



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Botley West Solar Farm
Hearing:	Open Floor Hearing 2 (OFH2) – Part 2
Date:	14 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.

00:14:37:03 - 00:14:43:27

Hello. Welcome back. The time is now 1130, and this open floor hearing is now resuming.

00:14:45:17 - 00:14:50:04

Can I ask Mr. Miles truly to come forward and present his representation? Thank you.

00:15:06:28 - 00:15:07:27

Miles. Truly.

00:15:37:12 - 00:15:38:01

Okay.

00:15:39:29 - 00:16:12:29

Um, this statement is ancillary to the statement reproduced at RR 0723, in the relevant representations part of the examination library. First, I wish to make one correction to that statement. The majority of the proposed scheme, i.e. 75%, is actually on greenbelt land, not 70%, as I said in my representation. And this agrees with the figure in the adequacy of consultation report.

00:16:14:23 - 00:16:54:05

I live at Audley House in Wootton, a grade two star listed house on the edge of the proposed scheme, with views across enclosure. One stop 12. We are therefore in a good position to judge the effect not on our house, but also on the surrounding area. I'm therefore not only an AP affected person, but also an IP an interested party. I disagree strongly with the statement in the P in the peer that the quotes the Sir form would have a minimum or minimal or low adverse impact on designated heritage assets.

00:16:55:13 - 00:17:08:06

I also disagree with the other peer statement that quotes. No residential properties have the potential to experience a degree of harm over and above substantial.

00:17:09:24 - 00:17:20:11

I have had two opinions from national farmers, with state agents confirming that there would indeed be a serious adverse impact and the degree of harm will be more than substantial.

00:17:22:04 - 00:17:58:06

The peer does not regard grade two listed buildings as of significance, but by not including grade two star listings, it must be assumed that they are of significance. I contend, therefore, that enclosure one, stop 12 should be taken out of the scheme altogether, because the panels in that enclosure would also badly affect the Oxford Drama School and Sansom Cottage. It also contains a high proportion of grade two soil and a veteran oak tree, which must be protected.

00:18:00:06 - 00:18:20:15

My second concern is the effect on the local public rights of way. The popular bridleway and footpath for Wootton to Woodstock will be shrouded in fencing on both sides. This also connects with Aikman Street and the ancient Roman road with footpaths. Cornford Lane will be similarly affected.

00:18:22:13 - 00:18:52:24

My third concern is the effect on the local road network, particularly the B4, A27, during the construction period. This is an extremely busy road which you must use as a shortcut between the A44 and the A42 six zero. It is likely to be the main access point for much of the land in the northern sector, and is totally inadequate for that purpose, so serves both the village of Wootton and the minor road known as Stratford Lane.

00:18:53:09 - 00:19:10:24

Both routes should be designated out of bounds to construction traffic if the scheme goes ahead. The B 427 has also, of course, been the access route for Blenheim Estates existing solar scheme with Waverley Farm, but this is a minor project compared to the one under discussion.

00:19:12:24 - 00:19:47:14

Lastly, photographs the lack of appropriate photographs showing the potential effect of this scheme on the local environment has been well described in the adequacy of consultation report. The views from the B-47 are a case in point. There are no adequate photographs of the surrounding countryside from this road in an east easterly direction. That area is open land, mostly sloping downhill toward the road and mostly, mostly cannot possibly be hidden by planting with trees or hedges.

00:19:48:12 - 00:19:49:24

One minute left. Thank you.

00:19:49:28 - 00:19:51:02

That's all I want to say.

00:19:51:06 - 00:19:52:22

Oh. Thank you.

00:19:55:03 - 00:19:57:22

Thank you, Mr. Truly. I believe we have a question for Mr. Wallace.

00:19:58:14 - 00:20:31:14

Yes, indeed. Um, you mentioned, uh, two aspects the impact on the listed building and then the impact on your no personal residence of that building. Um, both. In both cases, you're saying it's a substantial impact. Um, not knowing your properties intimately as you do. I'd just like to hear in your own words How you feel that it will be substantial, both on the impact on the setting and the special character of the listed building, and also on your personal enjoyment of that property, please.

00:20:32:17 - 00:20:50:05

The diminution in the value of the setting, particularly being partially surrounded by solar panels and with views across the solar panels, which cannot be hidden in any reasonable time frame by by planting trees.

00:20:53:26 - 00:21:13:00

And from from where it's visible. How do those views, if you like, contribute to the setting of that listed building? Do you have, for example, a commanding viewpoint that then would be no, you'd be lost in amongst that viewpoint? Or how how does that additional land contribute to the setting, please?

00:21:13:05 - 00:21:28:23

Yes. Is the answer. Yes. I mean from the from the approach all the way down the road to the approach of the house, and within the house itself, you will be able to see the solar panels very, very clearly and very close.

00:21:29:11 - 00:21:37:12

And presumably then that links into the impact on your personal residence in that from majority of the windows in your property, you'll be able to see the.

00:21:37:14 - 00:21:40:02

Um, so all the windows in the front.

00:21:40:20 - 00:21:41:05

Right.

00:21:42:00 - 00:21:50:03

Okay. Thank you. I just wanted to hear, you know, obviously, I understand what you're saying in terms of you've got that substantial impact. I just wanted you to have the opportunity.

00:21:50:05 - 00:21:55:26

I'd be delighted to welcome you there one day, and you can have a look yourselves. But then that is the case.

00:21:56:06 - 00:22:03:23

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, is there any more questions from anyone? No. Okay. Thank you very much.

00:22:06:17 - 00:22:10:17

I asked Mr. Richard Devereaux Cook to come forward and put his representation. Thank you.

00:22:30:16 - 00:23:01:09

Thank you very much. Inspectors up. My relevant representation is in the document file under RR dash 0882. And I again clearly don't intend to relate to that because that's not what you want to hear from me about. Um, I do feel immediately that there's the need to correct something you were told earlier by a speaker from the church or collective.

00:23:01:11 - 00:23:30:12

You asked about the 500, the £5,000 per megawatt figure, and you were told that that related to solar farms. It does not. It relates to wind. Onshore wind farms in Scotland. So I would just make that point. And if you want a reference to that in writing, I will happily send it to you just to deal with that. Um, as far as my own representations are concerned,

00:23:32:11 - 00:24:16:20

there are individual items that I wanted to focus on. Um, one of the overriding characteristics of this application, or rather, the lead up to this application, has been the way in which the applicant has failed to provide sufficient detail to those the public who are seeking it. And I can only point to the comments, for instance, in the relevant representation from West Oxfordshire District Council, where they expressed dissatisfaction with explanations from the developer, the applicant, as to how they reach conclusions that there would, for instance, be no significant impact by the scheme.

