



MORGAN AND MORECAMBE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS: TRANSMISSION ASSETS

The Applicants' Hearing Summary of Issue Specific Hearing 4 Day 1

Deadline 6
Application Reference: EN020028

Document Numbers:
MOR001-FLO-CON-ENV-NOT-0093
MRCNS-J3303-BGS-19256

Document Reference: S_D6_12

22 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:

Burges Salmon LLP and CMS

Prepared for:

Morgan Offshore Wind Limited,
Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd

Contents

1 THE APPLICANTS’ HEARING SUMMARY OF ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 4 DAY 110

1.1 Introduction.....10

1.2 Hearing Summary ISH4 Day 111

Tables

Table 1.1: Hearing Summary ISH4 Day 111

Glossary

Term	Meaning
400 kV grid connection cables	Cables that will connect the proposed onshore substations to the existing National Grid Penwortham substation.
400 kV grid connection cable corridor	The corridor within which the 400 kV grid connection cables will be located.
Applicants	Morgan Offshore Wind Limited (Morgan OWL) and Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd (Morecambe OWL).
Biodiversity benefit	<p>An approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Where a development has an impact on biodiversity, developers are encouraged to provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected.</p> <p>For the Transmission Assets, biodiversity benefit will be delivered within identified biodiversity benefit areas within the Onshore Order Limits. Further qualitative benefits to biodiversity are proposed via potential collaboration with stakeholders and local groups, contributing to existing plans and programmes, both within and outside the Order Limits.</p>
Code of Construction Practice	A document detailing the overarching principles of construction, contractor protocols, construction-related environmental management measures, pollution prevention measures, the selection of appropriate construction techniques and monitoring processes.
Commitment	This term is used interchangeably with mitigation and enhancement measures. The purpose of commitments is to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset significant adverse environmental effects. Primary and tertiary commitments are taken into account and embedded within the assessment set out in the ES.
Construction Traffic Management Plan	A document detailing the construction traffic routes for heavy goods vehicles and personnel travel, protocols for delivery of Abnormal Indivisible Loads to site, measures for road cleaning and sustainable site travel measures.
Design envelope	A description of the range of possible elements and parameters that make up the Transmission Assets options under consideration, as set out in detail in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description. This envelope is used to define the Transmission Assets for EIA purposes when the exact engineering parameters are not yet known. This is also referred to as the Maximum Design Scenario or Rochdale Envelope approach.
Development Consent Order	An order made under the Planning Act 2008, as amended, granting development consent.
Direct pipe	A cable installation technique which involves the use of a mini (or micro) tunnel boring machine and a hydraulic (or other) thruster rig to directly install a steel pipe between two points.
Environmental Impact Assessment	The process of identifying and assessing the significant effects likely to arise from a project. This requires consideration of the likely changes to the environment, where these arise as a consequence of a project, through comparison with the existing and projected future baseline conditions.

Term	Meaning
Environmental Statement	The document presenting the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.
Evidence Plan Process	A voluntary consultation process with specialist stakeholders to agree the approach to, and information to support, the EIA and Habitats Regulations Assessment processes for certain topics.
Generation Assets	The generation assets associated with the Morgan Offshore Wind Project and the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm include the offshore wind turbines, inter-array cables, offshore substation platforms and platform link (interconnector) cables to connect offshore substations.
Intertidal area	The area between Mean High Water Springs and Mean Low Water Springs.
Intertidal Infrastructure Area	The temporary and permanent areas between MLWS and MHWS.
Landfall	The area in which the offshore export cables make landfall (come on shore) and the transitional area between the offshore cabling and the onshore cabling. This term applies to the entire landfall area at Lytham St. Annes between Mean Low Water Springs and the transition joint bay inclusive of all construction works, including the offshore and onshore cable routes, intertidal working area and landfall compound(s).
Local Authority	A body empowered by law to exercise various statutory functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom. This includes County Councils, District Councils and County Borough Councils.
Local Highway Authority	A body responsible for the public highways in a particular area of England and Wales, as defined in the Highways Act 1980.
Main rivers	The term used to describe a watercourse designated as a Main River under the Water Resources Act 1991 and shown on the Main River Map. These are usually larger rivers or streams and are managed by the Environment Agency.
Marine licence	The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires a marine licence to be obtained for licensable marine activities. Section 149A of the Planning Act 2008 allows an applicant for to apply for 'deemed marine licences' in English waters as part of the development consent process
Maximum design scenario	The realistic worst case scenario, selected on a topic-specific and impact specific basis, from a range of potential parameters for the Transmission Assets.
Mean High Water Springs	The height of mean high water during spring tides in a year.
Mean Low Water Springs	The height of mean low water during spring tides in a year.
Micro-tunnel / micro-tunnelling	A tunnelling technique involving the use of a hydraulic (or other) jacking rig and a mini (or micro) tunnel boring machine to install a concrete tunnel between two points.
Mitigation measures	This term is used interchangeably with Commitments. The purpose of such measures is to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset significant adverse environmental effects.
Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Generation Assets	The offshore generation assets and associated activities for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm.

Term	Meaning
Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets	The offshore export cables, landfall, and onshore infrastructure required to connect the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm to the National Grid.
Morecambe OWL	Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Limited is owned by Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners' (CIP) fifth flagship fund, Copenhagen Infrastructure V (CI V).
Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms: Transmission Assets	<p>The offshore export cables, landfall, and onshore infrastructure for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project and the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm. This includes the offshore export cables, landfall site, onshore export cables, onshore substations, 400 kV grid connection cables and associated grid connection infrastructure such as circuit breaker compounds.</p> <p>Also referred to in this report as the Transmission Assets, for ease of reading.</p>
Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Generation Assets	The offshore generation assets and associated activities for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project.
Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets	The offshore export cables, landfall and onshore infrastructure required to connect the Morgan Offshore Wind Project to the National Grid.
Morgan OWL	Morgan Offshore Wind Limited is a joint venture between JERA Nex bp (JNbp) and Energie Baden-Württemberg AG (EnBW).
National Grid Penwortham substation	The existing National Grid substation at Penwortham, Lancashire.
National Policy Statement(s)	The current national policy statements published by the Department for Energy and Net Zero in 2023 and adopted in 2024.
Offshore booster station	A fixed structure located along the offshore export cable route, containing electrical equipment to ensure bulk wind farm capacity can be fully transmitted to the onshore substations.
Offshore substation platform(s)	A fixed structure located within the wind farm sites, containing electrical equipment to aggregate the power from the wind turbine generators and convert it into a more suitable form for export to shore.
Offshore export cables	The cables which would bring electricity from the Generation Assets to the landfall.
Offshore export cable corridor	The corridor within which the offshore export cables will be located.
Offshore Permanent Infrastructure Area	The area within the Transmission Assets Offshore Order Limits (up to MLWS) where the permanent offshore electrical infrastructure (i.e. offshore export cables) will be located.
Offshore Order Limits	See Transmission Assets Order Limits: Offshore (below).
Offshore substation platform(s)	A fixed structure located within the wind farm sites, containing electrical equipment to aggregate the power from the wind turbine generators and convert it into a more suitable form for export to shore.
Onshore export cables	The cables which would bring electricity from the landfall to the onshore substations.
Onshore export cable corridor	The corridor within which the onshore export cables will be located.
Onshore Infrastructure Area	The area within the Transmission Assets Order Limits landward of MHWS. Comprising the offshore export cable corridor from MHWS to

Term	Meaning
	the transition joint bay, onshore export cable corridor, onshore substations and 400 kV grid connection cable corridor, and associated temporary and permanent infrastructure including temporary and permanent compound areas and accesses. Those parts of the Transmission Assets Order Limits proposed only for ecological mitigation and/or biodiversity benefit are excluded from this area.
Onshore Order Limits	See Transmission Assets Order Limits: Onshore (below).
Onshore substations	The onshore substations will include a substation for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets and a substation for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. These will each comprise a compound containing the electrical components for transforming the power supplied from the generation assets to 400 kV and to adjust the power quality and power factor, as required to meet the UK Grid Code for supply to the National Grid.
Preliminary Environmental Information Report	A report that provides preliminary environmental information in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. This is information that enables consultees to understand the likely significant environmental effects of a project, and which helps to inform consultation responses.
Renewable energy	Energy from a source that is not depleted when used, such as wind or solar power.
Scour protection	Protective materials to avoid sediment being eroded away from the base of the foundations due to the flow of water.
Substation	Part of an electrical transmission and distribution system. Substations transform voltage from high to low, or the reverse by means of electrical transformers.
The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero	The decision maker with regards to the application for development consent for the Transmission Assets.
Transmission Assets	See Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms: Transmission Assets (above).
Transmission Assets Order Limits	The area within which all components of the Transmission Assets will be located, including areas required on a temporary basis during construction and/or decommissioning (such as construction compounds).
Transmission Assets Order Limits: Offshore	<p>The area within which all components of the Transmission Assets seaward of Mean Low Water Springs will be located, including areas required on a temporary basis during construction and/or decommissioning.</p> <p>Also referred to in this report as the Offshore Order Limits, for ease of reading.</p>
Transmission Assets Order Limits: Onshore	<p>The area within which all components of the Transmission Assets landward of Mean High Water Springs will be located, including areas required on a temporary basis during construction and/or decommissioning (such as construction compounds).</p> <p>Also referred to in this report as the Onshore Order Limits, for ease of reading.</p>

