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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:02 - 00:00:41:21

Same that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced. Thank you. It is now 10:00, and I'd like to welcome you all to this preliminary meeting for the Heikkinen Fen Solar Project. An application has been made by Eco Tricity hedge fund Solar Limited, who I will refer to as the applicant for an order granting development consent for the Kingston Fen Solar Park. My name is Susan Hunt and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for levelling up housing and communities as the single examining inspector to examine this application.

00:00:42:07 - 00:01:14:24

You will also hear and see me referred to as the examining authority or the exa. I'm a chartered town planner and a planning inspector. I will be reporting to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-zero with a recommendation as to whether the development consent order should be made. The case manager for this project is Tom Bennett, who likely to already have come into contact with in the pre examination period and he'll be shortly be replaced by Noel McGowan.

00:01:15:12 - 00:01:31:21

They're both here today and are supported online by Hob here. Recall and please contact a member of the case team if you've got any queries about the examination process generally or the help with today's events or the technology or anything like that.

00:01:33:15 - 00:01:52:13

I'll just deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person. Can everyone please set all your devices to silent? And I'm not aware that there's any fire alarm tests or any other drills today. So in the event of an alarm, please exit via the stairs that you just came up at and congregate in the main car park.

00:01:55:07 - 00:02:21:05

I aim to keep the proceedings focused and as efficient as possible. And to assist this, I issued an Annex B in my Rule six letter, which was dated 21st of July. That was the letter that invited everybody to the meeting, and that sets out an introduction to the preliminary meeting process. And I trust you've all read this in advance and so I'll only be providing a summary now.

00:02:22:17 - 00:02:41:12

You'll find information about the application on the project page of the planning Inspectorate's national infrastructure planning websites, and I encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with it because we'll be using it throughout to communicate with all participants and to provide access to documents throughout the examination.

00:02:44:00 - 00:02:47:14

Today's meeting is undertaken as a blended event.

00:02:49:08 - 00:03:19:21

And some of you are present with us at the hearing venue today here in Boston, and others are joining virtually using Microsoft teams. I'll make sure that if you've decided to attend today, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate. If you're participating virtually and you wish to speak at relevant point,

please use the hands up function on Microsoft teams and please be aware that there may be a delay before I see it. So if you're invited to speak, turn on your camera and microphone.

00:03:24:05 - 00:03:56:01

A recording of today's meeting will be made available on the project page of the website as soon as possible, and this will include a transcript. Therefore, every time you speak, can you please speak clearly into a microphone stating your name and who you are representing every time you speak? And this is for the benefit of the recording and the transcript. And please switch your microphone off when you finish speaking to avoid interference. That's if you're both online and in the room.

00:03:58:20 - 00:04:15:06

The recording will be retained by the Planning Inspectorate for five years, and it forms a public record that can contain your personal information to which the general data protection regulations apply. And a link to our Privacy Notice was provided in all six letter.

00:04:18:16 - 00:04:51:14

I'm now going to ask those of you who are participating in today's meeting to introduce yourselves when state your organization's name again. Remember to say who you are, who you represent, and which agenda item you wish to speak on. But think the parties here today. I'll just assume that you're going to speak on on every item. If you're not representing an organization, confirm your name and summarize your interest in the application. And can everybody also state how you wish to be addressed?

00:04:54:10 - 00:05:04:16

But hey, could we start with the lead speaker for the applicants and then anyone else in the applicants team? Only those who will be speaking today, please.

00:05:06:00 - 00:05:39:18

Good morning, madam. Thank you. My name is Neil Bromwich. I'm a solicitor and partner at Osborne Clark Solicitors, and I shall be speaking on behalf of the applicant today here with me. And if you don't mind, I will just introduce them rather than letting them introduce themselves to. To my left is Josh Taylor. Josh Taylor is an associate director at Osborne Clark. And to the left of him is Laura White.

