



Planning Inspectorate  
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

## Hearing Transcript

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| <b>Project:</b> | Springwell Solar Farm        |
| <b>Hearing:</b> | Preliminary Meeting – Part 2 |
| <b>Date:</b>    | 07 May 2025                  |

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:04:03 - 00:00:37:12

So will resume, please. Just before we move on to agenda item number five, the procedural decisions. Um, I'll just touch briefly. I did mention it about the importance of providing documents at the set deadlines. Um, and obviously, while we do have the ability to accept late submissions into the examination, this is at the discretion of the examining authority and should only be done and, uh, exceptional circumstances. So I did touch on it before the break, but I just wanted to highlight that again. Um, so we'll move on to agenda item number five.

00:00:37:17 - 00:00:42:29

Uh, which Mr. North over. We'll run through now. Thank you. Thank you. Um, it would.

00:00:43:01 - 00:01:18:12

Be useful to have annex F of the rule six letter in front of you for agenda item five. Um, you'll see that we've made a number of procedural decisions about the management of the examination. This annex explains in detail the reason for these procedural decisions. I'd like to highlight a few points before inviting any comments from participants. So item one covers the requested statement of common grounds between the applicant and certain interested parties. We'd also request the applicant Statement of Commonality for Statements of Common Ground.

00:01:18:14 - 00:01:32:29

Provides a table showing an overview of the position between themselves and relevant parties, and so to the applicant, have any comments on the requested statements of common grounds or or. This matter generally.

00:01:34:08 - 00:02:06:23

Is common for the applicant. Um, yes. We agree with the suggested um statements of common ground that are listed annex F, and we'll be submitting. Um, our intention is to submit drafts of those at deadline one. Um, in addition to the list there, we propose to submit draft SOC with Network Rail, Ministry of Defence and UK Health Security Agency. Um, just picking up on various points that have arisen in the relevant representations or previous discussions with those parties. Um, just in terms of the draft SDGs we've already submitted.

00:02:06:28 - 00:02:28:23

Um, which relate to Anglian Water, Cadent, xylem, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and National Grid. We're not proposing to update those quite at this stage, mainly because most of them are dependent upon ongoing discussions around protective provisions. So at the appropriate time, we'll update those ones. Um, so basic point is in agreement with an XRF and yes, we'll submit the statement of commonality as well.

00:02:29:04 - 00:02:35:11

Thank you. Uh, are there any other parties in the room that want to or online that want to comment on statements of common ground?

00:02:38:16 - 00:03:11:24

Okay. I'm not seeing any one in the room or online. Okay. So item two of annex F, uh, relates to suggested locations for the accompanied site inspection. Uh, we receive submissions on this at procedural deadline. A, um, and the applicants being requested to prepare a draft itinerary for the accompanied site inspection to be submitted at deadline one with IPS invited to comment on the draft itinerary at deadline. To, um, I can see that in the applicants procedural deadline.

00:03:11:26 - 00:03:27:29

Submit a submission. Um, it includes a few locations that are residential properties. So questions to the applicant. Is, is it suggested that the site inspection would go inside of properties to look at views from inside houses?

00:03:31:05 - 00:03:36:15

Common to the applicant. No, that's not the intention. Um, the viewpoints are just I suppose along side are in the general area.

00:03:36:17 - 00:04:12:27

Okay. So so it would be viewing representative views from adjacent land or the curtilage. That's correct. Okay. Thank you. Um, finally, item three of annex F covers the acceptance of additional submissions received during the pre examination period. I haven't been notified that anyone wants to speak on this agenda. Item five. Um, is there anyone here, either in the room or online, that wishes to comment on any of the other procedural decisions listed in annex half of the rule six letter?

00:04:17:13 - 00:04:25:03

No, I'm not seeing any hands. Um, if not, that concludes this item of the agenda. Thank you. I'll pass back to Mr. Manning.

00:04:26:24 - 00:04:38:07

Okay. Thank you very much. Okay, that brings us on to any other matters. Um, does anyone, uh, before we close the hearing, wish to say anything else at all?

00:04:40:25 - 00:04:42:16

No. Okay. Thank you very much.

00:04:44:07 - 00:04:47:00

Uh, actually, I, I would, please I did put my hand up.

00:04:47:02 - 00:04:52:02

Uh oh, sorry, Mr. Frost. Sorry, I didn't see the hand up on the virtual screen. Yes, please come in now.

