



**Answers to Examining Authority's Written
Questions Received 17th June 2025**

**Morgan & Morecambe Transmission Cables
Examination**

IP Reference-20053931

July 2025

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See separate document

1. Introduction and Approach

- 1.1.1 Fylde Council [FBC] is a statutory consultee and Interested Party for the proposed Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Cables proposal.
- 1.1.2 This Answers to Questions Report is prepared in response to the Examining Authority's [ExA] written questions issued on 17 June 2025.
- 1.1.3 In preparing this report in accordance with Section 60(3) of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended), FBC has shown due regard to relevant guidance, including the 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities' published by the Planning Inspectorate on 08 August 2024 (updated 16 December 2024).
- 1.1.4 In providing answers, FBC has been mindful of its role within this Examination. Answers have been provided to all questions directed at FBC, as well as in response to other questions for which FBC considers that voluntary provision of a response is appropriate and relevant.
- 1.1.5 In deciding which other questions to provide answers to, officers have been steered by its Consultative Group of elected members, as well as the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (incorporating Partial Review) [FLP] and other material matters and guidance.
- 1.1.6 FBC continues to be concerned about the inadequacy of the Environmental Statement [ES] its incompleteness and its inconsistencies. It is concerning to see at this advanced stage within the Examination, that information is still being requested and that negotiations between the applicant and several key stakeholders appear to be faltering with a failure to adequately respond to questions raised by FBC and other interested parties.
- 1.1.7 For clarity, FBC considers the ES as presented has not assessed full impacts and reasonable alternatives and has not engaged fully with the EIA Regulations and the 2017 Wildlife and Habitat Act.
- 1.1.8 FBC reserves its position on these matters and requests the Examining Authority require further information from the applicants to ensure the nature and extent of all impacts can be properly assessed and understood. We also request that appropriate opportunity and reasonable time is given for FBC and other parties to respond to any further information as and when it is supplied by the applicants throughout this process.
- 1.1.9 This report has in part been informed by consultation responses from council officers and other advisory bodies and individuals. The consultation requests, reviews of responses and creation of this report is the work of the officers of Fylde Council and no part of this process has been generated by AI.

2. Answers

2.1 Q1.1.5 b

- 2.1.1 The proposed core working hours (07:00–19:00, Monday to Saturday, with a 1-hour mobilisation period before and after) are excessive, in and close to residential areas. Harmful impacts would arise from noise, vibration, and light nuisance, especially during the early morning, late evening and weekend periods.
- 2.1.2 The standard restrictions controlled by conditions attached to planning permission issued by FBC restrict construction hours to 08:00–18:00 (Monday–Friday) and 08:00–13:00 (Saturday), with no works on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 2.1.3 However, any impacts would be exacerbated by the prolonged duration and relatively high intensity of the proposed works. Therefore, FBC would expect greater restriction in particularly sensitive areas and would not accept anything more permissive than its standard restrictions for all other areas.
- 2.1.4 Based on proximity, areas particularly sensitive to construction and mobilisation-related disturbance include:
- The care home in the Dunes area;
 - Residential properties near North Beach car park (temporary compound);
 - Homes adjacent to Blackpool Road playing fields;
 - Residential areas near the proposed substations; and
 - Locations along the main HGV/construction access routes due to potential cumulative impacts.

2.2 Q1.1.5 c

- 2.2.1 It is reasonable to assume that the likely impacts arising from onshore works will differ to offshore works. Therefore, the more restrictive hours set out in response to Q1.1.5b are more appropriate. FBC considers that it would cause significant harm to residential amenity if works from 07:00 were permitted six days a week for up to 11 years.
- 2.2.2 If the applicant can put forward a greater level of detail in terms of phasing-when and where operations are likely to take place it is possible to secure such details through the DCO where appropriate, FBC could consider more permissive hours. However, as it stands these impacts are considered substantial.

2.3 1.1.12

- 2.3.1 FBC employs a single officer who is responsible for emergency planning, business continuity and corporate risk management across its entire organisation. This level of resourcing is appropriate for Local Authority such as FBC but this capacity significantly constrains the Council's ability to lead or support developer-led emergency planning activity beyond statutory minimums, particularly for a scheme of this scale.
- 2.3.2 In this context, the primary responsibility for emergency preparedness should rest with the applicants, in consultation with the Lancashire Resilience Forum [LRF] and/or its successor body to serve as the multi-agency coordinating body for emergency preparedness across the sub-region and should be funded appropriately by the applicants through a Section 106 mechanism.

- 2.3.3 In order to ensure that the Outline Code of Construction Practice [App-193] and any subsequent management plans are sufficiently robust, FBC would expect the applicants to:
- Liaise directly with the LRF regarding risk assessments, emergency response coordination, and scenario planning;
 - Share a final, site-specific Emergency Response Plan with both the LRF and Local Authority Partners prior to the commencement of works;
 - Ensure that any construction-related emergency measures are embedded into contractor management, site induction and management processes.
- 2.3.4 Should FBC be required to engage in detailed reviews or exercises, this would need to be formally resourced via a Section 106 agreement or similar funding mechanism to avoid detriment to the Council's statutory responsibilities and existing emergency arrangements.
- 2.3.5 FBC raised the need for the applicant to liaise with the LRF in Section 14.3.1 of the FBC Local Impact Report [LIR] [REP1-078], submitted at Deadline 1 on 20 May 2025. FBC again requested that the applicant liaise with the LRF during an online meeting held on 20/06/2025.

2.4 Q1.1.13

- 2.4.1 FBC continues to liaise with the applicants to progress the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground [SoCG]. Most recently, a series of topic specific meetings have been arranged, with some having taken place. These meetings have been specifically arranged with the preparation of the SoCG in mind.
- 2.4.2 FBC and its consultees consider that there is still a significant amount of information and clarification required to be able to properly understand and assess the likely impacts of the proposed development. At this stage, FBC will not be submitting or signing up to a draft SoCG but is working towards a draft document being available for Deadline 4.
- 2.4.3 FBC notes that currently, with regards to the SoCG, there has been no liaison with the Council as landowner. The applicants have previously engaged with the Council and landowner separately and FBC is of the opinion that a separate SoCG should also be well advanced.

