



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Botley West Solar Farm
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH1) Part 2
Date:	09 October 2025

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00:00:04:05 - 00:00:37:11

Now 1115 and this hearing is resumed. And when we resume with the matter of flooding. Um, I'm coming in with a couple of quick questions just before Miss Cassini continues. Um, and it relates to what we heard just before the break there. Um, on the landscape and amenities plan, um, that's been provided to the examination. It shows indicative only the size and location of an attenuation pond. And you mentioned about designing for the worst case in that.

00:00:37:16 - 00:01:00:21

Um, on the basis of that plan, in the indicative location and size of the pond. Am I right in saying that regardless of what the infiltration testing proves, that the worst case that is the biggest size of the ponds that there will be? Or could it be that as a result of when you did the infiltration testing, that pond could increase in size.

00:01:07:06 - 00:01:11:24

Jonathan Morley For the applicant, it should be the biggest that we would design it at the moment in time.

00:01:12:10 - 00:01:19:21

Right? Okay, okay. So there's there's no prospect of it growing in size and easing into your solar panels.

00:01:22:16 - 00:01:24:17

Jonathan Molly is the applicant. No.

00:01:24:19 - 00:02:01:14

Okay. Thank you very much. Now, the one other thing that you mentioned, and it's, you know, it's it's it's right in terms of, of policy that you say, you know, the development should not mitigate or solve offsite flood problems. As long as you keep within the existing, you don't make it any worse. Then there's not a problem. From the policy perspective, the issue that I have and an issue that probably a

number of IPS have as well, is that the existing greenfield rate of that land, even without your development, is known historically and in recent times to cause flooding.

00:02:02:12 - 00:02:18:00

So putting a development on appreciate your try and keep it. You know, keep it down, not make it worse. But when the green field is already causing problems, is there not any burden on the applicant or any

00:02:19:18 - 00:02:29:27

conscience on the applicant? If you like to try and seek to resolve those flood existing flood measures through positive design in your scheme.

00:02:31:20 - 00:02:33:23

Draw them all in behalf of the applicant.

00:02:35:10 - 00:03:01:16

I see the point where you're coming from. Um, as I mentioned, we are investigating enhancement measures. So we have, as we say, undertaken the baseline model for Cannington with a view that as we move into detailed design, we will look at those enhancement measures that will be in consultation with the Environment Agency, the local authority and the locals in order to provide the most an appropriate enhancement as we can.

00:03:03:11 - 00:03:04:00

Okay.

00:03:04:17 - 00:03:11:04

So that that is in answer to your question. That is beyond the requirements of the NPS and the NPF.

00:03:13:09 - 00:03:44:14

Okay. I'm going to just jump forward. I'm going to steal one of my questions from ecology and bring it forward, if you don't mind. Um, I've noticed that in the ecology, information that come in as part of the second change request, um, there are going to be greater corridors for bats, and we'll come on to bats later. But it's said that within those buffers, within those corridors that there could be scrapes, escarpments, lakes formed for great crested newts.

00:03:45:00 - 00:04:13:16

Now, one of those key corridors for for that sort of enhancement, if you like, is along the the train line that runs just north of Warton Hall, just north of Kensington there. So you're going to be introducing additional water features as part of the great crested newt mitigation within the bat mitigation, if you like. How will they be modeled sized. How what impact would they have on the drainage, please?

00:04:26:02 - 00:04:52:28

Jonathan, on behalf of the applicant, I have just conferred with my ecology colleague. Um, and at the moment they're just high level scrapes and and being investigated. If they're to move forward, we'll have to look at that in a bit more detail, because I'll have to with the reason to regard to how much water is required within those scrapes to promote the given ecology that they're looking to retain.

00:04:55:16 - 00:05:17:04

So there'll be specific design requirements. So if you're looking for new so are you looking for balls or whatever it may be. Then there'll be specific design requirements for that given feature and the amount of water that we're looking to retain. Because if the infiltration rate is high then it will drain away too quickly. Or if it's low, then we'd end up potentially stagnant water. So we'd have to look at the hydraulic mechanism of that.

00:05:19:06 - 00:05:27:06

So, um, in short, at this stage, without detailed design or without infiltration testing, the simple answer is don't know.

00:05:31:08 - 00:05:37:20

The specifics of it, than we wouldn't know at the moment. As I say, that would be looked to be secured through the detailed design.

00:05:38:10 - 00:05:44:00

Okay, um, that completes my sort of post questions, so please continue.

00:05:44:06 - 00:06:23:00

Thank you. If we were now going to move on to field drainage and to the applicant in respect of field drainage, Castleton Parish Council at rep 5068, reiterated their concerns regarding the likely destruction of the existing field drainage installed in fields to the north of Castleton. And I know you replied at x one 10.6 in respect of this issue. Um, but within that response, you did acknowledge that field drainage may actually be disturbed, given the issues already identified.

00:06:23:02 - 00:06:35:09

And again, I appreciate their existing issues in Cossington. Can you explain how the situation in respect of potential flooding will not be made worse following decommissioning?

00:06:39:21 - 00:06:44:19

So Jonathan Morley on behalf of the applicant. So can you just confirm was that purely for decommissioning?

00:06:45:08 - 00:07:18:16

Basically what I'm looking for is that Castleton has set cuttings and parish council has said that the existing field drainage as it stands. There's existing field drainage. And their concern is that following construction, operation and decommissioning, when when the project, if it gets consent is removed, it will not be put back to how it is now and this situation will actually be made worse. Please Cuddington Parish Council, if that is incorrect, please do do correct me.

00:07:18:28 - 00:07:48:27

Our point was that the existing field drainage would be disturbed and partially properly destroyed because of course, the piles for these solar panels are between 1 to 3m in depth in the ground. And so that means our concern is that this would affect water flow off the land during construction, operation and post decommissioning.

00:07:49:08 - 00:07:49:27

So I suppose.

00:07:49:29 - 00:07:59:07

The question I'm actually asking is what I'm looking for is reassurance that when the project is no longer there, the situation will not be worse than is currently.

00:08:00:08 - 00:08:26:27

Jonathan. On behalf of the applicant, we will be looking to implement appropriate wording within the DCO to capture as a commitment from the applicant. Uh, we've been reviewing, um consented dsos with reviewed with respect to specific wording that they've used in regards to drainage, field drainage, etc. and be looking to incorporate that into deadline six.

00:08:28:01 - 00:08:29:25

So is it a technical.

00:08:31:08 - 00:09:01:27

Sorry. It it it would there would be a view that we'd look to capture as the crop that would do surveys, etc., to understand the field drainage prior to construction. Whilst we're constructing, we'd look to ensure that we survey and record any field drainage that's there. Anything that's deemed operational drainage we will look to reinstate as like with a view that it is operational and retains its function.

