



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Botley West Solar Farm
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) – Part 4
Date:	15 May 2025

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:41:00 - 00:01:21:00

Good afternoon and welcome back. The time is now 4 p.m. and we are now resuming this issue specific hearing. So we are now on agenda item three H. Um climate change. I have a few questions on this topic broadly focusing around identifying hazards and managing risk. So my first question to the applicant. Table 14.3 of S. Chapter 14 provides a summary of the scoping responses. Within this, the Planning Inspectorate said the following risks from climate change are proposed to be scoped out on the basis that impacts on are not likely to be considered significant during the proposed development's lifetime of 42 years.

00:01:21:26 - 00:01:40:23

Mitigation will be embedded in the design and technology of the solar array to account for extreme weather events such as storms, high winds, and increased ambient temperatures. On the premise that there is explains how and to what degree the design and technology accounts for these events. The inspectorate agrees to scope this matter out.

00:01:43:26 - 00:02:11:19

Okay, so in table 14.6, it seems all all the applicant has done is list out manufacturing standards for the solar modules and considered them to be sufficient. Before I ask my first question on this topic, I'd just like the applicant to applicant reflect on two incidents. So the first incident, it's regarding Porth Wind Solar farm in Anglesey, which was significantly damaged during Storm Dara in 2024.

00:02:13:10 - 00:02:26:16

Was that not built to manufacturing standards? Second incident again sorry. Siren sister hybrid solar farm or the all the Verwood Solar Farm in Dorset, both of which suffered significant damage through fires.

00:02:28:12 - 00:02:45:24

So my question to the applicant is would these taking these incidents into account, why are your manufacturing standards any different to those? And why is your design so completely different to

those that you feel? Major hazards and the impacts of climate change would not be significant with your proposed development.

00:02:48:25 - 00:02:54:26

Maybe it's on behalf of the applicant. I'm joined online again by Mr. Andrew Tasker, who can talk to climate change.

00:02:59:06 - 00:03:31:07

Thank you. Andrew Tasker for the applicant. Um, the standards which we have referenced, which you are referring to in, um, table 14.6 of our climate change chapter, um, include allowances with regards to, um, extreme weather events, including um, um, extreme heat events including UV radiation, um, humidity, um, wind speeds, to name to name a few.

00:03:31:25 - 00:04:10:03

Um, it was concluded, um, and it might be that there needs to be some engineering, um, additional engineering explanation, which I'm not an engineer myself, so I can't comment to that. Um, but these standards were deemed, um, acceptable, um, to scope out the likely significant, And risk to the proposed development. Um, I can't talk for the, um, standards that were, um, included in the schemes that you, um, you have have referenced, I'm afraid.

00:04:15:08 - 00:04:32:06

Okay, so in terms of standards, what makes you think that that if you were to build your proposed development according to these standards and then the risk of, you know, damage to the solar farm would be significantly less compared to the incidents that have occurred.

00:04:35:04 - 00:05:13:17

So all I can comment to. So apologies for the applicant. Um, all I can comment to is that standards such as um, the IEC, RTS 63126 include allowances with regards to um events such as extreme heat um between normal ranges up to I think 40°C and extreme weather up to about 70°C. Um, so within those parameters, in terms of extreme heat as the example there, um, it would be deemed that the risk posed to this project in line with such standard.

00:05:13:19 - 00:05:32:24

I mean, that's the standard which I've just quoted is 2020. Um, so those are up to date and include, um, most up to date science, um, and technical specifications with regards to photovoltaic systems. So that is all that I could comment, um, in that instance.

00:05:34:11 - 00:05:50:29

So if I may just cut in, I understand that our live stream whilst up the captions aren't working. So our crew at CVS are just working on that or we'll stay in here. We'll stay in the here in a bit. Just give them a minute or two to confirm what's happening with that. Thank you. Just take a pause.

00:07:14:02 - 00:07:19:24

Receiving the thumbs up. So thank you very much for that very brief pause, Mr. Sheikh. Apologies. I'll hand back over to you.

00:07:21:21 - 00:08:01:00

Thank you, Mr. Wallace. Staying on the agenda items regarding hazard and risk assessment. So the scheme as large as the one proposed, the the possibility of incident which could cause serious harm to people, the environment, or have a major impact on the performance of the proposed development may exist instance, as we have just mentioned, for example, could include severe damage to panels due to weather extremes, equipment malfunction due to overheating, and simply accidental damage to a cable. So my question is what various risk assessment techniques has the applicant used to identify all such potential incidents and ensure events which could lead up to these have been captured.