00:24:17:03 - 00:24:58:03

Or no adverse or minimal disruption. And and I personally share that view very strongly. And I believe that a large number of people who have been addressing you this morning and more would share that view too. It's very unsatisfactory that the developer has still not provided quite a lot of information. And to that extent, the use of mechanisms like the Rochdale envelope process is going to interfere with that as well. We, the public, we the people who are responding will need to be able to respond to something that turns up through this process of examination as, as you know better than all of us.

00:24:58:18 - 00:25:30:07

Um, we need to respond. And therefore it's very difficult to see how, on the face of it, we will get the chance to respond properly when the developer produces things like I referred to yesterday to you about the the changes made to the book of reference in relation to the the the plots of land that the developer was proposing to regard as in its ownership, rather than without knowing the terms of any agreement that was referred to earlier by another speaker as well.

00:25:30:19 - 00:25:33:14

Um, so those are important points. The.

00:25:36:19 - 00:25:58:02

The whole area of this particular application in relation to where I live, which is in the parish of hambre, is really quite devastating that you've heard already about the coverage about the number of parishes around the Red line boundary. Um, it is

00:25:59:19 - 00:26:37:21

very difficult to see how there can be special circumstances which require this development to be where it is being proposed for. You heard earlier from from Professor Rogers that the output of the existing generated electricity already exceeds the amounts that are said to be required. Why does this project have to happen? It really shouldn't. It doesn't need to. And that certainly is is my personal view as a resident within or very close to the boundaries of the overall project.

00:26:38:08 - 00:27:10:18

Um, I draw attention to 1 or 2. One minute remaining. Draw attention to 1 or 2 particular points. I have a my my representation. I refer to things like security fencing. It's there for you to read and I'm not going to add any more to it. Again, if you want further documentation, I can provide that. In terms of letters from Thames Valley Police about what counts as security fencing and what doesn't. So happy to do that. Um, other than that, I don't think I need to trouble you any more right now.

00:27:14:28 - 00:27:48:20

Okay. Thank you very much for that. You mentioned about the Thames Valley Police letters. Um, yes. Obviously they're not an interested party. They've not submitted anything to this examination. I personally have no objection to you sending those letters to us, but I'd like you to get their consent to do so that so that they understand that they're, in effect, being quoted in this examination, if you like. So as long as they're happy for you knowing the context of what their what their letters will be used for, then yes, please do submit them to the examination.

00:27:49:05 - 00:28:05:22

Just in case it helps. The letters are written by one or other of the design. Designing out crime officers locos um, who obviously have a particular interest in designing out crime, as their name suggests. For sure. I will, I will make sure that happens. Yes.

00:28:05:24 - 00:28:07:17

Excellent. Thank you very much, sir. Thank you.

00:28:10:04 - 00:28:15:12

Thank you, Mr. Cook. Can I now ask Mr. Roderick Cook to come forward and put his representation? Thank you.

00:28:31:18 - 00:29:05:27

Hello? Can you hear me? Good. Yes. My name is Roderick Cook, and I'm a private individual. Just a member of the public. I happened to live in Mill Farm, which is at the northwestern corner of the central section, at the top of the road. Uh, incidentally, um, it's called Mill Farm because there was a mill here, and there's been a mill there since Domesday Book. It's kind of interesting to me that this is not even mentioned in the heritage section of the submission.

00:29:07:06 - 00:29:08:24

It's also agreed to listed.

00:29:10:10 - 00:29:19:29

Um. What I really want to talk about today is just to amplify the pain of the in landscape and visual amenity.

00:29:21:22 - 00:30:02:04

Uh, and since from where I'm a personal view, because from where I live, I look straight down the even lower valley, uh, which forms basically the core of the central section of the solar farm, the riverine load, which enriched also by the waters of the River Glen, which flows through the Benham State and joins even a just to the north, meander south through floodplain pastures and under the rising ground on both sides, on one side Burley Wood, and on the other side the ancient princely Wood, and, looking into the distance, white and wood on higher ground at 98m, stands per well farm, 30m above the river.

00:30:02:24 - 00:30:22:01

This charming landscape is visible to all users of Lower Road and the residents of church in Long Hambre, and in future to the 2000, residents of the new town sought to cross. It seems strange that

PvP should consider putting solar panels on this rapidly rising ground. It will give the impression that the ridge has been coated in chainmail.

00:30:23:25 - 00:30:32:24

Which brings me to the main points. Because of the undulating landscape mentioned above, the solar farm will have an unusually high visibility.

00:30:34:11 - 00:31:06:26

Here I'm slightly comparing contrasting with other major solar farms around the country. I looked at the farms in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, which had recently been approved, and they're both on relatively flat land, very unlike here. Secondly, the other aspect is that this land is travel past and seen by a huge number of people every day at the moment, mainly by the drivers using low road, but in the future by the cyclist using the new cycle path down their road to be built as part of the salt cross development.

00:31:07:12 - 00:31:50:05

In addition, it is traversed by the Oxford to Worcester railway line, which has grown hugely in passenger numbers over the last 20 years. So many thousands of eyes looking at the affected landscape every day. It seems ironic that visitors travelling this way to Blenheim Palace to pick it up at the station by the smart Blenheim Park bus. We're passing through a sea of black panels. First, instead of the current unspoilt valley. It's worth noting that Low Road is the main artery for all local traffic between the Hamburg's Blaydon and Woodstock in the north, and to ancient canton and so on in the south, be it for shopping, taking children to school or visiting another village.

00:31:50:26 - 00:32:18:23

Currently it is totally rural, but under the proposed plan would be enclosed by solar panels on both sides of the road and on the east, these green belts on the east green belt side as far as the eye can see. Thus, all local traffic from village to village will be will be through an industrial landscape, which can't be good for anyone's sense of well-being. It's also worth noting that the cross Newtown would be immediately bordered on its north side and on its west side by solar panels.

00:32:21:13 - 00:32:23:23

Just to comment on some

00:32:25:08 - 00:32:55:11

viewpoints and hedges, there have been comments on the analysis of the number of viewpoints, the inaccuracy of the photo montages in the applicant's submission, which I fully concur. The reality is that viewpoints are continuous down these roads and psychopaths, including the new one down Low Road for Tall Cross Newtown, are along the railway along the footpaths. Um. The submission talks largely about hedges and mitigating the mitigation of hedges, ie softening the impact.

00:32:56:27 - 00:32:57:26

but should be

00:32:59:22 - 00:33:03:13

allowed. Allowing hedges to grow tall or planting new hedges are not mitigated.

00:33:03:15 - 00:33:04:10

One minute left.