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
BCA	Bilateral Grid Connection Agreement
CoCP	Code of Construction Practice
CoT	Project Commitment
CBRA	Cable Burial Risk Assessment
CfD	Contracts for Difference
CMS	Construction Method Statement
CSIP	Cable Specification and Installation Plan
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DCO	Development Consent Order
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security & Net Zero
dML	Deemed Marine Licence
EnBW	Energie Baden-Württemberg AG
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EPP	Evidence Plan Process
ES	Environmental Statement
EWG	Expert Working Group
GIS	Gas Insulated Switchgear
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
HGV	Heavy goods vehicle
HNDR	Holistic Network Design Review
HVAC	High Voltage Alternating Current
IALA	International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities
IAQM	Institute of Air Quality Management
LAT	Lowest Astronomical Tide
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MDS	Maximum Design Scenario

Acronym	Meaning
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
MLWS	Mean Low Water Springs
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MPS	Marine Policy Statement
MTBM	Mini (or micro) tunnel boring machine
NGESO	National Grid Electricity System Operator
NPS	National Policy Statement
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OSP	Offshore Substation Platform
OTNR	Offshore Transmission Network Review
PDE	Project Design Envelope
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PPP	Pollution Prevention Plan
PRoW	Public rights of way
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SAR	Search and Rescue
SPA	Special Protection Area
SNCBs	Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies
SSSI	Sit of Special Scientific Interest
SWMP	Site Waste Management Plan
TEP	Technical Engagement Plan
TJB	Transition Joint Bay
UK	United Kingdom
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WSI	Written scheme of investigation

Units

Unit	Description
%	Percentage
dB	Decibels
Kg	Kilogram
kHz	Kilohertz

Unit	Description
KJ	Kilojoules
km	Kilometres
km ²	Kilometres squared
kV	Kilovolt
m	Metres
m ²	Metres squared
m ³	Metres cubed
nm	Nautical mile
μPa	micropascal

1 The Applicants' Hearing Summary of Issue Specific Hearing 4 Day 1

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1.1 This document presents a written summary of Morgan OWL's and Morecambe OWL's (together, 'the Applicants') oral case at the Issue Specific Hearing 4 (ISH4) Day 1. ISH 4 Day 1 on the Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets Development Consent Order (DCO) application took place on 7 October 2025 at Village Hotel, East Park Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LL.