00:08:05:17 - 00:08:06:11

The applicant.

00:08:14:07 - 00:08:44:23

On the task on behalf of the applicant. So when we carry out our assessment at the scoping stage where we're defining the scope and boundary of the assessment, we do an initial screening exercise with regards to potential likely hazards, um, that are relevant to any particular development. So in this case we're looking at the photovoltaic system in addition to the balance of systems. So the supporting infrastructure, uh, when um, we scoped the assessment, we did not.

00:08:44:27 - 00:09:12:19

And in line with um, kind of our table 14.6 of our, uh, chapter, we concluded that there were no, um, uh, sufficient hazards, um, that posed a significant risk to the development. Um, and as such, no, um, uh, further detailed risk assessment, uh, would have been carried out as we we had scoped this out of the main assessment.

00:09:15:25 - 00:09:49:24

Okay. So just to confirm so risk assessment in terms of damage to the solar panels was carried out looking at risk assessment broadly, did you identify any of the risks for example on topic that we touched earlier. Aviation safety. You know, the the possibility of bird strikes or uh, you know, thermals as such and just generally, uh, accidental damage. Did you look at, um, risks posed by, you know, other events outside of just damage specifically to the solar panels?

00:09:50:23 - 00:10:37:10

So if I can deal with this. Andrew Tasker, on behalf of the applicant, if I can deal with this in, um, probably two, uh, elements. Um, I think the first element which you're referring to is what we define as in combination with climate change impacts, whereby, um, climate change or changes to climatic variation, um, is considered as to whether it would exasperate um or bring about new, um, potential effects to other topics such as um, human health, ecology, um, and um, and a particular example is with regards to flood risk, where this is very much dealt with within the flood risk assessment.

00:10:37:20 - 00:11:02:21

Um, so in that regard, yes, that has occurred at a topic by topic basis. And each topic specialist, um, I'm not going to speak for each topic specialist, but each topic specialist will be able to talk to that um, one item which has come up, which you, um, if you will allow me to talk about is, I think the thermal, um, kind of urban heat island. Um,

00:11:04:12 - 00:11:46:01

this is, this is something that does not form part of the boundary of the climate change assessment. When we consider climate change, we consider it in two core areas. We consider the impact of the development or the proposal on climate change, i.e greenhouse gas emissions. And in that regard, the receptor is very much a global climate. So we we talk about a global receptor as opposed to any local or localized receptor. Given that greenhouse gas emissions have um, no geographical boundary, um, localized receptors are not um relevant with regards to the assessment.

00:11:46:05 - 00:12:16:16

And for that reason, um, there wouldn't be any consideration in the climate change chapter around things such as, um, urban heat island effect. I'm aware that that has been raised, um, in the relevant reps. Um, and I believe our, our, our health impact assessment team, um, will be providing a response to that effect. Um, a deadline one um, but but I apologize. I don't believe they are um, or virtually or in or in the room at this point in time.

00:12:20:23 - 00:12:34:05

Okay. So following on from identifying risks. So once you have identified those risks and you mentioned you've identified them topic by topic basis, what then do you use to gauge whether a risk is considered acceptable or not?

00:12:35:20 - 00:13:18:03

If we're talking a hundred times on behalf of the applicant, if we're talking the in combination, that is in line with the methodology for the specific topic specialist, and each will have a different methodology and follow the the the their matrices with regards to climate change, um resilience um which again has been scoped out as part of the assessment for, for this application. Normally we would consider in the event that there are potentially likely significant adverse effects, the uh consequence, um, of said hazard and, um, the impact of the probability, the impact of said hazard.

00:13:18:06 - 00:13:53:08

And we would use a standard risk management risk matrix, um, whereby we, uh, define it as significant or non-significant in this context. Um, there there were no likely significant adverse effects that would be, um, brought forwards as part of the project. Um, and as we've, um, as I've already mentioned, this is based around the, the international manufacturing standards, which have allowances with regards to, um, climate change and extreme weather and such like.

00:13:55:01 - 00:13:55:24

Okay, so.

00:13:56:18 - 00:14:23:07

Going back to that significant matrix. So how have you determined whether something is significant and not significant? I understand you're referring to international standards, but what what do you actually use to say okay, well this risk is it's fine. We can live with that. It's less than one times ten to the minus six whatever. And whereas this risk is above this figure and therefore we need to put something in place to mitigate the risk and therefore bring it down to an acceptable level.