00:33:04:27 - 00:33:20:12

Thank you. If they block the view. One originally had, for example, Blenheim are currently allowing hedgerows by a low road to grow tall enough that you can't see the landscape at all except where they happen to be. Gaps. Mitigation is not mitigation. If this regional view is now obscured,

00:33:22:01 - 00:33:39:10

the solar panels may be a school by a hedge, but so probably is the original view. So in summary, the topography of the landscape makes it particularly visible compared with other large solar projects. A large number of people pass by every day on road and railway, with direct views of the affected landscape,

00:33:41:02 - 00:33:52:04

views from the road railway all effectively continuous, not the occasional viewpoints, and the use of hedges to obscure solar panels also likely to obscure the original view. Thank you.

00:33:56:06 - 00:34:28:04

Thank you, sir. Thank you for that. Um, you mentioned, uh, Mill Farm. Um, and if I'm correct, we went pretty close to that on our U.S.C. when we visited. So the entrance of built in solutions. Oh, yes. In that area around there? Yes. Um, and you've obviously got the bridge there of the arches going. Going through? Yes. Um, you mentioned it was in the Domesday Book and itself was a heritage asset. There's obviously other buildings around there. Other are there more sort of heritage assets within your grounds, as it were, or.

00:34:28:16 - 00:34:39:20

Well, the buildings are sort of 3 or 400 years old. You know, Cotswold stone buildings. Um, a large part was the old mill, which stopped working about 100 years ago.

00:34:40:00 - 00:34:40:16

Okay.

00:34:40:26 - 00:34:54:21

About about 180 years ago. About 1900, I think. Um, uh, obviously that building is not the one that was there at the time, the Domesday Book, but I think I'm pretty sure it was in the same site, the same place.

00:34:55:26 - 00:34:58:03

Okay, now, thank you very much for.

00:34:58:27 - 00:35:10:16

Working there for a thousand years. It's interesting. There's a mill right at the top of the central section development, and the next mill down river is a mill, which is exactly at the bottom of the civil farm development.

00:35:12:15 - 00:35:16:02

And is that one also not recorded or didn't you?

00:35:16:04 - 00:35:17:26

I don't think so. I don't think so.

00:35:18:10 - 00:35:21:05

Okay. Thank you sir. Thank you very much.

00:35:21:07 - 00:35:21:22

Okay.

00:35:21:24 - 00:35:22:09

Thank you.

00:35:25:05 - 00:35:30:06

Thank you, Mr. Cook. Can I now invite Rosemarie Lewis to come forward and put a representation?

00:35:39:14 - 00:35:59:17

Thank you. Just before I start, I do have a map which might help the inspectors because I'm going to be quite specifically talking about Lower Road. I did try to submit it, but the have your say is currently closed. Um, I will submit it later, but I have copies here if you wanted to have that in front of you while I was speaking.

00:36:00:03 - 00:36:08:09

Um, we won't be able to accept any hard copy documents here, but by all means, speak to our case manager, and we'll we'll we'll have that in front of us. Thank you.

00:36:09:10 - 00:36:47:01

So I'm Rosemarie Lewis, a resident of the village of church and adjacent to the western boundary of the central site, which comprises 70% of the entire proposal. I want to concentrate on two just very specific concerns for local residents traffic and noise. I believe the issue of heavy traffic and congestion in this area has not been adequately assessed by the applicant, and would draw the inspector's attention to the following facts drawn from local knowledge, daily use and actual observations of local roads, including by the previous speaker at the junction between the A 495 and lower road.

00:36:47:11 - 00:37:22:24

Traffic frequently queues for 500m as far as the low, narrow railway bridge, which is too narrow for a lorry to pass a car and unsuitable for HGVs. The queue restricts access into the prestigious Wolfram Institute and other businesses near the junction. More traffic turning into Lower Road to access the fields of solar panels will further delay the traffic. Trying to turn out to avoid queues, cars would cut through church hambre, an unsuitable alternative as the road is narrow and winds through the village where there is no pavement, no lighting and many properties adjacent to the road.

00:37:23:13 - 00:37:58:27

The applicant is proposing seven additional access points to the site from Lower Road. These will be added to the many tracks and property driveways. The turn to City Farm hamlet and the busy junction with Church Road into Church Hambre making 17 turn offs. Altogether, Lower road has no speed limit and contains long straight stretches, but also has bends and contour changes, restricting sightlines in places. The applicant's new public access path to run alongside Lower Road crosses it twice, which is a dangerous proposal.

00:37:59:23 - 00:38:35:15

The A4 and 95 itself is unsuitable for construction traffic because it passes directly through long Hampshire and Blaydon, where it is narrow and winding, causing a serious hazard to pedestrians. A safer access route to the site in this area would be from the A40 roundabout, approaching Lower Road from the south, as this passes just four of the 17 turn offs to reach the proposed substation and fields beyond. Please will the inspector examine whether the applicant has fully considered the impact on residents and other road users of its plans in this area? Secondly, noise.

00:38:36:09 - 00:39:06:13

I believe that the impact of noise both during construction and operation has been underestimated in the applicant's assessment. Impacts of construction noise are dismissed by the applicant as temporary and short lived. They state. Pile driving has the potential to cause some noise and vibration audible outside of the project site boundary. However, the pile driving will occur for a short time only next to any one receptor. I can find no justification for this conclusion. In the environmental statement pile.

00:39:06:15 - 00:39:36:26

Driving in an unbroken area of 500 hectares will cause severe noise pollution for each receptor for longer, and at a much greater distance than predicted by the applicant. It is well known in church Hambre that noises from Blenheim events four kilometres away can frequently be heard quite clearly, given the scale and topology of the central area. Hammering will reverberate throughout the even lower valley, impacting properties in church hambre, Blaydon, Bellbrook and Carrington.

00:39:37:13 - 00:40:07:28

A notable concern is the loss of peace and tranquillity in Blaydon churchyard, containing the much visited Churchill's grave. The noise will be heard in a number of schools, unsettling for vulnerable children, and is also likely to reach the ears of visitors to Blenheim Palace. All these concerns extend into the operational phase two of the estates that the power converter stations will emit 92dB. There are 156 PCs throughout the site. Some are placed in pairs.

00:40:08:00 - 00:40:26:07

Many are within 100m of properties and as close as five metres to public rights of way. And yet the impact is universally assessed as negligible, and cumulative impacts have not been considered during the construction phase. There has been no assessment of noise impacts on residential receptors.

00:40:26:09 - 00:40:27:13

One minute remaining.

00:40:27:20 - 00:40:58:02

During the operational stage. Some dwellings have assessed have been assessed for noise. But how the applicant arrived at the very limited number of these has not been explained, nor why they omitted so many sensitive receptors, including several schools and a crematorium. In summary, no residential amenity assessment has been carried out on either traffic or noise, or indeed on visual amenity. I hope the inspectors will consider these issues fully in the examination.