1.2 Hearing Summary ISH4 Day 1

Table 1.1: Hearing Summary ISH4 Day 1

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
1	Item 1 - Introductions, arrangements and purpose of the hearing	<p>1) Following introductions and the Examining Authority's (ExA) outline of the hearing arrangements and purpose, several initial statements were made by the parties.</p> <p>2) Blackpool Airport Operations Limited ("BAOL") made a statement confirming entry into a Cooperation Agreement with the Applicants and its subsequent issuance of a letter of no objection (AS-083) formally withdrawing all prior representations. BAOL's statement confirmed that the Cooperation Agreement ensures that sufficient controls are in place to ensure that Blackpool Airport can continue its safe, uninterrupted and efficient Airport operations while work is carried out within the Airport boundary and within the Airport's wider safeguarding areas. This includes matters relating to bird strike risk.</p> <p>3) The Applicants then made a statement addressing the programme of Ground Investigation (GI) works which has been ongoing across the Order limits since August 2025 to inform post-consent design, as previously highlighted at Issue Specific Hearing 3. During the survey campaign, minor incidents occurred on site, which were promptly resolved with the relevant landowners and reported to Fylde Borough Council (FBC) and the local MP (Andrew Snowden). The Applicants have provided updates to both parties and continue to liaise with landowners. It was emphasised that the project team remains available to address any further questions during the hearings in relation to this matter.</p> <p>4) In response to FBC's statement concerning purported deficiencies in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the amount of new information provided by the Applicants, the Applicants submitted that the EIA process had sufficiently demonstrated how impacts had been identified and considered. The Applicants further submitted that the more recent material produced was in response to specific questions raised during the examination.</p> <p>5) The Applicants requested a written statement from FBC setting out full details of their submissions, including where they consider the Environmental Statement (ES) to be incomplete and the mitigation hierarchy to have been improperly applied.</p> <p>6) Following the ExA's request for FBC to submit this statement as soon as possible and for the parties to liaise to move matters forward swiftly, the Applicants confirmed their willingness to make themselves available to FBC to discuss the relevant matters in detail. [Post-hearing note: FBC provided a statement to the Applicants to support their claim of deficiencies in the EIA on 20th October – the Applicants will therefore respond at Deadline 7..]</p>
2	Item 2 - Statements of common ground (SoCG) Update on SoCG submissions	<p>7) The Applicants confirmed that numerous meetings had taken place with stakeholders and thanked all parties for their engagement, and updates have been reflected in the Statement of Commonality (REP5-085).</p> <p>8) The Applicants went on to provide a status update for the relevant stakeholders, in relation to substantive progress made on the respective Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs):</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Historic England (HE) – The final SoCG was submitted at Deadline 5. The Applicants confirmed that all matters are agreed. b. Marine Management Organisation (MMO) – The final SoCG is expected to be submitted at Deadline 6. Outstanding matters include Article 6 on the 'benefit of the order' and unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance. c. Trinity House – All matters were agreed as of Deadline 3, but Trinity House are maintaining a watching brief on the draft DCO (dDCO). A final SoCG will be submitted at Deadline 6. d. Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) – All issues have been previously agreed. The Applicants have not submitted an updated SoCG at Deadline 5. A final SoCG will be submitted at Deadline 6. e. Natural England (NE) – The Applicants and NE have not yet entered into a SoCG. Instead, the SoCG was replaced by a risk and issues log (REP5-177) which has been submitted by Natural England at each deadline during examination. The Applicants confirmed that discussions are ongoing with the intention to submit a SoCG at Deadline 6. f. Spirit Energy (SE) - The Applicants submitted an initial SoCG at Deadline 5. All issues have been agreed. The final signed SoCG will be submitted at Deadline 6. g. Environment Agency (EA) – All matters are agreed in relation to ecology, waste, pollution prevention, flood risk and the water framework directive. Remaining matters include hydrogeology, with positive high-level feedback having been received by the Applicants. Discussions are also ongoing regarding protective provisions. The Statement of Common Ground will be updated at Deadline 6 to reflect progress. h. National Highways – Engagement has continued since the last set of hearings and the Applicants expect all matters to be agreed by Deadline 6. <p>9) The Applicants confirmed that positive progress had been made with the following councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lancashire County Council (LCC) – A SoCG was submitted at Deadline 4. Matters agreed include hydrology, flood risk and archaeology. Discussions are continuing on traffic and transport, landscape, ecology, land use and public rights of way (PRoW) with further meetings to be held after Deadline 6. A final SoCG will be submitted at Deadline 6. b. FBC – An updated SoCG was submitted at Deadline 5. Good progress has been made on noise and landscape matters in particular. The Applicants met with FBC the day before the hearing and subsequently submitted an updated SoCG the day before the hearing including well-developed positions on Green Belt matters in particular. A final SoCG is expected at Deadline 6. <p>10) In respect of progress with FBC, the Applicants noted that the SoCG does not reflect the position set out by FBC as read out at the start of the hearing. Accordingly, the Applicants noted that the SoCG will need to be considered in the context of the alleged deficiencies in the Applicants' EIA.</p> <p>11) The Applicants went on to provide a status update for the following councils:</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC) – A SoCG was submitted at Deadline 4. Matters agreed include landscape, hydrology, flood risk, geology, hydrogeology and ground conditions. Remaining matters include ecology, air quality, historic environment and noise. A final SoCG will be submitted at Deadline 6. b. Preston City Council (PCC) – A SoCG was submitted at Deadline 5 with matters agreed on landscape. The applicants will continue to try and obtain a position from PCC on other matters with a view to submitting a SOCG at Deadline 6. c. Blackpool Borough Council (BBC) – A SoCG was submitted at Deadline 5. Matters agreed include traffic, transport and land use. A final SoCG will be submitted at Deadline 6. <p>12) The Applicants provided a further status update regarding the SOCG position with the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. National Farmers Union (NFU) – A SoCG was submitted at Deadline 4. A revised SoCG is also currently with the NFU for comment. The intention is to submit a final version at Deadline 6. b. BAE Systems (BAES) – A SoCG was submitted at Deadline 5, with discussions being progressed since then. The intention is to submit a further SoCG at either Deadline 6 or Deadline 7, and BAES have agreed with the Applicants that this will be a joint submission with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). c. Newton-with-Clifton Parish Council and Freckleton Parish Council – An updated SoCG was submitted at Deadline 5. A final version is expected at Deadline 6. The Applicants thanked the parish councils for their continued engagement, with further meetings held on 11 and 18 August. The Applicants noted that there remain fundamental differences with the parish councils that are unlikely to be resolved, particularly in respect of site selection. <p>13) The Applicants acknowledged the importance of ensuring that as few matters as possible remain under discussion at Deadline 6 and confirmed that the Statement of Commonality would reflect this. Where issues are still being progressed, these will be clearly identified.</p> <p>14) In response to the ExA's observation that some sections were incomplete, the Applicants confirmed that updates had been made to action some of these omissions including in respect of FBC's SoCG.</p> <p>15) The Applicants further submitted that the SoCG with FBC reflects positive progress, including full agreement on air quality and the removal of climate change as an issue. These updates demonstrate the constructive engagement undertaken and positive progress achieved with FBC.</p> <p>16) The ExA queried progress with SABIC.</p> <p>17) The Applicants confirmed that discussions on protective provisions with SABIC are progressing well and that the Applicants do not expect a SoCG will be required.</p>
3(a)	<p>Item 3 – Noise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Operational noise - outstanding concerns 	<p>18) In response to the ExA's query for an update on FBC's position, FBC confirmed that the council's outstanding concerns in respect of noise and vibration relate solely to construction hours, as reflected in the SoCG. Accordingly, the Applicants made no submissions in respect of this agenda item.</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
3(b)	Item 3 – Noise b) Construction noise - outstanding concerns	<p>19) The ExA invited the Applicants to provide an update on the issues raised in respect of this agenda item.</p> <p>20) The Applicants confirmed ongoing engagement with SRBC. The Applicants will be updating the Outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (J1.3/F04) in response to requests to commit to less noisy plant and vehicles during construction. The Applicants also noted that information has been provided on construction and sequential scenarios, which sit outside the SoCG. Regarding construction hours, the Applicants reiterated that their position remains unchanged - 07:00–19:00 Monday to Friday and 07:00-13:00 on Saturdays - reflecting what they consider to be necessary and proportionate to deliver the works efficiently.</p> <p>21) The Applicants confirmed that engagement with PCC is ongoing, noting the council's resource constraints. The Applicants submitted a position at Deadline 5 (REP5-111) to ensure that the ExA was kept informed.</p> <p>22) The Applicants submitted that constructive engagement has also taken place with FBC, the host authority, and progress in discussions is reflected in the latest SoCG.</p> <p>23) The Applicants confirmed that all matters relating to construction and operational noise and vibration, save for construction hours, are agreed with FBC.</p>
3(c)	Item 3 – Noise c) Outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan	<p>24) In response to the ExA's query regarding higher sensitivity receptors and criteria for significant adverse effect levels, the Applicants confirmed that the Outline Noise and Vibration Management Plan (REP5-054) had been updated following engagement with FBC.</p> <p>25) The Applicants updated that FBC had appointed a noise consultant and submitted a series of questions to the Applicants. The Applicants responded to those questions and also provided further follow-up answers. In turn, the Outline Noise and Vibration Management Plan (REP5-054) has been updated to include specific consideration of increased sensitivity receptors, including riding schools, the care home and schools, following feedback from FBC.</p> <p>26) The Applicants further submitted that the updated SoCG has now been submitted, and that FBC has confirmed that the amendments to the Outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (REP5-054) are acceptable.</p>
3(d)	Item 3 – Noise d) Commitments	<p>27) In response to the ExA's query on Requirement 18, the Applicants confirmed that the update to Requirement 18 had been made in response to discussions with FBC's noise specialist. The Applicants noted that in addition to providing for specific noise limits, the requirement now includes provision for an operational noise management scheme and associated protocols for enforcement.</p> <p>28) The Applicants acknowledged that Commitment 80 needs to be updated to reflect these amendments and agreed to take this away as an action. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants have reviewed and updated the wording of CoT80 to account for the revisions to Requirement 18 of the draft DCO (REP5-010) and included this within Volume 1, Annex 5.3: commitments register (F1.5.3/F07) at Deadline 6 in satisfaction of hearing action point ISH4_3.]</p> <p>29) The Applicants confirmed that the commitment to update local residents is included within the Outline Communications Plan (REP5-046). This has been part of the application since submission. The Applicants are willing to make this more explicit, although they note that it is already covered within the Outline Communications Plan.</p> <p>30) The ExA asked whether the Outline Communications Plan (REP5-046) includes a time limit for notifications.</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>31) The Applicants responded that the current wording states that notification will be given to occupiers of nearby properties who will be informed in advance of the works taking place via effective and transparent methods of communication and engagement with residents, businesses, the local community and any other relevant stakeholders who may be impacted by site preparation and construction works. The Applicants submitted that specifics will be agreed with FBC as part of the discharge of the requirement. Subsequently, notification periods will also be agreed with Parish Councils, and the Applicants will meet those as requested. The Applicants highlighted that FBC is engaged in agreeing the plan, and the Applicants are responsible for carrying out the engagement. [Post-hearing note: Newton with Freckleton Parish Councils have requested a minimum of 48 hours' notice is given. The Applicants have agreed to this amendment and have updated the outline Communications Plan at Deadline 6 (J1.1/F05).]</p> <p>32) In response to concerns raised by local Fylde residents regarding community engagement, assessment of noise effects and accurate visualisations, the Applicants confirmed that operational noise limits have been set and are detailed in the Operational Noise Assessment (APP-120). This includes noise contour mapping illustrating projected noise emissions from the onshore substations, which is reflected in Requirement 18 of Schedules 2A and 2B of the dDCO. The Applicants also noted that a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) assessment (REP5-092) was submitted at Deadline 1, updated again at Deadline 5. These updates were made in response to feedback from FBC's noise consultant, particularly in relation to sensitive receptors such as schools, care homes and riding schools.</p>