00:14:25:00 - 00:14:58:01

For the applicant. Um, in line with, um, our guidance. So this is the EMA 2020 Climate Resilience and Adaptation guidance. It is, um, down to professional judgment with regards to whether a hazard, um, the exposure level, um, of the project, um, and the, the The resulting impact. The risk posed to to the project is is down to professional judgment and is based around the design parameters, the specification and the manufacturing standards.

00:14:58:03 - 00:15:33:18

As I've discussed, um, and using um, probabilistic projections. So in the UK we have something. We have the UK CPA team database, whereby we have a 25 kilometer grid square, um, which details the probabilistic projections. And that was uh, used to base our initial assessment on our initial screening around whether or not there were likely significant effects, which was concluded as not and therefore not brought forwards and scoped out.

00:15:35:22 - 00:15:44:19

So going back to professional judgment again, I mean, are you able to provide evidence of what you used as a framework to help you make that judgment?

00:15:47:19 - 00:15:54:26

Uh, not at this time with regards to the hearing, but I'm happy to take that away as an action and provide additional detail.

00:15:57:05 - 00:15:57:20

Mr..

00:15:59:11 - 00:16:04:17

Okay. I've got no further questions for the applicant. Is anyone else in the room who would like to make a comment at all?

00:16:06:25 - 00:16:21:29

Uh, yeah. County Counsel George Gurney, speaking, um, of the Oxfordshire County Council in our relevant representation, recognised that the contribution that this scheme will have to combating climate change. But we did outline concerns about climate resilience. And so I'm going to hand it over to my colleague Ethan Dudley who will expand further.

00:16:23:09 - 00:16:56:28

Uh, if Dudley, Oxfordshire County Council. So notwithstanding any manufacturing standards, Oxfordshire County Council has completed a climate risk assessment which demonstrates the severity of impacts locally and well within the lifetime of the project. In addition, it is explicitly stated in NPS in one section .10.1 that if new energy infrastructure is not sufficiently resilient against the possible impacts of climate change, it will not be able to satisfy the energy needs as outlined in part three of that EMP NPS.

00:16:57:21 - 00:17:25:18

In addition, the impacts of climate change are not limited to impacts on the infrastructure as you mentioned. They will affect staff during construction, maintenance, and decommissioning of the scheme and those risks need to be addressed clearly. It was also mentioned that greenhouse gas

emissions may not have specific boundaries. And while that may be true, the impacts of climate change and extreme weather absolutely do happen in specific locations and therefore should be considered. Thank you.

00:17:27:27 - 00:17:29:26

The applicant might respond to what we've just heard.

00:17:31:00 - 00:18:05:07

On behalf of the applicant. Just a quick point in response around the construction and working conditions. It was just to flag that in each of the outline code of construction practice outline, operational management plan and outline decommissioning plan. There is provision included in there in relation to emergency planning and procedure. So for each phase of the authorised development, there will be provisions which will go to the authorities for approval as part of the discharge requirements process, which will include that more day to day hazard management and emergency protocol.

00:18:07:18 - 00:18:12:27

Thank you. Is there anyone else in the room who would like to comment? I can see a few hands up.

00:18:21:25 - 00:18:22:13

Sorry.

00:18:23:12 - 00:18:28:06

Maybe the lady on the on the desk here first and then for the roving mic. Sorry. Thank you.

00:18:30:16 - 00:19:03:25

Hi, my name is Beth. Um, I am a volunteer for Stockport West. Um, my question is a bit more about the the Storm Dara, Anglesey solar farm that the examiner kind of mentioned to begin with, because I wasn't really sure about the explanation as to why Botley West wouldn't result in the same damage. What's so special about the solar panels? Um, for example, Cardington, a village that's going to be really close to the the farm has had a tornado, um, within the last couple of years, I believe, going through it.

00:19:04:04 - 00:19:15:10

So the houses that are, you know, really within a very close distance of the panels, how will they be protected? How will the developer protect them and anybody outside at the time?

00:19:17:07 - 00:19:32:21

Thank you very much. I believe Mister Rogers had a hand, missus. Karen Squib Williams had a hand. And Mrs. forget your name from Sustainable Woodstock. Uh, so if we do them in that order, please, Mister Rogers first.