00:40:58:19 - 00:40:59:08

Thank you.

00:41:04:13 - 00:41:12:06

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Thank you for your points. Can I now ask Mr. Tom Lewis to come forward and for his representative representation? Thank you.

00:41:29:01 - 00:41:29:19

Okay.

00:41:40:04 - 00:42:11:17

Good morning. I'm Tom Lewis. I'm in favor of renewable energy, but critical of the unjustifiably large and damaging proposal to build Botley West Solar Farm. I live in church and of the and one of the 15 villages that will be affected by the project. I'm afraid this is rather repetitious, but I know you know most of the stuff. Anyway, you will be aware from previous submissions, but here are a few of the facts.

00:42:12:05 - 00:42:41:08

If it is built, the solar farm would stretch from Wootton in the north to Botley in the south, from Hambro in the west to Kidlington in the east, and stretch about 14 miles in length. It will be the largest solar farm in Europe, and adversely affect residents in 11,000 homes within 1.5km of the site. If the panels were laid end to end, they would stretch from Oxford to New York.

00:42:43:10 - 00:43:25:08

75% of the solar farm is to be constructed on Oxford's green belt, which is described by local authorities as functioning well. 38% of the 1400 hectares is on best and most versatile agricultural land. Growing national average yields of cereals. This land will be lost to food production for 42 years of the life of the project. Management of the land during this time has not been detailed. It will involve installing up to two 2,200,000 solar panels, ancillary equipment and at least 30km of cable runs, tall fences, lights and cameras.

00:43:26:04 - 00:44:12:22

It will cross beneath the Thames attention and connect to a new substation near farmer, where before the electricity Firstly generated during daylight hours, is uploaded to the National Grid network and within seconds used throughout the UK, not just Oxfordshire. Published surveys by both the stock, Botley West Group and by the developers themselves find that overwhelmingly residents oppose this project and not only residents. Oxford City Council, for instance, stated that the DCO application will need to provide a strong and robust case for the development of this scale, particularly where it will need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify development within the greenbelt.

00:44:13:01 - 00:44:56:15

Justify impacts on the setting of a number of heritage assets, including Blenheim Palace. The developer has ignored this advice. The non-technical summary of the environmental statement states that there are no significant adverse effect, either temporary or permanent on the local landscape character arising from the construction and operation of the the project. This is patently untrue. Nearly all the land is controlled by Blenheim, and the setting of Blenheim Palace, a Unesco World Heritage Site, was cited in the 2017 management plan as being important to the landscape and to the surrounding historic villages.

00:44:56:26 - 00:45:29:20

This too has been ignored. Fluvial flooding is already a serious issue, particularly for the villages of Carrington, Warton, Jansen and Kidlington. The developers have consistently ignored peer reviewed scientific evidence that solar panels increase runoff. All the water flowing off this area ends up in the River Thames, increasing the risk of flooding downstream. Driving supporting panels into the ground to a depth 1.8m will inevitably damage the land drains, leading to an increase in flooding.

00:45:31:11 - 00:45:45:17

I would like the inspectors to ask the applicant to address the following three issues. The developer and the DCO has not provided a justification for the significant adverse impact it will have on public rights of way throughout the area.

00:45:45:21 - 00:45:46:27

One minute remaining.

00:45:47:11 - 00:45:48:14

Mitigation.

00:45:54:08 - 00:45:55:21

Is inadequate.

00:45:57:23 - 00:46:31:01

The. The code developers have not answered why alternatives to the current scheme have not been investigated. And thirdly, why not the development? Will not the development have a severe impact on the setting of Blenheim Palace, particularly as all of the land involved in the scheme is to be subject to compulsory purchase order and its future would not then be under Blenheim stewardship during and after decommissioning in 42 years time. Contrary to what we heard yesterday from Mr.

00:46:31:03 - 00:46:40:10

Dominic Hare, the CEO of Blenheim Estate and of the board of the Blenheim Heritage Foundation Trust, that

00:46:41:27 - 00:47:13:02

the management of Blenheim Company that owns the land and where the solar panels will be sited. Over one year ago, my colleagues wrote to the independent trustees, the Blenheim Heritage Foundation, to elicit their response to British solar farm. They have not replied and so far have refused

to endorsed or criticised the project. However, I understand that the current Duke of Marlborough, through his role on the Woodstock Town Council, is on record as opposing solar farm.

00:47:13:27 - 00:47:31:15

I have significant concerns that if the project proceeds, the village of Church, Hamble will be surrounded by an industrial landscape of glass and aluminium. In my view, it is environmental vandalism on a large scale and I urged the inspector to advise rejection of the project. Thank you for listening.

00:47:35:08 - 00:47:42:04

Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Thank you for your points. Can I now ask Mr. Steve Jenkins to come forward and put his representation? Thank you.

00:48:01:25 - 00:48:02:13

Hello.

00:48:04:08 - 00:48:15:19

My name is Stephen Jenkins and I'm speaking as a resident of London Borough. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I'm pleased to be here, but I would prefer to be walking in Kingsley Wood.

00:48:17:06 - 00:48:49:17

I'm here to raise concerns about the impact of this development on notable veteran and ancient trees within and around the application Ocean area. I believe the risk of damage, decline or loss to important trees has not been fully assessed by the applicant and that there are errors and poor presentation and assessment within the application. My specific concern is for trees that form part of the ancient woodlands in the central area at Tinsley Wood, Burley Wood, Bladen Heath and Walton Heath across the whole Botley West site.

00:48:49:19 - 00:49:22:11

There are other areas of ancient woodland and an ancient green line at Dunford impacted. The high value trees contained within hedgerows and boundary lines mark out and form a major element of the setting of this part of Oxfordshire. I wish to bring the examiner's attention to the following points drawn from local knowledge, fieldwork and observation of these ancient woodlands and individual high value trees. Volunteer fieldwork confirms veteran and notable trees exist in large numbers within and adjacent to these ancient woodlands.

00:49:22:23 - 00:50:05:04

The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory lists 25 oak, ash and horse chestnut trees, which have been verified by the Trust's specialist assessors. Of these, ten specimens are verified veteran trees. The registration numbers I will supply in an appendix. A number of the trees listed on the RTI do not appear in the applicant's submission. Many more trees have been recorded, measured and assessed by volunteers. A significant proportion of the high value trees present exist around the perimeter of the woodlands, and, as a result, are particularly at risk from being directly exposed to the installation of solar equipment and infrastructure and cable routing.

00:50:06:02 - 00:50:36:23

The applicant proposes cable route options that pass very close adjacent to, and in some instances underneath, high value trees. Examples of high risk pinch points within the applicant's submission are located at Bladen Heath, Spurr, Birley Lodge and Warton Heath boundary with Merton College land where a cable route option runs adjacent to ancient woodland for almost 500m. The routes and pinch points increase the risk of damage to trees and woodland.

