

Proposed Morecambe & Morgan Wind Farms – Transmission Assets

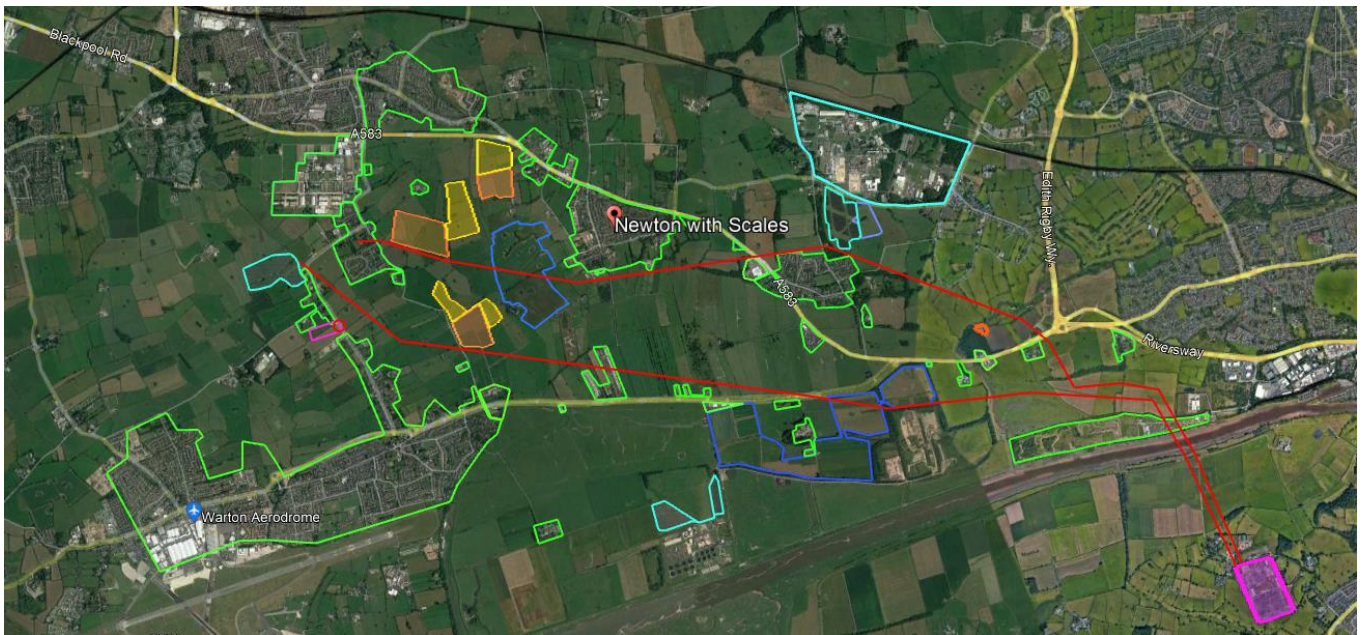
Points for consideration for feedback to the project

Introduction

The previous non statutory consultations were inadequate. Generic postcards were sent to many (but not all) residents. There was no local consultation event, despite a request from Newton with Clifton Parish Council. This meant people were unaware of the scheme and its impact on our rural community until Parish Council notices and social media posts engaged more of the community.

The Oct 26th statutory consultation event in Newton with Clifton Village Hall was so well attended that people were turned away at the door by Morecambe & Morgan Security as the hall was full. There can be no doubt that our community cares passionately about the negative impacts of the wind farm proposals and the effect they will have on our rural parish.

Our rural parish is also being targeted with an additional ~250 acres of solar farm in addition to the existing solar farms and nuclear licensed site as shown in the map below. The cumulative impact of these green energy initiatives has not been taken into consideration.



Key :

Red lines indicate existing overhead Pylon routes, Pale blue are existing solar farms and a nuclear licensed site, the dark blue indicates proposed solar farms and expansions to existing solar, proposed substations are in orange with construction compounds in yellow. Residential areas, commercial properties and farms are outlined in green. Penwortham substation is pink.