00:09:02:07 - 00:09:09:21

Then once we decommissioned, we would do a similar process, ensure that anything that's removed and any damage that's caused is put right.

00:09:11:09 - 00:09:16:24

Thank you. Castleton Parish Council, do you have any comments to make on what you've heard from the applicant?

00:09:17:27 - 00:09:54:03

Uh, yes I do. Um, I mean, what we're seeing here continuously with these flood risk issues is essentially everything being kicked into the long grass. Um, uh, you know, essentially, we'll deal with this in detail, post consent, uh, etc.. We're in a situation where our community is already subject flooding. Any small marginal increase In rate of runoff from the land will increase the occurrence of flooding.

00:09:54:08 - 00:10:33:03

Post consent, Cossington Parish Council will have almost no ability to intervene in whatever is imposed on us in terms of drainage skills, we do not have the financial ability to hire lawyers, etc. to fight on our behalf. Post consent on this matter, our contention remains that the scheme should be reduced to the north of the village, Jericho, Barnes and Worton to remove this risk to our settlements.

00:10:34:07 - 00:10:52:14

Thank you. At this point I probably would turn to the councils, but I know your colleague isn't available today. Could I ask that you ask him or her to review today? And if you do have comments, um, if you put them in for deadline six, please.

00:10:52:16 - 00:10:53:21

Yeah, we'll happily do that.

00:10:53:23 - 00:10:58:08

Okay. Uh, turns to the applicant. Is there anything additional you'd like to add?

00:10:59:00 - 00:11:01:20

Toby, it's on behalf of the applicant. Just to assist my.

00:11:01:22 - 00:11:02:07

Colleague.

00:11:02:09 - 00:11:02:24

Here.

00:11:02:26 - 00:11:05:12

Paragraph 1.1.4.

00:11:06:02 - 00:11:06:17

Of the.

00:11:06:19 - 00:11:07:14

Code of Construction.

00:11:07:16 - 00:11:08:07

Practice.

00:11:08:09 - 00:11:08:24

Which.

00:11:08:26 - 00:11:47:28

Is most recently submitted. CR2 dash 045. That already includes a commitment in relation to field drainage restoration and the visual inspections that would take place prior that my colleague Mr. Morley has referred to as he explained, will refine that wording at deadline six to add some additional clarification as to the scope of what that commitment is. And coming back on the timing point that's been raised from Cossington today. So that'll be made available at deadline six as to what exactly is being committed to. Just to reassure in terms of the control of how that would work, because it's part of the code of construction practice that would be submitted to the relevant planning authority as part of the discharge of requirements.

00:11:48:00 - 00:11:58:06

It's under requirement 11. And at that stage, obviously, when detailed design is known prior to the commencement of development. Those measures would be in front of the relevant planning authority to approve or not.

00:11:59:09 - 00:12:06:16

Thank you, Mister Saint John, you've got your camera on. Do you wish to make a comment or have you just accidentally put your camera on?

00:12:07:02 - 00:12:43:21

Yes I do. I just wanted to say that somebody could ask the Blenheim estate for their drainage plans. Um, much of the land in question north of Worton and Cossington was drained, probably in the 1970s. Um, and you had to produce detailed plans of what drains had been laid. And I'm sure an estate like Blenheim would have kept that sort of record for future reference when they needed to, you know, check where if there was a problem with a drain or an outfall.

00:12:44:07 - 00:13:05:12

So given the number of piles that are likely to be drilled into the ground, um, a lot of drains will be damaged. It's inevitable. Um, so I don't know how they're going to reinstate them all. Uh, but if someone needs to check where the drains are off Blenheim. Thank you.

00:13:05:28 - 00:13:15:26

Thank you. I'm assuming the applicant in your survey work will have access to existing drainage. Um, where you're proposing to build.

00:13:17:18 - 00:13:37:07

Your the model on behalf of the applicant? Yeah. We would seek confirmation of any plans from anybody the landowners, the tenant farmers, etc. in order that we create a full picture of where the drainage is. So we're aware of it. And if we need to do any other specific surveys, then we may take those out at the time. But yes, we would of course consult with the various parties.

00:13:38:21 - 00:13:39:25

And parish council.

00:13:40:19 - 00:14:16:19

Frankly, I'm staggered that you haven't asked for those plans already. Um, I would like to make one more point. Um, if there is any doubt on this matter whatsoever, the examiners and the Secretary of State are obliged to take measures in terms of these plans to avoid any increased risk of flooding of our community. That is also in the regulations. You cannot put in a development which potentially poses an increased risk of flooding.

00:14:18:14 - 00:14:59:15

Thank you. Is do you have any further comments or to that point? No thank you. Um, I'm going to move on to the last agenda item, which is remedial measures. My main question was actually to the lead local flood authority on this. Um, and it is my only question on this. So what I will do is I will put it as an action point. My only other point on this agenda item is, is to the applicant in respect of the Environment Agency, who are aware, is unable to be present at today's hearing.

00:14:59:17 - 00:15:07:24

However, they did submit an update of their position on the 7th of October. I'm not sure whether you have seen that document.

00:15:11:10 - 00:15:39:13

Jonathan Morley, on behalf of the applicant. Yet we've seen the response from the EA, and fundamentally it's just some grammatical and sort of typo errors, etc., and clarifications that we need to do primarily with the flood risk assessment which we will undertake. They are not material to any of the assessments that we have undertaken. It's also worth noting that we have been in consultation quite regularly with the local authority, and seek to pretty much agree with them most terms.

00:15:40:12 - 00:15:57:24

That that document will be if it hasn't already, will be made available in the examination library. So could I ask that for deadline six. You obviously you will review the document and provide comment for me at each of the areas that are outstanding so I can understand what progress has been made.

00:15:58:07 - 00:16:01:00

Jonathan. On behalf of the applicant, we will give you a detailed response. Yes.

00:16:01:02 - 00:16:08:21

Thank you. Mrs. Williams, do you want to come in at this point? Is it an appropriate place? Thank you very much. Yes.

00:16:08:23 - 00:16:38:26

Karen Williams, speaking on behalf of Dustin Dryden. The reason I suggest this is an appropriate place is although I'm talking about a number of issues or simply wish to raise a number of issues, the key one is it does relate to flood risk matters and mitigation. Again, it's written. So I'll essentially read it to you that on behalf of Mr. Dryden, I wish simply to highlight the following elements, which directly and I would suggest uniquely affect his home at goose I farm.

00:16:38:28 - 00:16:45:15

This is app 0072.4 on its sheets eight and ten.