00:50:36:29 - 00:51:16:11

Alternative solutions that avoid this increased risk would be preferable. The scale of the proposal creates a situation where ancient woodlands are significantly or completely surrounded. This size of development is much larger than and isolates the woodlands themselves. Buffer zones and new hedgerows are proposed, but there is no mitigation proposed for the effect of woodland isolation and fragmentation. The applicant has previously assessed the magnitude of impact on ancient woodland as no change without, as far as I can see, producing a robust, evidence based assessment of the impact of the development on ancient woodlands.

00:51:16:13 - 00:51:47:23

Woodland species that and woodland species that rely on adjacent habitats for dispersal and feeding. There is a clear failure to identify threats in the applicant's Veterans Tree survey report. The report falls short in several key areas. Emissions. There are examples of veteran and notable trees located within and adjacent and close to the site, that are not included in the report. Buffer zones. The report takes a simple, standardized approach to buffer zones.

00:51:48:14 - 00:52:16:06

This risks encroachment into canopy areas and root protection zones. Indirect impacts. There is little attention paid to indirect impacts such as hydrological changes, soil degradation, and increased exposure to wind and light, all of which are relevant to sensitive aged trees. In short, the report represents the scale and seriousness to irreplaceable trees across the site. I also want to raise concerns regarding.

00:52:16:08 - 00:52:17:07

One minute remaining.

00:52:17:09 - 00:52:51:09

Thank you. Regarding the draft development consent order as it relates to trees and hedgerows in DCO Reference App 015, part six, section 38 and 39. Um, it is proposed that once issued, the Undertaker and I'm paraphrasing here for time can basically fell lop or cut back the roots of any tree or shrub if they consider it necessary. The powers requested are very wide. They override existing protection and create significant risk to ancient woodlands, high value trees and hedgerows across the site.

00:52:52:09 - 00:53:35:03

In conclusion, please examiners raise these issues during the examination and require the applicant to reassess and carry out a robust and comprehensive assessment of high value trees across the site. Reduce risk by pulling development back significantly from ancient woodland boundaries and high value trees across the site. Reassess cable routes and investigate alternatives that avoid risk to damage

to high value trees, reduce development that fragments and isolates ancient woodland, ensuring the maintenance of suitable habitat for woodland species to feed and move freely between wooded areas, and finally redraft the DCO to reduce risk to ancient woodlands, high value trees and hedgerows.

00:53:35:05 - 00:53:35:25

Thank you.

00:53:38:03 - 00:54:08:26

Thank you very much. You've covered a lot of ground there. And apologies. I've got some questions for you that you may want to take away and respond in writing, but of course, see, see how you get on to to start with, um, you mentioned, excuse me, you mentioned about woodland fragmentation and isolation. Could you just sort of explain to me how the existing woodland sort of coexists with other areas of similar woodland and the movements and interaction between them?

00:54:10:08 - 00:54:42:00

Of course, um, the upper even load Valley in the central section. Um, it contains a patchwork of ancient woodland. Um, some of those woodlands are managed crops and contain areas of conifer. Um, but largely ancient woodland exists in in the four areas I mentioned. So from from the west, working eastwards. Um, and this is all outside of Hyde Park in Blenheim Estate itself. This is in the setting at the head of the valley. There's wood. Um, there is then a gap.

00:54:42:02 - 00:55:02:27

Uh, we have Birley Wood, which touches Bladen Heath at Casterton, at Burley Lodge. Uh, and there's Warton Heath in the east. But there are other examples of isolated pieces of ancient woodland, including bed Brook wood. Um, in the immediate area. But I would describe it as a patchwork of ancient woodlands that is dotted at the head of the lower, even lower valley.

00:55:06:18 - 00:55:07:03

Okay.

00:55:07:26 - 00:55:28:12

Okay. Thank you. Um, you mentioned about the a number of trees that had not been included in the report. Are you able to for a map? For a diagram, show those trees to us at a later date as to which ones you feel qualified but have not been assessed?

00:55:29:00 - 00:55:45:27

Yes, I can I can provide information that's available publicly on the ancient tree inventory that the Woodland Trust publish. Um, I can also provide, um, lists of trees that volunteers locally have recorded across the area, and I'm happy to do that by the first deadline.

00:55:46:18 - 00:56:25:18

Okay. Thank you. Um, and then in relation to the the article in the DCO that allows, as you say, the felling or lopping of, of any tree, um, in relation to that, you'd also made the previous point about the, the 15 metre buffer zone not taken into account the, the canopy of trees. Um, in my experience in past development consent orders. What applicants have sought to do is still keep that provision in but say

subject to the the review or subject to the opinion of a qualified or independent above a coach list or something like that.

00:56:25:20 - 00:56:37:12

So basically say we have the ability to do this, but someone has to approve it first. Would that go some way in alleviating your concerns if that was to be pursued?

00:56:37:16 - 00:57:11:25

I think it would. I think my concern is in the wording as it stands at the moment of the DCO. I think, as I said in my presentation, the powers requested are very wide and can be interpreted in such a way that the developer can act um, or the developers. Contractors can act in such a way that accidents can happen. Um, we've only recently seen the infield Toby Oak accident. Um, the loss of the of the tree. North London. Just to show that contractors make mistakes, and I think the powers requested are extremely wide and are not appropriate.

00:57:12:15 - 00:57:42:28

Okay. And just one final question. It was something that was sort of new to me because it was a concept on that. Obviously I understand indirect effects on woodland, as you say, from runoff from wind and whatnot, but you mentioned light specifically. Now, obviously we're, you know, got solar panels with there's a glint and glare assessment provided by the applicant. But could you just enlighten me in terms of any additional light, how that affects ancient and veteran trees? What are the consequences.

00:57:43:00 - 00:57:58:18

So this is about environmental change. It's about the change of temperature and the change of ambient air temperature in and around ancient woodland. The information that I've used has been gleaned from Woodland Trust Resources, and I'm more than happy to share those references with the examining authority.

00:57:59:10 - 00:58:01:22

Yes. Please do. That would be marvelous. Thank you.

00:58:03:23 - 00:58:09:12

You'll be pleased to know that completes the questions the grilling that there. So no, thank you very much sir. Thank you for your time.

00:58:09:14 - 00:58:10:09

Thank you very much.

00:58:10:24 - 00:58:11:16

Back to Kinsley.

00:58:11:18 - 00:58:12:03

Wood.

00:58:13:04 - 00:58:20:11

Thank you. Mr. Jenkins. Can I now ask Karen Williams to come forward and put a representation, speaking on behalf of John Nguyen.