2.5 Q1.2.3

- 2.5.1 FBC acknowledges that whilst there is no policy requirement for a sequential test for Green Belt development, the lack of consideration of alternative non-Green Belt options are relevant when attributing weight to assess whether very special circumstances exist.
- 2.5.2 For example, if the applicants have failed to show that alternative non-Green Belt sites could not have been used, then the need (in terms of the benefit) is less likely to outweigh the Green Belt and other harm, as it could have been located on a non-Green Belt site.
- 2.5.3 The information below relates to relevant case law which supports the assertion that the applicant has not properly considered and justified the Green Belt location and impacts.
- 2.5.4 The existence of an alternative site for a particular development may be a material consideration. In [Trusthouse Forte Hotels Ltd. v Secretary of State for the Environment \(1986\) 53 P. & C.R. 293](#), Simon Brown J., as he then was, stated five basic principles (at pp.299 and 300), including '(1) ... [the] fact that other land exists ... upon which the development would be yet more acceptable for planning purposes would not justify the refusal of planning permission upon the application site; (2) [where], however, there are clear planning objections

to development upon a particular site then it may well be relevant and indeed necessary to consider whether there is a more appropriate alternative site elsewhere. ... ; (3) [instances] of this type of case are developments, whether of national or regional importance, such as airports, ... coalmining, petrochemical plants, nuclear power stations and gypsy encampments ... ; (4) [in] contrast to the situations envisaged above are cases where development permission is being sought for dwelling houses, offices ... ; [and] (5) [there] may be cases where, even although they contain the characteristics referred to above, nevertheless it could properly be regarded as unnecessary to go into questions of comparability[, and this] would be so particularly if the environmental impact was relatively slight and the planning objections were not especially strong ...'.

- 2.5.5 Further, according to Simon Brown J, the extent to which it will be for the developer to establish the need for his proposed development on the application or appeal site rather than for an objector to establish that such need can and should be met will vary.
- 2.5.6 In this example, where the relevant Green Belt policy in the development plan expressly provided the need for a motel on the site proposed, not merely in the area generally, had to be established in each case, the burden lay squarely on the developer.
- 2.5.7 In [R. \(on the application of J. \(A Child\)\) v North Warwickshire Borough Council \(sub nom . R. \(on the application of Scott Jones\) v North Warwickshire Borough Council\) \[2001\] P.L.C.R. 31](#), Laws L.J., having reviewed the authorities, including Trusthouse Forte Hotels, said (at paragraph 30 of his judgment), that 'all these materials broadly point to a general proposition, which is that consideration of alternative sites would only be relevant to a planning application in exceptional circumstances', and that, generally, '... such circumstances will particularly arise where the proposed development, though desirable in itself, involves on the site proposed such conspicuous adverse effects that the possibility of an alternative site lacking such drawbacks necessarily itself becomes, in the mind of a reasonable local authority, a relevant planning consideration upon the application in question' (see also the judgment of Sales L.J. in [R. \(on the application of Luton Borough Council\) v Central Bedfordshire Council \[2015\] EWCA Civ 537](#), at paragraph 71, citing Carnwath L.J.'s judgment in Derbyshire Dales District Council).
- 2.5.8 In summary, FBC considers that it is reasonable to assert that adverse effects would arise because of the proposed development, specifically in terms of the impact of the substations upon the Green Belt. The impact would not be slight, and the objections are strong.
- 2.5.9 Furthermore, Green Belt policy clearly states that such development should be considered inappropriate. On this basis, FBC considers that the applicants should be required to establish the lack of suitable alternative sites and through that, the need for the development on the proposed site.
- 2.5.10 Furthermore, as there would be two separate substations, built and operated separately, the applicants must assess these matters separately and in-combination, giving regard to scenarios where alternative sites exist for either one or both substations.

2.6 Q1.3.1 b

- 2.6.1 FBC has previously identified other current planning applications, most recently in section 16.3.2 of its LIR [REP1-078]. At the ExA request on the site visits this is a further update for those applications.

- 2.6.2 The Construction Traffic Management Plans [CTMP] submitted by the applicants for both applications form part of the publicly available information and are referred to below. These can be viewed at <https://pa.fylde.gov.uk/> and inputting application numbers 24/0414 and 24/0541 respectively.
- 2.6.3 In summary application reference 24/0414 is a live application for a 49.9MW solar farm at Clifton Marsh Farm in Newton with Clifton, covering 69ha.
- 2.6.4 Section three of the outline CTMP estimates that construction will be carried out over a nine-month period. Construction access is proposed to be from the east via M55 (J2)/ A582 (Edith Rigby Way)/ A583/ A584/ SUEZ Recycling and Recovery private access road. HGV movements are estimated to comprise 3,816 two-way movements over the nine-month period, with a peak of 794 per month for the first three months.
- 2.6.5 At the time of this report, LCC Highways have requested additional information including suitability of the junction on the A584 and use of same junction by abnormal loads, rights to use the SUEZ access road from the A584 and frequency of trips. LCC Highways have not provided details of any consideration of cumulative impacts with Morgan & Morecambe. However, the FBC case officer has requested an updated CTMP to include consideration of all cumulative impacts.
- 2.6.6 Application reference 24/0541 is a live application for a 28MW solar farm at land to west of Parrox Lane in Newton with Clifton, covering 32ha. The associated CTMP estimates that construction will be carried out over a six-month period. Construction access is proposed to be from the west of the site via the M55 (J3)/ A585/ A583/ Kirkham Road/ Lower Lane and following an identical route back to the M55. The initial proposal was to use Parrox Lane but this was amended following objection from LCC Highways. HGV movements are estimated to comprise a total of 332 two-way movements over the six-month period, with a peak of 10 per day in the early stages of development.
- 2.6.7 At the time of this report, LCC Highways have been reconsulted, with the FBC case officer requesting that the consider cumulative impacts with this proposed development.