00:19:35:03 - 00:19:57:27

Uh, David Rogers. Uh, one common feature of climate change models, and I agree, a lot of them don't necessarily agree with each other. It's for the UK. Our summers will become drier and our winters will

become wetter. How did the applicant team factor in wetter winters as flood risks for the flood risk? We've already heard about of places like Casterton.

00:20:00:07 - 00:20:02:12

Thank you, Mrs. Karen Squib Williams.

00:20:05:00 - 00:20:41:06

Thank you. In a former life, I was, um, responsible for the the UK's DNA database and legal policy and deployment of that. So I'm a little bit cautious when probabilistic databases are mentioned. Um, and the use their upon of professional judgment to interpret those and risk matrices because of course they are built on factors already known. Whereas Botley West is a proposal that there is no comparator. It's unique in size and most particularly it's uniquely close to far more residential communities His than ever before.

00:20:41:12 - 00:21:14:17

Certainly of this size. And it includes a city. It includes being close to scientific parks. And as we've heard, it includes being close to the airport. And we know World Heritage site. I would therefore suggest that very careful scrutiny and analysis and as objective of professional judgment as can be achieved in interpreting how to apply the risk matrices and the probabilistic database information that has been used, because we're looking at something unique and those databases will have been built on the past.

00:21:16:11 - 00:21:19:06

Okay. Thank you. And then sustainable Woodstock, please.

00:21:22:17 - 00:21:57:11

This this is more of a personal comment. I have a background. Um, I'm retired now, but in healthcare, um, and you have to manage risk all the time. So I understand that incidents happen, and obviously we're trying to learn from this. Um, I just I've just have a question. Really? The examples, the examples that were given just earlier were um, on, um, Anglesey and in Dorset. And I just wondered what's happened since then, you know, have those incidents been dealt with because you have to deal with these incidents all the time.

00:21:57:20 - 00:22:15:20

It's, it's it's part of the risk assessment is the management of when they do occur. So having some insights into what might occur and then how do you manage them afterwards. You would you'd imagine we will get more storms. There will be occasional damage. But how will they be dealt with?

00:22:18:20 - 00:22:46:03

Thank you for those comments. Before I go back to the applicant, if they want to respond to those points that we just heard, it's following on from that last point, the instance mentioned. Obviously, the most important thing is that we learn from the and improve the reliability and reduce the risk. What have you done in terms of engineering standards which reduce the risk significantly compared to those incidents. It's again a learning point for us, you know, what can we do to to reduce the risk further?

00:22:49:18 - 00:23:05:24

Maybe it's on behalf of the applicant. As my colleague suggested before, we've not considered the other two instances in detail, so we'd have to take that away and look at those if a comparison was to be done. Um, I'm also not joined by my technical engineering colleagues anymore, so again, I'd have to take it that way in writing.

00:23:09:25 - 00:23:14:00

Thank you. Now moving on to item agenda three noise and vibration.

00:23:19:09 - 00:23:31:09

So I have one question on this topic with possible follow up queries depending on the response. Again, it's the applicant. The question relates to what will be in place during the construction phase to monitor real time developments.

00:23:32:26 - 00:23:38:16

So the question is what noise and vibration monitoring methods will you have in place during the construction phase of the project.

00:23:40:22 - 00:23:46:03

So be it. On behalf of the applicant, I'm joined online again by Mr. Richard Calvert, who can talk to this.

00:23:49:28 - 00:23:51:22

Hello. Everyone can hear me. Okay.

00:23:53:18 - 00:23:54:03

Yes.

00:23:54:16 - 00:24:05:03

Hello. Hi, sir. Richard Calvert, speaking on behalf of the applicant. Um, this is in terms of, of the the sort of noise and vibration emissions during the construction phase. Is that correct?

00:24:05:25 - 00:24:06:25

Yes. That's correct.

00:24:07:00 - 00:24:30:07

Yeah. So, uh, the proposal is to have a, um, code of construction practice, so, you know, construction management plan, uh, to be put in place, which will effectively limit the amount of construction noise that can be made or can be received at the surrounding residential receptors. Um, that was that was the procedure that, that we were looking to, to put in place for that.

00:24:31:25 - 00:24:58:21

So that management of noise. So that will be that'll be carried on with the code of construction in place. So am I right in thinking there'll be no monitors as such, or to monitor if, for example, something I don't know, something fails or doesn't quite work. Whatever. And it's generating noise

that it shouldn't be doing. There's no monitors in or around the construction project to alert that, okay, it's not performing as to how it should do.