00:05:40:05 - 00:06:10:00

Laura is project manager for the Applicant Ecosystem Solar Limited, and to the left of Laura. Isabel Hollands Isabel is the director at Pegasus Group. Although this morning it is likely that perhaps only myself will be speaking, But I'll reserve that and we will obviously be responding to your points on on the issues as they arise.

00:06:12:20 - 00:06:23:13

Very much welcome. Can we move on to those local authorities who have given intention to speak, starting with Lincolnshire County Council, please?

00:06:25:13 - 00:07:00:24

Good morning, madam. I am the lead spokesperson for Lincolnshire County Council and also act today for North Kesteven Council as well. My name is Constanza Bell at Constance e Constanza. Last name Bell of Council King's Chambers. And it's anticipated that I will be the person to address you this morning, But I will introduce you, if I may, to to those who sit next to me. Um, firstly, at the end of the table is Martha Rhys of Lincolnshire Legal Services, Senior Lawyer.

00:07:03:06 - 00:07:17:07

Next to her is Nick Feltham, assistant development manager at North Kesteven District Council, and then also sitting at the table. Mark Willis, Applications Manager for Lincolnshire County Council.

00:07:19:02 - 00:07:32:16

And confusingly, we also have a mark Willits, who was development manager for North Kesteven District Council. So there's a mark Willis and a mark Willits just to keep everybody on their toes.

00:07:36:09 - 00:07:40:13

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, Boston Borough Council.

00:07:42:06 - 00:07:52:00

Good morning, ma'am. My name's Peter from Boston Borough Council Planning Department. I'm a forward planning officer. I don't expect I will have to say a lot this morning.

00:07:54:03 - 00:08:06:21

Okay. Thank you very much. And welcome, everybody. Is there anybody on teams that wishes to speak wasn't so notified of anybody. But if there is, could you put your hand up, please?

00:08:08:24 - 00:08:12:21

Can't say. That's fine. Just observing.

00:08:25:10 - 00:08:33:05

If anybody else does wish to speak or if they are invited to speak by their team, and it doesn't preclude you from doing so if you've not introduced yourself.

00:08:36:12 - 00:08:45:16

The meeting will follow the agenda as set out in Annex A of my Rule six letter. And it would be helpful if you had this in front of you.

00:08:49:00 - 00:09:20:10

I don't expect a meeting to extend beyond an hour and a half today. But if it does, there'll be an opportunity for a comfort break. And today's meeting is basically to focus on the way in which I intend to examine the application over the next six months. And on this basis today, I'll only be inviting discussion about procedural aspects of the examination. There'll be no discussion of merits or any concerns you may have regarding the application.

00:09:20:20 - 00:09:29:18

These will only be considered once the examination of the application begins, and that happens following the close of this preliminary meeting this morning.

00:09:31:22 - 00:09:40:21

Are there any comments anybody wishes to make under agenda? Item one before I move on to my remarks about the examination process?

00:09:42:24 - 00:09:43:14

Right.

00:09:45:08 - 00:09:47:13

Okay. Item two on the agenda.

00:09:53:03 - 00:10:10:23

So annex be of the roll six letter that's entitled Introduction to the Preliminary Meeting and it explains how it will be conducted, how you can participate. And I assume everybody's read this. I won't go through it in detail.

00:10:12:12 - 00:10:25:01

If there's anything you're unclear about or need clarity on in relation to the examination process generally and now is your opportunity to ask and looking specifically at page.

00:10:26:23 - 00:10:38:05

Before. That's entitled the examination process. If there's anything in that that you're not sure about, um, or you'd like to comment on. I'd like to raise that now.

00:10:40:07 - 00:10:40:22

No.

00:10:43:20 - 00:10:53:01

Okay, turning to page B5, then XP of the rule letter, rule six letter that relates to hearings.

00:10:57:14 - 00:11:32:01

So as you will be aware, the primary method for examining the application is in writing, and there are provisions for hearings during the examination too. There are a number of different types of hearings as set out in Annex B and I trust these are self-explanatory. And and the draft timetable provides for two sets of hearings. And the first will follow this preliminary meeting today. And the second set of hearings are currently scheduled for week commencing 20th of November.

