



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

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| Project: | Botley West Solar Farm |
| Hearing: | Preliminary Meeting (PM) – Part 1 |
| Date: | 13 May 2025 |

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

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The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:03:21 - 00:00:37:08

Good morning, everyone and welcome. It is now 10:00 by the clock in the room, and I'm officially opening this preliminary meeting to look at the application made by Photo Vault Development Partners on behalf of solar five limited for an order granting development consent for the Botley West solar farm. Now would be a good time to switch your phones, or switch them to silent mode and make silent any noise alarms you may have on your devices. Uh, it's a relatively reasonable temperature in here at the moment, but it is due to warm up over the course of the day.

00:00:37:21 - 00:01:13:28

Um, so feel free to take off jackets and coats and stuff. I may dispense with mine myself as proceedings go forward. Um, we will all introduce ourselves in a matter of moments. But before we do that, please bear with me whilst I cater for a few housekeeping matters. Uh, can I check that everyone can hear me clearly? Thumbs up. That's always a good sign. Um, and please, can it be confirmed that the meeting recordings and the live streams have started? Thank you very much. Um, are there any requests for reasonable adjustments? Uh, arrangements? No.

00:01:14:02 - 00:01:37:28

Okay. Thank you very much. There are no fire alarm drills, uh, set for today. Um, but if the fire alarm sounds, please exit the building either from behind you or there are fire exits at the back behind us and congregate in the main car park. Um, the toilets are located in the atrium at the back there. So there's a gentleman, I believe, with his hand up there. Sorry.

00:01:43:02 - 00:02:02:13

Boss, thank you very much for that. Yes, there are a few technical glitches with the venue that are being looked at at the moment. And one of those is the Wi-Fi. And also, as you'll notice, it's a little dark in here. So I appreciate you might not be able to see me, but at least you can hear me. But the wi fi will hopefully be rectified as soon as it as soon as it can be.

00:02:02:15 - 00:02:09:07

Thank you. It's important, though, that we can read a lot of the paperwork because without it we're blind.

00:02:09:27 - 00:02:38:27

I fully understand where you're coming from. We do have a member of the applicant's team able to display documents on the screens around the venue, so hopefully any documents that need to be brought up can and will be as we proceed. But thank you for that, sir. Um, and that leads us on to to introductions. My name is Mr. Wallace. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State as the lead member of the examining authority to carry out an examination of the application. I'll hand over to other members to introduce themselves.

00:02:39:18 - 00:02:47:19

Good morning. My name is Helen Cassini, and I've also been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel of inspectors to examine this application.

00:02:48:28 - 00:02:55:12

Good morning. My name is Mr. Shaikh. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel of inspectors to examine this application.

00:02:57:13 - 00:03:05:06

Good morning. My name is Catherine Metcalfe. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel of inspectors to examine this application.

00:03:06:12 - 00:03:37:14

I can confirm that all members of the panel before you have made a declaration of interests responding to the planning Inspectorate's conflict of interest policy, and I confirm that none of us have any declared interest in relation to this appointment. Also present today are members of the case team. The case manager is Mr. Hayward and he is supported here by Miss Hannigan and Mr. Stevens at the back of the room and hard core online. Um, if you have any questions or concerns about today's event, please contact a member of the case team.

00:03:37:27 - 00:04:09:25

The audiovisual service today is presented by a CVS who have worked hard at the back of the room, and we thank them for their efforts today. So that's the team on our end, and we'd like to turn to the attendees for today. Uh, firstly, I'd like to welcome and acknowledge all those who are watching the live stream today. Welcome and thank you for joining us. I have a list of parties who are here just to observe, and as I have a list of those who are willing to speak today. I would like to start with introductions from everyone who has registered to speak.

00:04:10:03 - 00:04:32:05

And what I suggest we do here is when I read out the name of an organization or individual. If all members of the team present in person can introduce themselves one by one, followed by introductions from the virtual attendees of that team. I'll then turn to individuals and ask them just to confirm their attendance. So may I ask who's here? On behalf of the applicant, please?

00:04:33:20 - 00:04:53:06

Morning, sir. My name is Toby Yates. I'm an associate at Pinsent Masons with the legal advisors on behalf of the applicant, joined by various people here on behalf of the applicant, including my colleague Kara Phillips, who's a partner at Pinsent Masons. Would you like me to hand over to the various members of the applicant team, or would you rather wait until the relevant speakers are needed.

00:04:53:08 - 00:04:55:18

Maybe those on the front bench just to start with? Yes.

00:04:55:20 - 00:04:56:05

Sure.

00:04:58:29 - 00:05:06:12

Morning. My name is Christopher Le Quint. Uh, I'm, uh, planning and environmental lead for the project. Uh, speaking on behalf of the applicant.

00:05:10:05 - 00:05:14:23

Morning, sir. My name is Marco Lloyd. I work for Federal Development Partners.

00:05:16:18 - 00:05:29:19

Thank you very much. And thank you to your team. Obviously, more people come forward as and when need be. I appreciate that. Excuse me. Um, okay. Um, who is here on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, please?

00:05:31:07 - 00:05:37:25

Hello, I'm George Gurney. I'm here to speak on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, and I'm joined by Scarlett DaSilva, who'll be here to assist me today.

00:05:38:23 - 00:05:43:14

Thank you very much and welcome. And on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council.

00:05:45:19 - 00:05:52:01

Good morning. Yes. I'm Andrew Thompson and I'm the planning policy manager at West Oxfordshire District Council.

00:05:53:28 - 00:05:59:19

And I'm Andy Graham and I'm leader of West Oxfordshire District Council.

00:06:00:09 - 00:06:04:27

Thank you very much and welcome. And for Cherwell District Council.

00:06:06:13 - 00:06:07:06

Good morning.

00:06:07:15 - 00:06:13:00

My name is Suzanne Taylor. I'm a principal planning officer in development management. Thank you.

00:06:13:21 - 00:06:17:29

Thank you very much. On behalf of the Vale of Whitehorse District Council.

00:06:19:06 - 00:06:23:15

Good morning, Sir Stewart Walker, major application. Team leader for the Vale of Whitehorse.

00:06:24:05 - 00:06:26:01

Thank you very much. And will management

00:06:27:17 - 00:06:29:19

for your parish council.

00:06:30:25 - 00:06:34:21

Hi. Good morning, I'm Chris Westcott. I'm here on behalf of Cumnock Parish Council.

00:06:35:13 - 00:06:39:01

Thank you very much for Kensington Parish Council.

00:06:40:13 - 00:06:44:10

Good morning. Stewart Thompson here representing Covington Parish Council.

00:06:45:09 - 00:06:51:12

Thank you for Blenheim Palace. So we're here for Blenheim Palace?

00:06:53:22 - 00:07:03:17

Nope. Okay. Um, on behalf of Oxford Aviation Services Limited, I see a hand raised. If we could get a microphone to you.

00:07:06:24 - 00:07:12:21

Thank you. Uh, Owen Nadine, planning director at Lichfield. On behalf of Oxford Aviation Services Limited.

00:07:13:12 - 00:07:17:24

Thank you very much. And welcome. For Cpre, Oxfordshire.

00:07:22:03 - 00:07:24:00

No. Oh, okay.

00:07:25:27 - 00:07:28:24

Uh, for the low carbon hub IPPs. Limited.

00:07:33:06 - 00:07:43:03

No. Okay. I'll rattle through through these things to see if people are here because they have registered to speak. Uh, e-commerce UK. Yes, sir.

00:07:48:28 - 00:07:56:27

My name is Helen Muggeridge and I'm a member of the Cultural Landscapes Committee, which has prepared a statement for you.

00:07:56:29 - 00:08:01:21

Excellent. Thank you very much. Thank you. Um. From Forever Fields.

00:08:08:01 - 00:08:15:10

Uh. Good morning. My name is Anthony Thompson. I'm representing a community project called Forever Fields, speaking this afternoon.