Statutory Consultation

- The flyer sent to residents to inform them of the consultation was in a compostable bag so looked a lot like junk mail. Some people only actually found out about the event from social media. The same flyer has been sent to 55,000 addresses in our area and 25,000 addresses in the Isle of Man. This does not constitute meaningful engagement.
- All the consultation material at the event is covering the entire scheme so there is no information targeted for individual communities. This is especially important given the size and scale of the substations adjacent to Newton village. This makes it more difficult for residents to understand the impact in their area. Project team members present at the consultation events were not able to answer residents' questions.
- Land owners were sent a 36 page booklet but these were not available to most residents until the consultation event. Even in that booklet the maps lacked enough detail to enable people to understand the impact of the substations and/or cabling. Landowners also received a detailed map which was not available to residents. Even the large scale maps at the consultation did not enable people to assess the impact on their property.
- The online documentation is so vast as to be overwhelming and inaccessible for most people and many details that would be of interest locally e.g. potential access points to the construction sites are buried in these volumes.

Route/Site Selection

- Residents have serious concerns about the process of site and route selection by the project. National Grid Planning for Offshore Wind Farms and their connection to the National Grid [The Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design | ESO \(nationalgrideso.com\)](#) shows an offshore set of connections that appear to go South of the Ribble and link to Penwortham. However, routes south of the Ribble or under the Ribble have been eliminated for this project causing the whole scheme to move closer to communities.
- Residents are concerned that no information has been made available which identifies how the route selection from landfall to Penwortham and the substation search zones were defined. Residents suspect they are the least cost/most profitable options.
- The scoring system for the substation siting lacks rigour e.g. no information relating to how the criteria were determined, no apparent weighting applied, assessments appear to be subjective. No detail is supplied about how the difficulties with any particular location/route could be mitigated. Residents are concerned that the outcome was pre-determined.
- Residents feel that the project team have weighted the scoring in favour of birdlife rather than the lives and livelihoods of local people. However the potential bio-diversity net gain plans are undefined and the areas are unconnected providing no suitable corridors for wildlife.

Substations & Cabling

- Most other substations in the UK appear to be much further away from communities – this scheme appears to be setting an unwelcome precedent in terms of proximity to residential areas.
- There are no 'mockups' of what the substations would look like, especially given their enormous size (45 acres) despite requests for this from Parish Council representatives.
- The photographs that purport to show the visual impact of the substations were taken from obscure locations and not from the residential building line. These so called 'wirelines' are buried in weighty documents that are not readily accessible to the public. Again, this level of detail was requested in advance of the consultation by the Parish Council.

- Information regarding different substation technologies has not been made available and will impact the size, scale and view for residents, dwarfing the village.
- The substations are proposed in an Area of Separation. The intent of this AoS is to protect the identity of a community and is shown in Fylde Borough Council's local plan. The substations will effectively destroy this separation and change the character of the village from rural to industrial.
- Existing flooding issues in the parish will be exacerbated by this scheme. As a minimum land will become compacted from heavy vehicles during construction. Areas of the scheme are already in flood zones. These zones are set to extend according to the Climate Change Flood Zone Map for 2030.
- No meaningful information available on noise levels, vibration, electro-magnetic radiation or light pollution during and post construction and the impact of these on humans and both domestic and farm animals.
- The substations and the cabling routes will cut into large areas of good quality farmland that affect food security and people's livelihoods and leisure activity e.g. walking the existing Public Rights of Way and rural lanes and tracks. Sightlines from historic sites will also be adversely impacted. Residents are frustrated that green areas are being used rather than brownfields sites.
- No route has been declared for the 400kV cables from the substations to Penwortham. It is still showed as a large tract of land that is potentially impacted. Residents cannot make informed observations on such unknown factors.
- All cabling is addressed in the materials as being put in place via alarmingly wide trenches apart from when crossing the river and major roads where trenchless technologies may be used – there is no mention of this trenchless approach under farmland. Residents would prefer this approach wherever possible as it would be less intrusive.
- To date, there is little detailed information about how the construction phase will impact the local area. It is likely to last several years causing massive disruption. The consultation booklet states construction period of 3 years but the PEIR indicates 60 months. Residents are concerned that construction of the substations may not be concurrent thus extending the construction period unnecessarily. Suggested working hours are excessive and disruption from heavy traffic on already busy roads e.g. A583 is a major concern, as is the use of small rural roads regularly used recreationally by residents e.g. Parrox Lane, Newton.
- Residents are concerned that they may not be consulted on any changes to the scheme post this statutory consultation phase e.g change from underground cables to overhead.

Mitigation

- No information has been made available relating to how the project will mitigate :-
 - the construction activity;
 - the visual impact of the substations;
 - the noise and vibration levels both post and during construction;
 - light pollution from the sites;
 - electro-magnetic radiation;
 - how, and by whom, any agreed mitigation would be enforced.

Consequently, residents are unable to comment in any meaningful way on any mitigation unless further consultation takes place.