00:16:47:07 - 00:17:30:12

He lives there with his family and operates a modest, regenerative and biodiverse smallholding called Oxfordshire Estates Limited. And goosey is wholly encircled by the Red line, as it's currently proposed. And the summary points I want to highlight touch on a number of agenda issues, as I said, so I can't add technically to the specialist expertise behind the submissions already given to yourselves. However, you have all visited Goose Eye Farm, and I'd ask the examining authority in total to evaluate the impact on his home, specifically in terms of and I'll just quickly try and list a number of points.

00:17:31:07 - 00:17:38:29

So initially the residential amenity, then residents safety and Security.

00:17:41:09 - 00:18:17:21

A profound and intense visual impact on this particular location. The significant noise impact upon the property and the amenities of the home. Heritage and archaeological impacts in the round immediately surrounding and it did arise during the accompanied site inspection, the existing or repositioning of public and private rights of way in terms of security, safety and emergency services accesses to the home itself, and that touches on the secondary access I raised yesterday.

00:18:18:15 - 00:18:38:12

There is a point regarding the maintenance and continuity of water supply to his home. I won't repeat it. It has been previously submitted, but if needs be, I'll. I'll specify exactly where it was submitted. It's a water pressure question relating in particular to, um, plot number 827.

00:18:40:23 - 00:18:51:07

Additionally, the ecology and biodiversity around the breeding and overwintering and nesting of the bird like in the wetland habitat around the lake on site.

00:18:52:27 - 00:19:26:06

So far, I've been unable to identify the applicant's assessment regarding the operational effects of solar arrays on wetland birds and other creatures, such as dragonflies. If that assessment is there, then I'd welcome the applicants specifically addressing this to Mr. Dryden through myself. We have previously asked for it. Um, and again, this relates to the pond. The key point about flooding as the goose I land regularly, regularly floods to a significant level.

00:19:26:21 - 00:19:58:29

Um, despite the fact goose II farm itself falls outside of the development boundary as his land would be wholly encircled. I do seek specific details from the applicants regarding the additional flood runoff and contamination risks in terms of the mitigation, should the development go ahead. And I appreciate that that specific data will be affected by whatever the final buffer zone is sought or achieved or agreed by the applicants.

00:19:59:14 - 00:20:30:06

This list I've just outlined is essentially repeating points Mr. Dryden has made in the previous three years, particularly during the consultation phases. I'm raising them again as a substantive response is still awaited. And just to summarize, I do continue to seek very specific mitigation and possibly enhancement information regarding these issues affecting goose II farm. And I would respectfully echo the Mr.

00:20:30:08 - 00:20:42:13

Wallace's point made earlier this morning about the applicant's responsibility Ability to actually apply the mitigation hierarchy in respect of this piece of land. Thank you.

00:20:43:05 - 00:21:00:29

Thank you. To the applicant. There was quite a few points raised there. I'm only going to ask you if you have a response in respect of flood related. Anything else. If you do wish to respond, please do so at deadline six. So if you do have anything in response to the comments made regarding flood.

00:21:01:23 - 00:21:22:07

Jonathan, Molly, on behalf of the applicant, I think we've covered most of the points already about the flood risk and how we feel it would mimic the existing scenario or the natural scenario. So we would we would seek that there wouldn't be any increase in flood risk to the farm. Um, what we can do is have a look at it specifically, take it away and respond directly at deadline six.

00:21:22:09 - 00:21:28:25

Yeah, because I think there was a very specific request for information there. So if you could do that for deadline six, I'd be grateful.

00:21:28:27 - 00:21:29:12

Yeah.

00:21:31:12 - 00:21:32:25

Thank you. I had your hand up.

00:21:32:27 - 00:21:33:12

Yes.

00:21:33:14 - 00:21:34:02

Thank you.

00:21:34:04 - 00:22:12:23

Chris Westcott from Cumnor Parish Council. I wonder if I can maybe just make a couple of comments about flood risk in respect of the southern site, which, as you know, is in our parish. Um, and I would echo many of the concerns expressed by colleagues in Kensington Parish Council submissions. Um, I think the issue that we find difficulty in understanding is that some three years now into this process, we have still not had any meaningful answer to how the applicant attend, intends to conform with the flood risk policy in our made Neighbourhood Plan.

00:22:12:29 - 00:22:43:24

That's policy two in document Rep 1057. There's an accompanying flood risk report to that made neighbourhood plan, which is Rep 1060. Um, and linking the points that you made, Miss Cassini, about the kind of the human misery associated with this and the points that you made, Mr. Wallace, about land that already floods. I'd also reference you to the relevant representation from Jumper's Farm, and for the location of that, you would have seen it when you were at Helen the other day.

00:22:43:26 - 00:23:19:21

It's the farm that lies at the bottom of Tumbledown Hill on the B 407. That farm will have the DCO boundary on its western, southern and eastern perimeters. And they say that over recent and I quote over recent years, we infill chances of increasingly experienced the devastating effect of flooding and the mental anguish and misery it causes. And we know that climate change is expected to cause more frequent and severe floods. We believe that if this planning application is approved, it's likely to increase our risk of serious flooding, thus inflicting further and unnecessary misery.

00:23:19:26 - 00:24:06:13

They then go on to explain why this is the case, and it relates to the questions you've been asking. A major contributing factor to the flooding in this area is the inability of our watercourse drainage infrastructure to cope with high volumes of runoff when we have heavy or prolonged periods of rain. This has been proven over and over again. Many of the watercourses upon which this proposed development is planned feed into the brooks on the B117 between Filch, Hampstead and far more, and thence into the Thames between Farmer and Shoreham. Now this is a particular concern to them, because when you look at the construction plan, the field immediately to the south of Jumper's Farm, at an elevation of some 10 to 15m above the buildings, is the site of a construction compound.

00:24:06:15 - 00:24:42:27

So we're not talking here about potential runoff after panels of being constructed. We're talking about issues that are likely to arise, given the fact that this farm already floods when the land immediately above it is turned into a construction compound. Hence, that level of local granular knowledge that we have as a parish council was behind the formulation of the flood risk policy. RNI two And so I come back to my first point. So I'm three years into the process. Our residents and us as a parish council have no confidence in the fact that the points that we have been raised have been answered.

00:24:45:09 - 00:25:12:24

Thank you. Do you have a response? I mean, I accept you may not be able to respond in terms of the policy that's been referred to. And if if you would take that away and respond at deadline six, I would be grateful. Um, also, this is a very specific question that has been asked about a specific location. If you do have comments today, be useful. If not again. I do think that that warrants a that particular location warrants a specific response at deadline.