4(a)	<p>Item 4 - Landscape and visual matters</p> <p>a. Update on recent negotiations and matters outstanding</p>	<p>33) The Examining Authority (ExA) noted that landscape and visual matters had been discussed at ISH2 and requested an update from the councils and the Applicants.</p> <p>34) The Applicants confirmed that discussions with FBC have progressed, with a number of meetings held to explore matters relating to Green Belt, Landscape and Visual impact, and Design. As of the previous evening, the Applicants confirmed that a position had been agreed with FBC on Green Belt matters. While not all matters are agreed, substantial agreement has been reached on most issues.</p> <p>35) The Applicants stated in relation to LVIA matters, that the current draft SoCG reflects comments received from FBC and includes helpful notes to understand the differences between parties. The wording of the LVIA section is considered to be well aligned with both parties' positions, and the Applicants do not anticipate significant changes to the draft ahead of Deadline 6.</p> <p>36) The Applicants confirmed that useful conversations have taken place regarding the Outline Design Principles (oDP) (REP5-064), which underpins the Design portion of the SoCG. They emphasised the importance of ensuring the document provides a stable understanding of what is before the examination (the 'layers' of information that support the Works Plan proposals/ project parameters) and outlines the post-consent process to support good design outcomes, should consent be granted.</p> <p>37) The Applicants confirmed that a meeting with FBC on 10 September had been helpful, and further feedback was received on Friday 3 October. The Applicants understood that specific feedback was being sought on the oDP (REP5-064), <i>Section 6.0 Post Consent Design Process and Governance</i> and <i>Section 6.4 Post-consent Design Code</i>, with expectations in place to provide certainty about the outcome of the submission process. The feedback received so far</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>had not aligned with the nature of the meeting, but the Applicants were keen to persist with reaching an improved level of agreement on matters.</p> <p>38) The Applicants confirmed that a programme for engagement with FBC had been drafted to ensure development of the oDP with a view to the Council being comfortable with the process of post-consent design governance. This includes transparency around the role of the Applicants' technical/ delivery partner and Design Champion. A final version of the oDP (J3/F03) will be submitted at Deadline 6.</p> <p>39) The Applicants stated that they hope to reach further clarity with FBC on the oDP (REP5-064) in the coming week and do not anticipate any delay in submitting the final version at Deadline 6.</p> <p>40) With regard to LCC, the Applicants noted that coordination of a meeting to discuss the oDP (REP5-064) has been more difficult but confirmed that a meeting with LCC on these matters had been held on 15 September. The Applicants noted that there was a published programme in place which the Applicants were endeavouring to keep to.</p> <p>41) The Applicants confirmed that commentary had been received between Deadlines 4 and 5 submissions on the interim submissions between the Applicants and relevant Councils, and that a meeting with LCC had taken place to discuss this further. The Deadline 5 version (REP5-064) reflects input from both FBC and LCC. The Applicants await feedback and intend to issue SoCG text that reflects a reasonable structure of agreement.</p> <p>42) The Applicants stated that the SoCG with LCC aims to address issues raised by the Council and that the wording reflects agreement or disagreement on key issues. The draft SoCG reflects the position as set out in the Applicants' Response to Deadline 4 submissions from Statutory Consultees and other organisations: Lancashire County Council (LCC) (REP4-136, AS-082) (see REP5-122) and the Appendix to the Deadline 5 submission (REP5-174) dated 5 September in relation to Green Belt and LVIA matters (see S_D6_x/F01).</p> <p>43) The ExA confirmed that any Green Belt matters could be addressed in writing.</p> <p>44) The Applicants confirmed that a SoCG is in circulation with SRBC, with a meeting scheduled next week to finalise matters relating to LVIA, Green Belt and Design.</p> <p>45) The ExA queried why these discussions were taking place at this point in the examination process.</p> <p>46) The Applicants responded that the Outline Design Principles document (REP5-064) was submitted as part of the DCO application, but dialogue only commenced post-submission. The need for engagement was identified early in the examination programme. The Applicants confirmed that two sets of programmes had been established, but they had slipped due to resource constraints within the local authorities, which was not in the control of the Applicants. Notwithstanding this, the latest version of the Outline Design Principles (REP5-064) was issued within a week of meetings held with Fylde Borough Council and Lancashire County Council in mid-September and in advance of any written comments which were taking longer to be received than planned. Further comments were incorporated promptly following receipt of feedback. The Applicants emphasised that they have used best endeavours to reach a finalised position and that meetings with FBC and LCC were turned around promptly.</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
4(b)	Item 4 – Landscape and visual matters b) Outline Design Principles	<p>47) Fylde Borough Council (FBC) reiterated their concern regarding the Outline Design Principles (REP5-064), citing a lack of detail and uncertainty around how the design code would be applied.</p> <p>48) The ExA queried whether the use of terms such as “may” and “might” within the Outline Design Principles (REP5-064) may be addressed in the final submission.</p> <p>49) The Applicants confirmed that this issue had been raised early in the examination and was addressed in the Deadline 5 submission removing ‘uncertain’ language where possible and sought to provide clarity on phrasing of Project Level Design Principles and Post-consent Design Code (REP5-064) to relate as directly as possible to the wording of the relevant requirement/s. The Applicant noted that the level and nature of detail in the Project Level Design Principles (REP5-064) and Post-consent Design Code (REP5-064) that FBC would find helpful in steering the requirement discharge and compliance process, would be usefully issued to the applicant noting a specific request had been made for feedback on these two items specifically in the meeting on 10 September (S_D1_6.3/F04). The Applicants stated that the document had been reviewed against other projects and sought to provide as much certainty as possible. They confirmed that the discharge process would be overseen by a Design Champion, with a Compliance Report to accompany the requirements discharge submission, ensuring submissions align with a reasonable interpretation of the Project Design Principles and Post-consent Design Code (REP5-064). The Applicants submitted that this reflects established good practice and that the principles discussed with FBC were considered reasonable.</p> <p>50) The ExA referred to paragraphs 2.9.18 and 2.9.19 of the NPS EN-5, which reference the Horlock Rules, and queried whether the design code had been informed by these principles.</p> <p>51) The Applicants responded that the relevant sentence in the Horlock Rules relates to the interrelationship between towers and substations and must be read in context. The Applicants clarified that the guidance focuses on towers rather than substation structures and that no towers form part of this application. The second sentence in the specific point in the Horlock Rules refers to the exposure of terminal structures on prominent ridges, typically citing towers against backgrounds of trees or open skylines. Accordingly, the Applicants submitted that the Horlock Rules are not directly applicable to the design of substations in this case.</p> <p>52) The ExA asked whether the indicative layouts had taken account of local topography, public rights of way (PROWs), and vegetation, or whether they reflect a typical substation platform layout.</p> <p>53) The Applicants confirmed that the indicative layouts included in the Landscape and Design Technical Note (REP3-064) issued at Deadline 3, have been absorbed into the Outline Design Principles document (REP5-064). These layouts were indicative and reflected a realistic worst-case scenario from an electrical and functional perspective. The Applicants stated that the intention is to minimise landscape and visual effects and embed mitigation into the design, although final engagement with the supply chain/technical/delivery partner had not yet occurred.</p> <p>54) The Applicants provided context on the substation site selection process, referring to the Green Belt Technical Note (REP4-092). They explained that four potential areas were identified within a single area of search, which was consulted on during the PEIR stage. In response to consultation feedback, the Morgan substation was relocated east</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>of the public right of way, and the preferred location for the Morecambe substation was selected - the location to the south and to avoid the Area of Separation at Newton-with-Scales.</p> <p>55) The Applicants confirmed that the Horlock Rules were applied throughout the site selection process, including early sieving stages to ensure for example appropriate distancing from settlements. The Applicants referred to principle 5 of the Horlock Rules - 'The Proposals should keep the visual, noise and other environmental effects to a reasonably practicable minimum'. In relation to the design of substations the Applicant noted the principle emphasises amongst other things the need to: Allow sufficient space for screening of views by mounding or planting; Consider appropriate noise attenuation measures where necessary; and Consider adjoining uses and amenity of local inhabitants. [Post-hearing note: Principle 7 of the Horlock Rules on 'Design' is relevant to substation design with specific reference to the design of buildings etc.]</p> <p>56) The Applicants noted that the Horlock Rules had and will inform the substation design via the Project Design Principles that had captured key design guidance embedded in the Horlock Rules and that more up to date guidance published by the NIC on Project Specific Design Principles and by PINS comprising both 'Linear Infrastructure Projects: Best Practice in NSIP Applications March 2025' along with 'Achieving Good Design in Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects December 2024' was relevant and was before the ExA. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants' expert witness for landscape and design matters was lead author of the NIC's project specific Design Principles and Peer reviewer for both PINS guidance documents.]</p> <p>57) Comments from the public and by LCC raised the matter of site levels. The Applicants confirmed that local topography had been considered in the substation design. While detailed design is still to be developed, efforts have been made to lower the substations as far as practicable, balancing cut-and-fill requirements, spoil generation, and minimising HGV movements. Maximum height limits for buildings and masts have been set, and the design intent is to achieve a lower visual profile than currently applied for. The Applicants noted that the approach to exploring lowering levels as low as possible was secured through the Design Code and embedded within the Rochdale envelope to allow flexibility where necessary. [Post hearing note: the Applicants have agreed to annotate spot heights along the PRoW adjacent to the onshore substation on the contour mapping contained in the outline Design Principles to aid local understanding of the proposed onshore substation levels. The contour mapping within the outline Design Principles has been updated at Deadline 6 (J3/F03) with these spot heights.]</p> <p>58) LCC noted that it is not possible to establish the level change and drop in topography, which is why offsite planting has been raised. In response, the Applicants submitted that the design and mitigation strategy allows for bunding and planting within the platform extent and that sufficient space is available to ensure integration. The Applicant directed LCC to the updated outline Design Principles (REP5-064) and annotated scaled cross sections that illustrated the matter.</p> <p>59) The Applicants confirmed that offsite planting is not required and was not identified during the LVIA process as required to deliver mitigation and adequate landscape integration but the Applicants were open to discussions where possible. However, they do not control the land and cannot guarantee delivery.</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>60) LCC reiterated uncertainty regarding the level change and whether screening will be sufficient.</p> <p>61) The Applicants suggested that this was something for the ExA to consider on their next site visit and confirmed that full-scale plans have been provided to inform understanding of proposed levels.</p> <p>62) The ExA referred to ExQ 2.13.1.5 (PD-011) and asked the Applicants to clarify how stakeholder involvement would be secured prior to discharge of Requirement 4, and how meaningful community engagement would be ensured.</p> <p>63) The Applicants confirmed that meaningful discussions with FBC had taken place and have focused on the importance of post-submission design and the involvement of stakeholders and local communities. The Applicants noted that the Outline Design Principles document (REP5-064) sets out a clear process for design development post consent beginning with a meeting between the Applicants and FBC to agree the approach. The Applicants confirmed they would take direction from FBC on how stakeholders should be engaged and what consultation should look like.</p> <p>64) The Applicants emphasised that there is no intention to present a finalised scheme without consultation and that the indicative approach for engagement is included in the Outline Design Principles (REP5-064) submitted at Deadline 5.</p> <p>65) Responding to comments made by Newton-with-Clifton Parish Council that they had not received any representative visuals of the substations, the Applicants confirmed that 17 viewpoints were agreed during EIA scoping, including those for modelled views of the substations that were presented in the original DCO submission. The visualisations are based on the indicative layouts provided at D3 in the Landscape and Design Technical Note (REP3-064) and now provided in annotated plan form as part of the sequence of 'layered plans' that form the design information in front of the Examining Authority embodied in the oDP (REP5-064). The Applicants acknowledged that material finishes are not represented in the modelled view, but noted that the visualisations show what would be visible from agreed viewpoints. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants confirm that 19 viewpoints were agreed with the following statutory consultees: Natural England, Historic England, Preston City Council, Fylde Borough Council, Blackpool Council, South Ribble Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, West Lancashire Borough Council.]</p> <p>66) The ExA asked whether models could be used at this stage to help residents understand the proposals.</p> <p>67) The Applicants advised that as part of the requirement discharge process 3D computer modelled information could be used to support understanding of how the design responds to its context including building finishes, planting for screening etc. Following further concerns raised by the public regarding the information available to understand the proposals, the Applicants confirmed that the Outline Design Principles document (REP5-064) includes a suite of five plans which are to scale and have been available in the examination library since Deadline 3. A slide was presented that summarised the layered plan information for each substation comprising: Retained trees and hedgerows; proposed indicative site levels; indicative operational layout; indicative landscape strategy (planting); and the proposals for approval presented as the Works Plans and supporting descriptions. (The Works Plans illustrate the project parameters which informed the LVIA.)</p> <p>68) The Applicants offered to discuss these further with communities and emphasised that a significant amount of information is publicly available. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants confirm that they will update Figure 15 of the Outline Design Principles document to add spot heights along the Freckleton Bridleway (Public Right Of Way) to</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		provide a reference point in relation to the onshore substation Above Ordnance Datum heights as secured in Requirement 5 (see the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points of ISH4 and CAH3 (S_D6_6, specifically Hearing Action Point ISH4_29).]