00:08:16:03 - 00:08:20:00

Thank you very much. Uh, for the Churchwell Collective.

00:08:24:13 - 00:08:30:24

No, no. Hands raised. Nothing's in there. Uh, for the beg broke and Johnson. Greenbelt campaign.

00:08:33:28 - 00:08:34:13

Yes.

00:08:34:15 - 00:08:46:17

Alan Hearn. Hello, there. Hello. Alan Hearn, doctor Alan Hearn, representing big Brook and Johnson. Excellent. Thank you. I'm virtual, as you probably gathered.

00:08:46:22 - 00:08:53:16

Yes. Thank you very much for that. Thank you for confirming, uh, for Oxford University.

00:09:00:12 - 00:09:10:06

Good morning, sir. Rebecca Hawley from the University of Oxford. I'm head of town planning. Um, but I think that Mark juniper will be giving evidence later.

00:09:10:23 - 00:09:16:12

Okay. Fair enough. Thank you. Uh, for the Oxford Community Foundation.

00:09:17:23 - 00:09:22:05

I am Zoe Spriggs, chief exec of Oxfordshire Community Foundation.

00:09:24:06 - 00:09:31:16

Make a note of that. And now I'll come on to the the individuals who have registered here, um, are Steve and Michael Brown.

00:09:33:23 - 00:09:35:22

So that's me. I'm here on my own.

00:09:37:02 - 00:09:40:18

Thank you. Thank you very much. And welcome, Michael Field.

00:09:43:17 - 00:09:44:12

Good morning.

00:09:45:03 - 00:09:48:22

Good morning. Uh, Mr. David Beaumont.

00:09:53:08 - 00:09:56:11

Not okay. Uh, Jonathan Ford.

00:10:02:23 - 00:10:03:10

Hello.

00:10:07:17 - 00:10:08:20

Excuse me a moment.

00:10:12:06 - 00:10:13:20

Uh, Mr. David Foster.

00:10:14:21 - 00:10:17:10

Yeah, I'm here representing local concerns.

00:10:18:16 - 00:10:22:12

Excellent. Thank you very much. Uh, Vincent. Good start.

00:10:27:26 - 00:10:30:06

Okay. Uh, Harry. Saint John.

00:10:33:28 - 00:10:34:17

Hello.

00:10:35:08 - 00:10:41:07

Good morning. Uh, forgive me if I pronounce this incorrectly, but. Bojan Ivanovich. Evanovich.

00:10:42:19 - 00:11:31:13

Uh, I'm here virtually. Uh, I had a question. I'm a resident of Wharton, and I wanted to speak. Uh, unfortunately, it's the time of GCSEs, and there are so many speakers. From your instructions, I didn't really understand. When is my appropriate slot to speak? Uh, because I need to organise my day, and I don't know if I can maybe record my, uh, speech in a video and just email it to you and give you a Google link, because, you know, the most of your audience are elderly people that maybe don't work, but you have created, uh, you know, the hearing during public working hours and, you know, people who, uh, work cannot take a day off just to to wait and wait and wait.

00:11:31:15 - 00:12:02:24

So as I said, uh, I can speak, uh, when, you know, I've given more or less a predictable slot or I can just record chords my speech and send it to you, uh, in a link. And then you can, you know, press the play button or whatever. But, uh, as I said, I found signing up to this event incredibly confusing. And, uh, the format is, uh, you know, uh, a bit, uh, difficult to understand for people who are not in inspector or etc.,

00:12:02:26 - 00:12:16:20

etc.. So, um, I just need some clarification because I don't want to waste other people's time. And I also don't want to waste my time. But I am vehemently opposed to this, and I like my my, uh, voice to be heard, which it has been for two years.

00:12:17:25 - 00:12:33:27

Okay. Two quick questions from myself then. To you, sir. Uh, first of all, which agenda item today were you wanting to speak on and to? What are your sort of time constraints in terms of being in and out of, uh, those those other, um, commitments?

00:12:35:01 - 00:13:24:26

Well, a lot of time commitments you appreciate this is time of GCSEs. I have two kids and two school runs to do so I have very limited time. This is why I have a lot of different objections and I would like someone to hear me out because Botley West government officials and etc. etc. I don't want to hijack this. As I said, I'm prepared to to record my my speech. I would like you to play it whenever you have time. But, you know, as I said, the format for our objections is very uncomfortable because, you know, people who work younger people, they don't have time to just sit for a day or 2 or 3, you know, and listen to different presentations, inasmuch as they are probably very, very interesting.

00:13:25:12 - 00:13:48:15

You know, as I said, if you can just, uh, tell me, I can record this in the next half an hour, I will just send you the link, you know, with, you know, from a Google drive, and you can play the video whenever you find it suitable. Maybe you want to listen to it because it's a whole variety of of issues and they're all intertwined.

00:13:49:14 - 00:14:19:14

Sam Ivanovich, if I could just cut in there. We don't usually accept video submissions, um, to to the examination, but anything that's put in writing carries equal weight to anything that said orally. Um, what I will ask, is a member of the case team, uh, to contact you and to see the best way that you can have your submissions heard, um, and presented to us. Um, and then that will at least free you up for, for your other commitments during the day.

00:14:19:16 - 00:14:30:25

But, uh, I appreciate your, your frustration with the system. This is nonetheless how how we're working through it. So, um, a member of the case team will contact you shortly, sir.

00:14:31:17 - 00:14:32:06

Thank you.

00:14:34:11 - 00:14:39:13

Thank you for that. And then the last person I've got registered on my list is a mr. Tim Sumner.

00:14:47:02 - 00:14:52:19

He's got a commitment for his councillor activities, and he will be here to speak this afternoon.

00:14:52:23 - 00:15:31:11

Okay. Fair enough. Thank you very much for that. Thank you. I understand there are a number of observers in the room, um, and attending virtually, um, comprising interested parties and affected persons who have not registered to speak. But if anyone does feel compelled to contribute to today's meeting, please do raise your hand and examine. Your authority may allow this at an appropriate time, and in such circumstances, you'll be asked to introduce yourself, um, and your interest in the

application. Before I hand over to my colleagues who will set out our proposed approach to running this examination, I would like to make a few points about today's preliminary meeting.

00:15:32:00 - 00:16:09:17

Our main purpose here today is to discuss how the application should be examined and the process that it will follow only. We are not here to talk about the substance of the proposed development or its merits at this current time. This preliminary meeting is your opportunity to influence the process that we intend to follow. So therefore, any discussions or representations about the merits or disadvantages, advantages of the proposed development are for the examination itself. And indeed we've got open floor hearings this afternoon and tomorrow and an issue specific hearing on Thursday by which those matters can be aired.

00:16:10:05 - 00:16:20:13

If it was your intention to talk about merits based matters now, please do speak to a member of our case team and we'll see how we can accommodate you in the other events we have going on.

00:16:21:29 - 00:16:59:16

For those attending virtually, please rest assured that you do have our full attention at all time, even if our eyes are cast down and not looking at the camera. Aim to avoid any visual or noise distractions. Please keep your cameras and microphones off unless we invite you to speak. If virtual attendees decide to leave the meeting during breaks, you'll need to rejoin using the same link that was provided to you in our invitation email. And if you're watching the live stream after a break, you may need to refresh your browser. I must advise everyone, regardless of how they are attending today, that we do expect courteous behavior at the meeting and indeed at all hearings.

00:16:59:28 - 00:17:39:23

Please be patient. Wait your turn to speak and do not disrupt proceedings. You will all have your turn to speak. Repeat it or interruption of the preliminary meeting after a first warning may be deemed unreasonable behavior. Please be aware that an award of costs can be applied for and or made against a person who is behaving unreasonably. Finally, just to let you know that this event is being live streamed and recorded and the digital recordings that we make are kept and published online, and they're kept for a period of five years following the date of the decision by the Secretary of State on the Development Consent Order.