00:25:12:26 - 00:25:42:09

Six Jonathan Morley on behalf of the applicant. Yeah, I agree that we'll take that away and look at the specifics for deadline six. One point was raised about construction compounds. Construction compounds would incorporate their own drainage to ensure that there is managed in accordance with the MPs and the NPF, and that discharge rates are no greater than they would be under a normal scenario, with a view that actual rates from the construction compound would be restricted to a 1 in 1 year rate.

00:25:44:27 - 00:25:49:08

Thank you. So we will get a response to you, Kathleen. Tim. Parish council.

00:25:52:09 - 00:26:02:14

Alex Rogers, Carrington parish council I would just like to pass to Clive Carpenter, our advisor, for a brief comment.

00:26:05:03 - 00:26:42:12

At Carpenter Partington Parish Council, uh, I'd like to make a brief comment towards the last bullet point and remedial measures. You would have already gathered that we do not consider that the use of vegetation, uh, solely will mitigate the risk from the increased runoff from the panels. Um, that being the case, in order to have some confidence that they would be able to mitigate that risk, that would require the use of attenuation ponds and other ways to capture that water and release it into slow rate.

But this is a scheme wide issue, so the same would apply to any land parcel and any storm flow route that comes off the entire scheme.

00:26:42:19 - 00:27:08:24

And our best estimate is that that's more than 40 locations. So each of those would require each of those land parcels would require that kind of level of mitigation to provide confidence that the runoff from the solar panels would be mitigated. And talking to a point Mr. Wallace made, each of those potentially has the impact of, um, of altering the footprint of the solar panels that are available because it would apply to each land parcel. Thank you.

00:27:10:12 - 00:27:17:20

Thank you. Do you have a response in terms of additional mitigation? Well, the attenuation ponds being required.

00:27:18:01 - 00:27:54:01

Uh, Jonathan Morley, on behalf of the applicant, the sort of standard, as I said, industry approach is that the gaps and the solar panels won't effectively increase the impermeable area, which would normally be why you would require attenuation. So it can be seen as an enhancement measure for providing that attenuation as mentioned. It also occurs to me that this is as it's been mentioned quite several times, this is a historical issue for this location. And as I said before, we don't perceive that there will be any significant effect as a consequence of solar panels on the existing hydrology.

00:27:54:08 - 00:28:04:06

In essence, this is a repeat. This seems to be an existing problem that the client, the applicant, will look into enhancement measures to help resolve to some extent.

00:28:06:17 - 00:28:10:12

Thank you. Mr. Wallace, I believe you've got a couple of additional questions.

00:28:11:00 - 00:28:33:11

Yes, indeed. Um, I wonder if someone from the applicant's team who can be responsible for sort of file sharing, if you want, could bring up, um, the change request. Addendum. Uh, CR2 hyphen 71. Um, the change request addendum. Um, in particular, I'm looking at the hydrology technical notes.

00:28:35:01 - 00:28:37:09

I'll just wait for that to come up.

00:28:49:18 - 00:29:07:04

Whoever's doing that whilst you're while you're navigating to that and bringing that up. Um, I'm looking specifically at note number two. Uh, hydrology, technical note number two and figure 1.0. Excuse me, figure 1.1 within that, please.

00:29:09:29 - 00:29:12:13

Jonathan, the applicant was just looking for it now.

00:29:12:24 - 00:29:15:28

Fair enough. I appreciate it. Might have just surprised you on that one.

00:29:33:18 - 00:29:39:15

It's hydrology. Technical note two I believe it's figure 1.1.

00:29:46:18 - 00:30:22:01

Marvelous. Thank you very much. In figure 1.1, you can see sort of the light blue area and the other area there as part of the change request. There's an additional 2.41 hectares worth of solar farm being installed within Cumnor area. Um, and it's been installed there because discussions with the Environment Agency discussions have showed that it's actually within flood zone one. Now, the dark blue on that map is flood zone two or flood zone three, I should say.

00:30:22:03 - 00:30:47:13

And then the new installation is to the east of that. Now, on the accompanied site inspection, I looked over and I did not see a massive great big wall or big straight line down the middle of the site that somehow stopped the floodwater. That seems a very abrupt line. Why? Why is that? Why? What stops the water from going eastward and making the rest of that flood zone free, please?

00:30:49:19 - 00:31:22:23

George, I'm on behalf of the applicant. Well, that's a technical answer, and it's based on the hydraulic modeling. So it would depend on the boundary of the model that's being created. So it's whether it could, for instance, be the symmetry, the, the the landform on which the model is based upon has changed. Or alternatively it's the limits of the model. So sometimes you do get a defined stopping gap where the limits of restricted. Or alternatively it could be a change in the topography.

00:31:22:25 - 00:31:29:15

At that location, we'd have to take that away and give you a technical, detailed response at deadline six.

00:31:29:17 - 00:31:46:00

And I urge you to do that with utmost urgency. Um, there's no topography that goes that straight, that clear. And it was a limitation of the model. You're proposing an additional 2.4 hectares worth of solar farm in the flood zone on the basis of that plan.

00:31:46:09 - 00:32:06:16

What I sorry, Jonathan, on behalf of the applicant, why I would add is we have had detailed conversations with both the with the Environment Agency about placing solar panels in flood zones and the principally they had no issue with it that what they did request is that the underside of the panel, the lowest leading edge, is 300mm above the flood level.

00:32:07:06 - 00:32:17:22

And one of your design principles that was underpinning the design at the concept stage of the project was to avoid all areas of flood zone three, regardless of what the Environment Agency said.

00:32:17:24 - 00:32:39:16

Yeah. Yes. Correct. We will check. As I said, we will take this away and check it for deadline six and confirm. Please do what we will do. We will do as we have done on other locations where there's an absence of modeling is review against the EA surface water mapping. So we've used that and agreed that with the Environment Agency that that mapping could be used as a proxy for the absence of any data.

00:32:40:03 - 00:32:44:17

And could we take an action point for the Environment Agency to comment on that plan, please?

00:32:50:01 - 00:32:51:06

Sorry. Yes.

00:32:52:23 - 00:33:28:16

I might be able to help you with the part of the answer to your question. Um, having walked my dogs along there just this morning, um, there are no topographical features that would account for the straight line. Our understanding when we were doing the flood risk assessments for our made neighbourhood plan is that there's an error margin of at least 30m on Environment Agency data that land is flat land. The northern boundary is the Oxford Greenbelt way. One of the most notable footpaths in the area, and we can confirm and I can supply photographs, should you be interested that the land regularly floods.

00:33:29:07 - 00:33:29:27

Thank you.

00:33:31:13 - 00:33:35:27

Thank you very much. I have no further queries regarding flooding.

