

## Hearing Transcript

<b>Project:</b>	Springwell Solar Farm
<b>Hearing:</b>	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) - Part 4
<b>Date:</b>	08 May 2025

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:02:28 - 00:00:07:05

It's 2:05, so we will resume the hearing, please. Thank you.

00:00:09:10 - 00:00:40:27

Okay. We're going to come to, uh, traffic and transport now. Um, the subjects we've got to get through this afternoon, uh, we've done four and we've got four more to do. Potentially these are slightly longer, so we're going to have to run through probably a bit slightly quicker than we did this morning. So once we've completed our questions, um, interested parties will be given one opportunity to talk. So please say everything you want to in one go. Um, then we'll come to the the applicant before we then move on to the next agenda item. Um, trafficking transport then.

00:00:40:29 - 00:00:56:05

Um, the first question is I was going to run through related to the strategic road network, but because, um, national highways aren't here today, I'm going to part those for written questions unless the applicant give me a very quick update whether there's been any discussions with them.

00:00:56:09 - 00:01:08:15

Yes, Miss Coleman, for the applicant. I can do that. I'll ask Mr.. um, Gordon Buchan. He's a senior, sir. Sector director of energy at Paul Frischmann. Just to give you a quick update, because we've reached agreement with them so he can just cover that for you.

00:01:08:22 - 00:01:09:21

Okay. Thank you.

00:01:10:10 - 00:01:45:01

Good afternoon. Sir. Uh, I'm Gordon Buchan, appearing on behalf of the applicant. Um, so we have been in contact with National Highways, and, um, we have reached, um, an agreed position with, uh, Martin Seldon, who is, uh, their officer dealing with this application. Um, both parties, National highways, and the applicant can confirm that a formal statement of common ground will follow shortly. Uh, that national highways have no concerns with the adequacy of the assessment undertaken with respect to the potential for impacts on the trunk road network.

00:01:45:09 - 00:02:40:19

The National Highways welcomes the commitment to reduce traffic using an enhanced staff travel plan. Uh, that National Highways is supportive of the proposed measures to control construction traffic that both staff travel and HGV movements in the network peak hours as requested by Lincolnshire County Council, and will come on to that later. Um notes that National Highways is currently reviewing the abnormal load access elements on their network, but agrees that AIL access will be the subject of a formal application process for Ireland's moving, and that that is controlled by current legislation and permitting allowing National Highways and other infrastructure operators a technical overview and permitting process at that time, and that other than the um, the review of the abnormal load on its network, there are no further queries or points of disagreement in relation to matters on the strategic road network.

00:02:41:27 - 00:02:47:07

Okay. Thank you for the update on that one. And we'll look out for the statement of Common Ground at deadline one.

00:02:49:03 - 00:03:25:15

Okay. Uh, cumulative traffic effects now, please. Um, the environmental statement, uh, Considers cumulative effects in relation to traffic and noise, namely EP 056, tables 16.4 and section 16.7, and the Transport Assessment at paragraph 6.1.6 states that traffic movements associated with uh or included the developments um in the junction modeling include Heckingbottom and Fen, and the development at Sleaford West.

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However, it's not clear to the examiner authority whether the detailed modelling includes the proposed National Grid substation. It may even be.

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And if it doesn't, whether it should. Thank you.

00:03:41:03 - 00:04:12:06

Thank you sir. Gordon Buchan, appearing on behalf of the the applicant. Um. David B, uh, Red substation is included in chapter 16. In terms of an overall assessment that um App. Oh 56 and that's covered in pages 46 to 48, and other developments are on pages 94 to 96. Um, just now, we understand that the, um, substation development has not yet reached its finalized, uh, traffic numbers.

00:04:12:17 - 00:04:30:08

Um, so, um, what we are proposing to do that when that development and other developments have reached their finalized numbers, we will be undertaking a rolling cumulative assessment and that we can provide further detail at that time when those those developers have confirmed their movements.