00:58:32:07 - 00:59:02:17

Thank you. Um, inspectors, I, I'm going to simply introduce John Wayne by saying, um, the link by providing the link between, uh, Mr. Dryden, for whom I spoke earlier, and, uh, Mr. Wynn's project, which I believe has been. It's okay that we speak together. Um, here. So Mr. Dryden supports renewable energy, including regenerative farming, which he does use some of his land for. And Mr. Dryden has been working with Mr.

00:59:02:19 - 00:59:36:19

Wynne's Women's Project, supporting and developing alternative green energy solutions. Most importantly, the project promotes the continuity of existing central and local government plans to net zero and community economic resilience. In due course, you will receive an invitation for a specific site visit to Gazi Farm so that you can understand the unique and profound impact on Gazi, as well as to to secure an insight into Mr.

00:59:36:21 - 00:59:57:24

Wynn's alternative program that offers significant community benefits and far less harm than Botley West would appear to be proposing. So I'll hand over to Mr. Wynn, who will provide an overview of his work towards the alternative economic and energy resilience options in Oxfordshire.

00:59:59:12 - 01:00:33:07

Thank you. Karen. Um, so we have a project with our Department for Energy Security in net zero that we set up 18 months ago. And it's equally audacious, I have to say, in terms of seeking resilience in, in, in the local economy via renewable energy, it's completely different. It's not a different scale to, but it's a different format altogether. Um, so we have lots of important organisations from across Britain, not just from locally here.

01:00:33:25 - 01:01:08:08

There are particular areas in Britain that are particularly mature in their regional economies, and how they've devolved with local, local resilience projects. Um, what we have is a scaled project. It includes 30,000 people in the Glam Valley region, which stretches from Chipping Norton to Woodstock. And we have, um, 6 to 8 different solar farms that are owned by each of the clusters of communities, and they trade between each other.

01:01:08:19 - 01:01:42:12

Now, I repeat that this is a business project. Department of energy Security, net zero. So it's something that they are seeking to promote. And there's already maturity in other parts of the country. It's not something we're coming up with without precedent. So that's the strategic alternative for the specific issue on that one. The second one is to do with heritage. Heritage in the valley seems to be restricted to the two Blenheim Palace, but Blenheim Palace is the nucleus of the member of the World Heritage Site member.

01:01:43:03 - 01:01:53:14

We had Unesco come a couple of years ago in order to help us define this. So because the river climb flows into the Blenheim Palace, um.

01:01:55:20 - 01:02:31:04

It's not a, it's not a lake as it's is defined, that would imply that it's autonomous. It's not. It's the river itself was detoured years, 200 years ago and created a lake around that. So we suggested to Unesco that the all the communities along the river should therefore be part of the buffer zone of the membership. The way they agree with it. So we're in the process of working on that. That brings an important voice into who the member is of the World Heritage Site.

01:02:32:15 - 01:03:04:17

The third specific issue is to do with the cumulative impact. Um, now that comes at a kind of deep level issue, because our concern is that the planning framework is working in a particular level, which is going to be at variance with the Oxfordshire County Council and other programs, including Unesco, I have to say, whereby there's a social, There's a strong social component coming into frameworks being adopted by various government. The one in Oxfordshire at the moment is called Ox Leap.

01:03:04:21 - 01:03:07:11

It's just been brought into play by over.

01:03:07:22 - 01:03:08:20

A minute remaining.

01:03:08:28 - 01:03:42:12

Thank you. It's just been brought into play by other Arabs and they're overseeing it. Now, what that requires is a very strong component as to how the energy landscape integrates social voice in a deep way, not just as a bolt on. That also aligns with other frameworks that we're working with. Unesco being one of them. So going back to Disney's again to close the circle, Disney's also require a very strong social component to these projects, which is what our Disney's project is about.

01:03:42:16 - 01:04:05:23

So our concern is that this has to be brought into play, and we have all sorts of meetings coming up to continue what this is a strategic alternative, Integrating a cumulative impact, um, innovation at a deep level to integrate the social agenda into the climate and resilience areas.

01:04:11:03 - 01:04:41:11

Thank you very much for that. That's, uh that's good. I commend you for the for the work that you're, you're doing there. And in moving forward with that, there's one thing that I'd just like to, to sort of ask in relation to the proposed development. Obviously we're aware of your sort of general location. If the proposed development went ahead, how would that affect the running of your, your, your, your business and your development of these alternative, um, strategies? As such? How would that impact on you and your employees?

01:04:41:15 - 01:05:09:07

That's a really good question. Um, it's not about my business. It's about the fact that the region, the resilience of the region would have a huge impediment, a Monocultural impediment, sitting right in

the midst of what is potentially an incredibly diverse and resilient region. That's what the problem would be, and including even issues that have come up before about regenerative farming and different

01:05:10:28 - 01:05:28:05

local hyperlocal solutions like that. The region has lots of precedent and history and heritage in those areas. They would simply be squashed by such a development. It's monocultural that that's that's probably the main response to that.

01:05:29:01 - 01:05:31:04

Thank you very much, sir. Thank you for your time.

01:05:31:12 - 01:05:32:15

Thank you. Thank you.

01:05:34:19 - 01:05:47:12

Thank you, Mr. Wynne. Thank you, Mr. Williams. Can I ask, is there Mr. Rosenberg, either here or virtually online and if he whether he still wishes to speak. Mr. Rosenberg, do you still wish to speak?

01:05:51:13 - 01:06:22:29

Nope. Not seeing any hands. In which case there's no further names in our list of people who wish to have registered to speak. Um, so thank you for everyone for those collective representations. It's very much appreciated that you've taken the time and effort to come here today and address us directly. As for our introductions, I would just lie just like now, to turn to the applicants team and ask if there's any points that that they wish to make now, or whether they'll keep your keep their comments written submissions to the applicant.

01:06:52:26 - 01:07:10:00

Good afternoon, panel. Just a few points from the applicant this afternoon. And apologies for the repetition for those that attended yesterday. At some points will be covered now that I covered yesterday. Um, but also we'll be picking up on some of the points that have been raised this afternoon specifically

01:07:11:15 - 01:07:20:23

for the purpose of the recording and those that weren't able to attend yesterday. My name is Toby Yates. I'm an associate for Pinsent Masons, acting as legal advisors for the applicant.

01:07:22:21 - 01:07:55:01

Again, as I said yesterday, I'm not a technical expert, so I'll only cover those points a general level and do some cross-references as opposed to dealing with them in detail. And I know a lot of the technical matters are being picked up on the agenda for the issue specific hearing tomorrow, where we will be joined by relevant experts. Again, firstly, I'd just like to thank those that have attended and made representations this afternoon As I said yesterday, this is an important part of the process, and it's important for the panel to be aware of local concerns so they can be examined accordingly.