00:24:59:27 - 00:25:32:22

No, there was there was no proposals to actually have any any real time monitoring. Um, there was one thing, sorry, that I forgot to mention before was that, uh, the Environment Agency have requested that vibration monitoring is undertaken where the HDD works are carried out close to watercourses. So that is one, one aspect of real time monitoring that we will be undertaking. But in terms of other real time, uh, noise or vibration monitoring, we weren't proposing to do that now.

00:25:34:12 - 00:25:41:28

So To go back to the noise management plan that you referred to. Will these have trigger levels and if so, how have you derived these trigger levels?

00:25:43:08 - 00:26:03:22

Yes, they do have trigger levels in them. The trigger levels are taken from the guidance document base 5228. Uh, part one is is for noise and has the ABC categories in that. Um during the daytime the the construction phase noise limit is is 65dB a weighted.

00:26:06:25 - 00:26:15:16

Okay. And should those trigger levels be reached or trigger, uh, you know, causing nuisance, what would your immediate reaction be. What would your response be? Sorry.

00:26:16:27 - 00:26:28:06

Uh, the I guess the immediate response would be an investigation into what, what activity or what piece of equipment is causing those elevated noise. Noise levels.

00:26:29:21 - 00:26:30:07

Okay.

00:26:30:25 - 00:26:37:11

Thank you. Um, are there any comments from anyone else in the room or online regarding noise and vibration.

00:26:42:05 - 00:26:43:02

See any hands?

00:26:45:20 - 00:26:48:23

Okay, so I now move on to the next agenda item, which is sorry.

00:26:48:27 - 00:26:54:26

I'm sorry. I beg your pardon? I was having trouble with the technology. Uh, Edward van Dijk, environmental health for West Oxford Council.

00:26:56:22 - 00:26:58:08

Yes, Mr. van Dijk.

00:26:59:24 - 00:27:34:17

Thank you very much. Um, yeah. Can I just some very quick points to put questions in to, um. Uh, with the construction phase, the piling, um, that's going to be undertaken, that something in the middle in the, in the number of about a million piles of going in, give or take. I think, um, from memory, um, the construction hours that propose of 7 to 7, Monday to Saturday, um, are, uh, greater than what we might call the the industrial standard for for building works.

00:27:35:12 - 00:28:13:19

And so I've got two questions there really. First is, um, can we see some justification for the extension of the hours which are normally eight till, um, 6:00 during the week and then nothing on Saturday afternoons? Um, and when it comes to piling the, um, from, from experience, piling can be one of the most intrusive, um, persistent, uh, impacts. And the, uh, the standard that has been referred to already, um, does aggregate a little bit sound levels and uh, piling is can be impulsive.

00:28:14:07 - 00:28:51:22

And therefore we want to normally see a sort of slightly tighter restriction of times for piling. Um, outside the normal range for, for each day. Um, background levels in terms of operational noise we have now, just in the last hour or so, received some information on their derivation. Um, but we'll want to have a close look at that because the background level is, if you like, um, the, the, the comparator that you make for operational noise against noise for when it comes to assessing significance of operational noise.

00:28:51:27 - 00:29:26:26

So it's a fairly key indices which is derived from measurements of background levels. Um thirdly um monitoring has been mentioned. Um, as I understand it, um monitoring of operational noise is deemed not necessary, um, because the levels have been modeled from uh, industrial site from uh, um, industry information, um, particularly if there are marginal cases.

00:29:27:05 - 00:30:04:22

Um, I think it's reasonable to say that, Um. Monitoring of actual operational noise should be considered to to test the theory that's being put forward in the noise management plan. Um, impact to public rights of way. Given the regular use by residents in the vicinity of their dwellings, used by members of the public. Um, and that roots are in areas of tranquility, and the impacts will be for the duration of the development. Um, when it it would be our contention that as well as impacts to noise sensitive properties, uh, impacts to public rights of way should be assessed.

00:30:04:24 - 00:30:35:00

I don't believe they are. And and just one other thing that's come up. Um, as with the landscape assessment, uh, there's been reference to environmental statements. Significant, um, being a part of the matrix. Um, I'm sorry, I don't have the references, but there are some similar sorts of references made in the noise impact statement to to environment, uh, environmental assessment, uh, uh, levels of significance. And so we'd quite like to see how those, those stack up in the same way.