00:04:30:23 - 00:04:37:09

Okay. And is that anticipated to be within the examination period for the substation just now?

00:04:37:11 - 00:04:44:03

So we're at the mercy of the other developers. Um, but we will leas where possible and get that information where it is available.

00:04:44:27 - 00:05:03:27

Okay. Um, if that information isn't, doesn't become available, um, in the examination, does the applicant propose to Model with some general assumptions or as close as it can. Given the very unique relationship between the proposed development and the substation.

00:05:04:27 - 00:05:34:05

Sir Gordon, on behalf of the applicant, we can provide some assumed elements of it, but that would obviously have to be caveated with that. Um, but we, um, will have oversee because they are going to be coming later in the development cycle, is that their assessment will have to include the permitted developments from this scheme. So there will be either through information we provide or

information that they provide, say later a full detailed cumulative assessment including that that scheme there.

00:05:35:06 - 00:05:52:26

Okay. Thank you. So my understanding is is that the the transport assessment doesn't include figures at the moment. But um, the applicant will do so in due course when either the for the proper information is available or if it's not towards the end of the examination, you'll make some assumptions as close as you can to provide that information.

00:05:52:28 - 00:05:54:19

Yes, sir. That is correct. Yes.

00:05:55:00 - 00:06:03:26

And will Yoda. Given the discussions we had this morning, also be now included in the the proper transport modelling.

00:06:04:21 - 00:06:37:01

Um, so Gordon Buchan, on behalf of the applicant, we understand that the Oda scheme. Apologies. Um, the expected design fees for that project will be um towards and according to the publicly available information on their website, um will be circa quarter four of 2025. Um, they have not published detailed vehicle movements as yet. Um, if they're in a position that they can provide, that information will of course include it.

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Um, otherwise, we'll have to make an assumption to deal with any of their movements, sir.

00:06:44:10 - 00:06:51:21

Okay. Thank you. But you. Yeah. So you are planning to to include it, um, to the best of your ability during the examination.

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To the best of our ability.

00:06:52:26 - 00:06:53:27

Yes. Okay. Thank you.

00:06:56:25 - 00:07:17:07

Okay. We have come to Lincolnshire County Council, please. And in terms of, we've had a brief discussion about general cumulative effects in the approach this morning, but just specifically now more as a highway authority in terms of cumulative transport effects, whether you could comment, whether you're generally content with the application documentation.

00:07:17:25 - 00:07:25:19

Okay. Thank you. Justine Foster for Lancashire County Council. I'd like to pass this over to my colleague to my left and Mr. Ian Field to respond.

00:07:25:21 - 00:07:26:19

Thank you very much.

00:07:29:17 - 00:08:08:00

Thank you. Ian Field from Lancashire County Council. Yes, we are happy with what's been submitted so far. Obviously if the substation were to come forward, um, if the numbers aren't available later, then, um, this would need, uh, consent based on the numbers that are the two. We would have to not enable the two to be constructed until we'd seen the the traffic figures, if you see what I mean. So in the planning process, the one that gets consent first gets the available capacity, and then if the substation numbers for the traffic is not available, um, we wouldn't be able to comment on that until the numbers come forward.

00:08:08:27 - 00:08:17:10

Okay. So would that mean a scenario where this was given development consent, but then the substation couldn't be beat on transport grounds?

00:08:18:18 - 00:08:32:04

Potentially that that could be the case. But, um, it's about construction on I mean, it might there might be a delay in the construction period. This, um, they're both likely to get consent, um,

00:08:33:20 - 00:08:45:27

before that, before construction on both of them starts. And then they would have to agree between them. Which one came forward because of the limited, potentially the limited capacity. But until we see the numbers, we can't actually say whether there is a capacity problem.

00:08:46:05 - 00:08:58:09

Okay. I'm just thinking how that would work in terms of if they were both granted permission or they both had permission. How would they would then be delayed in terms of traffic movements?