4(d)	Item 4 – Landscape and visual matters d) Outline Arboricultural Method Statement and related matters	69) In response to concerns from FBC and LCC regarding tree planting and long-term management, the Applicants acknowledged FBC's comments regarding replanting and confirmed that a 5-year rolling period had previously been proposed. The Applicants took this matter away for consideration. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants have reviewed the duration of replacement landscape planting in light of FBC's request for a rolling 10-year period and will provide an update at Deadline 6 (see S_D6_6) in satisfaction of hearing action point ISH4_4.] 70) The ExA requested that both parties provide an updated position at Deadline 6.
4(e)	Item 4 – Landscape and visual matters e) Cumulative effects assessment	71) The ExA requested that, in their final SoCG, both FBC and the Applicants provide an update at Deadline 6 of their position regarding the assessment of any cumulative effects relating to the Bluefield Solar Farm on Plank Road which had been subject to post submission amendments and the proposed substations. 72) In response to a query regarding inclusion of the Orsted East Irish Sea Transmission project (OEIST) within the cumulative effects assessment, the Applicants explained that OEIST is currently at the scoping stage, with two potential cable corridors identified and no decision yet on array areas or substation locations. As such, a detailed cumulative assessment with OEIST is not possible at this stage. The Applicants confirmed that a high-level cumulative assessment was submitted at Deadline 5 (REP5-099), based on the information currently available. The Applicants submitted that it will be for OEIST to undertake a detailed cumulative assessment once further details are confirmed, particularly regarding substation and converter station locations. The Applicants also highlighted that visualisations in the Environmental Impact Assessment (see REP5a-031) illustrate anticipated growth and screening effects of proposed planting and confirmed that opportunities for coordination on planting and phasing would be explored post-consent.
5(a)	Item 5 – Transportation and traffic a) Acceptability of HGV Routes and Accesses – Update	73) The Examining Authority (ExA) requested an update on HGV routing and the status of discussions with Lancashire County Council (LCC). 74) The Applicants confirmed that agreement in principle had been reached with LCC on a number of points following a series of workshops and meetings. A swept path analysis has been undertaken for sections agreed with LCC for the final leg routes, and agreement in principle has been reached on approximately 10 and a half of the 16 links. Strategies have been developed to manage the passage of HGVs; a description of these link specific mitigation measures will be included within an update to the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) (J5/F05) at Deadline 6 and the detailed design measures would be progressed as part of agreeing the detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>75) The Applicants confirmed that discussions have been collaborative and constructive and that detailed design will proceed post-consent. The Applicants are confident that all matters relating to the acceptability of HGV routes can be agreed and that this can be updated in the SoCG to be submitted at Deadline 6.</p> <p>76) The ExA asked whether all measures are within the highway boundary.</p> <p>77) The Applicants confirmed that all measures being discussed with LCC are within the highway boundary, notwithstanding any comments from LCC regarding management measures such as caps or scheduling limits, which would be addressed in the detailed CTMP post-consent.</p> <p>78) In response to LCC's confirmation that engagement with the Applicants has been positive - with several concerns addressed, including updates to the swept path analysis and development of solutions within the highway boundary. The ExA requested that the Applicants and LCC provide a final position on HGV routing at Deadline 6.</p> <p>79) The Applicants confirmed that following Deadline 5, a series of workshops were held to discuss access designs, including matters arising from the change request. A meeting was held on 25 September, and the parties have agreed that subject to minor revisions to the outline Highways Access Management Plan (oHAMP) (REP4-060) that all matters can be agreed. The Applicants will submit an updated oHAMP (J8/F05) at Deadline 6 to further address LCCs comments.</p> <p>80) The ExA asked whether the Applicants were confident that all accesses could be constructed within the Order Limits and the Applicants confirmed this was the case.</p>
5(b)	<p>Item 5 – Transportation and traffic</p> <p>b) Construction accesses – Ballam Road</p>	<p>81) Following LCC's confirmation that they were content with the change application in relation to accesses 9A and 9B, the ExA requested a wider update on the construction access strategy from the Applicants.</p> <p>82) The Applicants confirmed that the strategy is designed to both maximise efficiency and satisfy safety requirements. The Applicants noted that on Ballam Road, two construction accesses are proposed to accommodate a concurrent construction scenario, which may involve two separate deliveries. This approach ensures compliance with Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations and appropriate scheduling. The Applicants confirmed their continued confidence that, through engagement with LCC, these accesses can be delivered. The Applicants also emphasised that in other locations along the corridor, where separate accesses have not been feasible, the Applicants have committed to shared access arrangements.</p> <p>83) The ExA queried whether the requirement for two accesses was primarily one of safety or efficiency.</p> <p>84) The Applicants responded that it is both and noted that having two separate accesses reduces risk and is preferable from a safety perspective. Safety considerations include both the physical implementation of access and the logistical management of construction activities under CDM regulations, particularly where two contractors are operating in overlapping areas.</p> <p>85) The ExA noted that there are a significant number of shared accesses proposed.</p> <p>86) The Applicants acknowledged this and reiterated that the Applicants had also committed to shared access arrangements where necessary. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants have committed to reducing the number of</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>accesses along Ballam Road in the location discussed at ISH4 in relation to interaction with land owned by Kirkham. The Applicants have made the commitment to remove one access from the scope of the project so that in a concurrent construction scenario there will be a requirement for shared access. The Applicants have updated the oHAMP and the DCO plans and schedules to reflect this change. The northern-most access of the two accesses will no longer be available for the Transmission Assets and will become 'white land' within the Order Limits.]</p> <p>87) The ExA requested that the Applicants set out the rationale for the number of accesses proposed and how potential safety issues, such as vehicles using the wrong accesses, would be managed. The ExA also requested that the Applicants signpost where vehicle routing is secured within the application documents. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants have set out the rationale for the construction access strategy, including the number of accesses and how those can be shared, and outlined the measures proposed in the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan for managing shared accesses at Deadline 6 (see J5/F05) in satisfaction of hearing action point ISH4_6.]</p> <p>88) The Applicants confirmed that driver education and access management measures, including signage and routing protocols, have been discussed in workshops and are included in within the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (REP5-066).</p> <p>89) The ExA referred to comments made by the representative of a landowner regarding Saltcotes Road and requested clarification on the need for and number of accesses in that location.</p> <p>90) The Applicants confirmed that two construction accesses are proposed at the centre of the cable corridor, provided via access points east and west of the road. A second set of construction accesses is proposed further south.</p> <p>91) The ExA queried whether accesses 25 and 26, located centrally within the corridor, could serve both cable routes.</p> <p>92) The Applicants responded that the location of accesses is aligned with existing gaps in the hedge to minimise disturbance. While shared access is possible, the Applicants have demonstrated that separate accesses can be safely delivered, offering maximum safety and efficiency benefits during the concurrent construction scenario.</p> <p>93) In response to concerns by the representative of a landowner regarding an access point intersecting their land, the ExA asked the Applicants for an update on the relevant access proposal.</p> <p>94) The Applicants confirmed that the accesses in question were proposed as part of the original application and that engagement with the landowner is ongoing.</p> <p>95) The Applicants clarified that an alternative access point has been identified outside the Order Limits, on land owned a family member of the landowner referenced above. The Applicants need to secure the rights to use this alternative access voluntarily. Once secured, the Applicants would be able to covenant not to use the other access point. The Applicants emphasised that this is a standard legal mechanism and discussions are ongoing.</p> <p>96) The ExA queried the anticipated timeframe for securing the alternative access.</p> <p>97) The Applicants confirmed that it is unlikely to be resolved before the end of the examination. However, the Applicants intend to update the Secretary of State on progress and can confirm that the process is being worked through.</p>
5(c)	Item 5 – Transportation and traffic	<p>98) The Examining Authority (ExA) invited comments from interested parties.</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
	c) Any access related issues arising from changed application	99) Responding to Westbury Parish Council's concerns regarding the impact of construction traffic, including on Balham Road, on local businesses, the Applicants emphasised that a suite of traffic management measures is being discussed with LCC including those covering Balham Road. The Applicants further clarified that Balham Road will not be closed and that detailed traffic management measures will be agreed with LCC through the development of the detailed Construction Traffic Management Plans. The Applicants noted that there will be no restrictions on general movement; the measures will apply only to construction traffic associated with the Transmission Assets.
6(a)	Item 6 – Socio-economic and land use a) Blackpool Road recreation ground	<p>100) Responding to a query from the ExA to FBC for an update on this agenda item, the Applicants clarified that the duration of works at the Recreation Ground would be five months in total across both projects, including restoration, and not five months per project. [Post-hearing note: This has been set out previously in REP1-041.]</p> <p>101) Following FBC's confirmation that they were content with the direction of discussions and satisfied with the Applicants' submitted statement regarding a Grampian-style condition, the Applicants offered to read out a joint statement prepared with FBC.</p> <p>102) FBC also confirmed that the section 106 agreement was not expected to be concluded during the examination, but considered that the relevant matters could be appropriately secured through this proposed requirement.</p> <p>103) The Applicants read out the following joint statement agreed with FBC:</p> <p><i>"The Applicants and Fylde Borough Council met on Monday 6th October to discuss the Section 106 for Blackpool Road Recreation Ground. Both parties can agree that the drafting principles and content are well advanced and good progress has been made. However, the Applicants are aware of the time left in examination and therefore are proposing to offer up a Grampian style condition which will require the S106 to be entered into before the construction works at Blackpool Road Recreation Ground can commence."</i></p> <p>104) The Applicants further confirmed that agreement in principle had been reached with FBC the previous day. The Applicants explained that a Grampian-style condition was proposed to be added as Requirement 28. This would specify that Work Nos. 15A, 51A, 52A and 53A (and the equivalent Work Nos in Schedule 2B for Morecambe) must not commence until a Section 106 agreement is entered into to secure appropriate mitigation for impacts on the Recreation Ground.</p> <p>105) The Applicants confirmed that the aim of the condition is to provide certainty and emphasised that the Section 106 agreement will be prioritised in the post-examination period, in order that it is finalised prior to the Secretary of State's decision.</p> <p>106) The ExA queried whether a unilateral agreement had been considered. The Applicants confirmed that, while a unilateral agreement had been considered, this would require the involvement of the Lytham Town Trust as freehold owner of the Blackpool Road Recreation Ground. The Applicants clarified that they do not currently have any land interest in the Blackpool Road Recreation Ground that could be bound by Section 106 obligations.</p> <p>107) Following concerns raised by a councillor for Kilnhouse Ward about alternative football provision for children, and FBC's confirmation that this matter formed part of ongoing discussions with the Applicants, the Applicants further</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>clarified that the play area would not be impacted by the works and would remain available for use. In terms of mitigation, the section 106 explanatory note (REP4-119) sets out principles to ensure provision for hiring pitches. If pitches are unavailable, alternative locations would be identified and laid out for temporary use, with the aim of ensuring alternative provision is available as close as possible to Blackpool Recreation Ground. Discussions with FBC are ongoing to achieve the best outcome.</p> <p>108) In response to the ExA's queries regarding the repayment clause contained within the draft section 106 agreement, the Applicants clarified that FBC had originally requested the Applicants to use their published template for s106 Agreements on their website, which includes this repayment clause. The Applicants had not amended this wording when updating the template with specific provisions as it is considered standard. It was also added that this clawback provision is relevant as the s106 Agreement includes mechanisms to ensure payments are made in advance; it is therefore reasonable that there are provisions to address potential overpayment.</p>