00:30:36:10 - 00:30:37:09

Thank you very much.

00:30:38:14 - 00:30:38:29

Thank you.

00:30:39:01 - 00:30:49:06

Before I go back to the the applicant for a response. Um, can I ask you something like am I writing? Do you agree with the baseline levels, or do you disagree with what they've been measured as?

00:30:50:07 - 00:31:26:12

Um, the the background level is, uh, becomes a figure which represents a range and, uh, within the applied British standard for 142, there are there is no absolute standard how you derive that. So there is a question of, um, judgement to an extent depending on the, the shape of the, the the curve. Um, so, uh, it's just something we'd want to check because the, the level it is agreed or the level that is used is, as I say, um, the baseline for assessing significance.

00:31:26:14 - 00:31:59:20

So it is itself a significant choice. So it would be something that we would want to have confidence in. It's simply been reported to date. The, uh, the detail has, has also been supplied, but it's something to be assessed closely in the future. Um, because at the moment the significance is judged as being operationally, um, significant as being relatively low. But as soon as you add a few decibels to those numbers, you then start to to move into a higher level of significance.

00:31:59:22 - 00:32:07:11

So it is important to, to, um, to have an agreed background level comparator, uh, within the British Standard.

00:32:09:11 - 00:32:09:26

Thank you.

00:32:09:28 - 00:32:12:18

Would the applicant like to respond to what we've just heard?

00:32:13:28 - 00:32:56:08

Maybe it's on behalf of the applicant. I'll pass that to Mr. Calvert in a second. Just a quick, um, point of clarity in relation to the operation and maintenance points being raised. Um, if you look at the outline code of construction practice, which is app two, three, two that sets out at paragraph 1.12.38. As Mr. Calvert was referring to earlier, that refers to best practicable means which the applicant is willing to commit to or is committed to, including things like the use of quieter alternative methods, but also maintaining and operating all vehicles, plant and equipment in an appropriate manner to ensure that extraneous noise from mechanical vibration is kept to a minimum where possible.

00:32:56:10 - 00:33:30:08

So that's for the construction phase. And then similarly in the outline operational management plan, which is app 234, that includes a similar commitment from the applicant that says that best practical means will be implemented during the design, construction, operation and maintenance of all aspects of the project to ensure that noise levels in all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the adverse and

significant adverse effects are minimised, so those commitments do exist in the documents that are secured in the respective requirements of the draft DCO.

00:33:30:18 - 00:33:35:08

So I just wanted to flag that. But anything else on the other points I'll have to hand to Mr. Calvert.

00:33:40:02 - 00:34:10:25

Hello? Yes. It's, uh, Richard Calvert, uh, speaking on behalf of the applicant. Um, thank you, Mr. Van Dyck, for your for your comments. I think it would be best if we get all of your comments in full and respond in writing. Um, however, there was just a couple of little points of, um, sort of clarification, perhaps, and maybe, um, just to alleviate any, any concerns that the, the stanchions for the solar panels, uh, the are being, the are piling. Um, however, the they are quite small.

00:34:11:05 - 00:34:43:00

Um, galvanized steel legs in the fact that they, they will, you know, go into the ground in the same way of maybe, perhaps a, you know, a fence post wood rather than a large pile required for a housing development, which I Which understand for a housing development. The quite substantial things was was for this site and for the stanchions for the, for the, for the solar solar panels. They're actually quite, quite small. Um, and you know, they don't they don't take a huge amount of force or power to, to be inserted into the ground.

00:34:43:15 - 00:34:44:00

Um.

00:34:46:25 - 00:34:54:13

And then there was the, just the point on the public, public right of way as well, which, uh, which I think will come back to all of those invited at deadline one. Thank you.

00:34:57:01 - 00:35:22:13

Sorry. Can I just ask you a question regarding operational fees? So I understand there's no real time monitoring during the construction phase, and the noise will be managed through an a noise management plan to be agreed with the local authorities. Once you move, if you were to move to the operational phase, do you intend to have any noise monitoring then at least for the first few months, say, for example, to confirm that no noise is being generated by the PTC PCCs or any other substations in place.

00:35:25:01 - 00:35:56:09

That wasn't something that we that we were committed to. Um, I mean, it would be something that we could, could perhaps, uh, you know, consider. Um, I there was there was just a point on the operational phase noise. Apologies. I should have mentioned it before. Was that the, uh, operational phase noise impact assessment actually considers the use of the pqrs units when they're working at their maximum capacity. Not they're not 100% of the possible capacity, but the operational capacity in that would occur.