00:04:53:20 - 00:05:33:08

Yeah. Thank you. Um, yeah, I'll just just picking up the, um, the same point, uh, again. Uh, and Your answer about everything being clear and covered in the, um, uh, in the report that you submit just in the break there. Um, I've read the report for the hacking fen um, one. And in there it specifically says

the E. The exa does not report in detail on every issue, and that the Secretary of State can be assured that the Exa has considered the matter and is satisfied with the applicant's responses given.

00:05:33:18 - 00:05:51:15

So. So even in there where you said we would see, um, your detailed responses to, um, representations, it doesn't appear that in previous ones that has been the case. So I just like you to give your assurance that what you said earlier will actually happen in your version.

00:05:52:15 - 00:06:13:07

Um, I don't think I said there would be a detailed response to every relevant representation in the in the overall report, that that will be where we take a view on the overarching topics, which obviously the relevant representations all filter into. But that's ultimately the place where we make our judgements on issues raised across the whole examination.

00:06:13:20 - 00:06:26:07

Okay. And can you please confirm then that the points that I raised earlier, uh, about things that had been omitted from the list, um, will be now subsequently added in.

00:06:27:09 - 00:06:31:13

The list of the uh, principal issue list.

00:06:31:15 - 00:06:32:08

Yeah. That's right.

00:06:32:10 - 00:06:46:06

Yeah. And we will ultimately, we'll take those points away. Um, and in the rule eight letter, um, we will confirm any changes to, um, the IRP as we call it, which is the initial assessment of principal issues.

00:06:48:03 - 00:06:49:16

Thank you. Okay.

00:06:49:21 - 00:06:50:09

Thank you.

00:06:52:19 - 00:06:54:08

Sorry, Mr. Williams.

00:06:55:14 - 00:07:13:27

Yeah. Scotland can cope with greenhouse gases. Mark Williams, just to follow on from what Mr. Frost has just said there. Um, I know we have a potential additional open floor hearing on the week commencing the 14th of July. When are there potentially additional meetings for issue specific?

00:07:14:19 - 00:07:16:09

Um, it will be all of that week.

00:07:16:13 - 00:07:16:28

That.

00:07:17:00 - 00:07:22:00

Week. Yeah. The likelihood it'll be Tuesday, possibly through till Friday if we need all of that.

00:07:22:02 - 00:07:41:19

All right. So, you know, if we look currently at your documentation, it highlights about eight, um, point, um, eight areas of, of um for discussion and additional um points be added in at that point. So if we, if we think um, health and wellbeing is a critical issue, can that be added.

00:07:42:13 - 00:07:57:14

In terms of the list that was in the the annex, the assumption that's something we'll take away. So we've obviously heard, um, suggestions that things should be added in. So we'll take that away and consider that. And in the rule eight letter which will come shortly. Any changes will be explained in there.

00:07:57:16 - 00:07:58:01

All right.

00:07:58:03 - 00:08:02:10

Thank you. Okay. Thank you. So, Mr. Alwyn, did you want to also say something?

00:08:06:16 - 00:08:17:01

Did we, um. Yeah, the. I'm sorry to backtrack slightly, but, um, the site visit planning

00:08:18:27 - 00:08:47:16

thing to do is would you be open to meeting with local people, and we can take you around some of the sites. Uh, we we'd like you to see, um, you know, in, in, in relation to the possible effects of, of the, uh, proposed solar project on those areas, on Bainbridge areas, places like that, and areas of outstanding beauty. So.

00:08:48:01 - 00:09:21:18

Yeah, there was a deadline, um, procedure, decision deadline, a where any suggested locations for site visits were, were requested. Um, and as part of that, the applicant will produce a draft itinerary which people are, which people can comment on still. So then would be an appropriate time for you to suggest any locations which should form part of the itinerary. Um, but but it's probably worth making clear that in terms of the accompany side inspection, that's generally on areas of land where we can't get access from public land.

00:09:21:20 - 00:09:38:12

So, um, if we can see it from a public right of way or something, then, um, Mr. North over and I will generally do that unaccompanied. Um, it's only really where we need to go onto private land, or we need permission to go onto land where we would factor that in in terms of the accompanied site inspection.

00:09:39:02 - 00:10:11:13

Yeah. All right. That's. Yeah. And the applicant's obviously organising that with you to get onto the, onto the land. Yes. What I'm saying is I think locally people will be very interested in meeting up with you on public footpaths or on, um, on other areas that are accessible, uh, including, you know, in the middle of South Scott Pointing out issues regarding the lay of the land in that area and the impacts. And a whole number of things, really.