01:07:56:01 - 01:08:07:16

The community's feedback on this project has helped shape the design and will continue to do so. So again, we generally thank, on behalf of the applicant everyone's attendance and participation in this step and other steps of the process.

01:08:09:12 - 01:08:33:00

Secondly, whilst I've only got limited time available to pick up on some of the key themes this afternoon, we want to reassure again the Xa and all interested parties that full responses to all points raised today will be picked up as part of the examination process, largely in the relevant representation response that we provide at deadline one, but also as part of the hearings tomorrow and our ongoing engagement with key parties.

01:08:34:26 - 01:08:48:24

Today's hearing, again, is about us as the applicant team, listening to points raised by interested parties and hearing what is said and where new points have been raised. Again, we've with the detailed notes of those, and we'll come back to those. In full as part of examination process.

01:08:50:22 - 01:09:05:22

So the key themes that I want to touch on, as I said, there's some overlap with those that I touched on yesterday, but for the benefit of the people that have made the effort to come this afternoon, I'll touch on those again. And there's some other topics as well that I think were key themes from this afternoon's submissions that weren't necessarily raised yesterday.

01:09:08:04 - 01:09:43:15

I'll start off again with the policy context, and I do appreciate that this can be somewhat frustrating for interested parties. Um, but it's just important that we are acting within the appropriate framework for a project of this scale. So again, I'd direct the examiner authority to NPS, n1 primarily for the urgent need for critical national priority, which includes renewable energy generation of this project's nature. I gave a couple of references yesterday, which I won't repeat, but we can put in our written submission, although I would just add a reference which I didn't mention yesterday, which is to.

01:09:43:17 - 01:09:48:02

Paragraph 3.3.22 of N1.

01:09:51:28 - 01:10:31:27

And the reason I add that now is because one of the submissions before that made the point around wind versus solar, and I'd just like to raise that. We absolutely advocate for the need for wind as part of the energy mix and critical national priority. But as the NPS sets out, including in that reference that I've given you there, it's wind and solar, which are key parts of that energy mix. For example, you'll see at the paragraph reference, 3.3. 22 of MPAC and one. It says that ensuring affordable system reliability today and in the future means wind and solar need to be complemented with technologies which supply electricity or reduce demand when the wind is not blowing or the sun does not shine.

01:10:32:02 - 01:10:40:19

So it says that you've got wind, solar as well as energy balancing services that all add together as part of the energy mix, which is important critical national priority infrastructure.

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I'd also just like to respond to the points raised around the varying calculations that have been mentioned, and the ability of the project to meet the 840MW. I've had communications from the project team, with some further calculations in that regard not being able to digest them yet, but we can submit those as part of our written submissions post hearing. But that sets out how it is a realistic and feasible delivery and aspect of the scheme to meet that 840 megawatt.

01:11:12:28 - 01:11:48:10

Next, I'll touch on the size of the project because again, that's been a bit of a key theme this afternoon, and it's important to reference that developing a project at this proposed size, with its substantial benefits, is important to meeting that urgent need that set out in the national policy. And as I mentioned yesterday, the applicant's position is that if this project is consented, along with those that are in the regime, it would still lead to a shortfall in the capacity set out in the government's 2035 targets, and again picking up on a point that was raised earlier around the suggestion of excess capacity being in the system.

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Again, that assumes that all projects in the pipeline come forward. So if that point is raised at each of those projects such that none of those come forward, then you'd have no capacity being brought forward to meet the critical national priority and targets set by government. This is set out by the applicant primarily in its planning support statement, which is app Dash 225. And we've also set out a supplementary statement of need which is PDB 014. And that sets out responses to the examiner authorities specific queries around how this project.

01:12:24:02 - 01:12:28:09

And so the more generally is a key part of that energy mix including at this scale.

01:12:32:16 - 01:13:09:20

Moving on to some of the topic specific points, one point that was raised in some submissions this afternoon related to flood risk. I just want to reassure you that mitigation measures do include implementing sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water runoff. Surface water runoff. I'll try that again. And ensuring that construction and operational activities do not adversely affect water quality or increase flood risk. Again, the assessment in that regard is set out primarily in the Hydrology and Flood Risk chapter, which is chapter ten document reference app Dash 047.

01:13:10:18 - 01:13:28:27

And I note that requirement nine of the draft DCO secures the need for written details in relation to water and drainage systems, to be submitted substantially in accordance with the conceptual drainage strategy. And again, that drainage strategy forms part of the applicant's submitted documents.

01:13:34:26 - 01:13:47:09

The next topic that I'll just briefly touch on is landscape and visual amenity. Because again, there's been various oral submissions around landscape concerns, which the applicant acknowledges and concerns around creating an industrial landscape.

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And this hearing is just to note that the landscape and visual assessment has evaluated the effects on landscape, character and visual amenity. And it includes baseline studies, identification of key visual receptors, and evaluation of both short term and long term impacts and specific mitigation measures are included in that regard. And that's all set out in chapter eight Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, which is app Dash 045.

01:14:18:03 - 01:14:53:06

Moving on then to agriculture concerns and land use. Again, that's a key theme this afternoon. I just want to reiterate the applicant's position is that following its surveys, it's determined that 38.35% of the project comprises best and most versatile land, which just to be clear, is three A and above three B is not BMV land. And as mentioned yesterday, permanent infrastructure has sought to avoid BMV land as much as possible, resulting in only 5.5 hectares of being land being permanently lost, which is not significant in EIA terms.

01:14:55:01 - 01:15:15:07

Sorry, could I just ask you a question while we're talking about BMV land, please? Mr. David Sherratt made a representation earlier today in respect of the BMV lands, and he alluded to the fact that the figures provided in the land use chapter related to a previous iteration of the scheme, a larger

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scheme. Can you confirm whether the figures in the S chapter relate to that larger scheme, or the scheme that is before us?

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That's one for the technical lead, I'm afraid, but we can definitely put that in writing after this hearing.

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Thank you. By deadline one.

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Sure. That's fine.

01:15:38:21 - 01:16:15:15

So just to continue in relation to agriculture, part of the concerns this afternoon have been in relation to food security and relating to the use of arable farmland, and we absolutely understand that food security is a concern. But again, just having to bring it back to the policy framework. And there were amendments to the NPF in December 2024 that said, there's no longer a need to consider food production in land use planning terms. And that's relevant for this nationally significant infrastructure project pursuant to paragraph five of NPF, which says it can be a material consideration for this sort of development.

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And also to note that we heard from farmers that use this farm land. Yesterday that confirmed that actually this farmland is potentially difficult farmland and not always highly productive arable use farmland.

