



# **MORGAN AND MORECAMBE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS: TRANSMISSION ASSETS**

**Applicants' Response to Rule 17 Letter**



**Deadline: Deadline 6**  
**Application Reference: EN020028**

**Document Numbers:**  
**MRCNS-J3303-JVW-19253**  
**MOR001-FLO-CON-ENV-NOT-0089**

**Document Reference: S\_D6\_11**

**October 2025**  
**F01**

Document status					
Version	Purpose of document	Approved by	Date	Approved by	Date
F01	Submission at Deadline 6	GL	October 2025	IM	October 2025

Prepared by:

Morgan Offshore Wind Limited,  
Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd

Prepared for:

Morgan Offshore Wind Limited,  
Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd

---

# Contents

**1    APPLICANTS’ RESPONSE TO RULE 17 LETTER DATED 15 OCTOBER 2025.....1**  
    1.1    Introduction .....1

**2    APPLICANTS’ RESPONSE TO THE RULE 17 LETTER .....2**  
    2.1    Response to Rule 17 Letter .....2

---

# **1 Applicants' Response to Rule 17 Letter dated 15 October 2025**

## **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1.1 The Applicants' response to the Rule 17 letter is set out in this document.
- 1.1.1.2 The Applicants have numbered the submissions in line with the Planning Inspectorate's document library, with subsequent paragraph number, e.g. REP5-001.1, REP5-001.2, etc.

## 2 Applicants' Response to the Rule 17 Letter

### 2.1 Response to Rule 17 Letter

Table 2-1: PD-016 – Rule 17 – Request for further information

Ref	IP submission	Applicants' response
1.1	<p><b>Uncertainty in relation to delivering the proposed mitigation areas and impact on Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) conclusions</b></p> <p>Due to on-going aviation issues the certainty and feasibility of delivering the proposed mitigation areas has been questioned. During ISH4 (see recording and transcript of ISH4 Part 8 – 08 October 2025 [EV10-016 and EV10-017]) in relation to a request for a without prejudice derogations case issued as Q14 in the Report on Implications for European Sites (RIES) [PD-015], the applicants stated that they will not be providing a without prejudice derogations case and that they don't consider that one is necessary. They stated that additional information will be provided at deadline 6, covering clarifications and alternative mitigation measures that could be applied. They also stated that the conclusions around no adverse effect on integrity are the same.</p> <p>Can you advise what would the implications be on the conclusions of the HRA if any of the mitigation areas: Lytham Moss, Newton-with-Scales and Fairhaven Saltmarsh could not be delivered?</p> <p>If any of the mitigation areas could not be delivered, could the applicants theoretically provide avoidance/ mitigation measures in another form that could avoid/ reduce the potential for adverse effects? If so, what would such measures comprise?</p>	<p>The Applicants note this question is directed to Natural England but would also direct the ExA to the Applicants' response to Q14 of the RIES (S_D6_5). The Applicants are confident that all mitigation areas can be delivered safely and avoid adverse effects on integrity on all European sites in consultation with Natural England and aviation stakeholders. However, in the unlikely event that these mitigation areas cannot be delivered, alternative mitigations are available as set out in the Applicants' response to Q14 of the RIES.</p>
1.2	<p><b>Potential impact on the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation areas</b></p> <p>An updated Outline Wildlife Hazard Management Plan [REP5-107] has been submitted at deadline 5. A Draft Wildlife Habitats Attractant Risk</p>	<p>Whilst this question is directed to Natural England, the Applicants confirm that the design and management measures set out in the Draft Wildlife Habitat Attractants Risk Assessment at Deadline 5 (REP5-107) align with the principles set out in the Outline Wildlife Hazard Management Plan. Further information was included in the Draft Wildlife Habitat Attractants Risk</p>