00:35:56:11 - 00:36:20:10

You know, we'll leave very, very short periods or very small periods of the year. So actually, during the majority of the time, the sound which is, uh, has been predicted to, to occur at each of the different receptors would actually be quite a lot lower than has been shown in our in our noise impact assessments. That was just a bit of a, you know, point of reassurance as well for, for a number of residents and, um, decision makers.

00:36:21:07 - 00:36:58:00

I guess what I'm seeking is for you to be more proactive in terms of reactive. So if a noise was being generated above, you know, the level that's been agreed that would cause nuisance rather than to wait for a member of residents to pick it up and then, you know, phoned to the local authority saying it's causing a nuisance, then effectively complain that you would perhaps possibly do some noise monitoring yourselves first, whether it be using monitors or just, you know, walking around the area, you know, taking measurements to make sure it's not causing a nuisance and then possibly take action before rather than wait for someone to actually let you know when it's causing a nuisance and then for them to complain.

00:37:00:09 - 00:37:05:01

I'm sure we would be open to the possibility of undertaking that yet.

00:37:07:15 - 00:37:10:04

Thank you. I believe Mrs. Lewis had a question.

00:37:13:17 - 00:37:33:12

Thank you. Just as I raised yesterday about the noise, I wondered if the applicant could explain why there is no assessment during construction on residential properties. And secondly, how. There was some, um, assessment during the operational phase, but for a very limited number of properties. And I wondered how those were chosen.

00:37:37:08 - 00:37:38:19

The applicant might respond.

00:37:42:02 - 00:38:14:01

Hello? Yeah, it's Richard Calvert speaking on behalf of the applicant. Um, the, uh, noise impact assessment, uh, the chapter, uh, which is app 050 uh, does include an assessment of construction phase on residential receptors. Uh, that is that is all set out there. It's also expanded in, uh, the construction, um, the appendix 13.2, which is app 212 as well. Um, so that, that, that is, that is considered considered fully uh, at all residential receptors.

00:38:14:03 - 00:38:35:17

Sorry. The affected residential receptors. Apologies. In terms of the operational phase noise, there was a. We selected the receptors just based on those which are located closest to the red line boundary and those which are most likely to be affected by noise. That's how that's how those were chosen.

00:38:38:16 - 00:38:42:12

I believe there's a gentleman at the back who has a question at the front. Sorry.

00:38:50:02 - 00:39:07:02

John one um, is the noise impact assessment being done in a cumulative impact way, where the noise of the operational, um, work is actually sitting on top of the something like the, the airport, um, noise.

00:39:09:17 - 00:39:11:21

The question is about cumulative impact.

00:39:12:22 - 00:39:15:05

Okay. The applicant might respond to that question.

00:39:17:03 - 00:39:26:07

Hello, it's Richard Calvert speaking on behalf of the applicant. Uh, The assessment considers only noise from the the solar farm on the residential receptors.

00:39:28:03 - 00:39:34:12

Thank you. Are there any other questions from people either present here or online?

00:39:36:26 - 00:39:42:14

Do you not seeing any hands? In that case, I'll move on to the next agenda item which is 3G traffic and transport.

00:39:45:03 - 00:39:57:12

In chapter 17 of the ES on Traffic and Transport, it states. The overall conclusion is that there will be no significant effects arising from the project during the construction, operation and maintenance of decommissioning or decommissioning phases.

00:39:59:07 - 00:40:17:17

However, with with. Table 12.21 of this chapter listing significant increases on the number of heavy vehicles and at certain links, such as a 207% increase on link seven. How has the applicant taken into consideration the effects of heavy vehicles, specifically on villages such as Johnston?

00:40:20:27 - 00:40:25:26

So the ETS, on behalf of the applicant, I'm joined online by Mr. David Archibald to deal with this.

00:40:31:03 - 00:41:07:03

Good afternoon, David Archibald, on behalf of the applicant. Um, just to confirm, um, in terms of percentage increases. Um, that is essentially a first step in terms of the process. So what we do is essentially a screening exercise whereby we look at the changes in traffic flows. Look at the percentage increases in traffic flows on various sections of highway. Um, and that then determines the assessments. So once we've done an assessment of the percentage increases we then look at the more detailed aspects of the assessments. Um, and just to confirm in terms of percentage increases, we have to bear that in mind in the context of baseline traffic flows.