00:10:11:15 - 00:10:24:12

There's a lot of land you could walk around over that 4000 odd acres that we could take you to without, uh, going off public roads or public footpaths, bridleways, etc..

00:10:25:00 - 00:10:52:16

The. Yeah, the, the, um, any interested parties allowed to attend the company's site inspection so they can come along as well? Um, but it's important to note that it's not to discuss the merits of the case, um, simply because obviously, if there's 30 of us in a field, we can't keep track of discussions, who says what? So it's purely to show us, um, the physical features of the site, if that makes sense.

00:10:53:03 - 00:10:58:10

Yeah, it does make sense. It does. But we could offer you a similar tour equally.

00:10:58:12 - 00:11:12:22

Education, as I said, in terms of the itinerary, you've got the opportunity to to comment on the draft itinerary for the site inspection, so if you'd like to make any additional points then then that that's your opportunity, right? Okay. Thank you, thank you. So, Mr. Williams.

00:11:12:24 - 00:11:13:09

Yes.

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

Sorry. Just to follow up on that point. Apologies to the Green Parish Council. Um, so I understand on the site visit, um, you'll you'll be doing a tour around various, um, sites. Um, getting a lay of the land. Um, you won't want us chirping in your ear while you're doing it. You want to have a good look at it? Um, just to clarify. Um, the spring will. Applicant won't be chirping in your ear either. I'm assuming.

00:11:39:02 - 00:11:48:22

Absolutely not. No. There will be no discussion. Simply pointing out physical features of the land in the site, that that's as far as we will, and we'll shut down any discussion on the merits very quickly.

00:11:48:28 - 00:11:49:25

Okay. Thank you.

00:11:51:27 - 00:11:53:02

Mr.. Mr.. Ball.

00:11:53:16 - 00:12:05:21

James bond, Digby parish council. Uh, the applicant mentioned, um, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. Um, what was the comment back to you? And I couldn't hear what you were saying very well before.

00:12:06:29 - 00:12:08:24

So, yeah, if you could just clarify that again.

00:12:08:26 - 00:12:36:00

Thank you so much for the applicant. And we've been in discussions with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue in relation to the battery safety management plan. Um, so that, um, they're happy with the, um, the management plan in the event of a fire at the battery. So that's the main, um, area of interest with them and discussions around that. Um, so that's an ongoing discussion, and we'll be making any amendments that they're seeking in that plan and developing that with them to reach agreement with them. So that's that's the focus of that discussion.

00:12:37:14 - 00:13:04:11

Okay. Okay. Thank you very much. Because, uh, most of the, um, most of the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue are part time is from building a and Brant Broughton with probably one at Sleaford full time. So they'll need considerable training to deal with fire at the batteries. And, uh, this can't, you know, the, the whole lot of them will need a lot more training they have at the moment.

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

Well, I think we're delving into the merits of the case again, and we will actually come on to this issue tomorrow where you're more than welcome to to raise those points tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Frost. You've got your hand up.

00:13:19:24 - 00:13:41:06

Yeah. I just wondered why, after the break, you felt the need to restate your point about the submission. Deadlines are final. Uh, are you backtracking on, uh, on the comments you made to the county council about accepting their representation late? Can you please clarify?

00:13:41:15 - 00:13:47:03

Absolutely not. It was simply just an important point to clarify before we moved on to the next agenda item.

00:13:49:13 - 00:13:51:06

Was it. Okay. Thank you.

00:13:51:20 - 00:13:53:02

It was Mr. Frost. Thank you.

00:13:56:15 - 00:14:00:12

Okay. Anything else from any one in the room?

00:14:01:17 - 00:14:02:06

Thank you.

00:14:03:02 - 00:14:35:09

Okay. In that case, thank you very much for all your contributions. Uh, this morning, uh, we very much look forward to commencing the examination of the application. Uh, just remind you that, um, both notes and digital recordings of the proceedings today will be made available as soon as practicable on the project page on the national infrastructure website. And, um, just a few reminders. Obviously, we've got open floor hearing session this afternoon, uh, at 2:00. So we look forward to seeing you then. Uh, issue specific hearing one, uh, here at 10:00 tomorrow.

00:14:35:24 - 00:15:01:05

Uh, and the rule eight letter, which, um, we will publish the final draft. Uh, sorry, not the draft timetable, but the final timetable, uh, will be produced as early as we can. Um, probably beginning part of next week, hopefully. Uh, and then the first deadline for written submissions will be Tuesday, the 3rd of June. Okay. Well, the time is now 12:10, and the preliminary meeting is now closed. Thank you very much.