6(b)	<p>Item 6 – Socio-economic and land use</p> <p>b) Local authorities comments on the Local Tourism assessment submitted at deadline 5</p>	<p>109) Following FBC's comments regarding the impact of the proposed development on tourism and the application of paragraphs 5.13.2 and 5.13.4 of the National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 at a local level, the ExA invited the Applicants to respond.</p> <p>110) The Applicants explained that local tourism impacts had not been raised as an issue by FBC or any other local authority at the statutory consultation under section 42 Planning Act 2008, scoping stage or at PEIR. The Applicants confirmed that their original assessment was undertaken at a regional level, which the Applicants considered to be the most appropriate assessment for this type of project and was consistent with the accepted approach taken for the Mona Offshore Wind Farm DCO.</p> <p>111) The Applicants maintained that the regional approach was entirely appropriate given the connection to offshore wind farms and accordingly the broader regional context of the application. Notwithstanding this, and despite no objections being raised prior to submission, the Applicants confirmed that a Local Tourism Assessment (REP5-142) had now been undertaken.</p> <p>112) The Applicants referred to paragraph 5.13.2, which states that where a project is likely to have socio-economic effects at a local or regional level, the applicant should undertake an assessment of these impacts. The Applicants submitted that their approach satisfies this requirement. [Post-hearing note: This point has been expanded upon in S_D6_6, ISH4_11: Applicants response to Hearing Action Points of ISH4 and CAH3 at Deadline 6].</p> <p>113) The Applicants welcomed comments from FBC and submitted that the assessment is robust and demonstrates minor, if not negligible impacts on local tourism. The Applicants noted that FBC had taken away an action point to provide evidence that offshore wind projects impact on tourism at ISH1 but had not done so.</p> <p>114) The ExA noted that tourism had been included in both FBC and BBC's Local Impact Reports. The ExA queried the Applicants' interpretation of paragraph 5.13.2 of NPS EN-1.</p> <p>115) The Applicants emphasised that a Local Tourism Assessment (REP5-142) had now been provided and suggested that if this had been considered critical by local authorities or the Planning Inspectorate, it should have been flagged earlier</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>in the process. The Applicants reiterated that in any event, the assessment is now available and demonstrates that impacts are minor, if not negligible. The Applicants welcomed comments from FBC and BBC.</p> <p>116) The ExA accepted that the detailed assessment was helpful and noted that FBC and BBC had not yet responded with any comments. The ExA considered that the policy had not initially been complied with and that the assessment should have been provided by October 2024. [Post-hearing note: As above, this point has been expanded upon in S_D6_6, ISH4_11: Applicants response to Hearing Action Points of ISH4 and CAH3 at Deadline 6].</p> <p>117) The Applicants responded that they appear to disagree on the interpretation of the policy. They reiterated that the assessment is now available and noted that there has been significant offshore wind development in the East of England and no indication of tourism impacts in those areas.</p> <p>118) Responding to concerns raised by BBC regarding the potential closure of Starr Gate, the Applicants confirmed that all powers relating to Starr Gate had already been removed from the highway related schedules (3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 6A and 6B) and the public rights of way schedules (5A and 5B) of the dDCO. The Applicants highlighted that they have no powers in the draft DCO to enforce closure of the Starr Gate junction.</p> <p>119) Responding to FBC's reiteration of concerns regarding the timing of document submissions and the local tourism assessment, the Applicants again confirmed the process undertaken in preparing the application. They submitted that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was subject to full scoping and that the draft Environmental Statement was provided at the section 42 consultation stage, allowing all parties to comment. The Applicants noted that a number of additional documents were submitted by the Applicants as part of statutory consultation, including a draft DCO, and that no comments were received either from FBC or LCC about tourism on the draft DCO. [Post-hearing note: BBC did not provide comment either during the section 42 consultation stage].</p> <p>120) The Applicants submitted that the application was accepted by the Planning Inspectorate and that this represented a key juncture. They acknowledged that some of the detailed engagement has occurred only more recently but submitted that this often reflects the reality of complex projects. The Applicants confirmed that they are working hard to engage with stakeholders and that FBC, LCC and BBC are doing the same.</p> <p>121) The Applicants submitted that the volume of information provided is consistent with other large-scale DCOs and NSIPs. They referred to updates to management plans and Environmental Statement chapters and noted significant progress since the hearings held at the end of July.</p> <p>122) The Applicants confirmed that the SoCG with FBC includes agreement that the application documents have considered the most up-to-date plans and policies relevant to socioeconomics.</p> <p>123) The Applicants requested that FBC and BBC provide comments on the Local Tourism Assessment (REP5-142) to enable a response (and any updates) to be submitted at Deadline 6.</p>
6(c)	Item 6 – Socio-economic and land use	<p>124) Following the ExA's request for an update on the Outline Employment and Skills Plan (REP5-083), the Applicants confirmed that they will ensure the position is clarified at Deadline 6, including confirmation that FBC will act as the discharging authority within Requirement 19 of the draft DCO (C1/F09).</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
	c) Employment and Skills Plan	
6(d)	Item 6 – Socio-economic and land use d) Use of Freckleton bridleway	<p>125) The Examining Authority (ExA) requested clarification regarding whether Freckleton bridleway would remain open for pedestrians, cyclists and horses, noting that the Applicants' responses to ExQ2 indicated that the Applicants "anticipated" that it would remain open for such use.</p> <p>126) The Applicants confirmed that the route will be diverted but will remain open while the diversion is in place.</p> <p>127) The ExA queried where this was secured within the application documents.</p> <p>128) The Applicants confirmed that the diversion is secured within the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (REP5a-034), as part of the Code of Construction Practice (REP5-044). The indicative diversion is shown on figures within that management plan.</p> <p>129) In response to a resident's concerns about the future use of the bridleway, the ExA asked the Applicant for further assurance that that the development works would not result in the loss of the bridleway.</p> <p>130) The Applicants explained that the route in question is already a well-used agricultural track. It is not intended for construction access but will be used for construction and operational access to environmental mitigation area. Therefore, the level of use will be significantly lower than current agricultural activity, such as tractor movements.</p> <p>131) In response to Freckleton Parish Council's concerns raised regarding the condition of the bridleway following borehole and trial pit investigations, the Applicants confirmed that they were aware of the concerns raised. Condition surveys were undertaken prior to the Applicants taking access, and based on current investigations, they do not believe the Applicants' activities were responsible for the deterioration. The Applicants noted that the area has experienced poor weather and has historically been used by tractors and cattle. As stated earlier in the hearing, the Applicants have reported the matter to FBC and the local MP. If it is identified that the condition of the bridleway has resulted from the Applicants' activities, they will reinstate it and ensure it is fit for use.</p>
6(e)	Item 6 – Socio-economic and land use e) Wrea Green Equitation Centre	<p>132) The Examining Authority (ExA) noted that the Applicants intend to submit an equestrian noise study at Deadline 6. The ExA queried the delay.</p> <p>133) The Applicants responded that regular engagement has taken place since submission of the application, with a focus on communication and potential impacts to horses. The Applicants confirmed that they understand the concerns raised Wrea Green Equitation Centre and are confident that suitable measures can be put in place to ensure the Centre's activities can continue alongside construction.</p> <p>134) The Applicants confirmed that a meeting had taken place with the Equitation Centre the previous day, during which a proposal for a communications protocol was discussed. While details are still being finalised, the measures will include monthly check ins and a description of any works that are likely to be happening in the vicinity of the centre, including start date and duration of the works. The Applicants will agree a suitable catchment for this notification process. Contact details for Wrea Green will be provided including an agricultural liaison officer and the contractor's details and landowner liaison contact. Mitigations (including ongoing communication) will also be discussed and any specific information that may be required from the contractor in relation to the planned activities will be agreed in advance. The</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>Applicants confirmed that Wrea Green and other specific receptors have been identified in the Outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (REP5-055) and the equestrian noise study will ensure that mitigation measures are applicable and communicated to the riding schools.</p> <p>135) The ExA emphasised that, as a public body, it must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and that it considered that insufficient information had been provided to date to assure itself that this duty can be discharged.</p> <p>136) The Applicants reiterated that they have undertaken regular engagement with Wrea Green Equitation Centre and that the Centre has been specifically identified in the Outline Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (REP5-055) and will be treated as a specific receptor. The Applicants confirmed that early measures are being brought forward and that the Outline Communications Plan (REP5-046) is being developed into a bespoke plan for Wrea Green. The Applicants stated that compound activities can be scheduled and timed to minimise disruption and that they are confident the necessary assurances can be provided.</p> <p>137) The ExA emphasised the need for clear proposals to enable discharge of its Equality Act duty and expressed concern that a further study was being produced at this stage in the examination. The Applicants responded that the equestrian noise study was specifically requested by the ExA in its second round of questions (PD-011). The Applicants highlighted that the study also provides an opportunity for further engagement with Wrea Green Equitation Centre on the specific measures proposed.</p> <p>138) The Applicants confirmed that all relevant matters will be drawn together for Deadline 6 to provide the ExA with assurance. The Applicants acknowledged the importance of the issues raised and confirmed that Wrea Green is aware of the ongoing discussions.</p> <p>139) Following submissions by Wrea Green, reiterating that their primary concern was for advance notice of activities so that sessions could be rescheduled, the Applicants agreed with Wrea Green's comments that the meeting held the day before the hearing had been constructive and that the action now is to develop a bespoke communications plan. This will include regular check-in calls, a description of construction activities, and liaison via an agricultural officer. The plan will be informed by the equestrian noise study.</p> <p>140) The ExA urged the Applicants to provide something substantive in response, noting that without it, the ExA may not be able to discharge its duty under the Equality Act.</p> <p>141) The Applicants confirmed that the equestrian noise study was requested by the ExA and that that is being undertaken. However, they submitted that they consider the communications protocol to be the most appropriate and effective mechanism through which to manage the risks identified at Wrea Green Equitation Centre. The Applicants confirmed that both measures will be progressed and reiterated that communication is central to the next steps.</p>
7(a)	<p>Item 7 – Onshore ecology/biodiversity</p> <p>a) Update on outstanding issues under discussion with</p>	<p>142) The ExA opened the item by referring to the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (REP5-104) and queried whether any specific issues had progressed further since the Deadline 5 submissions.</p> <p>143) The Applicants confirmed that the main outstanding issues relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NE_13, concerning potential impacts to Sand Dunes features of Lytham St Anne's, SSSI: A Hydrological Risk Assessment was submitted at Deadline 3 and updated at Deadline 5 (REP5-104) to incorporate National Vegetation

