

In our previous representations ([RR-010] and [REP2-073]), we raised concerns regarding works that the applicant seeks to carry out to the Watton Beck crossing. Watton Beck is a 'main river' for which the EA is the flood risk management authority, but the EA also owns the land on which Watton Beck flows. The condition of the defences in this location is such that we are likely to need to carry out improvement works within the 35 year operational lifetime of the proposed scheme. Our concerns around this relate to whether our ability to undertake these works might be significantly more challenging and/or costly due to the presence of the cable running under Watton Beck. We currently have limited information about the ground conditions in the area and therefore we have no certainty about the type of flood risk management scheme may be required, and in particular whether sheet piling may be required. Due to the lack of certainty regarding the depth of the cable at this location, it is not yet known how this might affect the options available or whether this will result in additional costs for us.

We have held several discussions with the applicant around this issue and we are confident that we will be able to come to a satisfactory agreement for Watton Beck through the use of land agreements and/or through some additional wording within the Protective Provisions for the Environment Agency within the DCO. As such, we have decided that it is not necessary for us to attend either the Draft DCO Hearing or the Compulsory Acquisition Hearing. We will continue to work with the applicant to ensure that we are afforded suitable protection in this regard.

We will also be seeking to provide an updated Statement of Common Ground in due course, to ensure you have clarity on our latest position.