00:11:33:10 - 00:11:47:21

And if you'd like to participate in a hearing that you can register in advance with the case team. But if you're simply wish to observe, you don't need to do this. You can either attend in person or watch the recording live or afterwards in your own time.

00:11:53:21 - 00:12:24:15

There aren't any other interested parties here today apart from the local authorities. But if they're in future hearings, if there are any multiple parties that wish to speak at a hearing and they have similar views, they are encouraged to group together and appoint a spokesperson to make best use of time and to avoid repetition. And anyone who speaks at a hearing should expect me to ask them questions and also to seek the views of other parties and give the applicant an opportunity to respond.

00:12:24:17 - 00:12:33:15

And cross-examination is not permitted. And if you want to ask a question of one of the other parties around the table, that that must go through me.

00:12:41:04 - 00:13:15:04

Today's meeting and hearings are in-person events as explained. They are. They are blended. And one of the advantages of holding the hearings and meeting in person is that when the formal proceedings have ended and even in bright times as well, the applicant and the parties who have attended can take the opportunity to make face to face discussions. So that's another advantage of having them in person can help speed up matters and, for example, on statements of common ground.

00:13:16:11 - 00:13:27:20

For those who are attending the event, virtually the same opportunities won't occur. But we do ask the applicant to engage in dialogue with all parties to try and make progress where matters are still in dispute.

00:13:29:19 - 00:14:11:08

The two issue specific hearings and you'll see them referred to as is following today's meeting. And there are more planned for, as I said before, the week commencing 20th of November. We'll discuss the timetable a little bit later under item four of the agenda. Um, but just like to say at this point, as well as confirming dates in my forthcoming role, Rule eight letter, I will continually review the format of any future hearings I'll have regard to venue availability and consider any preferences for virtual or blended hearings and.

00:14:12:02 - 00:14:26:18

So if anyone would like to make any points regarding the future hearings, particularly the ones in November and potential locations for a venue for a future hearing, I believe I believe the applicant would like to do so. And this is your opportunity.

00:14:27:09 - 00:14:29:14

Thank you, ma'am. Would you like us to pick that point up now?

00:14:29:16 - 00:14:30:06

Yeah.

00:14:30:19 - 00:15:01:20

Neil Bromwich for the applicant. Yes, madam. Under item nine or section nine of Annex E, time for the reserve for the hearings. In No. The week commencing 20th November. We have two options. One option is to hold those hearings at this venue. Um, and the other option is to hold the the hearings in Lincolnshire and sorry, in Lincoln.

00:15:03:03 - 00:15:38:19

The issue we have is that we only have a day and a half available at this venue. That's because there is only this room is only available for two days and I understand that half a day will be taken up by setting up the room. So that constrains the time that available to you to hold those hearings. Whereas if we held it in Lincoln, then we can have three days of hearings, up to three days of hearings. Um, now, obviously because of availability and getting towards Christmas, we need to make a decision on that reasonably soon.

00:15:39:03 - 00:16:10:07

And therefore, Madam, we just flagged that point because it's something that we will be picking up with your case officer and um, hopefully coming to a um, agreement on it soon. So if any of the other parties have any comment about that, we appreciate that. Lincoln is not as close to the to the development site as this site, and therefore it may be more restrictive for people to get to. But on the basis that there's no members of the public as yet, um, intending to speak.

00:16:10:17 - 00:16:12:11

Hopefully that won't be a problem.

00:16:15:09 - 00:16:23:15

Okay. Thank you very much. Just like to ask the councils if they've got any particular strong feelings about venue for the next set of hearings.

00:16:24:00 - 00:16:34:11

Entirely happy with Lincoln as a suggestion. Thank you, madam. We would, however, like a blended event of all possible just to facilitate attendance by everyone who would wish to be here.