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
	Natural England relating to Onshore Ecology and Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology	<p>Classification (NVC) surveys at Lytham St Anne's SSSI and the St Annes Old Links Golf Course Biological Heritage Site, and also to incorporate comments raised by NE and the EA. The EA has since confirmed that they are content with the updates made.</p> <p>ii. ii.NE_15, sand dune habitat surveys: The Applicants undertook NVC surveys of Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI and St Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS. The results were included in an update to Volume 3, Annex 3.3: Phase 1 habitat, national vegetation classification and hedgerow survey technical report (REP5-039) at Deadline 5. The Applicants are awaiting NE's comments on this but believe that the relevant information has been provided and anticipate this issue should be resolved.</p> <p>144) The ExA queried when the Applicants are anticipating meeting with NE to discuss this issue.</p> <p>145) The Applicants confirmed that a meeting or written comments had been requested and that they are currently awaiting NE's availability and so it is hoped that this issue should be resolved before Deadline 6.</p> <p>146) The Applicants continued with their status update of outstanding issues. In relation to NE_19 (lack of an in-principle derogation case for impacts to intertidal SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds), the Applicants summarised the joint statement agreed with NE (see Table 3-2 of REP5-124), outlining that subject to the Applicants submitting further information into Examination at Deadline 5, Adverse Effect on Integrity on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar sites can be ruled out. The Applicants updated the outline Ecological Management Plan (oEMP) (REP5-068) at Deadline 5 to reflect this.</p> <p>147) The ExA queried the status of the oEMP (REP5-068), noting that it had not yet been updated to reflect the distinction between alleviation measures and mitigation areas.</p> <p>148) The Applicants confirmed that the alleviation measures are part of the mitigation package and that it remains correct to classify them as mitigation.</p> <p>149) The ExA asked whether the measure is still required for the purposes of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).</p> <p>150) The Applicants confirmed that NE still considers the measures to be necessary as part of the mitigation package to rule out adverse effects on integrity.</p> <p>151) The Applicants added that NE has stated that any remaining concerns regarding impacts to Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar terrestrial waterbirds (NE_20) can be closed out in light of updates to the oEMP and the Information to Support Appropriate Assessment (ISAA) submitted at Deadline 5 (REP5-021).</p> <p>152) [Post-hearing note: The Applicants would also add that in regards to the lack of soil survey data (NE_16) the Applicants and Natural England both agree that this is a point of disagreement between the parties.]</p> <p>153) The ExA referred to NE's request for a commitment to install the cable at a depth of 15 metres (within the clay layer) rather than the currently proposed 10 metres, noting that NE considers this would fully mitigate their concerns. The ExA asked why the Applicants had not made this commitment.</p> <p>154) The Applicants responded that installing the cable at greater depth reduces electrical efficiency. For this reason, the Applicants do not consider it appropriate to commit to 15 metres. The Applicants also went on to state that that other mitigation measures, agreed with the EA, could be adopted to address any concerns in respect of this issue.</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>155) [Post-hearing note: The deeper the burial of cables, the greater the thermal path length and soil volume that heat must pass through before reaching the surface. This will typically result in higher cable operating temperatures, which results in reduced current carrying capacity (efficiency) of the cables. The Applicants have appropriately assessed the constructability of the current approach and have committed to a minimum drill depth of 10m. Any further commitment of this parameter will be informed by the appointed contractor during detailed design.]</p> <p>156) The ExA asked how the Applicants intend to progress the issue with NE.</p> <p>157) The Applicants confirmed that they will endeavour to progress this issue with NE whilst noting that their position has been made clear and acknowledging that it is possible that agreement may not be reached by the end of the examination.</p> <p>158) The ExA requested an update on sand lizard mitigation. Responding to FBC's comments on the Outline Sand Lizard Mitigation Plan (REP5-112), the Applicants noted that they had received further comments from FBC on Friday. The Applicants confirmed that the sand lizard mitigation package will be reviewed and discussed with FBC, with an updated Outline Sand Lizard Mitigation Plan (S_D4_14/F03) to be submitted at Deadline 6.</p> <p>159) The Applicants added that clarification on any points raised can be provided as part of the Natural England EPS licence application. They emphasised that they are not seeking to downplay the high ecological value of the sand lizard population and are aware of its sensitivity. Comments on the Technical Note have been taken on board and this document will be updated at D6. Regarding fencing, the Applicants remain open to discussion but noted concerns that fencing may pose additional disturbance risks to sand lizard habitats due to the installation process and maintenance requirements to remove accumulate of wind-blown sand.</p> <p>160) The ExA requested that parties continue discussions outside of the hearing and provide an updated position on sand lizard mitigation at the next deadline. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants and FBC have engaged further on this issue and provided an update position (see Applicants' Response to Hearing Action Points of ISH4 and CAH3 (S_D6_6) in satisfaction of ISH4_9.]</p>
7(b)	<p>Item 7 – Onshore ecology/biodiversity</p> <p>b) Peat compensation strategy for worse-case scenario</p>	<p>161) The ExA referred to Commitment 101 and requested an update from the Applicants.</p> <p>162) The Applicants confirmed that they have overlaid the Order Limits onto the new peat map published by Natural England (NE). This mapping will be submitted at Deadline 6. The updated mapping shows that peat covers approximately 2.91% of the overall Order Limits, primarily around the Local Nature Reserve and just north of Higher Ballam. The Applicants confirmed that the area north of Higher Ballam has been surveyed and peat has been recorded. Further clarification will be provided at Deadline 6 regarding how the mitigation hierarchy will be applied to peat within the Outline Soil Management Plan (J1.7/F04).</p> <p>163) The ExA noted that Lancashire County Council (LCC) had previously indicated they were not fully satisfied with Commitment 101.</p> <p>164) The Applicants responded that their position is that peat management is appropriately secured through the Outline Soil Management Plan (REP5-059) and the Code of Construction Practice (REP5-044). Therefore, a separate requirement within the DCO is not considered necessary.</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>165) The ExA asked whether the Applicants were confident that there are no outstanding issues in relation to peat.</p> <p>166) The Applicants responded that a requirement should only be imposed where necessary. The measures set out and secured are considered entirely appropriate for the level of peat that may be encountered and how it will be managed.</p> <p>167) The ExA reiterated their concerns around other parties' disagreement with the Applicants' position on peat management.</p> <p>168) The Applicants clarified that there may be a misunderstanding regarding the classification of the land. The majority of the areas are cultivated agricultural land, which presents a different scenario. Within the mitigation hierarchy, the mapping shows a very low percentage of potential peat presence. The Outline Soil Management Plan (REP5-059) secures entirely appropriate peat management measures. A compensation package is not required due to the limited extent of peat resources.</p> <p>169) The Applicants explained that the detailed design of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) would be informed by GI data, including borehole surveys, to identify geological conditions such as peat lenses. This information would guide the HDD profile and entry/exit points, which can be adjusted within the Development Consent Order corridor limits. The Applicants confirmed that risks - including those associated with peat and unexploded ordnance (UXO) - are assessed in advance. UXO risk is evaluated through a dedicated report, with mitigation based on the likelihood of encountering munitions. The Applicants noted that UXO typically does not penetrate to the depth of the HDD drill path, with higher risk concentrated at entry and exit points. The Applicants emphasised that these risks are actively assessed to inform appropriate mitigation measures prior to any HDD. [Post hearing note: The Applicants have overlaid the Order Limits onto the updated peat mapping published by Natural England and will submit this at Deadline 6 (see Appendix 2.1 of S_D6_6) in satisfaction of hearing action point ISH4_7. The Applicants have also reviewed and updated the Outline Soil Management Plan to include a peat mitigation hierarchy (see J1.7/F04) in satisfaction of hearing action point ISH4_8.]</p>
7(c)	<p>Item 7 – Onshore ecology/biodiversity</p> <p>c) Onshore Biodiversity benefits Statement and Biodiversity Benefit Supporting Statement</p>	<p>170) The ExA referred to Table 5 of the Biodiversity Benefit Supporting Statement (REP5-145) and asked the Applicants to briefly explain the latest strategy and approach to optionality in relation to biodiversity net gain (BNG).</p> <p>171) The Applicants explained that a hierarchy had been introduced into the Biodiversity Benefit Supporting Statement (REP5-145) to ensure delivery of a minimum of 10% biodiversity benefit. The Applicants confirmed that while they are confident in delivering BNG at Lea Marsh Fields, this has not yet been confirmed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) or BAE. The hierarchy therefore ensures that the commitment to a minimum of 10% biodiversity benefit is maintained regardless of whether delivery occurs at Lea Marsh specifically. The Applicants noted that their preference was to deliver local biodiversity benefit and is why the hierarchy was introduced.</p> <p>172) The Applicants proceeded to outline how the mitigation hierarchy would be applied:</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>i. Option 1 is the Applicants' preferred approach, involving full delivery at Lea Marsh Fields. This is considered the best option in terms of meeting policy requirements under NPS EN-1 and EN-5 and delivering the highest biodiversity benefit.</p> <p>ii. Option 2 commits to delivering only 10% biodiversity benefit at Lea Marsh, using a reduced footprint. This allows flexibility to reduce potential bird strike risk and would mean that compulsory acquisition powers would not be needed for the full area. The difference would be delivered in consultation with stakeholders and landowners to maximise biodiversity benefit in the area.</p> <p>iii. Option 3 involves funding biodiversity projects within the local area, should delivery at Lea Marsh not be achievable. This would address the shortfall between what can be delivered at the substation site and the 10% biodiversity benefit target.</p> <p>iv. Option 4, considered a last resort, would involve meeting any remaining biodiversity benefit requirement through biodiversity credits.</p> <p>173) The Applicants added that their approach had evolved since the previous hearings, reflecting feedback received and further consideration of how biodiversity benefit would be secured. They referred to paragraph 7.2.1.1 of the Biodiversity Benefit Supporting Statement submitted at Deadline 5 (REP5-145), noting that Requirement 26 - originally submitted at Deadline 5 on a without prejudice basis - had been reviewed and revised alongside the associated compulsory acquisition articles. The Applicants confirmed that this revised mechanism would secure biodiversity benefit through a formal plan, replacing the previous Biodiversity Benefit Supporting Statement (REP5-145). The Applicants confirmed that the updated requirement would no longer be without prejudice but form part of the dDCO.</p> <p>174) The Applicants indicated their willingness to submit the revised material ahead of further discussion at the next hearing session in respect of the Compulsory Acquisition of land for this purpose.</p> <p>175) The ExA confirmed that this would be discussed further during the DCO item of the hearing.</p> <p>176) The Applicants confirmed they are happy to meet with FBC to further discuss their request for clarification as to whether the 10% commitment was predicated on permanent habitat losses and/or temporary losses and their concerns regarding the relationship between certain key documents and the timing of the biodiversity benefit commitment. They acknowledged that the Outline Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (REP5-106), Biodiversity Benefit Statement (REP5-074), Outline Landscape Management Plan (REP5-062) and Outline Ecological Management Plan (REP5-068) all need to be aligned and interact effectively. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants have reviewed and updated the aforementioned documents where relevant to ensure they align effectively as they relate to the commitments within the Outline Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (S_D3_8) in satisfaction of ISH4_10.]</p> <p>177) The Applicants clarified that biodiversity benefit is not being offered in relation to land taken temporarily. The Applicants emphasised that there is currently no statutory requirement for BNG at present, and that the Defra approach is not yet confirmed. Accordingly, the Applicants' commitment relates to permanent loss only.</p> <p>178) Following Newton-with-Clifton Parish Council and a member of the public's concerns raised regarding Option 3 outlined above, the Applicants responded that Option 3 was introduced to ensure local biodiversity projects were</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>considered. Accordingly, if delivery at Lea Marsh fields is not possible, the intention is to work with local projects to maximise biodiversity benefit in the area. The Applicants emphasised that this approach is in keeping with the approach taken with local planning authorities in other projects.</p> <p>179) The Applicants clarified that no irreplaceable habitats would be lost as a result of the scheme. They explained that the BNG calculation undertaken for the whole Order Limits was intended to provide an indicative sense of potential habitat impacts. However, the DEFRA metric calculator requires inclusion of all habitats within the Order Limits boundary - such as sand dunes at the landfall - even where no physical impact is anticipated due to the use of trenchless crossing techniques. The Applicants emphasised that this inclusion is a function of how the metric operates, not an indication of actual habitat loss.</p> <p>180) Responding to a resident's objection to further land acquisition for biodiversity benefit, the Applicants acknowledged that BNG is a complex and evolving area. They emphasised that biodiversity benefit is not mitigation and is not a statutory requirement. It is being offered voluntarily. Full mitigation is already being provided, and the mitigation hierarchy has been fully considered. Where irreplaceable habitat exists, such as the sand dunes, trenchless techniques are being used to avoid impact.</p> <p>181) The Applicants confirmed that a revised package has been put forward to the examination and highlighted that they understood the importance of balancing additional land acquisition for biodiversity benefit against what is necessary for mitigation.</p> <p>182) The ExA queried the status of Requirement 26 and noted that further information is needed.</p> <p>183) The Applicants confirmed that the revised drafting would be circulated to any interested parties. [Post-hearing note: The Applicants confirmed that the revised drafting of Requirement 26 has been circulated to the relevant parties, being SRBC, FBC, BBC, PCC and Newton-with-Clifton Parish Council, and the Examining Authority.]</p>
7(d)	<p>Item 7 – Onshore ecology/biodiversity</p> <p>d) Outline Ecological Management Plan</p>	<p>184) The ExA requested updates from the Applicants and FBC regarding the updates made to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (REP5-068) at Deadline 5.</p> <p>185) The Applicants acknowledged disturbance impacts at Fairhaven Saltmarsh and reiterated that high bird activity at the landfall site had been recorded. To reduce disturbance and encourage birds to remain at their designated roost sites, the Applicants committed at Deadline 5 to carrying out a recreational disturbance study. This study will inform the detailed ecological management plan, including warden placement, outreach measures, and staffing requirements. NE has confirmed its satisfaction with this approach.</p> <p>186) Regarding Lytham Moss, the Applicants clarified that geese and swans feed within the area of impact but do not roost there. Mitigation will be delivered at Lytham Moss, where feeding activity is concentrated. The Applicants explained that the area of mitigation does not need to match the area lost, as food supply will be increased to control carrying capacity.</p> <p>187) With respect to Fairhaven Saltmarsh, the Applicants explained that the focus is on reducing disturbance rather than accommodating additional birds. The Applicants added that waders and wildfowl are not evenly distributed across the</p>