2.7 Q1.3.2

- 2.7.1 FBC acknowledges that the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 apply but substantively they require the same thing, where Reg 14(3)(b) of the 2017 regulations has the same wording as the referenced Reg 18(4)(b) of the EIA Regs. FBC acknowledges this error and would amend the reference in its submission [REP2-057] to Reg 14(3)(b) but otherwise maintains its position.

2.8 Q2.1.6

- 2.8.1 FBC requests that specific references should be provided for the DCOs which are identified as having been applied for in Article 2. which would usually be set out in the definitions section.

2.9 Q2.3.3

- 2.9.1 FBC has submitted representations in this regard, notably within its LIR [REP1-078].

2.10 Q2.4.1

- 2.10.1 FBC requests that references to eight weeks within all sections of Schedule 12 [REP2-004] be amended to ten weeks. FBC considers that this is justified on the basis that some requirements are substantial, for example Schedule 2A requirement 5 includes detailed design matters, with the consideration of such associated details likely requiring more than eight weeks.
- 2.10.2 FBC considers this request is reasonable, on the basis that Schedule 12 includes a deemed discharge clause which should provide the applicants the reassurance and certainty they could reasonably require.
- 2.10.3 FBC requests that the reference to 10 days within part 4 of Schedule 12 be amended to 25 days. FBC notes that some statutory consultees reserve the right to response only within 21 days of consultation and that key consultees for this application, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, operate on this basis.
- 2.10.4 FBC requests that fees are specified within part 6 of Schedule 12, noting that some other recently made DCOs include the same, for example for Heckington Fen Solar Park [EN010123]. This should include a fee of £2,578 for the first application to discharge each requirement and a fee of £588 for each subsequent application for the same.

2.11 Q2.1.17

- 2.11.1 FBC notes that under statutory undertakings, there is exemption for any tree works application, instead with a requirement to inform the local authority that work is being carried out near to or upon protected trees.
- 2.11.2 FBC considers that the article is not necessary, instead there should be a provision for the applicant to revisit the situation in consultation prior any tree work or removal. Projects of this scale will extend over longer periods of time and the situation/circumstances regarding protected trees may well change and FBC may require some input.
- 2.11.3 There should also be a provision to require that all arboricultural works carried out along the transmission route are only undertaken by suitably qualified arboricultural professional and to the standards set out in BS3998:2010.

2.12 Q3.1.1

- 2.12.1 FBC requires that the Outline Dust Management Plan [APP-195] be expanded upon to specifically enable the relevant responsible authority to require action to be taken with regards to dust management and mitigation. As drafted, the interpretation could be that the final say on such matters lies solely with the applicants.

2.13 Q3.1.2

- 2.13.1 Whilst directed at the applicants, FBC considers it appropriate to provide a response to this question.
- 2.13.2 FBC is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and contributes to multi agency emergency preparedness and response through its active role in the Lancashire Resilience Forum [LRF]. This includes participation in risk assessment processes, emergency planning groups, and incident response coordination.

- 2.13.3 To date, FBC has not been approached directly by the Applicant regarding liaison with emergency services in the context of this proposed development. While FBC is supportive of engagement on emergency preparedness, it is important to highlight that resourcing constraints limit the extent of our direct involvement in ongoing liaison or coordination activities.
- 2.13.4 The primary responsibility for engaging with the emergency services rests with the applicants and it is suggested that formal engagement should take place via the LRF and its thematic groups (e.g. Risk, MACPOL, and Recovery), and the sharing of plans, access routes, constraints, and hazard-specific information in advance of site mobilisation.
- 2.13.5 FBC recommends that the applicants prepare and maintains an Emergency Services Liaison and Coordination Plan, which should: set out roles and responsibilities across agencies; confirm engagement with the emergency services, including Fire and Rescue, Police, NHS Trusts, and NWAS; and, be updated in response to any material changes in construction activity or risk.
- 2.13.6 Should facilitation from FBC be required beyond statutory minimums, a resourced agreement would be necessary to avoid overburdening existing capacity and to ensure robust preparedness and community protection.

2.14 Q3.1.3

- 2.14.1 FBC considers the use of 2020–2021 data as an air quality baseline inappropriate due to pandemic-related anomalies (e.g., significantly reduced traffic and NOx levels). Although air quality in the borough is generally good, data from those years do not reflect typical conditions and may underestimate the project's potential impact.
- 2.14.2 However, it is noted that the Air Quality chapter [APP-121] sets out that the approach is conservative, stating in sections 9.6.1.10-12 that the highest background readings have been taken.
- 2.14.3 FBC therefore queries whether additional data points from 2017 and 2018 should have been included to account for the fact that the data from 2020 and 2021 has been effectively excluded. The assessment methodology on section 9.10 does not account for these matters.

2.15 Q3.1.4

- 2.15.1 FBC also queries the appropriateness of the use of one year of data, as per parts 'a' and 'b' of this question, directed at the applicants. FBC reserves the right to review this answer and provide further comments.

2.16 Q6.1.6

- 2.16.1 FBC notes the applicants' proposed use of trenchless technology to cross beneath the Lytham St Anne's dune system. Whilst this is considered to be the most appropriate method to avoid direct physical disturbance of these highly sensitive habitats, this is an extremely sensitive location.
- 2.16.2 The possibility of "unforeseen circumstances" (e.g. failure or collapse of boreholes, hydrofracture, or unforeseen ground conditions and disturbance) could, in a worst-case scenario, result in indirect or even direct impacts on the dune habitats or protected species

such as sand lizards. While these occurrences are uncommon, these are not “unforeseen”, and risk cannot be discounted and therefore additional assurances and safeguards are necessary.

2.16.3 FBC considers that the potential consequences of “unforeseen circumstances” includes but is not limited to:

- Ground subsidence or sinkholes within or near the dune system;
- Accidental release of drilling fluids (e.g. bentonite) to surface, potentially impacting flora and invertebrates;
- HGV use along sand winning track causing potential vibration disturbance (collapse of nesting borrows). Surveys identified that this is nesting hotspots (south facing slope of track. Therefore phasing restrictions will be key to manage the impact;
- Unexpected requirement for open-cut works if trenchless techniques fail;
- Prolonged site presence or construction activities that increase human or machinery disturbance; and,
- Need for emergency access or remediation works within the SSSI, leading to unplanned impacts on habitats.

