

The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
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Your ref:
Our ref: CCJR
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Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer

We are writing on behalf of Lancashire County Council, Fylde Council and Wyre Council, regarding the proposed Morgan, Morecambe and Mooir Vannin Offshore Windfarm projects and their associated onshore transmission infrastructure.

The councils support offshore wind and recognise its importance in delivering energy security. There is, however, a strong local expectation that investment of this scale should also deliver clear economic benefits in the areas affected, including employment, skills and supply-chain opportunities.

The statutory planning process is focused on determining whether individual schemes are acceptable in planning terms. It provides limited scope to consider whether different approaches to onshore connections could deliver greater economic benefit over the longer term. As a result, decisions may be taken that meet immediate project requirements but do not fully reflect wider economic considerations.

Through the Lancashire Combined County Authority, partners have agreed the Lancashire Growth Plan, which sets out how major infrastructure investment can support long term economic growth across the county and strengthen existing industrial and employment areas. The scale of offshore wind investment expected in the Irish Sea presents an opportunity in this context, particularly if decisions on onshore connections and related infrastructure are taken with a longer term, strategic view. This could support enabling infrastructure to unlock Hillhouse Enterprise Zone, an anchor Strategic Site within the Growth Plan for advance engineering and manufacturing.

For this reason, the three councils intend to commission a light-touch economic review, compliant with the Green Book, of the onshore cable connection options for the Morgan, Morecambe and Mooir Vannin projects. The review will focus on the economic implications of different options and is not intended to revisit detailed technical design or delay current planning decisions.

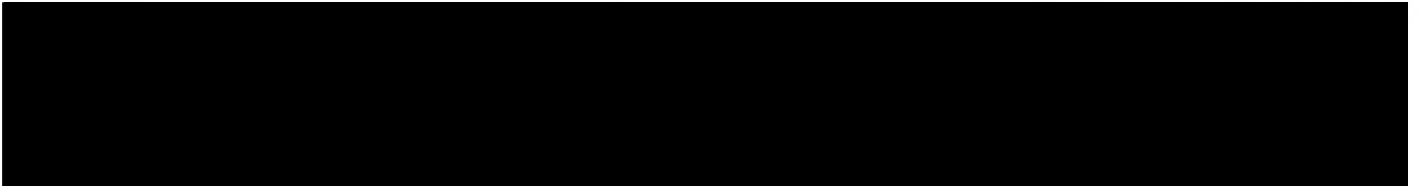
This is particularly relevant given the likelihood of further offshore wind projects coming forward in the Irish Sea. Decisions taken now on onshore connections will have a bearing on how effectively future projects support economic growth and investment.



Given the scale of public and private investment involved, we consider it important that government has a clear understanding of the economic implications of different connection approaches before future decisions are taken. We would therefore welcome your opinion on the value of this investment and your support for this work proceeding alongside the current planning process.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,




Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs,
Environment & Communities
Lancashire County Council


Leader of Fylde Council


Leader of Wyre Council