00:17:40:15 - 00:18:15:21

So, therefore, please be aware that the General Data Protection Regulations apply, and it is important that you understand that you will be recorded and therefore you consent to the retention and publication of the recording. It's unlikely that we will ask you to put sensitive or personal information into the public domain, and indeed, we'd encourage you not to do that. But if for some reason you feel it is absolutely necessary for that information to become in the public domain, we encourage you to speak to a member of the case team first, and we'll see how that is best distributed to us before I move on.

00:18:15:23 - 00:18:19:05

Does anyone have any questions on the points that I've just covered?

00:18:22:10 - 00:18:25:20

Okay, then I'll hand over to Mr. Schaaake for the next agenda item.

00:18:26:24 - 00:19:09:28

Thank you, Mr. Wallace. I will now provide a summary of the examination process. This is set out in NXP to our rule six letter of the 28th of March, 2025. Please do read this carefully if you haven't done so already. Before we get into the examination process, I want to say a bit about what has happened so far during the pre examination period. One the examining authority has read the application documents to understand the proposed development and its effects. Two in order to familiarize ourselves with elements of the application, we undertook a series of unaccompanied site inspections of the construction route and specific locations in the surrounding area between the 24th and 27th of February, 2025.

00:19:10:17 - 00:19:40:20

A short note of the locations we visited, the time of day and weather conditions is published on the Planning Inspectorate National Infrastructure Project webpage as notified in our rule six letter, and we will keep this up to date throughout the examination. Three We have read all relevant representations received so far where parties have expressed their view about the proposed development. We have also received a few submissions which the examining Authority used its discretion to accept, and these are listed as additional submissions.

00:19:42:04 - 00:20:14:20

Now, in regard to the legislative and policy framework, this application is for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, or NCP, under the Planning Act 2008. The overarching National Policy Statement for energy NPS in one, the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy, NPS in three, and the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks, NPS and five are the relevant policy statements for this project. Besides the Planning Act of 2008, examination Procedure rules govern some aspects of the process.

00:20:15:00 - 00:20:45:18

You will hear us referring to the rule six letter or a rule 13 notification or a rule 17 request. These are all rules set under the Examination Procedure rules. These can be found on the website. Legislation. Legislation. Gov.uk. And are also on the Planning Inspectorate website. In regard to the examination process. The examination of this nationally significant infrastructure project will commence. Once this preliminary meeting has been closed. Since, the examination process is primarily a written one.

00:20:45:20 - 00:21:07:00

Representations made in writing carry equal weight to any representations made orally. There may also be hearings, but these should be understood as building on the foundations of the written submissions, so interested parties should seek to engage fully throughout the written process, rather than think that they can wait for a particular hearing for the opportunity to influence proceedings.

00:21:08:27 - 00:21:27:19

The examination will take an inquisitorial approach as opposed to an adversarial one. The examining authority takes the lead in establishing what is important and relevant to the decision which the

Secretary of State needs to take. So we shall be looking for evidence of what is important and relevant. Testing the evidence put forward to see how robust it is.

00:21:29:22 - 00:22:04:21

Examination outcomes. At the conclusion of this examination, we will we will provide a recommendation report to the Secretary of State for Energy Security, net zero, who will consider the evidence and review our recommendation before making a final decision on the application. The recommendation report will have, at its core, our recommendation as to whether the Draft Development Consent Order, also known as DCO. Either in its current form or as amended during the examination, should be approved. It will also contain recommendations on what land should be subject to compulsory acquisition if the Secretary of State approves the DCO.

00:22:05:18 - 00:22:30:11

Even if we do not recommend that our consent should be given, we are required to still put forward what we consider would be the most appropriate DCO if the Secretary of State goes against that recommendation. The important point is that all matters relating to the draft DCO are integral parts of this examination. Does anybody need clarification on these general matters around the examination process that will not be covered by later agenda items?

00:22:33:15 - 00:22:34:21

Okay. Not seeing any hands

00:22:36:07 - 00:23:09:23

participating in the examination. The final point to make is about you and participating in the examination. This has been explained in some detail in the rule six letter and in the Planning Inspector's document. What is my status in the examination? However, I want to acknowledge the status of some specific participants here. Most people, either because they hold an interest in land that is within the proposed order limits, or because they have submitted a relevant representation, or because they are a statutory body, or because they are a statutory undertaker, are considered interested parties.

00:23:10:17 - 00:23:15:08

Most people present today here are here because they fall under one of those categories.

00:23:19:03 - 00:23:19:20

Okay.

00:23:21:27 - 00:23:25:24

Do you have anyone who speaks? Uh, speak under this agenda item.

00:23:29:25 - 00:23:37:26

Okay. Not seeing any hands. Virtually all here. Present. Okay, so we'll now hand over to Miss Cassini to take us through agenda item three.

00:23:39:00 - 00:23:53:25

Thank you, Mr. Shaikh. Um, so agenda item three looks at the initial assessment of principal issues. Um, it would be useful to have unsexy of our rule six letter on the screen for this item, please. So could ask the applicant team to share that.

00:23:57:05 - 00:24:27:20

Thank you. If your technology doesn't allow you to see the list on the screen clearly, you can find it as annex C to our rule six letter, which is dated the 28th of March this year, which has examined examination library reference PD 006, section 88, subsection one of the Planning Act 2008, as amended, requires the examining Authority, or ESA, to make an initial assessment of the principal issues arising on the application.

00:24:29:03 - 00:25:05:24

Um, for those of you who do have a copy of our rule six letter, please now turn to annex C. Um, since the list of principal issues is visible on the screen for those attending this meeting in person, I do not propose to read through the items identified. You may, however, wish to note the following. Firstly, that the principal issues have been compiled, compiled largely alphabetically, and this is not in an order of importance. Secondly, this annex is neither a comprehensive nor exclusive list of all issues that are important and relevant to this examination.

00:25:06:11 - 00:25:39:16

Instead, it identifies what we consider to be the issues attracting the most concern and upon which our recommendation is likely to be made. It will inevitably be the case that other relevant issues will arrive during the course of the examination. Those other issues will be considered and examined thoroughly when that happens. Equally, issues currently on the list may turn out not to be as important as they appear to be now. It should also be noted that a number of the principal issues have run into relationship and overlap, and if necessary, these will be reflected in the examination.

00:25:40:11 - 00:26:21:01

We do have a number of requests to speak on this agenda item. We'll hear those in turn shortly. The Acsa may have questions, and I'll also give the applicant a chance to speak at the end of the agenda item. By inviting you to speak. Please remember that we are not here to discuss the merits of the application. As Mr. Wallace has said, there will be opportunities for all parties to make those types of submissions as part of the detailed examination, which commences after today's meeting. At this stage, we are seeking submissions from interested parties who have any additional issues which they think or should affect the structure of the examination.

00:26:22:10 - 00:26:45:06

With this in mind. With that in mind, I invite submissions with a further reminder to all parties to introduce yourselves before you begin your submission, indicating whether you are representing an organisation and, if so, what its remit is. So coming first, Mr. Stewart Walker, on behalf of the Vale of Whitehorse District Council, I believe you have registered to speak on this agenda item.

00:26:48:18 - 00:26:51:16

Yes, I have. Um, sorry, just finding my notes.

00:26:54:06 - 00:27:09:25

I think it was just to reiterate the support for coming to parish councils, queries and comments that have been put in written representation with regards to the cumulative impact and where that would fit within the um, subject headings of the issues. It was just getting clarity on that, please.

00:27:11:23 - 00:27:30:08

Thank you. Um, we're not here today to make any rulings about the content of, um, the the list, the initial assessment. But obviously it will take into consideration all all the comments have been made and will be reflected in our rule eight letter moving forward.