2.16.4 FBC therefore fully expects these risks to be addressed explicitly within the project's risk register and mitigation hierarchy.

2.16.5 Given that the applicants have acknowledged the possibility of prolonged closures of public rights of way due to unforeseen construction issues [CoT102], FBC requests an Outline Contingency Plan to be submitted to the examination. This should include:

- A worst-case scenario assessment for dune impacts;
- Emergency protocols and response measures to minimise environmental harm;
- Pre-agreed communication protocols with local stakeholders, including Natural England and the FBC;
- Restoration measures in the event of habitat damage; and,
- Temporary alternative access arrangements for PROWs and beach users.

2.16.6 Such a plan would be prudent and proportionate to the sensitivity of the receiving environment and would demonstrate good project management.

2.16.7 FBC broadly agrees in principle that no direct impacts to the dune habitats or sand lizard population would be likely under normal circumstances given the planned use of trenchless technology. However, without sight of detailed ground investigations and a defined construction methodology, the conclusion cannot be regarded as fully robust.

2.16.8 The depth and alignment of the crossing, combined with a lack of submitted contingency measures, currently leave a residual risk of unanticipated effects that need to be addressed before such a conclusion can be confidently supported.

2.16.9 FBC therefore requests that the applicants provide:

- A full technical rationale for the chosen trenchless method and parameters for the expected depth;
- Site-specific ground investigation data once available; and,
- A detailed outline of environmental safeguards and contingency measures and particularly considering the ecological designations.

2.16.10 Until these matters are clarified, a precautionary stance must be maintained regarding potential impacts on the sand dune system and associated protected species.

2.17 Q6.1.10

2.17.1 FBC considers the proposed wording to be adequate.

2.18 Q6.1.11

2.18.1 Wording should include a commitment to provide replacement ponds where ponds are to be lost.

2.19 Q6.1.13

2.19.1 The current wording is inadequate because it does not refer to the need for a peat management protocol to be followed if impacts on peat cannot be avoided. The Outline Soil Management Plan [APP-200] should be referenced as this document describes acceptable peat management measures.

2.20 Q6.1.14

2.20.1 Wording should be amended to read "To mitigate and compensate for potential temporary habitat loss associated with Mill Brook Valley Biological Heritage Site, temporary construction compounds will be micro-sited to avoid the site wherever reasonably practicable, and mitigation and compensation measures will be proposed if avoidance is not reasonably practicable."

2.21 Q6.2.1

2.21.1 FBC notes the explanation provided by the applicants concerning the methodology and how the calculations have been done. However, FBC has several concerns and objections.

2.21.2 Firstly, the areas presented for habitat creation and enhancement are described as 'indicative' throughout. Calculations will need to be re-visited when/if these areas are confirmed. It stated that where access could not be obtained habitat calculations were based on existing datasets. FBC requires an understanding the proportion of land where access was not available and where there was reliance on existing datasets and implications/mitigations.

2.21.3 Secondly the BNG metric spreadsheet, FBC requests full sight of the details of the habitat condition assessments undertaken to complete the biodiversity metrics.

2.21.4 The scope of the assessment of onshore biodiversity benefit is limited to areas of permanent habitat loss.

2.21.5 FBC requests an explanation as to how long the 'temporary' habitat losses will be, and how long habitat reinstatement in these areas is likely to take. If the time periods involved are several years, consideration should be given to providing further off-site habitat creation and enhancement.

2.22 Q6.2.2

2.22.1 FBC notes the commitments made by the applicants as part of the Transmission Assets relevant to ecology set out in the ES. These includes measures to conserve biodiversity in terms of ecological interests and generally comply with the mitigation hierarchy, with measures to avoid and minimise impacts as far as is possible, although it is stated that offsetting (gain) will only be required for the permanent habitat loss areas, where biodiversity benefit is being delivered.

2.22.2 It is necessary to understand how long the 'temporary' habitat losses will be, and how long habitat reinstatement in these areas is likely to take. If the time periods involved are several years, consideration should be given to providing further off-site habitat creation and enhancement.

2.22.3 Further explanation should be provided by the applicants concerning efforts to avoid and minimise ecological impacts.

2.23 Q6.2.3

2.23.1 Section 4.6.10 of EN-1 requires biodiversity net gain to be delivered after compliance with the mitigation hierarchy, with section 4.6.11 encouraging details of any off-site delivery to be set out within the application for development consent. Section 4.6.12 goes on to provide more advice for how off-site provision should be delivered.

2.23.2 If an approach for provision outside of the order limits and thereby also off-site was to be pursued, FBC would request that the details of any such provision be provided to the examination, with sufficient time for consultation to be carried out.

2.23.3 With reference to the hierarchy and the associated 'avoid, reduce, mitigate and compensate' process, FBC would expect to see mitigation as close to the affected area as possible and of an appropriate type. FBC would also expect to see evidence of positive engagement with other requirements in terms of biodiversity mitigation design, such as those set out in paragraph 192 on the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.23.4 However, if proposed mitigation due to adverse effects on aviation cannot be achieved, because of significant bird impacts from any potential location, the ES is shown to be defective in its assessment.

2.24 Q10.1.1

2.24.1 FBC acknowledges that the applicants propose trenchless installation methods beneath the sand dune system, which is intended to minimise any disruption to the existing coastal flood defences. However, we note that "unforeseen circumstances" (e.g. equipment failure, borehole collapse, fluid escape) could, in a worst-case scenario, lead to physical disruption of the dune structure. Given the dunes' vital role in attenuating wave energy and providing a natural flood buffer, any significant disturbance or alteration - whether temporary or permanent - has the potential to increase local flood risk, particularly in extreme weather events.