ID	Agenda Item	Notes
		<p>cable corridor, with concentrations around Lytham Moss and Newton-with-Scales, and that mitigation has been targeted accordingly.</p> <p>188) The Applicants confirmed that an updated wildlife attractants risk assessment will be submitted at Deadline 6. It was added that all mitigation areas have been assessed and are acceptable in respect of bird strike risk.</p> <p>189) The Applicants stated that agreement has been reached with BAOL regarding the bird strike risk assessment. Agreement has also been reached with the MOD in relation to Fairhaven Saltmarsh. The Applicants are working through the process to ensure both mitigation areas can be adopted.</p> <p>190) The Applicants confirmed that the mitigation areas have been developed in consultation with NE, who are content with the proposals. The Applicants anticipate NE will sign off the mitigation areas at Deadline 6.</p> <p>191) Responding to residents' concerns around the movement of geese to the mitigation area, the Applicants responded that it is very much expected that geese will respond to the mitigation measures, and that this is evidenced by current feeding behaviour in the area. The Applicants emphasised that is a standard and commonly accepted mitigation approach for pink-footed geese. The Applicants explained that the geese come to the area for the winter, are very selective about roosting sites, roosting generally on the saltmarsh and intertidal areas away from potential predators at night, and forage typically within a 20km radius during the day, choosing intensively farmed agricultural land, such as that at Lytham Moss.</p> <p>192) The Applicants noted that geese feeding mitigation has been successfully implemented in the area previously, including for the M55 and Queensway developments. The Applicants reiterated their confidence in the proposed measures.</p> <p>193) Responding to a resident's concerns regarding the location of the substation sites, the Applicants confirmed that a thorough desktop assessment had been undertaken in relation to the substation sites. They noted that NE's mapping does not identify the sites as functionally linked land, and survey data collected over 14 surveys across two years showed no evidence of significant goose activity. The Applicants concluded that the substation sites are not functionally linked for geese.</p> <p>194) Responding to further issues raised by members of the public regarding the impacts of the development on geese, including reference to video footage showing large flocks of geese flying over the substation area, the Applicants acknowledged that geese regularly fly over and roost in the salt marshes of the estuary, including Fairhaven Saltmarsh. They confirmed that the area regularly supports 20,000-30,000 pink-footed geese over winter, with numbers fluctuating annually.</p>