00:33:36:15 - 00:33:39:07

So just to help with the earlier question.

00:33:39:09 - 00:33:44:01

The Environment Agency's comments is now on the website. So it's just put on this morning.

00:33:44:06 - 00:33:45:10

Thank you very much.

00:33:46:13 - 00:33:54:09

Um, does anyone else from the council side or from interested parties want to raise anything more about flooding before we move on?

00:33:57:19 - 00:34:29:16

Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Miss Cassini. We'll move on now then, to the item on ecology. Um, if we may. Um, obviously Natural England are not here. They've sent their apologies, but they have given us a, uh, an additional submission, which I hope you've seen on the the website, which sort of summarizes their position regarding a lot of outstanding matters. Um, the main part of their sort of outstanding matter and ecology relates to bats.

00:34:30:07 - 00:34:44:24

Um, they've received the bat technical note. Thank you very much for that. Um, but they have said they've still got some outstanding technical concerns. I quote, due to incomplete data. Um, why?

00:34:49:29 - 00:35:21:12

Good morning, sir. Nick Batson for the, uh, the applicant, um, the data that's, uh, they are, um, waiting on, uh, is in respect of static monitoring for the for the site. Um, we have, uh, undertaken static monitoring. Uh, with respect to that on the site for in 2002, 2003, some in 2004, and then some more this year as well.

00:35:21:21 - 00:35:57:01

The intention this year is to use those data to help inform, um, the, uh, the final detailed design with respect to how we place the buffers around the features within the development that might be used by bats. Um, and yeah, we're expecting to have those data available now in, uh, for, for deadline six. So everything we have in respect of bats that Natural England need is, uh, it's in the final analysis at the moment and will be being submitted at deadline six.

00:35:57:22 - 00:36:17:00

Okay. So just to ensure in terms of timeline, because you mentioned both detailed design and now so you're saying that the additional Bat information will be available at deadline six. That will inform your mitigation and your buffers at deadline six that then Natural England can respond to a deadline. Seven. Is that correct?

00:36:17:18 - 00:36:24:25

I'm meeting with Natural England tomorrow to go through the final, um, this issue to, um, to get final agreement with them.

00:36:25:07 - 00:36:26:27

Okay. Okay.

00:36:28:29 - 00:36:54:24

Thank you very much on that. Um, as part of the the bat mitigation in the the Olymp, the landscape ecology management plan. Um, there is now this three tier buffer system, um, in there. Um, does there need to be any crossover between that and the outline code of construction practice to ensure that during construction that's also maintained?

00:36:55:29 - 00:37:09:27

Nick Bettison for the applicant. Um, yes. Absolutely, sir. Um, so the, uh, kiosk currently, um, can get you the reference. That's useful. Um.

00:37:11:29 - 00:37:38:06

Uh, section .1. 11 of the KOSPI. I think that the wording there is that it's a minimum of five metres, and what the intention was that deadline six was to clarify, to make sure that that was explicitly where we had bigger buffers in respect of bats or watercourses or whatever, that that was made more explicit in the COC at this stage, to give confidence that that will indeed be the case. Yes.

00:37:38:09 - 00:37:53:19

Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. I understand a hand was raised, but if it's from the. I've got London Oxford airport was raising a hand. First I will come to you, sir. It's online. Yes, Mr. Nadin? Yes. Um.

00:37:53:22 - 00:38:25:15

Thank you sir. Um. Nedim from Litchfield, on behalf of Oxford Aviation Services Limited. And apologies. This is not about bats. It's just an agenda point on three. See? Very quickly. There wasn't a moment to to do it earlier. Um, bird strikes is listed in the ecology. Um, as it sort of relates to aviation. Is it possible to cover that in three? If the managing director of Oxford Airport will be available at that time as well, to cover all matters of aviation safety? We just hope that bird strikes for aviation could be covered then as well.

00:38:26:17 - 00:38:33:03

Yes indeed. No. We will come on to bird strike later on. Absolutely. Um, gentleman from Kensington.

00:38:34:22 - 00:39:06:18

Yeah. Alex Rogers from Kensington Parish Council. Um, we've been raising the issue of bats, I think, since very early in this examination. Uh, we're very happy to see the new bat survey documents. Pins reference. I think there was app 6.5 and the Bat technical note. This demonstrates that there is agreement that there is a negative impact of solar on bat populations.

00:39:07:01 - 00:39:24:15

The mechanism behind that negative impact is unclear, and the project, sigh is at least of national importance in terms of bat populations, possibly of international importance.

00:39:26:07 - 00:39:52:11

A number of bat species you will see from the new technical report and survey results move over and forage over fields, not just along hedgerows and in wooded areas. And I'd point in particular to. Figure two of the summary part of app 6.5, which shows the um

00:39:54:00 - 00:40:13:06

core range and dispersal routes for barber style bats. This is a near threatened bat species. What that shows is those bats are using a lot of the habitat in the central section that will be covered in solar panels.

00:40:14:27 - 00:40:15:15

Now,

00:40:17:03 - 00:40:48:16

the impact on bats from solar is potentially very, very high. And I'll refer to the Tinsley study of 2023, which we refer to in well, which will go into in detail in our response to these sets. But I'll just pull up a couple of statistics here. Common pipistrelle activity in open fields was reduced by 86% in that study.

00:40:48:28 - 00:41:28:02

Soprano pipistrelle was by 68%. Nicholas bats nodules, which the technical note shows are located over fields by 48%. We've also seen information arising from the Gwent level solar projects tracks where a statement was produced to the Minister for Climate Change in 2022. The diversity of plant species decreased for the majority of locations, and abundance has dropped dramatically 95 to 100%.

00:41:29:16 - 00:42:11:09

Um, I would just point out that the Secretary of State and the government have signed up to the Convention on Biological Diversity and also to the recent Montreal biodiversity targets, and I'll just lift one target from there. So hope species extinction, protect genetic diversity and manage human wildlife conflicts to ensure that urgent management actions halt human induced extinction of known threatened species, and for the recovery and Conservation species, particularly threatened species.

00:42:12:04 - 00:42:47:17

I do not believe that mitigation measures are put forward by the applicant, actually will protect many of the bat species here, and material evidences in their own technical note. And what we're seeing is thinking based on old knowledge about how to mitigate impacts on bats. This is new knowledge coming through from scientific literature and their own study, which demonstrate that bats do use these types of areas.

00:42:49:08 - 00:43:04:17

Thank you very much. And yes indeed any any documents we've referred to there. Please do get them in at deadline six and other quotes that you've made there. I'll come over to you. Appreciate some of that may be sort of new or you've not fully been able to flesh out an idea for that. Do you have any response?