00:08:59:02 - 00:09:12:04

Well, where this has happened on the other end, it there's a condition on the second one that comes along that it has to liaise with the with the first one. The first one has the in planning terms, it's always the first one that comes forward that gets the available capacity.

00:09:13:19 - 00:09:22:00

Okay. Is there is there any complication there? The fact that the substations coming through the Town and Country Planning Act and not through the national infrastructure regime?

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I don't think so. No. I mean, it would be, um, we would suggest a condition to North Kesteven if there was a concern about the numbers associated with the substation.

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Okay. Thank you to the applicant. Have anything to say on those points?

00:09:39:08 - 00:10:10:11

It's common for the applicant. I think it would be firstly, helpful just to understand the point in writing so that we can understand exactly what's been suggested. Stood, um, obviously, uh, in any event. Um, I don't know if it's sort of some sort of, um, I mean, we'd be collaborating with National Grid in any event. Um, as I've said before, there are checks and balances on ensuring that the effects of anything we get approved under the requirements is no worse than the. Yes. And that includes our cumulative effects assessment, which we've said that we will do on the information available.

00:10:10:15 - 00:10:20:03

Um, I think Mr. Buchan can also talk to, um, the available capacity as well, and perhaps provide some comfort in that respect as to why we don't envisage that being an issue in the first place.

00:10:20:23 - 00:10:25:23

Okay. We will take that point away as well and think about whether we need to ask some questions around that relationship.

00:10:30:06 - 00:11:04:10

If I may, sir, um, one thing, when we've had similar circumstances in other developments, uh, one thing that we have seen, um, that may, may assist, um, the local authority and one thing that we have proposed, post which I believe the local authorities contend with. Is that during the peak hour periods at seven till nine and from 4:00 to 6:00 in the evening, when the junction capacity is at its most constrained? Um, certainly for Springwell, we're looking at limiting, um, development traffic through that.

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Um, now that may be an option, um, that, uh, North Kesteven and that, um, Lincolnshire County Highways may wish to put on for um, other developers as well to make may make sure that the junctions are not significantly disadvantaged during that time. Outwith those times I think. Um, then spare capacity exists within the network to accommodate further traffic flows as well.

00:11:29:24 - 00:12:01:13

Okay. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Let's move on to proposed highway improvements. The next item on the agenda. Um, the proposed development proposes, uh, improvements at the A15. Uh, dash, um, 1191 and the A15 Gorse Hill Lane. Junctions and general arrangements. Drawings are illustrated in the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan. In appendix three, um. The County Council has set out that it requires full details of these proposed junction improvements.

00:12:02:00 - 00:12:13:25

Um uh approval under section 278 of the Highways Act, and a bond for these major works with the applicant to respond to, um, that position from the county council.

00:12:14:19 - 00:12:45:17

Thank you. Sir. Alexis. Um, miss Coleman for the applicant. Um, yes. We've had several discussions, um, useful discussions with, um, Lincolnshire on this point. Um, and we understand the need for the approval of detailed design. What we've proposed is to add drafting into the comp to secure that, that, um, that there is the, um, requirement that they approve the detailed design. Um, with respect to the

works generally under um, articles ten and 12 of the DCO that that we need to have detailed design approved. And we've suggested drafting that.

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We've agreed with them on on other schemes. And then specifically in relation to the two junctions, we've also suggested a um requirement in the Waltham text in the CMP, um, that sets out what such an agreement would look like. It wouldn't strictly be a section 278 agreement under the Highways Act, because the works themselves would be approved in principle at the DCO. So it would be a sort of hybrid, um, agreement, um, under article 16 of the draft DCO, but it would achieve the same purpose in terms of approval of um, detailed technical drawings, um, and, and supervision of works and the sorts of things that Lincolnshire, um, are concerned with.

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So we've, um, had some helpful calls, including one just at the end of last week, and we've now proposed some drafting to try and give comfort that, um, that both we agree to that, but then also that that's secured appropriately in the documents.