00:16:38:15 - 00:16:45:20

Okay. Thank you. Are there any other comments? Boston. Are you okay with Lincoln? I would agree with that. Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

00:16:56:18 - 00:16:57:08

Okay.

00:16:57:10 - 00:17:08:04

I certainly bear that in mind and continue liaising with the case team on that point, and that will be confirmed in the forthcoming roll out letter. Thank you, madam.

00:17:19:05 - 00:17:57:18

Okay. Page B6 of Annex B of the rule letter. All six letter that refers to site inspections. And I've already carried out an unaccompanied sight inspection and that was on Tuesday the 23rd of May. And so there are some notes on on what I've viewed on that site visit and that's that sits examination library reference EV 001. And this this took place from public land only so only from the the highways and public rights of way.

00:18:00:17 - 00:18:22:02

And a company ID site inspection is necessary because will need to enter the land proposed for both the solar park and the big fence substation works. And these are environments where there may be health and safety security issues. Hence mine needs to be accompanied and this visit would need to be arranged by the applicant.

00:18:24:03 - 00:18:42:10

I expect this accompanied site inspections be carried out during the same week as the second set of hearings that currently timetable for the 20th of November and may also carry out a further unaccompanied site inspection in the meantime as well.

00:18:44:06 - 00:18:58:21

I'm suggested locations for for me to visit a welcomed and they should be submitted by deadline one that's already in the the timetable so procedural decision and that's the 3rd of October.

00:19:00:22 - 00:19:13:07

In terms of the company's site inspection, does anybody have any queries or comments about the way in which that's expected to be carried out? Could ask the applicant, please.

00:19:14:16 - 00:19:52:13

Thank you, madam. Yes, we will be submitting some suggested locations for accompanied site visits. There are also several locations where we're aware that you haven't yet visited, which are are both accessible on publicly, but could form part of the accompanied site visit which we'll be submitting at or before deadline one. In terms of the the access, yes, the access will be made or the applicant will make access available to the extent it's able.

00:19:53:23 - 00:20:14:21

You may be aware that there are some landowners where we haven't yet been able to agree land rights and therefore we'll continue to talk to them. But in in essence, we don't have any concerns that we'll be able to make all or most of those off site locations.

00:20:21:04 - 00:20:35:24

Okay. Thank you. So we'll we'll see the suggested locations at deadline one. Yes. Yes, madam. Okay. So the councils have any queries or comments they'd like to make on the accompanied site inspection, please?

00:20:37:05 - 00:20:47:14

No, no, thank you, madam. We've seen the note and we're broadly happy with the locations that identified so far. If anything further emerges and obviously we can liaise with the applicant, but no, no comments. Thank you.

00:20:49:05 - 00:20:55:12

Okay. Do Boston have any particular locations that they wish to point out at this stage? Not at the moment.

00:20:55:14 - 00:20:56:04

Thank you.

00:20:56:06 - 00:20:57:05

Okay. Thank you.

00:20:57:20 - 00:21:14:03

Sorry, madam, could I. One of the one of the points right now for the applicant, um, bike offense substation you mentioned. Um, obviously you're aware that that is an operational, um, substation. There may be restrictions to the extent.

00:21:15:01 - 00:21:16:10

Microphone a little closer.

00:21:16:21 - 00:21:35:17

Sorry. There may be. There may be health and safety restrictions in accessing parts of that substation. So we will need to liaise with National Grid to agree how that land is accessed. But we don't anticipate any any problem you having access to the area within the order limits.

00:21:42:20 - 00:21:44:09

Okay, That's fine. Thank you.

00:21:52:02 - 00:21:58:23

Turning to Annex G. If there are all six letter procedural decisions.

00:22:07:19 - 00:22:58:11

So there's a there's a range of procedural decisions and. That's in addition to the decision to hold issue specific hearings this afternoon and tomorrow. The first procedural decision relates to change application. This was received on the 25th of August. And. That's now available to view on on the project page of the website. And given it was received in good time prior to the commencement of the examination, I expect to be able to make a decision on whether to accept the amended plans and documents shortly, and that will be with the issue of my Rule eight letter and the final examination timetable, and that's expected to be issued probably early next week.