2.24.2 The following are potential consequences of unforeseen circumstances that could affect flood risk and the hydrology of the dune habitat:

- Impacts of changes to the water table or water levels on the dune ecosystem;
- Ground instability causing localised collapse or subsidence within the dune structure;
- Escape of drilling fluids (e.g. bentonite breakout) causing erosion or weakening of dune surfaces;
- Emergency surface works that require temporary access or excavation within the dune system;
- Loss of vegetation (intentionally or inadvertently), which could reduce dune cohesion and increase erosion risk;

- Prolonged site occupation increasing the potential for vehicle damage or compaction on dune areas; and,
 - Delay to reinstatement of any protective landscaping or temporary structures, leading to exposure during storm events.
- 2.24.3 FBC requires a clear framework be established respond to these eventualities in a manner that prevents increased flood vulnerability to the surrounding area.
- 2.24.4 Given the applicant's acknowledgment of the potential for prolonged PRow closures due to unforeseen circumstances [CoT102], FBC would expect this to be mirrored by the provision of an Outline Contingency Plan covering:
- Emergency flood risk management measures, including rapid repair protocols for any damage to the dune system;
 - Monitoring of dune integrity during and after HDD operations, including hydrological impacts;
 - Defined thresholds for when additional engineering or environmental interventions would be triggered; and,
 - Clear communication routes with the Council and the Environment Agency in the event of any incident.
- 2.24.5 FBC recommends that a worst-case scenario assessment be submitted as part of any such plan, along with mitigation and response measures that have been agreed with relevant stakeholders.
- 2.24.6 FBC notes the conclusions set out in section 2.11.4 of the Environmental Statement [APP-070] and accepts that under normal construction conditions, the use of trenchless technology and embedded mitigation should avoid any increase in flood risk. However, FBC is not convinced by the conclusion as presented, due to the absence of detailed site-specific HDD design information, including final pit locations and depth profiles and a clearly articulated contingency strategy for managing flood defence and dune hydrological integrity in the event of unforeseen complications.
- 2.24.7 FBC requests that the ExA ensure an assurance protocol be established through an enforceable DCO requirement which details pre-construction submissions.

2.25 Q10.1.8

- 2.25.1 FBC considers that in the context of sensitive and functionally important locations such as: the Lytham St Anne's sand dune system, which acts as a natural flood defence, and Blackpool Road North Playing Fields, which includes key drainage infrastructure and surface water receptors, the term "reasonably practicable" is not sufficient. As currently worded, it lacks clarity and will lead to differing interpretations once in practice.
- 2.25.2 FBC interprets "reasonably practicable" in this context to mean that all feasible best practice technical and logistical efforts must be made to retain existing ditches, outfalls, and structures unless there is demonstrable evidence that retention would compromise safety, engineering feasibility, or cause greater environmental harm.
- 2.25.3 Similarly, "reasonably practical" (assumed to be intended as "reasonably practicable") in the context of reinstatement should mean that repairs and reinstatement works must be

undertaken promptly, with clear timescales, using methods that restore the original function, drainage performance, and where relevant, the biodiversity value of the feature.

2.25.4 In both locations, delays or inadequate reinstatement of drainage features could result in waterlogging, surface flooding, or soil erosion, with knock-on effects for recreational use, local habitat impacts, and wider flood management.

2.25.5 FBC does not consider the current wording to be sufficiently robust for high-risk or environmentally sensitive sites like the dunes and Blackpool Road Playing Fields.

2.25.6 The following concerns should be addressed:

- The phrase "where possible" introduces subjectivity. It should be revised to reflect a presumption in favour of retention, with exceptions justified in writing;
- No specific timescale is given for "as soon as reasonably practicable." This could lead to unacceptable delays in reinstatement, particularly in winter months when water management is most critical; and,
- There is no commitment to consult the FBC or a successor body in addition to the Environment Agency where local drainage infrastructure (not classified as EA Main River) is impacted.

2.25.7 FBC requests that the following amendments are made:

- Replace "where possible" with "unless demonstrated to be environmentally damaging;"
- Clarify that reinstatement will occur within a defined period (e.g. 10 working days) unless agreed otherwise; and,
- Include FBC as a notified body where local flood infrastructure, land drainage, or parkland public and private open space is affected.

2.26 Q11.1.4

2.26.1 FBC has identified the non-designated and locally listed heritage assets where it is considered that the potential for harm to setting or significance might result. Details of each of these assets is provided at Appendix 3 which includes a map showing the location of each asset. The details include: a description of the asset; the criteria for which it has been listed; and, images of the asset.

2.26.2 FBC notes that the applicant has responded to previous concerns raised in section 11.1.8 of REP1-078 regarding the significance and setting of the Locally Listed Buildings [LLB] Leach Lodge Farmhouse and cobble wall (LLB9/PRN6198), a surviving constructed cop (LLB10) and Thursby Nursing Home (LLB5). The applicant asserts that 'the temporary changes arising from construction works would not affect the heritage significance of the locally listed buildings'.

2.26.3 FBC considers that the assessment provide is too simplified, in that the potential for very extended periods of construction and associated works could give rise to material impacts.

2.26.4 A list of these assets was shared by email with the applicant on 26/06/2025.

2.27 Q11.1.6

2.27.1 The applicant has provided a verbal update to FBC officers (during an online meeting held on 26/06/2025) that the trial trenching will resume in August 2025 and that the results from these continued investigations will not be available during the lifetime of this application.

- 2.27.2 FBC relies primarily upon the Lancashire County Council [LCC] Archaeology Team for this type of matter and it is noted that this question has been directed towards them. FBC defers this matter to LCC but reserves the right to comment further.

2.28 Q11.1.7

- 2.28.1 FBC considers that there are outstanding matters regarding the potential effects on Quakers Wood Burial Ground. FBC also notes that the applicant verbally agreed (during an online meeting held on 26/06/2025) to carry out further assessment, in response to our submission which aligns with the text below.
- 2.28.2 FBC is of the opinion that the applicants' position on Quakers Wood Burial Ground as set out in Annex 3.2.18 of PDA-025 and Annex 5.9 of REP1-045 is not appropriate. This is primarily for the reason that there is no proper recognition and consideration of the fact that a substantial component of the significance of Quakers Wood is derived from its peaceful location.
- 2.28.3 A peaceful location was selected for this burial ground on the basis that Quakers tradition value silence, with a tranquil location necessary for a believer's eternal rest and for the living to connect with God.
- 2.28.4 The proposed substation is in proximity to the burial ground and owing to the size and appearance the development will adversely affect the setting of the burial ground. During construction the work will adversely affect the peaceful character of the burial ground. It is not clear if and how the trenchless crossing will mitigate the worst impacts of the development on the peaceful burial site, with parts of the work order limits passing through the northern part of the burial ground.