00:41:07:07 - 00:41:41:00

So if baseline traffic flows are low, you will inevitably get a high percentage increase. And if baseline traffic flows are higher and vice versa. But notwithstanding, that's just the first part of the process. The

second part of the process is the detailed assessment, and that's set out in in chapter 12 document A049. Um, it's being prepared in accordance with the national policy statements in accordance with industry standard guidance and good practice. Um, and it aligns with the approach adopted for other similar infrastructure projects.

00:41:41:16 - 00:42:00:19

And we've assessed the impact of construction traffic on driver delay, non-motorized user delay, non-motorized user amenity severance, public transport delay, road safety, the impact of abnormal loads on the safety of users of the road network. Um, and following that assessment is that which concludes that there won't be any significant effects arising. Thank you.

00:42:04:05 - 00:42:22:17

So it's still within the guidelines in terms of going back to the actual figure of a 207% increase is still a significant amount, particularly with those vehicles being heavy vehicles. So how do you assess you know, what that would have been specifically in the small villages in and around, you know, the proposed development.

00:42:26:15 - 00:43:01:03

Yeah. So, so, so like I say, the percentage increase is it is to some extent a function of the baseline traffic flows. If you have low baseline traffic flows then you will inevitably get high percentage increases. It's then when we're looking at the more detailed aspects of it, that's when we undertake the full detailed assessment so to speak. So when we drill down in terms of let's say, for example, use or amenity and fear and intimidation, we look at the individual numbers of vehicle movements in terms of the total. We look at, for example, numbers of HGV movements, speed of traffic, and we undertake assessment based upon those, those individual items.

00:43:01:07 - 00:43:22:26

So the percentage increase is almost a screening exercise, but it is fundamentally linked to the baseline traffic flows. If you have low baseline traffic flows like I say you will have high percentage increases. But that's just part of the process. That's the first part of the process is the second part where we look at those more detailed aspects that we then draw the conclusions, and those conclusions show that there's no significant effect predicted.

00:43:24:22 - 00:43:52:22

Thank you. Our final question goes back to a point that Mr. Wallace raised earlier, and it's regarding maintenance. So I understand as the, the the operation performance of the panels decreases, there will be times where you'll need to replace those panels and whether you do them all in one go or whether you space them out. But my understanding is that once the construction phase is over, things such as the widening of the road will be, you know, the width will be reduced back to its original width.

00:43:54:16 - 00:44:15:13

However, if you then need to change certain panels and you need and you need those heavy vehicles, what will you do? Would you apply to widen those roads? Or do you envisage that the original width will be sufficiently wide enough to actually cope with those changes that you need to put in place to change the panels and so on.

00:44:17:27 - 00:44:47:23

David Archibald, on behalf of the applicants. Um, so the road widening that we're proposing won't be returned once the construction is finished. We envisage those being in place for the duration of the project. Um, so, for example, if there's a need to replace anything, those, those improvements will remain in place. Um, I'll defer perhaps to my colleague Toby Yates in terms of where that is secured. Um, but my, my, my my understanding is that they will be in place for the duration of the project throughout the whole operation and maintenance period.

00:44:52:18 - 00:44:56:27

Sorry, the duration of the project being 37.5 years or just the duration of the construction.

00:44:58:00 - 00:45:04:00

Uh, construction and operation and maintenance. Uh, and I guess if need be, decommissioning.

00:45:04:29 - 00:45:06:18

So that would be the full 37, not.

00:45:06:20 - 00:45:07:05

The.

00:45:07:07 - 00:45:08:19

Full. Okay. Thank you.

00:45:10:19 - 00:45:17:21

Okay. I've got no further questions on that topic. Is there anyone who wants to make a comment either or here or or online.

00:45:23:01 - 00:45:24:01

Not seeing any hands.

00:45:25:18 - 00:45:28:21

Okay. I will now hand over to you to go through agenda item four.

00:45:32:08 - 00:46:02:25

Thank you, Mr. Schaake. Um, agenda item four is to deal with the hearing actions. We've noted a number of action points throughout the course of today's hearing, and a full list of these action points will be published on the project page of the National Infrastructure website as soon as possible. We can now move on to agenda item five, which is the close. So this brings us to the close of issue specific hearing one. We would like to thank everybody for your attendance and participation today.

00:46:02:28 - 00:46:08:10

The time is now 445 and issue specific hearing one is now closed.