00:23:00:19 - 00:23:13:16

This does not preclude any interested parties from making comments on the change application as submitted, and these are still expected to be submitted by deadline one, which is Tuesday the 3rd of October.

00:23:15:18 - 00:23:36:21

There will also be an opportunity for the applicant to present the change application and for interested parties to make comments where they relate to the draft event. Link sent order this afternoon. And environmental matters tomorrow. And does anybody have any comments to make on this procedural decision at this stage?

00:23:40:03 - 00:24:12:07

Thank you, madam. Neil Bromwich for the applicant? Yes. Just. Just to confirm that we welcome a decision on the change request by the 17th of October. Um, and just to add that that will enable us then at deadline to when we submit our updated documents to update either the original application, if the change request is not accepted or to update the documents as submitted with the change request.

00:24:12:22 - 00:24:23:17

And that gives us a helpful clarity on that. And just to explain that, that that will be our our approach to updating documents if that's agreed.

00:24:33:01 - 00:24:40:11

Okay. Thank you. Do the councils have any comments to make on on the change application at this stage? No. Okay. Thank you.

00:24:42:13 - 00:25:10:09

The next procedural decision relates to statements of common ground and the need for these statements and who I expect the applicant to agree them with and the topics to be covered are all set out in Annex G. And so I won't repeat these now. And does anybody have any comments they wish to make on statements of common ground and Section two of Annex? At this stage, the applicant, please.

00:25:10:20 - 00:25:31:02

Thank you, Madam Neil Bromwich, For the applicant. It may be helpful just at this stage just to note that it's not intended to have a statement of common ground with Cadent Gas Limited Gas Limited written, I believe, two pins to confirm that they don't have any assets in the development area and therefore there's no need to have an agreement with them.

00:25:34:02 - 00:25:40:03

Yeah, I've seen that. I'm not sure if it's been published yet, but I've seen their letter. Thank you.

00:25:41:15 - 00:25:46:20

Is there any comments from the council's relating to issue? A statement of common ground?

00:25:50:04 - 00:25:51:03

No, thank you.

00:25:59:07 - 00:26:04:18

The third procedural decision relates to the accompanied site inspection, which I've already covered.

00:26:09:18 - 00:26:47:17

The fourth procedural decision refers to reports on the interrelationship with other nationally significant infrastructure projects, and you should refer to Annex C of my Rule six letter, and this refers to the interrelationship of the application with other projects in the region, specifically Lincolnshire. And I've requested a report on the relationship with those listed nationally significant infrastructure projects for receipt at deadline one, which is 3rd October.

00:26:48:19 - 00:27:20:17

And sets out the range of information that I expect to see within the report. And as stated in Annex C. It is anticipated that some parties will wish to participate in the examination of one or more of the other listed solar parks, examinations and the timetable. The draft timetable has been devised accordingly to take account of other concurrent examinations.

00:27:22:20 - 00:27:56:14

As you'll be aware, Cottam has recently commenced examination. I've not seen the final timetable as yet. Understand the rule eight letter is due to be issued shortly. Mallard, Pass and Gate Burton are partway through examination and the start of the West Burton examination has been delayed for the time being. There may be implications for the Haskins and Fen examination timetable as a result.

00:27:57:07 - 00:28:29:16

And so if you have any comments in this respect, could you raise it under item four of the agenda in terms of timetabling? If there's any dates that cause you particular concern in relation to the other projects. Is there anything any party would wish to raise regarding the the report and the expect to be issued initially at deadline one? Does the applicant have anything new?

00:28:29:18 - 00:28:38:24

Bromwich For the applicant, madam. The only point we would raise is that this is a matter for on your agenda for issue specific hearing to and we'll address it at that point.

00:28:41:13 - 00:28:50:05

Yeah, that's fine. We'll be discussing an issue specific hearing. Um, procedurally, is there anything that the council's have any comments to make?