00:43:05:15 - 00:43:36:00

Thank you Nick Benson for the applicant. I think it's really important to set out the, the the work that tins these group undertook, specifically looked at a comparison between a grassland field with panels and a grass and grassland fields without panels. And the example that gentleman gave in respect of the Gwent levels would have been in a similar situation. You have grassland habitats that are within the grant levels in between all the rains, and then you have with and without solar.

00:43:36:18 - 00:43:42:12

The important thing that the tenancy work didn't look at was differences between an intensive arable landscape

00:43:43:28 - 00:44:18:24

and a grassland landscape with with bats within panels. I'm sorry. So the, um, what the project is sought to do is, uh, sorry the Tinsley work has been it did identify issues that undoubtedly have arisen that is new to science in terms of how bats react to Sound of Bombs, in particular how some of the smaller species foraged through them. The evidence was that they were moving much faster and they were moving in much straighter lines.

00:44:18:26 - 00:44:34:09

And that's from that perspective, indicates that they were foraging less within those areas. The mechanism by which that happens hasn't been elucidated yet. We don't know what that what that mechanism is. So

00:44:35:24 - 00:45:24:04

the what projects are sought to do is to adopt a precautionary principle to the application of buffer areas that move those the panels away from the bats. So that's the core of what we've why we've come up with a three tier system that allows for the permeability through the site at a number of levels. You've got larger areas of um, uh, Larger buffers that cover the core key areas, um, then medium sized buffers, for want of a better term, on areas that are, that have features that might where backs might be, um, that might use but also allows for connectivity between the core key features as well.

00:45:24:06 - 00:45:32:29

And then um, a more a smaller buffers on the, on the remainder of all the hedgerows. So the uh.

00:45:35:09 - 00:46:05:09

Concept that we're, that we're not mitigating for bats is simply isn't true. That's what we've agreed with Natural England in terms of the approach that's adopted now, um, for solar rain sips moving forwards. Um, and as Natural England said in their, um, response to uh, Q2, they want that they want this project to be an exemplar in terms of how it addresses that of X, and that's what the applicant would like to achieve as well.

00:46:06:28 - 00:46:11:29

Okay. Okay. Thank you very much. I'll just take one more point on this before I move on.

00:46:12:26 - 00:46:33:14

I would just point out that the applicant's own evidence clearly demonstrates the suite of bat species are using the arable fields as habitat. Um, so that the kind of suggestion that Tinsley results are somehow biased, uh, do not seem to be the case.

00:46:35:14 - 00:46:36:00

Okay.

00:46:38:00 - 00:47:08:00

For the applicant. So the, um, core foraging areas that are shown within the, um, uh, within the, that technical report, they, uh, they're a statistical measure of where abouts the bats are, um, might be within the, um, uh, within that zone. So it's not it's not, it isn't. Although that that that figure absolutely looks like the bats are everywhere. The radio tracking data.

00:47:08:02 - 00:47:13:04

That's not how radio tracking data works. The core sustenance zones are.

00:47:15:06 - 00:47:24:00

A statistical model for how the bats might be occurring within that area. You then have to apply an element of statistic of ecological knowledge of bat

00:47:25:22 - 00:47:41:29

ecology to understand where they're going to be, where the foraging, where the invertebrate biomass is. Invertebrate biomass is not within a field that's been sprayed with pesticides. It's in on the edges of the fields along the, um, uh, any margins close to the coast of the hedgerows.

00:47:42:20 - 00:47:57:03

So in terms of the point that gentleman is making about the evidence you've provided, that sort of shows the bats going across the field. So you're saying that was a high level assumptions, and then your actual technical data proves that that's wrong.

00:47:57:05 - 00:48:02:09

So the technical data shows that they use the, um. The.

00:48:06:10 - 00:48:06:25

The.

00:48:09:06 - 00:48:45:11

Uh, corridors, if you like. Along the hedgerows, along the, um, uh, along the, uh, the railway line in particular, along and along the watercourses on site. Um, that's when you're observing the bats. That's where you see them. You don't see them. There are some species absolutely that we'll use for that. We'll forage across the field. It's the biggest bat species in particular. Well, there's plenty of data to show that they do forage across fields. They're also the species that, um, the work suggested wasn't it wasn't a set of farms.

00:48:45:13 - 00:49:02:29

They didn't find any effect for a lot of those. Interestingly, the Tinsley worked also didn't find an effect on Barb. Still, although they do acknowledge the fact that that might be down to the fact that Barb started to read species and they didn't have enough data in order to be able to draw any firm conclusions. But equally it could be but they there isn't. There is no effect on that particular species.

00:49:03:14 - 00:49:25:22

Okay. Okay. I appreciate you want to come back. Come back on that. I know we've said at deadline six you'll put in a lot of documentation with the quotes, and I'd just ask if you could respond to what you've heard there at deadline six as well. Um, yeah. Thank you very much for that. Um, change of pace and change of topic within ecology. I'll come over to the other councils. Oh, sorry.

00:49:27:03 - 00:49:44:10

Uh, Rebecca McLean, um, ecology for city County Council. If I could just come in briefly on the bats. Um, so we appreciate that a lot more additional information has recently been submitted. Um, our position, I guess, generally reflects Natural England's is that we want to be sure full.

00:49:44:12 - 00:50:24:24

Analysis has been undertaken on all that data, um, before locations or width buffers are finalized. But we are generally accepting of the approach suggested around the different tiers of buffers that are proposed. Um, I've got some concerns about how that's been incorporated into the Olymp. So at the moment, for the tree buffers, we've got a description of the locations we'd really want to see that

clearly marked up on a plan. Um, and part of the decision being made, um, and then picking up on the point that's just been being discussed, we'd be very keen to see more monitoring incorporated into the proposals.

00:50:24:26 - 00:50:38:06

Currently, I think that's mainly linked to the licensing, which generally is only done for about ten years. So potentially for further period of time and to make sure we're getting monitoring not just along those buffer areas but within the solar farm itself as well.

00:50:39:06 - 00:50:41:27

Okay. Okay. Can the applicant commit to that.

00:50:43:15 - 00:50:45:11

Person for the applicant? Um, I

00:50:46:27 - 00:50:59:19

don't have the the, um, monitoring strategy, uh, in front of me, but absolutely, the intention is to monitor for the for all, for all wildlife. The intention is to monitor for the for the operational lifetime of the project. That's that's is set out in the lamp.

00:51:01:01 - 00:51:15:06

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, so come back over to you. Um, the local nature recovery strategy you've mentioned before, it's sort of ongoing and there's not yet too much reference of it. What's the current position regarding it, please?

00:51:15:09 - 00:51:15:26

Um, so.

