From: Mark McAllister <[redacted]fgem.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 July 2026 10:36
To: [redacted]@energysecurity.gov.uk>
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Subject: Morecambe Bay Wind Farms

OFFICIAL

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As I mentioned, I visited two constituencies in the Blackpool region on Friday. There is currently a planning application for the Morgan and Morecambe wind farms to have landfall in the Fylde constituency of Andrew Snowden (Con). There is strong opposition to this plan in the constituency. Meanwhile, in the neighbouring Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency of Lorraine Beavers (Lab), they are very keen to host the landfall of the wind farms as the catalyst for the redevelopment of the Hillhouse brownfield site. Both parties, contend that this latter route would save £500 million. Peter Bingham accompanied me and could see the feasibility of the alternative route.

I believe that there is potential here to address a number of government priorities, not least growth and regional development. It also highlights how difficult it is to consider all of these issues when planning our new energy system.

Dan Parks, assistant to Lorraine Beavers, has prepared a briefing note for you. I have copied Dan on this email since he would be a good point of contact for follow up questions of detail.

Regards,

Mark McAllister

Chair

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Opportunities for place-based economic growth at Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone, Thornton, Lancashire

Three proposed windfarms in the Irish Sea are presently intended to connect to the National Grid at Penwortham substation, just west of Preston – namely, Morgan, Morecambe, and Mooir Vannin. The former two projects are slated to connect in the early-2030s, and the latter project in the mid-2030s.

The choice of Penwortham as the connection point for these three projects came about as a result of NESO's (and previously National Grid ESO's) Holistic Network Design work. The choice of Penwortham represents a potentially significant missed opportunity.

Some thirteen miles north-west of Penwortham is the Stanah substation, and the adjacent Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone (HTEZ) to its immediate north. For the three proposed windfarms to connect into a new substation at Stanah – sited on HTEZ – would have significant economic, budgetary, and operational benefits, relative to the proposed connection at Penwortham. These advantages are enhanced when one considers the extent of offshore wind development expected in the Irish Sea beyond these three projects.

This note outlines those benefits as concisely as possible. Figures are taken from the Green Book-compliant assessment that was commissioned by Lancashire County Council, Wyre Council, and Fylde Council.

In their totality, these benefits represent a significant opportunity to reindustrialise a part of Lancashire in desperate need of investment. The government has repeatedly and explicitly made clear that it expects clean energy projects to deliver tangible local benefits in terms of jobs and investment.

The urgency of this matter is heightened due to the decision on the DCO for the Morgan and Morecambe transmission assets being due by 14th September – a deadline which has already been extended.

Budgetary benefits

- The Stanah alternative could save up to £520 million in infrastructure costs, via a significantly shorter connection route.
- These savings would support national ambitions to cut costs eventually borne by consumers, aligning with the central priority to reduce household energy bills.
- The cost-savings also improve the viability of the project from a developer perspective – key given that the developer for the Morgan windfarm pulled out six months ago.

Operational benefits

- A new Stanah substation would sit 5km inland, compared to Penwortham's location 30km inland, offering a considerably simpler civil engineering project.

- A shorter connection route would streamline delivery, reducing project timescales and therefore assisting the government's policy to deliver these projects as quickly as possible.
- The proposed connection to Stanah would face much less opposition from residents and community stakeholders, with the proposed Penwortham connection prompting significant controversy. Indeed, the Stanah option would be actively welcomed by the local community.

Economic benefits

- It has the potential to unlock 1,100 jobs – or more if the substation is used as a catalyst for the associated projects in and around HTEZ which rely upon new energy infrastructure.
- A new substation at Stanah would allow HTEZ to once-again be a viable industrial site, attracting good employers and bringing significant economic value to an area desperately in need of it.
- It could mean an extra £1.7 billion in local economic value over the period 2030 to 2040. This would represent an 8.6% increase in the size of the local economy.

Conclusion

A new substation at Stanah, offering a connection for three proposed windfarms, is supported by both the local authority and the local Member of Parliament. However, this is being prevented in favour of a connection to Penwortham that has attracted significant political and community opposition, and would be delivered at much greater expense.

There are significant potential cost-savings and an opportunity to revitalise an industrial asset in an area which desperately needs it. These benefits directly align with the Government's priorities and ambitions, especially in the north-west of England.