00:28:52:04 - 00:29:04:21

It's just to note that there are also the examples of Springwell and Foss Green which don't appear in your list at present. It's just a flag that they are also, in the view of the council, relevant

00:29:06:12 - 00:29:16:12

detail which can be addressed at a later stage I'm sure. But just to flag that they are on, they are matters that we consider need to be addressed.

00:29:18:16 - 00:29:22:19

Okay. Thank you. Yeah, we'll discuss those in issue specific hearing.

00:29:32:00 - 00:29:59:08

And going on to the next procedural decision. Number five relates to progress schedules that I expect to receive throughout the examination. The first versions to be received at deadline one, and I don't intend to go through these and an excuse, self-explanatory, but are there any questions or comments relating to the progress schedules? No.

00:30:01:12 - 00:30:02:15

Okay. Thank you.

00:30:08:08 - 00:30:27:04

Federal Decision six relates to local impact reports. These are expected to be submitted at deadline one by the relevant planning authorities North Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council and the relevant county authority, which is Lincolnshire County Council,

00:30:29:01 - 00:31:16:06

and a procedural deadline. A I receive comments from both Lincolnshire and North Kesteven which highlight that their local impact reports will be received at deadline one. And this is obviously after the first set of environmental hearings and both and development consent order this afternoon and tomorrow. Um, but because it is it's clear from the the agendas the the hearings today and tomorrow will be primarily high level hearings and they're mostly giving an opportunity for the applicant to present the scheme, provide me with any relevant updates at this early stage and um, just an overview of clarification of matters.

00:31:16:08 - 00:31:49:22

So don't expect to hear any particularly technical or detailed evidence today and tomorrow. And it will be I'll have regard for the local impact reports which will inform my questioning first written questions which are due to be issued on the 17th of October, and then the next set of hearings on the 20th of November. Um. But all the other. Any comments? I'll come to the council's first on on the timing of this.

00:31:59:05 - 00:32:00:02

No comments from.

00:32:02:11 - 00:32:04:01

Boston have anything to raise.

00:32:04:03 - 00:32:06:03

No. Ours is drafted. Is going to be ready.

00:32:06:07 - 00:32:14:20

Okay. Thank you. And that applicant have anything to say on local impact reports? No, madam. No, thank you. Okay. Thank you very much.

00:32:22:20 - 00:32:50:16

The final two procedural decisions relate to comments on relevant representations and again to be submitted deadline one and additional submissions and did accept some additional submissions. There's just two that are listed there, one from the Canal and River Trust and one from the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, so that they're self-explanatory.

00:32:55:05 - 00:33:13:07

So with regard to annexes B, C and G over all six letter, are there any other questions about the way wish to propose to examine this application? We'll see. We'll come on to the timetable shortly. Is there anything anyone else wishes to raise before I move on to item three?

00:33:16:03 - 00:33:16:18

Okay.

00:33:19:16 - 00:33:22:21

So initial assessment of principal issues.

00:33:24:09 - 00:33:28:05

Set out in Annex D, the Rule six letter.

00:33:38:24 - 00:34:13:11

So this list provides an initial framework of issues for the examination of the application and doesn't preclude me from amending the list, adding to it, removing items from principal issues at a later stage in a process. And. You can you can see the list there. And I think it's fairly self-explanatory, But so I've got nothing further to add at this stage. But to any individuals here today, wish to raise any comments on on either on the broad headings or on the individual matters.

00:34:13:16 - 00:34:15:24

So I'll come to the local authorities first.

00:34:18:06 - 00:34:56:10

Yes. Thank you, madam. Just. Just one brief matter. Note The way that you capture it is to say it's a list of a framework of issues under issue five, which is the sort of broad, broadest of all the issues, if you like, the general and cross topic matters. The fourth bullet point is cumulative and in combination effects with other projects and developments in the locality, including other solar farm proposals in the region. And Madam, you won't be surprised to learn that this is obviously a key point and key concern for both North Kesteven and Lancashire County Council as authorities.