00:27:33:02 - 00:27:43:06

It was just seeking clarity where if we were looking at cumulative impact as a separate topic heading, or whether it would be covered under the themes of the environmental chapters that sought clarity on.

00:27:43:10 - 00:28:03:04

Sorry. So each of the topics that we look at, cumulative issues will be considered within within those. So sort of within each topic they will be covered. Thank you. Can I now ask Suzanne Taylor on behalf of chair while district council, please.

00:28:04:11 - 00:28:38:17

Thank you. Yes. Suzanne Taylor, I'm speaking on behalf of Cherwell. Um, I just wondered, there were a couple of potential additions, I think, to this list. Um, the first was ecology. Um, is is not. Doesn't appear at all. Um, the other issue that, uh, Churchwell particularly, uh, wanted to look at was coalescence. Potentially, we thought that could come under the landscape and visual amenity section. And finally, um, a reference perhaps to aviation activities.

00:28:39:21 - 00:28:40:14

Thank you.

00:28:41:04 - 00:28:46:10

Thank you. Uh, Mr. George Gurney. Uh, Oxfordshire County Council.

00:28:47:16 - 00:28:57:03

Yes. George Gurney, representing Oxford County Council. Um, yeah. We'd like to support, uh, Churchill's request that ecology be considered as one of the principal issues in the examination. Thank you.

00:28:58:14 - 00:29:02:11

Thank you. Mr. Andrew Thompson of West Oxfordshire District Council.

00:29:02:23 - 00:29:05:05

Good morning. Yes. Thank you. Um.

00:29:08:08 - 00:29:51:07

And we appreciate that the list of principal issues is not exhaustive or comprehensive, but we wish to highlight a couple of issues that are not currently listed that we think should be, um, the first of these relates to ecology and nature conservation. Uh, West Oxfordshire District Council covered the

potential ecological impacts of the solar farm at length in its relevant representation. Um, we requested that the potential impacts on protected and priority species be given detailed consideration at examination due to the potential for landscape scale impacts, and to ensure that the impacts on protected and priority species are avoided and adequately compensated.

00:29:51:20 - 00:30:25:16

Um, so we recognise that the initial assessment of principal issues is not exhaustive, but surprised a little. Um, ecology and nature conservation is not included as a principal issue. Um, the second of these relates to the noise impacts of the scheme. We note that the examining authority sought clarity clarification from the applicant prior to the preliminary meeting regarding the maximum design scenarios for the project, including the noise impacts of constructing substations across the development.

00:30:26:04 - 00:31:03:03

We also note that noise and vibration is covered as a strategic matter, but we did highlight through the relevant representation, um, concerns about the noise impacts of the project, particularly during the operational phase of noise arising from the power converter stations. Um, the Council considered that noise impacts of the project had not been fully assessed within the applicant's assessment, which focused primarily on sensitive receptors and was limited to residential dwellings within and on the edge of the site.

00:31:03:24 - 00:31:17:24

Um. So we consider that noise and vibration impacts should be covered as a principle issue, but also recognises that it may be regarded as a cross-cutting theme along with the landscape impacts of the proposal. Thank you.

00:31:18:12 - 00:31:23:21

Thank you very much. Is Mr. Vincent good start online or in the room yet?

00:31:26:20 - 00:31:38:09

No. Uh, Mr.. Good start. If you do, uh, watch back later. You are able to make, um, contributions in writing if necessary. Uh, Mr. Steven Michael Brown.

00:31:41:22 - 00:31:42:24

Thank you very much.

00:31:45:21 - 00:32:16:26

My name is Michael Brown. I'm here. As it were, on my own. I don't represent anybody else. Um, but I have chaired a local, um, group, uh, in in the hambro villages. My written submission for this hearing is in the examination library. PDA zero eight. I want to raise the subject to the number and quality of the currently available photographs and photo montages.

00:32:18:01 - 00:32:29:05

I would this would affect the arrangements or process for the examination and is relevant to principal issue, landscape and visual amenity.

00:32:31:01 - 00:33:02:12

The project bounded by the Red line, covers some 3200 acres at the statutory consultation stage. There were photographs taken of 55 viewpoints and photo montages of 18 of them. Although the local authorities were consulted about 55, the 18 were selected and told by the applicant alone for the DCO. The 18 photo montages have been increased to 31 winter year.

00:33:02:14 - 00:33:17:02

One summer year. 15 again selected from the 55 by the applicant. So on average there is only one photo montage viewpoint for every 103 acres.

00:33:19:06 - 00:34:01:11

The question I'm asking you to consider is whether 55 viewpoints and 31 photo montages are of sufficient quality and insufficient number to provide enough information. So the impact of the project can be properly understood by anyone looking at it. If not, then I'm asking you to direct that further photographs and photo montage is that the right quality should be provided? When your site visits, you will have an impression of the quality of the landscape with undulating topography, distant views, many ancient public footpaths and a few roads, all of which provide vistas of the countryside.

00:34:02:16 - 00:34:18:27

This is not flat land that can be hidden behind new hedging. I've asked myself what are the relevant requirements and where we might find appropriate guidance. I've identified the following one.

00:34:18:29 - 00:34:47:05

Mr. Brown, sorry to interrupt. We are verging on entering into merits or otherwise. Um, about the application I take. I do take your point. I understand the point that you are making about photo montages, and I have made a note of that. But we you are beginning to stray somewhat into merits. Is there anything else in terms of the list of the principal issues you wish to add? I don't want to appear rude at all.

00:34:47:07 - 00:35:22:21

Oh no, I understand. Um, my concern is that unless this opportunity is taken for me to ask for further photographs and photo montages. This seems to me to be a process matter as to whether or not you will agree that further materials should be provided in this way. And if it is, then it affects the directions which you might make to the applicant as to what should be done.

00:35:23:16 - 00:35:37:21

And it will affect everybody. If if you do go ahead with that and you do order further, further photographs and photo montages, then those have to be slotted in to your overall timetable.

00:35:38:00 - 00:35:58:02

No, I do I do understand the point that you make and you know, you made it very clear. Is there anything else that you wish to add? Oh, that because I do have to stop you moving into discussing merits, which I think we were beginning to verge into that, but I think I understand I definitely understand the point that you have made.

00:35:58:04 - 00:36:06:12

In which case I will keep my, uh, my slot this afternoon, which, um, I've also got listed. Thank you.

00:36:06:14 - 00:36:07:12

Thank you very much.

00:36:09:02 - 00:36:13:17

Um, Miss Dominic here on behalf of Blenheim Palace. Are you available?

00:36:15:11 - 00:36:26:14

No. Again, uh, please make any contributions in writing. Moving on to Mr. Anthony Thompson on behalf of Further Fields, if you'd like to make your contribution.

00:36:28:15 - 00:36:35:15

Oh, thank you very much. Uh, Miss Barbara Hammond, on behalf of low carbon Hope, IPPs.

00:36:37:10 - 00:36:37:27

No.

00:36:40:05 - 00:36:41:29

No. Parish council.

00:36:44:15 - 00:37:17:04

Um, the parish council. Sorry. Thank you. No problem at all. Um, as you probably understand, we've got no prior experience of participating in this kind of application, so we'd be really grateful for any guidance you can give us. But we have at this stage, we think, five process questions that we would like to ask if that's okay. Um, one question about cumulative impacts and for individual issue questions, and the question about cumulative impacts has been already addressed by Stewart Walker of the veil.

00:37:17:06 - 00:37:53:09

But just for clarity and for completeness, um, as a parish council, we're unclear how the cumulative impacts of this application and application on an immediately adjacent site and being made currently under the Town and Country Planning Act and the proposed National Grid substation for our parish, how are those three interrelated applications will be considered cumulatively, and I recognize that it probably won't be possible to provide an answer now, but it's something that exercises, the parish council and our residents.