	<p>Assessment is now included within the document (Appendix A) including additional design commitments/management measures to control bird attraction. At ISH4 (see recording and transcript of ISH4 Part 5 – 08 October 2025 [EV10-010 and EV10-011]) a question was asked in relation to those additional proposed measures and the potential downgrade to the quality and effectiveness of the proposed mitigation areas.</p> <p>Could NE comment on this point?</p>	<p>Assessment at Deadline 5 to clarify the adaptive management approach and the Applicants consider that these measures would not reduce the quality and effectiveness of the proposed mitigation areas.</p>
1.3	<p><b>Peat Management Strategy</b></p> <p>During ISH4 (ISH4 (see recording and transcript of ISH4 Part 3 – 07 October 2025 [EV10-006 and EV10-007]) a discussion took place regarding the wording of commitment 101 [REP5-026] and NE response to ExQ2, Q2:6.1.8 [REP5-184]. The applicants stated that to put the concerns in context, they have utilised the maps mentioned by NE, and the total area where deep peat could be present constitutes 2.91% of the overall order limits area and that peat disturbance is unlikely.</p> <p>The applicants' position is to update the soil management plan to include a hierarchy of control for peat management but there is no intention to include a specific compensation strategy. Additionally, the applicants have confirmed that they are not proposing to include any specific requirements into the draft development consent order (DCO) in relation to deep peat management and compensation strategy, stating that they don't consider it to be a necessary measure.</p> <p>Could NE further comment on this outstanding issue and if you maintain that compensation strategy is necessary, could you propose suggested drafting for a potential requirement on a without prejudice basis?</p>	<p>The Applicants would firstly highlight that as shown on the Natural England Peat map, produced in May 2025, there are only very limited areas within the Order Limits identified by Natural England as having the potential to contain peat. An overlay of the Order Limits onto this mapping has been provided in 'Response to ISH4_7' (REF) at Deadline 6, which shows that only 2.91% of the Order Limits contains any potential peat.</p> <p>The Applicants consider that the mitigation measures presented in the Outline Soil Management Plan (REF5-059) are appropriate. This document includes, at Section 1.8.6, the commitment to the production of detailed Peat Management Plans, where required, and to the inclusion of detailed peat probing surveys pre-construction to inform the Peat Management Plan (PMP). Therefore, if the disturbance of peat cannot be avoided through detailed design, PMPs would ensure that the agricultural peat resources can be appropriately managed and restored to ensure that these resources are protected. Following ISH4 and in response to ISH4_8 (see The Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points due at Deadline 6 (S_D5_6)) the Applicants have updated the Outline Soil Management Plan (J1.7/F04) to include an explanation of the implementation of the peat mitigation hierarchy within the measures proposed. The Outline Soil Management Plan forms part of the Outline Code of Construction Practice. The requirement to undertake PMPs is therefore covered by Requirement 8 of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft Development Consent Order. Therefore, the Applicants believe that the necessary controls and requirements for the protection and management of peat are already in place and are proportionate for the level of peat likely to be encountered.</p>