00:51:15:28 - 00:51:16:18

It's.

00:51:16:22 - 00:51:31:28

Due it's going through an approval process at the moment. It will be going to our cabinet for approval on the 21st of October. And assuming that process will go smoothly, it'll be published, um, 12th of November. So stupid publication.

00:51:33:22 - 00:51:42:13

So published. 12th of November. Okay. Okay. Thank you very much for that. In which case, if that's

00:51:44:02 - 00:51:53:13

that's just before the examination closes. As such. Um, how would you advise the examining authority to treat or wait to that document?

00:52:00:20 - 00:52:02:10

Yeah. George County Council, I guess.

00:52:02:12 - 00:52:04:19

Our position is it will be a material concern.

00:52:04:21 - 00:52:05:06

Within.

00:52:05:08 - 00:52:14:16

The examination period. Appreciate it is very much at the end of the examination period. So I think it should be given the full weight of a of an approved plan within the examination period.

00:52:14:25 - 00:52:31:04

Okay. Thank you. Come over to the applicant. Um, the LNR s as a whole, the potential for it to be public will go to cabinet on the 21st of October, then published 12th of November. Same question to you. Really, how would you advise I wait or consider that document?

00:52:33:16 - 00:52:47:24

On behalf of the applicant, noting the deadline seven is on the 10th of November, which is the last sort of substantive deadline, we suggest it's minimal wait, because there's insufficient time remaining in examination to give proper consideration to that.

00:52:48:21 - 00:53:21:12

Okay, take take the positions of the respective parties on that. Thank you. Um, I'd now like to turn on to birds. Farmland. Birds in particular. Um. In change request two. Um. There's 17.6 hectares of land where solar installation is being taken out, but that land is being retained in the order limits. Um, described as being to double up as both biodiversity net gain and for the mitigation of farmland birds, specifically skylark.

00:53:21:24 - 00:53:34:02

Um, in response to question two point 16.8, it says that the land would be managed for the benefit of birds. What does that actually mean in real terms?

00:53:35:28 - 00:54:06:02

Uh, for the applicant. So in terms of, um, that particular parcel of land, it would fall within the, uh, the area that would sit that we've committed to sitting within the bird risk zone of Oxfordshire airport. And so what that would mean is that it would be managed as a, um, a broadly long grass policy, which is between 20 and 30cm in height.

00:54:06:18 - 00:54:25:16

Um, this is, from a skylark perspective, pretty much perfect. I've worked on quite a few airfields airport projects over the years, and every single airfield is full of Skylark. So in terms of management, that area would be um, uh,

00:54:27:06 - 00:54:33:09

managed in such a manner that would be very suitable for Skylark and for, and for any other ground nesting birds.

00:54:34:08 - 00:55:05:14

I mean, the, the council, um, will come onto a farmland bird strategy in a moment, but they've highlighted that that, uh, the farmland bird assemblage includes species such as corn bunting, partridge, lapwing, linnet, skylark, sparrow, yellowhammer, yellow wagtail. Another bird species that are on the list in section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act. Um, I appreciate what you've said about the land being managed nicely for Skylark.

00:55:05:22 - 00:55:07:12

How about those other species?

00:55:07:20 - 00:55:23:02

So in terms of those other species and how often they occurred on on site, we had three cornered bunting across the entire site as a peak count. We had six grey partridges and we had three lapwing. We had 23 linnet, um.

00:55:28:01 - 00:56:03:15

And one yellow wagtail. Um. The farming and bird assemblage on the project site as a whole, individually, with respect to the individual species, they weren't um, the numbers just didn't warrant them being dealt with as an individual on an individual receptor basis. So we dealt with them as an assemblage because the assemblages is diverse, which is what you would expect from a farmland habitat in that kind of in, in rural Oxfordshire. Um, in terms of how that specific piece of land would benefit corn bunting, it wouldn't be particularly beneficial for them.

00:56:03:17 - 00:56:39:26

It would have there would be a seed source there at some time, parts of the year. But it the project site as a whole incorporates um, large areas of um, uh, new grassland habitat that will be created that will benefit confronting corn bunting use field margins. At the moment, there aren't any field margins on site except in the northern site in the northern site area. Um, the vast majority of the project site has little or no field margin. Um, every single hedgerow across the whole site of the um will have at least five metres, and most of them will have more than that.

00:56:40:15 - 00:56:55:15

Um, so that will be beneficial for the likes of corn bunting, grey partridge, linnet, um, all of the other, um, Farmland assemblages and the species that are specifically referenced in terms within the NFS or the emerging and says.

00:56:57:02 - 00:57:23:27

Okay. Okay. Thank you. I'll come across to the council. Obviously, you requested, if you like a farmland bird strategy be produced. It's a request that we've heard, and we've suggested a proposed requirement in the DCO to which the applicant will respond fully at the next deadline. But in terms of what you've heard so far and this, you know, 17.6 hectares of land. What's your position? What do you think?

00:57:24:19 - 00:57:47:14

So one of the key species we're concerned about is skylark. Um, because it is ground nesting and the introduction of solar panels. Um, generally, I think we referenced in our previous response research has shown that skylarks are not recorded breeding within solar farms. They are recorded foraging but not breeding. So that's one of the key species that we're concerned about.

00:57:47:21 - 00:57:48:10

Um.

00:57:48:21 - 00:58:22:09

Where where the applicant provided their skylight technical note, which we've commented on at deadline five. Um, and we have some concerns in terms of, uh, the their assumptions made in terms of the ongoing capacity to support skylarks. Um, that 17.6 hectares would go some way to addressing that if it were suitably managed, but we don't think it addresses the full issue. So that's why we'd still promote the idea of farmland birds strategy that could help increase capacity for skylarks, um, in the surrounding area.

00:58:23:09 - 00:58:31:18

Could I be so bold to suggest that rather coordinate a farmland bird strategy? It's a skylark mitigation strategy. Would that be more appropriate?

00:58:31:20 - 00:58:33:25

Potentially, yes. Yeah.

00:58:33:27 - 00:58:57:07

Well, no. Potentially. I'm I'm I'm reading your your response and seeing all the species that are listed. And I'm thinking that if, you know, if we narrow it down to Skylark because that's where the concern is. Then that sort of helps address them. As long as you have no residual concerns regarding any of the other species that you yourself have listed in your submissions.

00:58:57:24 - 00:59:06:07

Yeah, and I do have colleagues online in West Oxfordshire County District Council, so I want to check that they would be happy with that position.

00:59:06:20 - 00:59:10:16

No call on them if anyone's are able to speak to that comment please.

