

The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
55 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HP
United Kingdom

Phone: 01772 539669
Email: joshua.roberts@lancashire.gov.uk
Your ref:
Our ref: CCJR/SW
Date: 17 April 2026

Dear Secretary of State

Unlocking £520m of National Cost Savings and Up to £1.7bn GVA from Offshore Wind Transmission Decisions in Lancashire

We write 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.

Decisions taken on transmission infrastructure at this stage present a significant opportunity to deliver substantial national cost savings and long-term economic benefits. A light-touch, Green Book-compliant economic review commissioned by the three councils has identified that an alternative approach to onshore grid connection could deliver:

- Up to £520m in avoided national infrastructure costs, through a reduced length of underground cabling and more efficient use of existing assets.
- Approximately 1,100 additional jobs enabled at Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.
- Between £990m and £1.7bn in additional Gross Value Added (GVA) between 2030 and 2040.
- A potential 8.6% increase in the size of the Wyre economy.

Taken together, these outcomes represent an alignment of delivering value for money, energy security, and place based economic growth.

We support secure, affordable energy, but it must be delivered at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers. There is 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.

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

For this reason, the three councils commissioned a light-touch economic review, compliant with the Green Book, of the onshore cable connection options for the Morgan, Morecambe and Mooir Vannin projects focusing on the economic implications of different options. The Executive Summary of this review is attached for your consideration.

The review identified several significant matters that warrant further investigation:

- An assessment of the cost and infrastructure implications of an alternative route versus the proposed Development Consent Order (DCO) route for Morgan and Morecambe sets out potential cost savings in the order of £287m, rising to £520m if infrastructure upgrades are included to accommodate Mooir Vannin.

These savings derive from landing Morgan & Morecambe and Mooir Vannin at Rossall and terminating at a new substation at Hillhouse Enterprise Zone adjacent to the existing Stanah substation. The new substation would be supported by upgrades to the overhead lines from Stanah-Hambleton-Penwortham to improve firm capacity to enable energy export back to Penwortham. The effect is a reduction in the kilometers of underground cable, with the Alternative Northern Route requiring around 5km, as opposed to 30km in the DCO route, for which there are significant expected cost savings.

- The failure of the Morgan project to secure a Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation introduces a different viability dynamic, particularly in relation to the strike price required for financial viability. In a note to investors dated 15th January 2026 *EnBW stated:*

Lancashire County Council
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD



“The primary reason for EnBW’s withdrawal is that the two projects did not receive government support through so-called ‘Contracts for Difference’ in the recently completed allocation round of the UK Department of Energy Security and Net Zero. In combination with other factors beyond its control, this implies that the projects are no longer economically viable as per EnBW’s standards and criteria. These include increasingly deteriorating conditions such as significant cost increases across the supply chain, higher interest rates and ongoing project implementation risks.”

These comments in respect of economic viability and supply chain cost inflation are directly relevant. Reducing the onshore transmission infrastructure costs could reduce the strike price that would need to be achieved in a future allocation round, thereby improving viability. The project promoters note that they are capitalised with 50bn EUR to deploy across Europe and the UK by 2030 – improving the viability of the Morgan wind farm through reduced infrastructure costs could secure investment in UK energy generation as opposed to it being diverted overseas.

- A high-level ecological review has found no insurmountable environmental or ecological challenges. This contrasts with the assertions made by NESO in their recent correspondence with Fylde Council that this is a reason for not considering Stanah as the connection point. Any environmental and ecological constraints discovered have recommendations for further survey to ascertain the extent of the mitigations that are required, but it is believed that established techniques can mitigate any potential impacts effectively.
- An economic review undertaken into the constraints to economic development at Hillhouse enterprise zone shows that with a modest investment from the local transport authority and improved energy export potential as a result of a new substation and improved firm capacity on overhead lines, would enable the site to be more fully built out for both energy generating uses and industrial uses. The net additionality is some 1,100 additional jobs, and between £990m and £1.7bn in additional GVA over the decade from 2030 to 2040. These represent significant uplifts in jobs and local economic output, which would have the effect of increasing the size of the economy in Wyre by 8.6%.

This evidence highlights credible national cost avoidance benefits, the potential to reduce energy cost pressures on households through cheaper project delivery, improved prospects for offshore wind viability off the Fylde Coast, and substantial local economic benefits. These benefits would allow local communities to share in economic prosperity in exchange for the disruption associated with hosting nationally significant infrastructure.

We collectively have a duty to consider the broader context when assessing the likely impacts of a Development Consent Order. The above benefits should also be considered alongside the likely harm of consent for the Development Consent Order being granted, as set out through our submissions to the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State for that matter. The positive weight attributed to the likely economic and energy benefits

Lancashire County Council
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD



only becomes more significant when weighed against the likely harm of the proposed scheme.

Considering this evidence, we respectfully urge you to pause any decision on transmission assets to allow full and further investigation into these matters ensuring that strategic, economic and national value considerations are properly reflected alongside planning and technical requirements.

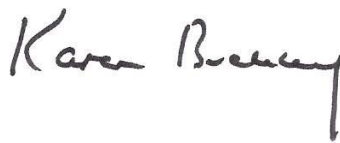
In addition, we would welcome the opportunity for you, or the relevant Minister(s), to visit Lancashire to see first-hand the proposed landing point, the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone, and the wider context in which these nationally significant decisions are being made. We believe a visit would provide valuable insight into both the scale of local impact and the opportunity to unlock substantial national cost savings and economic growth. If diary constraints mean that a visit is not possible, we would respectfully request a meeting in Parliament so that we can present the findings of the review and discuss how these issues might be considered further.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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



Cllr Karen Buckley
Leader of Fylde Council



Cllr Michael Vincent
Leader of Wyre Council

Enclosure:

Economic Review of Offshore Wind Developments in Lancashire: Executive Summary