00:37:54:10 - 00:38:14:20

Our four issue specific process questions are taken in turn. How will you take account of how many people will be affected by this project? Whereby, for example, in our parish, virtually the whole population of 7000 people live within 1.5km of the power station.

00:38:16:11 - 00:38:58:19

Other questions we have about process is how will flood risk be assessed when the more detailed flood risk assessment, commissioned by this parish council and forming part of its made neighbourhood plan, and so its flood risk policies seem to have been ignored by the applicant. We

have more detailed information because we've commissioned our own flood risk survey, which forms part of the made neighbourhood plan. Um, and next question is actually by reference again to the Red House Farm Power Station application and the response by Thames Valley Police to that application, in which they warn that solar power stations act as a magnet for organised crime gangs.

00:38:59:04 - 00:39:53:20

But unfortunately, we can find no reference to designing out crime in the Botley West documentation. And so we'd like to understand what your process will be for examining this by, for example, by reference to MPP f policies 96 B and 135 F. And our last question is Will and how will you assess the proposed permanent, not 40 years temporary National Grid substation proposed for the parish?

Because at the moment, as we understand it, and recognising that we're a parish council and not able to necessarily devote as much time as other organisations, and we have a position where we think that National Grid are saying that it needs to be here because of Botley West and Botley West is saying they need to be here because of National Grid, and we see that as a somewhat circular argument, and we wonder how you will unpick that.

00:39:54:22 - 00:40:25:24

And just lastly, we have a kind of nomenclature question if we may just add one sort of nomenclature question on the end. And we were given to understand, I think, at the start of this process, that the name Botley West derives from the name of the proposed National Grid substation. And we find that odd because since at least last November, National Grid has been communicating with us, telling us that the power the substation is going to be called far more. So we wonder whether the name ought to be changed.

00:40:26:12 - 00:40:27:01

Thank you.

00:40:27:21 - 00:40:41:20

Thank you. Um, in terms of the name, I think that's probably one for the applicant to deal with. So I will leave that for them to comment. Um, at the end. In terms of flood risk. You mentioned that you have some additional information. Is that correct?

00:40:41:24 - 00:40:57:03

Yes. Published on the Vale of Whitehorse website where we have all the information from a neighbourhood plan. We have a detailed flood risk assessment, and there are a number of flood risk policies included within the main Neighbourhood plan. More than happy to send you an email with the links to those if that would be helpful.

00:40:57:05 - 00:41:19:25

I was going to ask that that would be very useful in terms of flood risk. I mean, it is a topic in its own entity which will be examined during during the course of this process. Um, design in terms of your concerns. Again, I probably will pass that one over to the applicant at the end for them to respond to.

00:41:23:00 - 00:41:56:03

Yes. Yeah. Just in terms of cumulative impacts, we obviously have the list from the applicant as to the other projects that are going on in the area. We will deal with them in two ways throughout the

examination and in our reporting. The first would be to look at them on a topic by topic basis. So anything under transport that is cumulative across all the projects. We will take that into account and assess that under the topic of transport. But of course there's more. So there's multiple receptors subject to multiple impacts.

00:41:56:07 - 00:42:28:21

So there's transport noise uh vibration and visual impact. One residence may be subject to multiple impacts. And we will take those into account as they come forward on the receptors, on the evidence that's not just presented from the applicant but presented from, from, you know, the interested parties. So anything that can be flagged up to us of any concerns. We will listen and we will take that into account and present those to the to the Secretary of State at the conclusion of the examination.

00:42:28:27 - 00:43:00:15

And if I may just touch a bit further on in terms of how do we take account of the number of people affected? Um, obviously we've got a large number of relevant representations that shows the strength of the feeling in the community, and we are also aware that some of those groups that have been organized, not every member of that group has written a relevant representation. Now, there's probably hundreds more people behind the face of the organization, if you know what I mean. So we do take all representations seriously.

00:43:00:17 - 00:43:34:27

We know where they come from. We know they come from from a personal place for a lot of people. And from our site visits, we've been around and we've seen the areas that are going to be affected, and we will no doubt carry out more inspections over the course of this examination. So we are well aware of the communities that are on the receiving end, if you like, of a development, should it go go ahead or just in general in terms of the efforts that people are putting in to to attend the examination, to take time out of their their working days and whatnot, to come and be a part of this.

00:43:34:29 - 00:43:41:18

So we will take that into account. We will give credence where it is due? Definitely.

00:43:42:11 - 00:44:00:00

Thank you. That's very helpful. And presumably if we have additional information, for example, you mentioned cumulative impacts. The one of the cumulative impacts listed by the applicant is inaccurate. It listed as a screening opinion. It's already on its second planning application. We're happy to supply the more up to date information to you if that would be helpful.

00:44:00:02 - 00:44:09:25

That would be welcomed. Yes, indeed. Any any place where there's an update or anything. Yes. By all means, put it in writing to us. Thank you. Sorry, Miss Cassini.

00:44:10:25 - 00:44:17:22

Thank you. I have a George Smith on behalf of FRS Register to speak, but I don't believe.

00:44:18:13 - 00:44:18:28

Yep.

00:44:19:21 - 00:44:20:16

Mr. Smith.

00:44:26:09 - 00:44:58:05

Um, yes, I, I'm, uh, appearing on my own behalf. I'm a long time resident of Antrim, but a former district councillor and chairman of the ancient society. Um, the point I'd like to make at this stage is that there's clearly discrepancies between the views of the proponents and the adversaries of the scheme. And I think there's a need for objective information to be produced in some cases. Particular example land use.

00:44:58:29 - 00:45:34:29

And there is a disagreement about the classification of the agricultural land in the area, what grade it is. And much of that is actually obsolete. There's also a lack of information about the impact on agriculture, what crops are grown and what would be lost. I think it would be a great help if the inspectorate could commission an independent and up to date information about the quality of agricultural land and the impact on agricultural production if the scheme goes ahead.

00:45:35:12 - 00:45:42:28

It would be better if this appeared independently, rather than in an adversarial way between the proponents of the objectors.

00:45:44:26 - 00:45:52:20

Thank you very much. Next person. Uh, on behalf of Oxfordshire Community Foundation.

00:45:53:26 - 00:46:31:11

Thank you. Yeah, I'm Zoe Springs. Um, again, I'm really sorry if I've got the process wrong. I wanted to say something under the list of principle issues and to say that, um, so as an organisation, um, a charity, we match donors, um, with the needs of grassroots charities. And we think that one of the principal issues to be considered is community benefit and a community benefit fund. And and just to highlight, there was so many amazing charitable organisations, PTAs, parish councils in the affected areas, um, their costs are going up, the demand for their services are going up, but public giving is going down.

00:46:31:13 - 00:46:42:26

And so funding is really needed and we would advocate that any funding should be for non-statutory purposes and be additional. Um, I hope that counts as an issue. Thank you.

00:46:43:03 - 00:46:49:10

Thank you very much. Uh, Mr. Hearn, on behalf of Brook and Johnston. Green belt campaign.

00:46:51:09 - 00:47:00:08

Hi, there. Um. Good morning. Good morning. We made a relevant representation, which I think you've given the number 92 two.

00:47:00:10 - 00:47:01:03

That's correct.

00:47:01:23 - 00:47:38:19

Uh, on page three of that, we, um, set out, uh, our five principal issues. Our work has been limited in particular areas. We are resourced by ourselves, not anybody else. So we pick particular ones. Um, site selection has come up in your list. Uh, cumulative impacts has been discussed this morning, and that seems an appropriate way forward. The others on our list, um, we think you should give consideration to including particularly decommissioning, which is the fourth one on our bullet points on page three.

00:47:39:04 - 00:48:12:09

Um, this application is for a temporary position. So if the scheme isn't properly decommissioned, it won't be temporary. Uh, but at the moment, the applicants have made, uh, perhaps understandably, very little, uh, of the decommissioning process, a few paragraphs. The draft DCO, um, contained nothing about the obligation to decommission. It just contains, uh, clauses in respect of a decommissioning plan. If indeed anyone's around to do the decommissioning in 40 years.