00:13:36:05 - 00:13:42:13

Okay. Thank you. And the county council are you do you agree with with that summary of yes. Position.

00:13:42:21 - 00:13:51:16

Yes. That's right. We'd also ask for road safety audit stage ones to be done, which we understand they are in process of being doing. So we're expecting those as well.

00:13:51:20 - 00:14:01:14

Okay. Thank you. One of my other questions was the the yes, there's referred to safety audits having been undertaken but they're not provided. So whether that can be be provided as well.

00:14:03:08 - 00:14:22:20

If I may, sir Gordon Buchan on behalf of the applicant. Um, stage one road safety audit for the A15 works has been completed. A design of response has also been undertaken. And that information has been passed to the county council. Um, unfortunately, it was last night, so, um, but that information has now been submitted.

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

Okay. Thank you. Um, and can I just check with the county council that it's ultimately only those two junctions you're seeking that level of detail for, and it doesn't apply, um, to the other highway improvements such as that the B1191 RAF Digby and um sort of vehicle passing bays, those sorts of features.

00:14:42:09 - 00:15:24:08

Yes we would normally those we would term as minor works and we will still require technical details for them before they, um, are constructed, but they can wait until later after they have consent. Because because they are minor works. It's the major nature of these two junctions on the on the A15 that we need, um, sort of full technical details and also the, the comfort that an agreement will be

entered into so that we get the bond, because one of our main concerns is if the development, if construction starts by a developer on on a major highway scheme and then they for some reason go bankrupt or something, we're left with a sort of junction that's not completed.

00:15:24:10 - 00:15:44:29

And it will. We need the bond to be able to complete the works and make them safe for the traveling public. So, um, whereas minor works like passing bays or accesses don't, don't have that sort of level of risk associated with them, so they don't need a full bond. Okay? We will need the sort of technical detail approval through the CMP at a later date.

00:15:45:08 - 00:16:21:18

Okay. Thank you. Understood. Um, okay. Moving on to site accesses. Um, the outlying, uh, construction traffic management plan sets out, uh, the sort of typical layout of a site access. Uh, again in appendix three of that document. Uh, and that's secured, uh, within the street, uh, rights of way and access plans. Um, given the locations of the site, access are known and set out in the plans. Um, could you just provide more justification about why full details in terms of accesses and visibility, Splays, uh, aren't being provided, uh, upfront with the application.

00:16:26:12 - 00:16:53:19

Uh, sir Gordon Buchanan, behalf of the the applicant, um, the information, um, for those sections, uh, hasn't been provided at this exact stage because it would certainly allow some flexibility and design of those junctions to accommodate, um, different, uh, techniques and construction. All the vehicle movements that could serve the types of vehicle that could use the junction. But, um, we've had further discussions with the.

00:16:56:22 - 00:16:57:07

Um.

00:16:58:04 - 00:16:59:00

Sorry, sorry.

00:16:59:02 - 00:17:00:24

Um, I think everything's okay. Please carry on.

00:17:00:26 - 00:17:15:28

Okay. Sorry. Um, so we've, um. Sorry I lost my place, so. But we are able to provide further information to the council. Um, should that information be requested at this stage, um, and further information related to the access junctions cells.

00:17:16:09 - 00:17:23:21

Probably particularly. My next question is for the county council, whether you're, um, content with the level of detail that you have in terms of the site accesses.

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Um, well, I from a highways point of view, I'm comfortable that those site accesses can be accommodated in the sort of schematics that are proposed, and the visibility space can be provided,



but I think we do need the, um, full detail at this stage because I've spoken to other colleagues and potentially, for example, um, hedgerows might need to be removed for visibility space, which could have not a highways impact but an ecological impact on, on um, where the access is. So I think we do need I think it would be helpful to have that detail now at this stage.

00:17:59:12 - 00:18:03:23

Okay. How does the applicant feel about providing those.