1.4	<p><b>Minimum drill depth beneath the Lytham St Anne's Dunes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</b></p> <p>The Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment [REP5-102] was updated at Deadline 5 and the ExA are awaiting further comments from NE at Deadline 6. In your [REP4-140] you state “Based on this data, a commitment to set the minimum cable depth at &gt;15m (rather than 10m) would fully mitigate our concerns and would hopefully avoid the middle sands too, which form an important part of the aquifer.” and “Natural England advises that the Applicant should ensure the cable burial depth is sufficient to be located in the low permeability glacial clays. This should be secured in the project commitment log.”.</p> <p>This issue was discussed at the ISH4 (see recording and transcript of ISH4 Part 3 – 07 October 2025 [EV10-006 and EV10-007]) with the applicants maintaining their position that the “Applicants are unable to commit at this stage to increasing the minimum drill depth beneath the Dunes SSSI. Final depths will be determined once contractors are appointed and the detailed design is undertaken. Additional hydrogeological data will be collected, including information on groundwater abstractions from the St Annes Old Links Golf Course, as well as further ground investigation and ground water monitoring as necessary. This information will inform the detailed Hydrogeological Risk Assessment, which will in turn inform the final cable positioning and depths.”</p> <p>The detailed Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (HyRA) is secured through Requirement 8(o) of the DCO. The applicants explained that depth of the cables will have an impact on electrical efficiency and that other mitigation measures could be adopted and those would be agreed as part of the discharge of the Requirement 8(o) in consultation with Natural England and the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Could you explain in more detail if you still consider that a specific commitment to increasing the burial depth from 10m to 15m is necessary?</p>	<p>As mentioned in ISH4, the Applicants maintain that a commitment to a fixed minimum drill depth of 15m below the Lytham St Anness Dunes SSSI is not appropriate or practicable at this stage of the project.</p> <p>Increasing the drill depth would result in a greater thermal path length and soil volume that heat must pass through before it reaches the surface. At greater depths, this results in higher operating temperatures and therefore reduces the current carrying capacity / efficiency of the cables. The Applicants have provided further information to Natural England on the potential impact on ground water temperatures at Deadline 4 (RI_G10, REP4-100).</p> <p>From a constructability perspective, by committing to a deeper minimum drill depth of 15m, this reduces the flexibility in design and could compromise the feasibility of the direct pipe drill technique. The Applicants have appropriately assessed the constructability of the current approach and have committed to a minimum drill depth of 10m. Any further increase of this parameter will be informed by contractor input and detailed design.</p> <p>The Applicants acknowledge that borehole MORGAN_A2_CP01B and HBH01 identifies glacial clay/tills at 14.5 m and 14.0m depth respectively, however this represents only two datapoints and does not give sufficient data for the geological makeup of the landfall area as a whole. As set out in Table 3.13 of Volume 1, Chapter 3 of the Project Description, the maximum drill length of the landfall is 1,500 m. Considering the length of the drill and the potential trajectories through either the northern or southern alignment (or both) within Work Nos. 6A/6B, there is insufficient data currently available to ensure that the clay layer is continuous and consistent over the area being considered for potential drill paths. At Deadline 6, the Applicants have committed to undertaking further Ground Investigation (CoT128), specifically to inform the detailed Hydrogeological Risk Assessment(s).</p> <p>Therefore, the Applicants remain unable to commit at this stage to increase the minimum drill depth beneath the Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI, and maintain that the final depth can only be determined once the contractors are appointed</p>
-----	--	---

		and detailed design is undertaken, taking into consideration and fully assessing further ground investigation and monitoring results.
1.5	<p><b>Offshore ecology</b></p> <p>At ISH4 (see recording and transcript of ISH4 Part 6 – 08 October 2025 [EV10-012 and EV10-013]) the applicants indicated that NE might not be in a position to set out its final position on outstanding issues relating to physical processes, benthic ecology and matters relating to the Fylde Marine Conservation Zone by deadline 6 (22 October 2025) as required by the examination timetable.</p> <p>The ExA requests that NE makes every effort to comply with the deadline for all offshore ecology issues, in order to allow time for the last-minute clarification of positions (if required) in advance of the close of the examination at deadline 7 (29 October 2025).</p>	The Applicants are not responding to this question.
1.6	<p><b>Risk and Issues Log</b></p> <p>The ExA notes the latest version of the Risk and Issues Log that has been submitted by NE at deadline 5 [REP5-177]. Within this there are a number of matters that are still colour coded 'Red' or 'Amber'.</p> <p>The ExA notes NE's definition of a matter with an amber colour coding is such that:</p> <p>"Natural England does not agree with the Applicant's position or approach and consider that this could make a material difference to the outcome of the decision-making process for this project.</p> <p>Natural England considers that these matters may be resolved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of additional evidence or justification to support conclusions; and/or</li> <li>• revisions to impact assessment methodology and/or assessment conclusions; and/or</li> <li>• minor to moderate revisions to impact modelling; and/or</li> </ul>	The Applicants are not responding to this question.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well-designed mitigation measures that are adequately secured through the draft DCO/dML and/or</li> <li>• amendments to draft plans</li> </ul> <p>If these issues are not addressed or resolved by the end of the Examination, then they may become a Red risk issue as set out above.”</p> <p>Having regard to this can NE in conjunction with its Risk and Issues Log that is to be submitted at deadline 6 (22 October 2025) for all of the matters that still have a red or amber colour coding explain the implications of each of these matters in terms of the conclusions the applicants have reached in either environmental impact assessment (EIA) and/or Habitats Regulations assessment (HRA) terms and whether they are likely to materially affect the applicants’ assessment of effects.</p>	
--	---	--