00:48:12:14 - 00:48:51:21

So we would strongly suggest that the decommissioning issue is one that should be principal, because if the applicants can't prove decommissioning will take place and will restore the land to its current state, then the application really can't be considered temporary and perhaps the order can't be made. So we see that as pretty fundamental. Um. Funding is on our list as well. Uh, along with deliverability of the scheme, which we think go together, funding is something which the applicants are required to prove to enable the compulsory purchase to go ahead.

00:48:52:06 - 00:49:23:25

Um, we've done a critique of their funding statement in our relevant representation, and we find it has many flaws to the point that you, uh, the examining authority and the secretary of state can't really rely on the fact that the applicants small German company, uh, fronted by a, um, shell business in the UK, can actually afford to make this acquisition of the of the land they want to acquire compulsory. So that really needs to be tested.

00:49:24:03 - 00:50:07:16

And looking at other decision letter recommendation letters from different schemes. It does appear that others do. You test the funding availability from the applicants and in addition to our relevant representation, we, uh, our chairman, John Lewis, sent a letter to the, uh, the Inspectorate's, um, case team. Uh, Simon, ever helpful, replied, um, uh, drawing attention to the fact that you have mentioned the Rochdale envelope, uh, as being of importance in the selection process.

00:50:07:27 - 00:50:46:03

Uh, and we asked whether that would be discussed today. Subsequently, the, the DCO, uh, the, um, ish one, if that's what you call it, or meeting on Thursday has that on the agenda as well. So, uh, our question whether it's today or Thursday is how is the Rochdale envelope, uh, current procedure going to be interpreted? Will there be any scope for the applicants or even yourselves, to recommend to the Secretary of State that less panels be built within the Red line area? Um, and finally, I'll add, we haven't raised this before.

00:50:46:05 - 00:51:34:21

We thought somebody else would. But the the description, uh, under the principal issues list on annex C, battles are slightly and we thought others would probably raise it. Um, you talk about under assessment of alternative development scenarios and the Rochdale envelope covered that, including the rationale for the preferred route, which is not a concept we've heard about in terms of, um, solar farms, uh, and other potential routes and the selection of sites for the above ground installations Blocking valve stations, which, uh, we're not engineers, but in our limited experience, that probably relates to gas pipeline rather than a rather than a solar farm.

00:51:34:23 - 00:51:47:12

So we wonder whether that's accurate. And if so, how does it fit with the scheme as being proposed by the applicants? So sorry there are so many items, but that's that's our list. Thank you.

00:51:47:25 - 00:51:51:19

Thank you very much. Mr. Wallace. I think you have something to add.

00:51:51:21 - 00:52:41:13

Uh, yes, indeed. No, certainly. Uh, your comment about block valve stations is is correct. There are. Excuse me. There are none within this proposal in terms of above ground installations. That was mainly in the secondary substations and the PXE units. Um, and in terms of the, the preferred route as such, um, without getting into the merits, there are occasions within the order limits where there are choices as to where the cable route is going. Um, and that will be explored further at issue specific here in one on Thursday, but it's basically asking the applicant, you know, why has the cable route connecting the the northern, the central or the southern areas? Why has that been chosen to be the way that it is? Uh, basically that was meant by that.

00:52:41:16 - 00:52:42:04

Thank you.

00:52:42:06 - 00:52:47:24

Okay. And presumably the crossing of the Thames, which is something we raise in our relevant representation.

00:52:49:10 - 00:52:50:07

Yes. Of course.

00:52:50:21 - 00:52:52:17

Yeah. Okay. Thank you very much for that.

00:52:53:15 - 00:52:57:18

Thank you. Uh, Mr. Stewart Thompson, on behalf of Castleton Parish Council.

00:52:59:09 - 00:53:17:03

Thank you. Uh, yes. In keeping with the interpretation of the representatives, Castleton Parish Council submit that the issue of ecology has not been included in the list of principal issues. And this is something that I'll speak to in my slots later this afternoon.

00:53:18:07 - 00:53:23:22

Thank you very much, Mr. Nadin. On behalf of Oxford Aviation Services Limited.

00:53:31:15 - 00:54:02:27

Thank you. On behalf of Oxford Aviation Services Limited, the owners operators of London Oxford Airport. Firstly, the airport acknowledges and welcomes the inclusion of aviation safety as a topic for discussion on Thursday's issues specific hearing. However, as per the written representations made to this preliminary meeting, there is some concern that aviation safety is not listed as a principal issue, which would offer opportunity for more detailed scrutiny later in the examination process.

00:54:03:18 - 00:54:35:09

The issue of aviation safety has given clear considerations in the Principal National Policy Statement, and one relevant to this proposal. In this instance, one of the affected airports is Oxford, one of only 29 aerodromes in the UK safeguarded by the CAA. Due to its importance to the national air transport system. In light of its importance and particularly its recognition as a first in class training centre for pilots both in the UK and globally, with which comes very specific air movement considerations.

00:54:35:20 - 00:54:56:05

And having regards for Ian one, we consider the development proposed around the airport deserves detailed scrutiny against the balance of need. As such, and I suspect following Thursday's session, where issues and concerns will be given some time to be discussed. We respectfully request that aviation safety is moved to be a principal issue. Thank you.

00:54:57:08 - 00:55:00:11

Thank you very much. I also have a mr. Will Curtis.

00:55:02:11 - 00:55:05:12

Thank you, Mr. Jonathan Ford.

00:55:11:18 - 00:55:48:08

Thank you. Thank you. Uh, I am speaking as a member of the public, and I have four principle issues, which I think are the most important in terms of this development. And the overriding one is the issue of our time issue of our generation, which of course is climate change. We've heard no reference to that today or in the documentation that has to be addressed. The other things I'd like to see addressed, which I think are very important, are the issue of amenity.

00:55:48:10 - 00:56:20:18

And there I'm particularly talking about visual amenity. I am a landscape architect, so that's something close to my heart. Secondly is biodiversity. We've heard a number of people talking about ecology. Biodiversity really needs looking at it more closely. And finally, the issue of community. And I'm not just talking here about financial benefit for the community, see, but all the other ones, including footpaths and and so on.

00:56:22:18 - 00:56:42:21

Thank you very much. Thank you all for your input. And before I turn to the applicant, does anybody else wish to make any comments in relation to the initial assessment of the principal issues? I see a couple of hands up at the front so we could just take them in turn. Please, if you could just give me your name and who, if anybody you're representing, please.

00:56:42:28 - 00:57:16:00

Thank you. My name is Karen Williams and although I will be representing two other individuals tomorrow, my three points are generic points. So it may not be relevant. And they're simply matters that you may potentially wish to consider. Consider as principal issues that appear to be missing to me, but if I'm wrong, I look forward to being corrected the first. That doesn't appear to be any area where the considerations of national security are at least contemplated, and I'm mindful that the planning law is driven by 2008 and so forth.

00:57:16:02 - 00:57:46:19

Whereas more recently we're looking at matters such as Heathrow fires and massive electricity outages. So I just wonder if national security does, in fact, have a place as a principal issue in the process. That's my first point. My second point is turning to the sort of David and Goliath type challenge that many of us have. In that, of course, there's a raft of people and a lot of money available on the applicant side, whereas individuals are left to sort of struggle through to some large extent.

00:57:46:25 - 00:58:20:25

I've attempted to make greater use of AI in that endeavor. And what I'm finding, whether by accident or I don't know, is that several key documents of the applicants are not AI searchable, either because they have been submitted as each page being photographed, or as a scan which prevents AI to search. And I wonder whether the examining authority might consider directing that the materials submitted are done in a format that is AI searchable to help this imbalance of resources.