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And final point in relation to arable farmland is just to note that there are, or there is government information available that sets out the availability of arable farmland across the country and identifies that there is spare, arable farmland that is currently not being used. So it's not that it's short on supply and therefore the use of this farmland or potential arable farmland would restrict the ability of the rest of the country to be able to deliver. There is spare arable farmland available.

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Next, in relation to community benefits. And again, a point yesterday is that this is not a key part of the planning balance, but the project and the applicant absolutely understands that it's something that's of interest to interested parties. In the starting position from the applicant, is that this project aims to deliver significant community benefits, including renewable energy, to power approximately 330,000 homes. Biodiversity, net gain, as well as economic, educational and sustainability benefits.

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And the applicant strongly welcomes the positive comments made in some of the oral submissions. Recognizing these wider benefits beyond just the renewable energy generation.

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But we also know some of the comments around the size of the wider community, benefit that the applicant is willing to consider and the fund management of that community benefit. And the applicant is willing to continue to evaluate that community benefit package as a whole. And we can provide a further update on that at deadline one.

01:18:11:13 - 01:18:44:06

Next, and just briefly here. There's a point in one of the final or later oral submissions there around uncertainty on the traffic assessment. And this is captured as part of the applicant's environmental impact assessment in chapter 12, Traffic and Transport, which is app zero for nine and for comfort. As part of that assessment, you'll see that it secures a construction traffic management plan, and there's an outline of that plan available as part of the documents. I don't have the reference in front of me, but we can add that in our written submission after the hearing.

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And that provides full details, embedded mitigation measures that are proposed to prevent or reduce potential adverse effects associated with construction traffic on local roads. And that's secured in the DCO as part of the commitment to a code of construction practice.

01:19:02:12 - 01:19:44:12

Next, and almost finally, is the greenbelt again that was raised this afternoon. And I won't cover it in too much detail because you have the references, hopefully from yesterday. But just to repeat, it's 4.2.16 and 4.2.17 of NPS one, which has the starting position and presumption in favour of the very special circumstances case being found. Given the critical national priority status of this project. But as I said yesterday, on a precautionary basis, and in addition to that presumption, the applicant has been willing to set out its very special circumstances case, which can be found in the planning support statement app dash 255.

01:19:46:05 - 01:20:13:12

If I may just interject very quickly on that point, it probably won't be a question you can answer now. Probably be a question for the issue specific hearing tomorrow. So probably giving our hand away as such. But you've said that the community benefits are not to be taken into account in the planning balance, and yet they feature as part of your very special circumstances case for the greenbelt. And I would like to know how the applicant is reconciling that, please.

01:20:14:01 - 01:20:16:27

That's helpful. Thank you. Yeah. We'll take a note of that and pick up on that tomorrow.

01:20:19:21 - 01:20:53:25

Then coming to the final couple of points. I made one around the panel replacement and the gentleman giving this oral submission was very strong. I thought giving document references, so I thought I could give him some references to go to, go and consider if that would be helpful. And it's just to note that chapter 14, Climate Change, which is app 051, sets out that the service life is expected to be 25 years, and as such, they are assumed to be replaced once during the operational lifetime of the project. So that is built in to the environmental impact assessment, and it's expressly covered there.

01:20:54:26 - 01:21:25:00

And in the same vein, at table 31 of the Operational Environmental Management Plan, which is app Dash 234, which is a document that's secured under the draft development Consent order, sets out that regular planned maintenance of the scheme will be conducted to optimise efficiency of the scheme infrastructure, such as replacement of PV panels and PCs power converter stations When required. So again it's forming part of the assessment and also the mitigation that's been secured by the applicant.

01:21:27:08 - 01:21:53:18

Next. And it's just a brief point in relation to landowner negotiations. And whilst the applicant's land agents are not here I've been in contact with those. And it was just to correct an earlier submission that the applicant has engaged with Mr. Dryden for both a consultation and land perspective. For example, one of the founders for the project, Peter Gershman, has met with Mr. Dryden personally on two occasions.

01:21:57:01 - 01:22:30:04

Next as well. Compulsory acquisition. We know that there was a couple of comments raised this afternoon around compulsory acquisition. The applicant's full case in that regard is set out in the statement of reasons, which is as 015. And that's in alignment with national policy, sets out that there's a national need for this project, as I said earlier and on that basis, it is in the public interest as a as a general point in favour of compulsory acquisition powers. But just to be clear, at this point, it might not be the best setting to deal with compulsory acquisition in detail.

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But just to be clear, the applicants preference is to seek voluntary agreement with all landowners where possible, and in fact it has secured a strong number of voluntary agreements, including some of the leases you heard about yesterday and the compulsory acquisition powers are sought as a fallback in

the event that they are needed, either due to a failure to comply with those voluntary agreements or, in the case of unknown, unregistered land interests, for example, that are not known at the moment following due diligence and land referencing. And that's a standard and accepted approach that's taken across many CEOs, including the vast majority, if not all, of the recent solar discos

01:23:09:19 - 01:23:40:22

there or what I've just gone through then is this sort of fair summary of what I consider the key themes from this afternoon and again. Apologies to anyone if I've missed anything that someone was hoping to be considered now. I know there was comments raised around public rights of way funding and decommissioning, ecology and veteran tree surveys, and also some draft eco points. And I also know in relation to heritage and site selection, noise and vibration and traffic, those latter topics I just mentioned will be dealt with as part of the agenda at the issue specific hearing tomorrow.

01:23:40:24 - 01:24:07:29

So again, whilst I don't have time to cover them in detail now, they will form part of the examination process and the applicant will continue to engage and respond to those at the appropriate time. So to conclude and on that basis, again, just thank you to the panel for having the applicant's response, but to everyone for their contributions and participation in this examination. And the applicant continues to be welcoming comments and feedback from interested parties and will continue to engage with everyone. Thank you.

01:24:11:08 - 01:24:12:12

Thank you, Mr. Yates.

01:24:14:06 - 01:24:20:08

No further questions from us, so we'll leave those for tomorrow's issue specific hearing. I will now hand over to Mr. Wallace for agenda item four.

01:24:21:04 - 01:24:52:02

Thank you very much. Yes. That brings us to woods. Excuse me. Brings us towards the close of today's business. There are no specific actions arising from today's hearing, but where a number of you have, um, in your speeches have said that you'll provide certain information. And we look forward to receiving that at deadline one. That brings us to the end of this open floor here. And thank you to all of those who have taken the time and taken part today, giving us some food for thought.

01:24:52:04 - 01:25:09:27

Definitely there. A reminder that the applicants response, and indeed all written summaries of all submissions that have been provided today are due by deadline one, which is the 4th of June. The time is now 1240 and I bring this hearing to a close. Thank you.