00:34:56:12 - 00:35:17:00

And so we just simply wish to to flag that in having it as a sort of sub bullet point under that topic. And we don't want to be taken as as saying that that is somehow a sub issue or a an issue of some lesser importance. In our view, it could be a topic in its own right. Um, just just to explain our position on that.

00:35:19:21 - 00:35:24:14

Okay. Thank you. Does Boston Borough Council wish to raise anything?

00:35:24:16 - 00:35:25:16

No, we're fine with this.

00:35:25:18 - 00:35:28:10

Thank you. Okay. Thank you. And the applicant?

00:35:29:06 - 00:35:30:18

No, madam. Thank you.

00:35:31:06 - 00:35:31:23

Thank you.

00:35:48:10 - 00:36:02:02

Okay. So in terms of, um, initial assessment of principal issues, if there is anything else that anybody wishes to raise, um, watching this recording as well, um, please put them in writing to me by deadline one.

00:36:04:11 - 00:36:13:02

Okay. Gender Item four Annex E of the rule six letter is the draft examination timetable.

00:36:30:21 - 00:36:31:17

Okay.

00:36:34:21 - 00:37:00:03

So the timetable, it does include the draft dates for future hearings, as I've already mentioned, week commencing 20th of November, and deadlines for submission of written documents as well as dates that I will issue documents and that that includes my written questions as well. I won't read it out in full. It's if it's in front of you. Key points I'd just like to outline.

00:37:02:15 - 00:37:39:14

So as I've already mentioned, the examination will commence today following this preliminary meeting. And the first issue specific hearing will be here at 2:00 this afternoon relating to the draft development consent order. The second issue is specific Hearing starts at 10 a.m. here tomorrow and it will comprise a high level overview of the proposed development. It will outline the amendments that are included in the change application policy context, energy generation need and benefits, as well as the approach to the cumulative assessment.

00:37:41:01 - 00:37:49:16

Environmental matters generally will be limited to ecology the water environment, habitats, regulations, land use and archaeology.

00:37:51:18 - 00:38:07:23

As soon as practicable after this week's initial set of hearings and as I said, likely to be early next week, I will issue my Rule eight letter and that will finalize the timetable and we'll also confirm whether I accept the change application.

00:38:10:07 - 00:38:24:21

I've already made a procedural decision for deadline one to be on Tuesday, 3rd of October, so that that date is fixed. And I will expect to receive a range of documents, including those referred to in the previous agenda item.

00:38:28:01 - 00:38:51:09

The draft timetable sets out. That will issue my first set of written questions in around four weeks time, which is the 17th of October. And if required, a second set of written questions would be issued on the 19th of December, which is around four weeks after the planned hearings in November.

00:38:53:19 - 00:39:12:18

Additional issue, specific hearings, compulsory acquisition hearing and a potential open floor hearing. And this is only if requested. They're scheduled for the week, commencing 20th November, and expected to take up to three days in total, together with the accompanied site inspection.

00:39:14:14 - 00:39:36:22

Another important date is the 23rd of January 2024. That's when I expect to issue my schedule of changes to the draft development consent order and on the report on the implications for European sites. But they just just to note, they will only be issued if required.

00:39:39:11 - 00:40:21:14

So you will see that there are six deadlines in total. And purposefully. Deadline five and deadline six, which from the 13th and the 20th of February, respectively. And they I see them as being the final opportunity to wrap up any outstanding matters. This is intended to signal a potential early closure of the examination under section 99 of the Planning Act 2008, and that's approximately four weeks prior to the statutory six month period, which would be the 19th March from today.

00:40:23:09 - 00:40:35:14

This is by no means set in stone, and the parties should be aware that, given this proposed development is not as complex or as controversial as the other solar parks in the region.

00:40:38:07 - 00:40:44:09

Then time can be devoted by the interested parties to the final deadlines of the other projects.