00:58:21:16 - 00:59:02:02

My third and final point is, um, I understand that this is an inquisitorial approach. I just wonder if in the process, um, where it fits in terms of drilling into testing that evidence that I think the, um, that Mr. Wallace referred to, where the applicants repeatedly established the need for this application to be repeatedly said to be on the basis that the government cannot achieve net zero without Botley West. And I wonder whether there will be any actual drilling into the evidence for that, because those who wouldn't agree with that might say we've already achieved the government's target with what's in the pipeline.

00:59:02:04 - 00:59:12:00

So I just wondered if there's a point in the process that can clearly address, rather than just what might be called marketing hyperbole, that the government needs this.

00:59:13:06 - 00:59:20:19

You need will form part of the examination and we will be addressing that during the course.

00:59:21:01 - 00:59:21:26

I'm grateful.

00:59:22:05 - 00:59:24:26

Thank you. I believe gentleman next to you.

00:59:25:08 - 01:00:04:27

Thank you. I'm Richard Cook. I'm here for Pembroke Parish Council and also in my own behalf. Um, one point has arisen very recently, and that's the statement of changes to the book of reference. The schedule of changes, I think it was lodged with, with you as recently as the sixth of this month, so only just over a week ago. Um, an issue has arisen in that it's very difficult, especially for the likes of us, members of the public who are not in any way being paid to do any work on dealing with this application.

01:00:05:06 - 01:00:41:03

And that is that in the, in the starting point, The developer produced maps of the overall project, which had every field numbered. Um, we found that helpful because it was easy to then work out where things were likely to go, and not in the statement of of schedule of changes to the book of reference. A new system of field, or rather plot numbering, has been used, which bears no relationship at all to how fields originally were numbered in the early consultation days.

01:00:41:14 - 01:01:12:23

And that makes it very difficult indeed for us to work out what plot of land equals what fields within the overall project in size, within the red line boundary, and so on. Uh. Would it be possible to take that as a principal issue, so as to make sure we all sing from the same hymn sheet, and that if the applicant is asked to just Reorganize its field numbering or plot numbering process to make it easy to follow.

01:01:13:01 - 01:01:46:21

At the moment, it requires, first of all, to identify the plot of land. It requires then, looking at the the map relating that to the schedule that's just been produced, and then trying to follow that through into Land Registry records. And it also happens that the Land Registry records don't seem to bear any relation to the title numbers that are being put forward as rate relating to a plot of land. So that's my point, is, can the applicant sort out its field numbering and make sure that plots of land can be properly identified easily?

01:01:47:11 - 01:02:06:25

Thank you. I think the applicant has adopted a very standard approach in the use of plots. What I would suggest is maybe could the applicant part of the applicant's team speak to the gentleman in question, and maybe you could have a conversation offline about if there's any additional information the applicant could perhaps support you with.

01:02:08:23 - 01:02:10:11

Some of for the applicant because we can range.

01:02:10:13 - 01:02:24:25

Up. Thank you. Obviously that information would need to be made available for all members of the public. But I think in the first instance, if the applicant could maybe liaise with yourself as to what would be of greatest assistance to you, would that be satisfactory?

01:02:26:07 - 01:02:30:10

So I'm happy to speak to anybody and thank you for that. That view.

01:02:30:12 - 01:02:36:23

Thank you. I believe there were some other hands up in the room, I think behind, and then we'll come to you as well.

01:02:44:13 - 01:03:21:04

Hi, I'm Hilary Brown from Sustainable Woodstock, and I'd like to there's a few issues I'd perhaps like to repeat. First of all, the three issues that I think need to be part of principle is sort of already been mentioned. The climate crisis, um, is not But obviously that's why we're here. That's why we're the project. The proposal is going forward. Um, the previous issues we. Stated by the statutory people around the, um, table here on, um, ecology and related issues.

01:03:21:06 - 01:03:46:28

We support that. Uh, one in particular, which I'll be speaking on this afternoon, is on community benefits, which were the, um, Oxford Foundation has already mentioned. We believe that we understand this is not part of the process, but we feel it should be part of the there's a distinct lack of process here in England, and this should be part of the process. Um, and so we'd just like to state that.

01:03:49:11 - 01:04:06:21

Thank you very much. Just before I move on to the next person, the issue of I, um, which you raised, would it be possible for you to identify the actual documents, whether there is an issue that would be very helpful for us.

01:04:10:27 - 01:04:22:20

Yeah, that's fine. If you just like to submit into the examination those documents that you've already flagged, that would be useful. Sorry, gentlemen, on the end. Sorry. I'm sorry.

01:04:23:12 - 01:04:33:24

Personally, I suppose Rosemary Lewis, um, I'm a local resident. Um, and I'm speaking on my own behalf, but, um, through the the voices of of friends and.

01:04:33:26 - 01:04:34:12

Neighbours.

01:04:34:27 - 01:05:07:23

In the villages affected. I'd just like to endorse what's already been talked about, the impact on the community and local residents. Um, I'm one of 22,000 people living within 1.5km of the 1400 hectare site, and no proposal of this size, or as close to 70 people, has yet been examined in this country. Um, so it's inconceivable the impact on the local community of this size should not be fully considered, um, residential amenity. An assessment has not been carried out by the applicant.

01:05:08:10 - 01:05:36:03

Um, and it covers obviously as you talked about, cross cross issues, but it covers all sorts of things like visual amenity, which is slightly addressed. Sense of place, appreciation of open spaces and community activities. Noise. Traffic. Congestion. Socioeconomics. Um. The use of public rights of way. Human health consultation and engagement over the 40 years life of the project. And I would like that to be considered as a principal issue. Please.

01:05:37:27 - 01:05:44:16

Thank you very much. I don't think it's anybody else in the room which wish to make further comments on this agenda item.

01:05:46:16 - 01:06:01:12

Uh, don't think there's anybody online. Um, so coming. Finally, then to the applicant, would you like to make any comment on any of the matters raised at this stage? I think there was a couple of points. Uh, design and the name of the project. If you could perhaps address today, please.

01:06:02:02 - 01:06:24:16

Toby Gates, on behalf of the applicant. Um, yeah, sure. Appreciate the focus here is procedural. Um, and the applicant hasn't got any comments strictly on that. Um, I just want to reassure the interested parties that to the extent anything is raised, that's outside of the principle issues. Excuse me. That'll be dealt with as part of the relevant rep response process and the wider examination process. So those points.

01:06:24:18 - 01:06:25:03

Are.

01:06:25:07 - 01:06:31:20

Addressed by the applicant. Um, I'll continue that. I'll pause there.

01:06:31:27 - 01:06:39:25

Sorry. Could could I just let the applicant just finish? And then I will pick up the point that you're trying to make. Thank you.

01:06:41:06 - 01:07:17:02

Thank you. Tibbetts, on behalf of the applicant again. Um, the two points you mentioned, I'll come back to the first one being the name of the project. And just to confirm, there's no proposals to change the name of the project. That name is derived from the name of the location of the point of connection for the substation, which still remains in Botley West. And so. At the moment we'll keep that name. And then in terms of design, the relationship with design and potential crime concerns, um, I'd point gentlemen to the project description chapter, which is app Dash 043.

01:07:17:14 - 01:07:53:08

And that sets out that the project incorporates fencing and various security measures as part of the scheme design, and that is in relation to the construction and operational phases and decommissioning phase of the project, and includes things such as CCTV and other security measures. So that helps to

mitigate against the risk of criminal activity, and the applicant considers that their measures are appropriate for a scheme of this nature. Um, and references for those plans that are mentioned are um app dash 231 for the code of construction practice and that's for construction measures.

01:07:53:20 - 01:08:13:22

And then app dash 234. For the operational management plan for the operational security measures, I did make some other notes on some of the other topics that were raised. But again, I'm conscious that we don't necessarily want to stray into substantive points, but I can do some signposting if that would assist, or I can stop there.