00:59:17:16 - 00:59:35:26

Melanie Dodd, ecologist at West Oxfordshire District Council um, I think, uh, our main concern is with the skylarks and the impact on that particular species. I think most of the other species, I would be comfortable with the mitigation that's already been put forward.

00:59:37:03 - 01:00:09:24

Okay. No, that's that's that's useful. That's that's helped me out a lot actually, in terms of those those other species in the council's position on them. Um, so I come across to the to the applicant. Um, obviously we know appreciate your respond fully at deadline six, there's the proposed farmland bird

mitigation strategy proposed as a requirement. If that were to become a skylark mitigation strategy, um, to fully now manage that land, to fully agree how that land would be used for skylarks.

01:00:10:28 - 01:00:23:00

A do you think that's necessary? And B, if so, do you think it acceptable to have that sort of requirement? Appreciate you probably need to confer among the bench there.

01:00:24:24 - 01:00:34:24

Tibbetts on behalf of the applicant. That suggests we deal with that deadline six in full in response to the scheduled changes, particularly as it's changed from the farmland bird to skylark, so we can fully take that away in in detail.

01:00:34:26 - 01:00:36:19

Okay. Okay. Thank you.

01:00:39:18 - 01:00:40:07

Okay.

01:00:43:14 - 01:00:44:07

There's.

01:00:46:26 - 01:01:13:13

Notes in the time. Just a couple more questions on this topic, if I may. Um, this touches more on the Habitats Regulations assessment side of things. Um, I know in response to the deadline for submissions that there is an agreed methodology with Natural England about how ammonia deposition is going to be, um, dealt with. Do you have any updates on what's happening with that and when we can see that?

01:01:14:04 - 01:01:54:19

I think that's for the applicant. Um, I'll, I'll be giving Natural England an update tomorrow, so I'll give you an early, early indication. We've completed all the modelling and the, um. The initial result suggests that there are. While we do have some exceedance of 1% within at the very, very edge of the sac. Um, in combination scenario, those locations are, um, By virtue of the fact that in one specific location, the SAC boundary, there's an underpass that goes under the the A34 right and the SAC boundary goes through that underpass.

01:01:55:01 - 01:02:17:19

So the deposition occurs right on the edge of the road, which happens to be in a on on that underpass because of the way that the SAC boundary is drawn. So we'll be discussing that in England tomorrow. But my assumption is that they will be content that that's not going to show any kind of, um, adverse effect on the integrity, considering it's on concrete, not on grass. So we'll be updating our HRA and submitting those data at deadline six.

01:02:17:24 - 01:02:26:15

And can I just confirm that that in combination assessment takes into account the most recent projects that appear on the cumulative assessment list?

01:02:26:18 - 01:02:30:27

Uh, Nick Batson for the applicant. Um, yes, that's my understanding from the transport guys.

01:02:31:01 - 01:03:12:14

The only reason I ask that is because, of course, the ADT was 192 vehicles and would close to that 200 vehicle threshold. So just wanted to make sure the most recent ones are in there. So in case you go over that. No, that's. That's fine. Okay. Thank you. Um, I've just got one further question, um, on this now. Um, we asked a question, um, two point 13.2, um, regarding tree protection scenarios. Um, the applicant responded that the arboriculture document provides a working framework that could be implemented once detailed design and tree survey information has been refined.

01:03:12:24 - 01:03:43:00

Um, the host authorities responded that the information provided today is to generic, and that the design of the site should have been based on actual tree consents constraints, not just the set of principles. Um, the host authorities also requested and updated our Borough Control impact assessment. It's applied and commented that tree protection scenarios six and nine are unacceptable. Um, at deadline five, you just referred us back to what you said at deadline four.

01:03:43:13 - 01:03:50:08

Um, could you be a bit more helpful? If you like? We've got a deposition.

01:03:54:00 - 01:04:07:12

On behalf of the applicant. Not right now, but we will be at deadline six. The expert the cultural expert isn't here with us today. It's separate from Mr. Batson. But at that point is noted. And we'll make sure to supplement what's already been submitted rather than repeat it. Thank you.

01:04:09:01 - 01:04:09:20

Okay.

01:04:12:12 - 01:04:17:25

Um, finally on ecology, before I open it to the floor, um,

01:04:19:12 - 01:04:32:27

you promised to include Watercourse Beng units within your updated Beng assessment and statement. Um, that was missing at deadline five. When can we expect to see Beng watercourse units?

01:04:32:29 - 01:04:37:01

So Nick Batson for the applicant. And we'll be submitting that at deadline six. That's ready to go.

01:04:39:13 - 01:04:47:14

Okay. Okay. Before I bring this particular topic to a close, does anyone have any further comments on ecology?

01:04:49:07 - 01:05:04:20

Yes. Just to highlight and bring it back to the point you raised earlier around the mitigation hierarchy in its application in design, I think, um, what we're looking at here in terms of the lateness of the bat data and watercourse data speaks to that. So just like that. Thank you.

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

Yeah. Now. Understood. Understood? Yes.

01:05:12:05 - 01:05:42:24

Alex Rogers, Castleton Parish Council. Uh, I just put forward that the UK government has published official statistics for wild bird populations. Updated 23rd of September of this year. This demonstrates that farmland birds have declined by 62% since 1970 and have continued to decline over the last five years by 11%.

01:05:42:26 - 01:06:10:29

So in fact, the matter of conservation farmland birds is a very serious one in connection with this particular scheme. And I'll also just say that many of the birds listed as in serious decline are present across the site, and many of them are reliant on arable agriculture as a food source during certain times of the year.

01:06:12:26 - 01:06:15:20

Okay. Thank you very much. Any further comment?

01:06:16:23 - 01:06:46:27

Nick Batson for the applicant, I think that's Mr. Rogers makes a very, very good point in terms of farming and bird decline. And I'd just like to highlight the work that's been done by the University of Cambridge and RSPB, looking at this very issue in terms of how solar farms can contribute to farm and bird populations and the work that Our work demonstrated a very significant benefit to farmland birds in terms of both diversity and abundance from well-managed solar farms in comparison with the intensive arable landscape.

01:06:47:11 - 01:06:48:00

Okay.

01:06:48:11 - 01:07:24:00

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, for Mr. Nadine online, we'll come back to bird strike in the aviation safety. Um, later on, as we mentioned, um, it's now 12:20. I'm conscious that the next section is heritage, which will be a substantive section. What I propose we do now is adjourn for lunch. Um, and then we can have heritage as a, as a whole section after that. Um, if I was to say resume at 1315, does that give everyone a chance to get lunch? Knows some facilities around here, but yeah.

01:07:24:02 - 01:07:29:09

Okay, so we adjourn now, and the hearing will resume at 1315. Thank you.