2.29 Q12.1.16

- 2.29.1 FBC acknowledges the applicant's intention to maintain flexibility between locating the trenchless cable installation entry/exit pits either within the eastern and western ends of Blackpool Road Recreation Ground, or within the adjacent land at Blackpool Airport.
- 2.29.2 Whilst FBC understands that the applicants may wish to preserve construction flexibility during detailed design and ground investigation phases, the Recreation Ground is a well-used, publicly accessible open space with recreational, community and visual amenity value. Any use of this land for compound or pit locations must be weighed carefully against its local importance and potential for disruption.
- 2.29.3 FBC considers that the Recreation Ground should only be used as a last resort, and only if the airport-side options are shown to be unfeasible due to engineering, safety, or environmental constraints. FBC would expect a robust justification from the applicant if the Recreation Ground were ultimately selected for construction activity.
- 2.29.4 If entry/exit pits were excluded from the Recreation Ground entirely, this would offer stronger protection for community recreational space, avoid unnecessary disturbance, and limit long-term reinstatement risk. FBC would welcome the removal of this flexibility if the airport land is confirmed viable for pit construction.
- 2.29.5 As of the time of writing, detailed reinstatement measures have not yet been agreed. However, FBC has made clear that any use of Blackpool Road Recreation Ground for construction activity must be subject to:

- A detailed reinstatement plan, agreed in advance, covering turf replacement, drainage reinstatement, and boundary treatments;
- Restoration of any footpaths, sports pitches, or informal play areas to their original condition and betterment;
- An explicit commitment to timescales for reinstatement, especially where phasing delays between the Morgan and Morecambe projects could prolong disruption; and,
- Provisions for temporary loss of amenity, including alternative community access or equivalent mitigation, should construction compound use span a prolonged period.

2.29.6 FBC seeks to work constructively with the applicant to agree clear protections and commitments in writing, ideally secured via a DCO Requirement or detailed provisions in the Outline Code of Construction Practice. FBC also expects close involvement during the detailed design phase to ensure the Recreation Ground's amenity and function are fully restored.

2.30 Q12.1.19

2.30.1 FBC do not agree with the applicants' assessment that the impacts on Blackpool Road Recreation Ground would be minor adverse. FBC has set out the likely impacts in its Relevant Representations [RR-0705], LIR [REP1-078], Written Representations [REP1-079] and Written Statement [REP2-057].

2.30.2 FBC considers that there have been limited discussion about, or details provided, for the proposed works and reinstatement. The applicants have repeatedly requested that the Council and other affected parties responsible for Blackpool Road Recreation Ground and its activities sign up to a voluntary heads of terms, with the latest deadline for sign up being 14th July 2025.

2.30.3 However, there is still uncertainty about what exactly the impacts and reinstatement would be.

2.30.4 FBC also notes that the Council as landowner has not been engaged regarding the Section 106 agreement referred to at CoT124. FBC reasserts its request for a topic specific hearing on Human Health and Recreation.

2.31 Q13.1.2

2.31.1 In the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), it states that the EIA Regulations have no 'hard and fast rules' about what effects should be deemed to be significant. The likely significance of the predicted landscape and visual effects is the result of the combination of sensitivity of place and magnitude of effect and, whilst a judgement may be made to determine which combinations are significant and which are not, even those effects which are not deemed to be significant cannot be completely disregarded.

2.31.2 Only by drawing out the key issues can the true significance of impacts be understood and the scope for mitigating adverse effects be undertaken successfully.

2.31.3 FBC considers that the applicants have distinguished between the significant effects which might influence the final decision against those which would not, and that the matrices of effects presented [APP-123] have taken precedence over a detailed and descriptive narrative, which would have demonstrated a clearer understanding of the local landscape.

2.32 Q13.1.5

- 2.32.1 FBC has not had meaningful engagement with the applicants with regards to the Outline Development Principles [APP-209]. FBC considers that its answers to other related questions (predominantly within section 13) and representations made within its Relevant Representations [RR-0705], LIR [REP1-078], Written Representations [REP1-079] and Written Statement [REP2-057] provide relevant guidance.
- 2.32.2 FBC considers that the Outline Development Principles are high-level and generic and that any such document should be informed by more detailed information, consultation and creation of a well-reasoned design strategy.

2.33 Q13.1.6

- 2.33.1 FBC considers that the proposed substations, either separately or collectively, would likely cause significant impacts and upon the local landscape, heritage assets and views.
- 2.33.2 FBC does not consider that sufficient design content has been provided to satisfy the objectives of good design. The application for the substations appears to be based upon the installation of basic and functional design models which would not provide a positive contribution to the rural landscape between Kirkham and Newton with Scales, and they would become significant detracting elements within views across the Green Belt and the Area of Separation.
- 2.33.3 Mitigation through good design which blends functionality, aesthetics and integration with the surrounding landscape, would contribute more positively to the landscape, its local context and views within and across it. There is no evidence of any such consideration having been given.
- 2.33.4 Both in terms of the content presented and the justification provided, the FBC considers that the current design content is not sufficient to meet the requirements of paragraph 5.10.30 of EN-1.

2.34 Q13.1.10

- 2.34.1 FBC considers that there are no benefits of the proposed design having two separate substations in terms of visual appearance, landscape character or openness of the Green Belt. In every instance, the effects would be cumulative and the harmful impacts of construction prolonged.
- 2.34.2 The applicants assert that there would be benefits but have not provided details or evidence of what those benefits would be. Additionally, no commitment to coordination of development in such a way as to co-ordinate phasing, reduce construction periods, share any infrastructure, have been proposed and the applicants have resisted any requests to engage with such strategy.
- 2.34.3 The principle of delivering two separate substations could present opportunities to find alternative sites outside of the Green Belt for one or both substations, the applicants have provided no evidence of this being actively considered or a reasonable justification for not doing so.
- 2.34.4 Siting one or both substations elsewhere could reduce or avoid the significant impacts on the Green Belt and Area of Separation which are presently predicted.