01:08:15:02 - 01:08:23:09

If it's relevant to the the principal issues. It probably would be useful to give people that information now.

01:08:23:15 - 01:08:57:24

Sure. So the first one that I had noted was just in relation to the point made on noise, and I was just going to direct the gentleman that raised that to the ES clarifications report, which the applicant submitted, which is PDB dash 015, and that includes a clarification around noise for substations during construction. And specifically that's yes. Clarification seven in that report. So paragraph 2.8 in relation to aviation law I don't have anything to add here because I appreciate that we covered the issue specific on Thursday.

01:08:58:26 - 01:09:23:08

And then in terms of cumulative, I appreciate various people raised concerns with cumulative and just wanted to confirm the points that examiner authorities made, that each individual chapter of the applicant's submission includes an assessment of cumulative. But there's also the Cumulative Effects and Interrelationships report, which is app Dash 057. And that sets out the cumulative position more broadly.

01:09:25:06 - 01:09:56:07

Next I've got the temporary nature of the scheme and the requirement for decommissioning. Again, I imagine we may touch on this in further detail on Thursday under the DCO agenda item. But just to reassure in this first instance that there is a requirement in the DTA requirement 14 DCO latest version being as Dash 009 and requirement 14 secures that decommissioning must happen And a breach of that requirement is a criminal offence. So hopefully that gives us enough comfort for now.

01:09:56:09 - 01:09:58:15

But as I say, we can explore that further on Thursday

01:10:00:11 - 01:10:14:24

in terms of funding. Appreciate sounds as though interested parties have seen the funding statement, so I won't go into too much detail on that other than just reassure again that we've seen the relevant representations that have been made on that point, and we'll reply to those at deadline one.

01:10:17:04 - 01:10:47:11

And then just to the gentleman's point, we've taken his name, and we'll put him in touch with the land agents and environmental consultants to help clarify the position and numbering in the book of reference. But in the meantime, it might be helpful just to direct that gentleman to the land plans in the latest references as 006, because that set of plans corresponds with the plot referencing in the book of reference that, as you have said, was drafted in accordance with the infrastructure planning regulation. So then hopefully that helps him.

01:10:47:13 - 01:10:51:10

In the meantime, align the plot referencing in the book of reference to a visual plan.

01:10:52:25 - 01:11:19:13

And then finally, on my list, I apologize if I've missed anything, but is the climate change point? Obviously, it's very central point to a renewable energy scheme of this nature, and I just direct all interested parties to the climate change chapter, which is app Dash 051, which sets out the applicant's assessment in relation to climate change. So that's all I had on my list. And as I say, apologies if I've missed anything, but hopefully that's sufficient for now for procedural purposes. Thank you.

01:11:19:15 - 01:11:23:17

Thank you very much. I think there was a gentleman online which wish to speak.

01:11:24:10 - 01:12:08:29

Uh, yes. I will not be able to speak at my allotted time and I will submit a written statement. However, I just wanted to raise quick procedural points because I don't want my speech then to be dismissed on merits. ET cetera. ET cetera. My first point is that, uh, in my opinion, this, uh, entire planning process is a bit flawed because, uh, the developer has been allowed to aggregate non-contiguous, non-contiguous land parcels, which are solely connected in many occasions by National Grid cables and in any other planning application when you're, you know, doing a house or whatever you need to do parcel by parcel.

01:12:09:07 - 01:12:43:09

So in case you know, you split this in kind of only contiguous areas. Each of these, uh, sub areas should pass the test of being the national infrastructure project, because if you allow, uh, non-contiguous parcels to be aggregated by just by electricity cables, by that token, the entire country can be a single solar project. So this, to me, is a fundamental issue. I've raised it with the inspector. I never got any, uh, kind of opinion on this.

01:12:43:15 - 01:13:24:18

I have probably written to Botley West on a number of occasions to provide a legal opinion because, you know, in other places solar farms are just, you know, a blob like a rectangle, you know, in some far area next to industrial zone here. If you look at the mish mash, uh, it was only designed this way to avoid local scrutiny. So again, you're going to then say merits, not merits. I'm just saying that someone from the inspector needs to make sure that this doesn't set a precedent, whereby then anything can become a project, so long as you're able to find friends to label it as an sip.

01:13:24:23 - 01:13:59:00

And then you get, you know, quasi judicial powers from the secretary of state, then anything can fly currently in from the procedure. I think that all of these subunits need to be, uh, looked at separately, especially because this is now a Heathrow sized thing. So that's one. The second procedural issue that I have is that just by accepting the application, I believe that the inspector has accepted the temporary nature of a 40 year project.

01:13:59:12 - 01:14:29:23

So, for example, I'm going to be dead in 40 years. And all the, uh, the assurance is now given by, you know, the, the developer, my Blenheim, etc., etc. are going to, uh, you know, they cannot be taken face value because, you know, agricultural, uh, rejuvenation takes 7 to 10 years. 40 years is purely chosen as the longest possible period to kind of call it temporary. And we all know this is bogus.

01:14:30:22 - 01:15:08:18

Uh, my third point is that when we have, uh, sustainable Woodstock, speaking on behalf of residents and negotiating, uh, kind of, uh, financial Issues. I would like a sustainable Woodstock to declare all of their in-kind. Contributions and all of their email exchanges with the developer. Duke of Marlborough, Blenheim Estate and other affiliates. Because I for one, I want Inspector to know do not accept this to be an independent NGO or action group.

01:15:08:29 - 01:15:45:00

I view them as an extension of the developer. Uh, and also, you know, there are certain kind of articles that are planted with certain kind of comments that come immediately, etc., etc.. So that's my third issue. And then about the climate change, everyone is saying that Oxfordshire Oxfordshire declared a global climate emergency. Okay. We need to understand how what that means exactly for the Oxfordshire because I live, you know, in Walton on the Harrington Road.

01:15:45:13 - 01:16:18:02

And the only thing that's happening is the floods are getting worse and worse. And the runoff from the Blenheim fields, uh, you know, if they put solar farms will basically, uh, increase the risk, flooding risk significantly. And these are predictable things in the planning, you know, uh, applications normally you cannot accept projects that will a priori worsen the flooding, uh, situation for neighbors.

01:16:19:01 - 01:16:31:19

And if we have all of these risks, you know, the value of our homes is going to go down. No. What? I'm sorry. Uh, the developer, etcetera, etcetera. Despite previous requests.

01:16:31:25 - 01:16:40:20

Mr. Ivanovic, I'm going to have to ask you. I'm sorry to interrupt, but we are as as I said to the other gentleman, we are straying now into merits. Um.

01:16:40:25 - 01:16:52:18

This agenda. I will I will just say from the procedural perspective, there's one other thing. It's the impact of, uh, the visual pollution on our home values.

01:16:55:00 - 01:17:37:25

This has not been produced. I have repeatedly asked repeatedly for this over the last year and a half. And again, it needs to be done by independent, uh, agencies that are not in the pockets of Blenheim. So that's that's all. I will be submitting a written statement. But procedurally, as I said, the CIP is, uh, approval path is inappropriate. The 40 year, uh, kind of reassessment by the government that this is temporary basically allows, uh, you know, for a different set of procedures.

01:17:38:12 - 01:17:54:25

And, you know, this directly contradicts the the permanent nature of the greenbelt. And everyone knows this, this is kind of the key. So by steamrolling the process further a lot of items are just pushed back.

01:17:58:06 - 01:18:29:01

Thank you very much for your contribution. Um, thank you all for your participation. Participation. Even today, it's not our intention to take any procedural decisions today, but we have listened to and will consider the comments made by all parties. It is now coming up to 11:20 and we're going to adjourn for a 15 minute break. So we will resume at 1135. So the preliminary meeting is now adjourned until 1135.