00:40:45:21 - 00:40:59:10

In any case, when I've completed examination of this application, I'm obliged to inform each of the interested parties, and no additional submissions will then be accepted after that point.

00:41:02:23 - 00:41:10:15

Okay. Oh, no comments on the draft timetable. And starting with the applicant, please.

00:41:11:13 - 00:41:15:16

Thank you, madam. Neil Bromwich for the applicant. We don't have any further comments on the timetable.

00:41:20:20 - 00:41:22:16
Misspelled for the council space.

00:41:23:22 - 00:41:41:11
Yeah, it's just another need to be mindful of the fact that the West Burton hearing's been adjourned for up to a month and so it will just be a case. Think of keeping an eye on that and reflecting on if that needs to affect the timetable at all. It's just a point simply to be mindful of think at this stage.

00:41:44:15 - 00:41:49:24
Okay. Yeah. Thank you. And Boston Borough Council, do you have any comments on the timetable?

00:41:50:01 - 00:41:55:08
No, we're not involved in any of the other initiatives, so the timetable seems fine for our point of view.

00:41:55:21 - 00:41:57:06
Okay. Thank you very much.

00:42:10:08 - 00:42:16:17
Does anyone have any specific comments to make about potential early closure of the examination?
The applicant.

00:42:18:05 - 00:42:20:00
No, madam, we don't have any further comments.

00:42:21:14 - 00:42:23:13
Do the Council's have any comments to make?

00:42:25:22 - 00:42:30:08
Nothing beyond what we've already said, madam. That the need to be mindful of other other hearings.

00:42:30:12 - 00:42:31:22
Okay. Thank you very much.

00:42:52:09 - 00:43:14:05
Okay. Thank you, everybody. Take all the comments into account when producing the role. Rule eight letter the final Timetable. So I must also point out that at any point during the examination, I might issue a specific request for information from named parties, and I'll only do this if necessary. This is known as a rule 17 letter.

00:43:17:01 - 00:43:45:02
And I'd also like to highlight the importance of ensuring that information is submitted in accordance with the set deadlines. And it may seem like the end of the examination is a long way in the future, but it is a tight timescale, particularly as I intend to close early and we do have the Christmas break in between. And so whilst I do have the ability to accept late submissions into the examination, this is at my discretion and will only be done in exceptional circumstances.

00:43:46:22 - 00:43:54:24
This is because late submissions restrict the ability of other parties involved to respond to that information and that can jeopardize the timetable as a whole.

00:43:56:14 - 00:44:10:01

So it's important for parties here today to note and those watching the live stream, that if you do submit something late, there's always the possibility that it might not be accepted into the examination.

00:44:12:18 - 00:44:25:22

Okay. So anybody have any other matters to raise? Well, now on agenda item five on procedural matters of anything that they've heard today, the applicant.

00:44:27:06 - 00:44:27:22

No, madam.

00:44:29:16 - 00:44:30:21

And the councils.

00:44:31:07 - 00:44:32:09

Yes. Yes, please.

00:44:32:11 - 00:44:46:22

Madam, just one brief point, which is issue specific hearings. The council would ask that you consider whether a specific hearing on BMV is appropriate. And given that the council's position is, that is a key issue.

00:44:48:23 - 00:44:49:13

Thank you.

00:44:51:14 - 00:44:59:10

Thank you. Do Boston have anything to raise other matters? Thank you. Now. I'll take that into account. Thank you.

00:45:15:13 - 00:45:52:22

Okay. I've had no other matters notified to me under the agenda. In this case, I will move to close this issue. This. This meeting. Preliminary meeting. Thank you all for contributing and look forward to commencing the examination of this application. And remind everyone that a digital recording of the proceedings will be made available soon as possible on the project page of the website, and I will return here at 2:00 this afternoon for issues specific hearing one into the draft development consent order.

00:45:53:12 - 00:46:02:02

The time is now 1046 and this preliminary meeting of the Higginson Fen Solar park is now closed. Thank you.