2.35 Q13.1.11

- 2.35.1 At a high level, FBC considers that more detail should be provided regarding the scope of works, timing, duration and restoration. The proposed development above ground should take into account the context of its location, minimising the effects on the visual and landscape character and be appropriate in size and location for the working processes which have contributed to that character. For the substations, this notably includes agriculture, recreation and heritage.
- 2.35.2 Indeed, the proposed substations are likely have a very significant impact on the character and appearance of the sites and surrounding area, in terms of both temporary and permanent effects. Therefore, the applicants' reliance upon planting to provide screening is a rather primitive approach and the design and appearance of the structures themselves should also be considered.
- 2.35.3 Local and national policy a guidance clearly requires that new development should demonstrate a high standard of design, taking into account landform, layout, orientation, massing and landscaping, which all relate well to the surrounding landscape, and which take the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area.
- 2.35.4 FBC considers the following enhancements essential to demonstrate good design in this context:
1. Equipment Procurement and Appearance
 - Colour, finish, and material selection for any above-ground infrastructure (e.g. kiosks, cabinets) should reflect the semi-rural and/or recreational setting as appropriate (e.g. use of subdued tones and matt finishes).
 - Equipment should be selected with an emphasis on compactness and low visual massing, especially near public footpaths, parks or open space.
 2. Site Layout Considerations
 - The positioning of any above-ground structures must avoid key sightlines across the playing fields and should be located away from areas of high recreational use (e.g. pitch perimeters or playground).
 - Temporary construction compounds or fencing should avoid fragmenting the site in ways that restrict movement or visibility for park users.
 - Provision of clear desire lines and safe pedestrian routes during works, with advance consultation with the Council.
 3. Landscape Integration and Reinstatement
 - A clear plan is needed for reinstatement of landform, planting, and access, with native planting that aligns with local biodiversity goals and aesthetic context.
 - Long-term landscape mitigation should include robust tree planting, use of wildflower margins, and reinstated hedgerows or boundary features where appropriate.
 4. Community Impact Minimisation
 - Design should support the continued use of unaffected areas of the site wherever possible during works.
 - FBC recommends a commitment to engage with local users and sports clubs on design layout and timing to reduce impact on seasonal pitch use.

5. Enhanced Detail in the ODP

- Location-specific design parameters for Blackpool Road Recreation Ground.
- Visual examples (e.g. photomontages or design codes).
- A commitment to submit final design details for local authority approval prior to commencement.

2.35.5 Without clearer and more site-sensitive design commitments, FBC are concerned that the temporary and potentially permanent infrastructure will detract from the quality, appearance and function of the surroundings. Good design should not be confined to the substation site but applied holistically across all areas affected by the project.

2.36 Q13.1.13

2.36.1 The use of an independent design review process is a tool which can be helpful under certain circumstances. Given the level of information currently available, with uncertainty around exactly what is proposed and when, FBC considers it ineffective for officers to commit to a position on this issue at this time. Such a decision should ideally be made with the benefit of a greater level of information, in conjunction with discussions between all relevant parties.

2.37 Q13.1.14

2.37.1 The proposed substations would have distinct and permanent impact on the character and appearance of their sites and surrounding area. FBC notes the many submissions made by local residents, raising concerns about the cause of those visual impacts. Notably, these include comments that as usable, informative visualisations have not been provided that the impacts cannot be properly understood and regardless, that the overall size means that harmful impacts are inevitable.

2.37.2 FBC considers that in order for the Secretary of State to accurately judge whether those visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as local residents and visitors to the local area, outweigh the benefits of the project (as required by NPS EN-1), the effects have to be assessed fully. The assessment presented is not a full assessment, as it draws a conclusion which preclude further detailed assessment, based on high-level parameters only.

2.37.3 For this reason, an assessment of the effects on the visual amenity of residents and visitors should be undertaken and their significance considered.

2.38 Q14.1.5

2.38.1 FBC accepts the proposed limit of $L_{A,T} < L_{A90,T} + 5 \text{ dB}$ as per BS 4142:2014, but emphasizes that this level reflects an adverse impact.

2.38.2 Therefore, proper and continuous monitoring at agreed sensitive receptors is essential. Mitigation measures should be agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority. Additionally, Best Available Techniques must be used and submitted for review prior to construction.

2.38.3 Operational noise limits must be explicitly secured under Requirement 18 of the draft DCO to allow for monitoring and enforceability.

2.39 Q14.1.10

- 2.39.1 FBC would not consider it acceptable for the applicants to only provides advance notice for works outside core hours. Instead, FBC recommends the DCO be amended to require that: all works outside core hours be agreed in writing, in advance, with the Local Planning Authority; and, a formal sign-off process be included, particularly for activities likely to cause nuisance.
- 2.39.2 FBC also considers that the applicants to include notification for residents and other people likely to be affected through the relevant community liaison officers, with updates to the Management Plans to that effect.

2.40 Q14.1.13

- 2.40.1 FBC considers that whilst the principle of the use of soil bunds and barriers is broadly acceptable, the applicants should be required to provide a demonstration of their effectiveness using BS 4142 methodology; and, evidence of the expected level of noise attenuation to be achieved.
- 2.40.2 Timings for advance notification and consultation on noise-generating works must be defined, and approvals should be secured from the Local Planning Authority.

2.41 Q14.1.14

- 2.41.1 FBC understands that the bund would reduce some noise impacts. However, with regards to the burial ground at Quakers Wood, whilst reduced noise impacts would relate well to the significance of this area, the creation of the bund and carrying out of development and associated activity, would have the potential to have a harmful effect.
- 2.41.2 The burial ground was chosen by the Quakers in late 17th century outside of the village to be a quiet and peaceful place both for eternal rest and for the living family members and the change from peaceful rural atmosphere will impact the heritage asset.
- 2.41.3 The answer to Q11.1.7 in this document provides further explanation.

2.42 Q14.1.15

- 2.42.1 FBC considers that the proposed 48-hour minimum notice is acceptable. However, the community liaison function must be adequately resourced and responsive. Contact details must be clearly communicated to the public to facilitate complaint handling and resolution.

2.43 Q15.1.2

- 2.43.1 FBC would like to reassert the request for a specific hearing session on matters relating to community benefits.

2.44 Q15.1.4

- 2.44.1 FBC considers that the applicants have not justified their approach to tourism. In their answer [REP1-046] the applicants have sought to summarise the approach taken for other similar DCOs.
- 2.44.2 FBC considers that their summary of these other assessments is too simplistic and misleading.
- 2.44.3 For example, turning to the first of the five examples presented, the applicants provide a summary of the Rampion 2 DCO at sections 1.2.1.6 and 1.3.1.8, concluding that their approach

is similar, relying on the fact that the assessment in this other case identifies a study area of ~3,800km². No further assessment is provided.

- 2.44.4 However, section 17.4.2 of the Rampion socio-economics assessment [Rampion Rep6-135] distinguishes between zones of influence for different types of impacts arising, notably stating that "In comparison, the tourism and recreation effects related to onshore infrastructure and offshore/inshore based recreational activities potentially impacted by offshore infrastructure are assessed at a much more local level." (emphasis added).
- 2.44.5 Rampion assessment, section 17.9.29 [Rampion Rep6-135] explains that "At a more localised level tourism assets within 500m of the onshore cable, substation and connection to the national grid (identified in Appendix 17.3: Socioeconomics technical baseline, Volume 4 of the ES (Document Reference: 6.4.17.3)) have potential to be negatively impacted. The impact on these tourism assets is considered below. RED has committed to several embedded environmental measures aimed at reducing the disruption caused by construction activity (and therefore the impact on the volume and value of the tourism economy). This includes the environmental measures outlined in Table 17-19 (including C-19, C-22, C-26, C-32 and C-66)."
- 2.44.6 Similarly, at sections 17.9.40 – 17.9.59 contain part of the type of assessment which FBC expects to see, in this case including assessment of impacts upon onshore recreation, including consideration of specific PROWs and concluding that impacts will arise, requiring mitigation.
- 2.44.7 Notably, section 17.9.40 advises that "At a more localised level, construction and installation activity along the onshore cable corridor may have a negative impact on walking and cycling routes, coastal paths, holiday parks and other tourism-related assets that are located in close proximity to onshore construction works."
- 2.44.8 Additionally, FBC firmly rejects the applicants' assertion in section 1.3.1.15 [REP1-046], that as a result of roughly 10% of the Fylde population being employed in tourism compared to a national average of 15-20%, "The sensitivity of Fylde's visitor economy can therefore be considered lower than many rural and coastal locations in England." This is a grossly oversimplified and inaccurate methodology when considering such matters.
- 2.44.9 Firstly, the claim that the sensitivity of Fylde's economy is lower is completely unfounded. At a superficial level, this may appear to be a reasonable claim. However, the sensitivity of the economy is not equivalent to the characteristics of any response arising from development. Whilst the two are linked, economically speaking they are different considerations.
- 2.44.10 Instead, what the applicant is actually claiming is that magnitude of harm arising would be lower and/or the significance of the type of harm would be less. However, this is once again unqualified. The applicants have made no attempt to explain what the difference between impacts on visitor economies of different proportions of an area's economy actually are, both in terms of type and magnitude of impacts.
- 2.44.11 Additionally, returning once again to the Rampion socio-economics assessment example [Rampion Rep6-135], the visitor economy in that area was assessed to be 12% of the overall economy which is much close in size to Fylde's economy and also below the national average.
- 2.44.12 FBC is frustrated that the applicants continue to downplay the significance of this issue and is alarmed that references to other DCOs are being made, alleging support for their approach when FBC considers the opposite to be true.

2.45 Q17.1.1

- 2.45.1 The applicant sets out in their Planning Statement [APP-233] that assessment around openness and any justification regarding the impact on the purposes of the Green Belt are not required, and on the basis that the development fall under the 'critical national priority' definition set out in EN-1. The applicants' position in best summarised in section 5.24.1.12 of the Planning Statement.
- 2.45.2 The applicant does go on to explain in section 5.24.1.15 that regardless, they consider Very Special Circumstances to exist. However, the Planning Statement presents a circular argument, where in section 6.4.1.3 and 6.4.1.4, it explains that Very Special Circumstances exist because the development is of the critical national priority type, referring back to section 5.24.
- 2.45.3 Interestingly, the Planning Statement does acknowledge in section 6.4.1.4 that the applicants must "demonstrate that all residual effects are those that cannot be avoided, reduced or mitigated, setting out how any mitigation or compensatory measures will be monitored and reporting agreed to ensure success" but with regards to Green Belt impacts, this approach does not appear to have been taken.
- 2.45.4 FBC notes that the applicants indicate in part of their response to representations made by Freckleton Parish Town Council [page 36 of APP-123] that "The potential landscape and visual effects of the Transmission Assets are identified in section 10.7 and assessed in section 10.12. This includes consideration of the impacts of the Transmission Assets on openness of the Green Belt and its policy objectives). It is also discussed in Volume 1, Chapter 4: Site selection and alternatives of the ES." FBC cannot identify such consideration of impacts upon openness in or around Freckleton and the substation locations, within the referenced parts of the submission, nor elsewhere.
- 2.45.5 FBC considers that the measuring of negative impact should be assessed through the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment process, quantifying the degree of harm which may be generated by a proposed development by identifying the sensitivity of the landscape area and its ability to respond to change.
- 2.45.6 Whilst the Landscape and Visual Assessment undertaken by the applicant [APP-123] includes some assessment of Green Belt impacts, it does not fully assess the importance of the landscape characteristics within the area between Kirkham and Newton with Scales to the different stakeholders (local residents, tourists, ecologists, etc.) and for this reason, does not accurately predict the level of harm.

END.



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