00:18:05:00 - 00:18:32:28

For the applicant? That might be one we need to take away, but I would just add the points I've made already about securing the, um, detail of works, um, authorised under articles ten and 12 of the DCO that also does encompass alterations to layout of the street to provide for access. So we do have measures in terms of approval of detailed design in the future. Um, we I think we just became aware of the more detailed point, um, earlier today. So, um, we can consider that and come back.

00:18:33:04 - 00:18:47:10

Okay. Thank you for that. Okay. That's all the questions I have on traffic and transport at this stage. Um, does anyone in the back wish to say anything? Okay, we'll go to the gentleman on the right. Uh, just to mix it up, Mr. Williams. Thank you.

00:18:57:09 - 00:18:59:09

We'll come to you next, Mr. Alvin. Thank you.

00:18:59:17 - 00:19:35:15

Thank you. Thank you very much. My name is James Gallagher. I'm a resident of Nathan Bay. Uh, I'm speaking here today in a personal capacity, but I'm also a member of the, uh, Community Speed Watch, which is supported by the parish council, who has a general brief in terms of looking at road safety in Navan and the surrounding areas. I appreciate that a lot of details. Not yet. Hopefully work through. For example, the county council has not yet produced its final local impact report, but I want to make, uh, observations on the basis of the papers that I've seen today that are available on the commission's website.

00:19:36:05 - 00:20:18:06

Um, I think there are two fundamental points I want to make. The first is that within the study area as defined by the applicant, there's an underestimate of the A15 road safety risks. And secondly, the traffic assessment is flawed because the study area is too narrowly defined. And I'll go on to explore both those points in a moment. Um, and both those weaknesses, I think, are compounded by a failure to allow for the cumulative traffic effects, which we've already touched on to an extent. First, the A15, it's renowned locally as a road that does have a danger aspect to it, particularly at the road junctions for the other roads coming on at east west, uh, basis.

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Turning first to the A15, B1 202 Heath Lane junction, uh, that is acknowledged to be at capacity. And the problem is that a steady stream of traffic along the A15 results in drivers on the B1 202 becoming impatient and taking a chance to get across onto the other side of the B1 202, or turning on to the A15 itself. The applicant's submission envisages two scenarios for addressing this. The first is that the

improvements are proposed that which the County Council has in hand, are actually implemented before prescription, before construction begins.

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And the second is, if that's not the case, a worker shuttle bus will run from Lincoln and Branston every half hour. Um, turning to that second one first, I can't see how that necessarily will work. I've struggled to find any information about where the workforce will come in cumulative, uh, the cumulative effects for all these actions, there are fragmentary, uh, references to workforce, for example, in relation to the National Strategic Highway and how many are expected to come along from the west of Newark on the A46, etc.

00:21:32:00 - 00:22:02:06

but I've not seen an overall assessment of where the cumulative workforce will come from. But what it seems to me is running a shuttle bus every half hour from Lincoln and Branston is unlikely to supply anything like the necessary workforce, setting that on one side, that might be an issue which you want to explore further. The adequacy of that shuttle brush, and perhaps I should have said if at any stage the examining authority would like to ask a question, then please feel free to interrupt me on a specific aspect.

00:22:02:08 - 00:22:38:19

But so first of all, the shuttle bus. Will it work? However, if it doesn't work, um, there is then potentially a problem at that junction. Um, the applicant's assessment is that if the, um, even with the shuttle bus working, there will be delays of up to 20s at that junction at peak time on average delays, the 20s are likely to encourage more and more motorists to take chances on that junction, and that is likely to result in more collisions, more fatalities, and that is predictable.

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So I think it would be very dangerous to allow this development to proceed unless the pressure, unless that junction is improved in advance of the construction works. So that's my first recommendation. Turning to some of the other junctions, construction will increase the traffic at the A15 junctions with the two Navami roads, Greenman Road and Heath Lane. Both are poor accident records and will be additional problems with the extra spring well traffic.

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It should be also noted that the proposed Greenman Road junction would host the Nathan be best to have referred to slightly earlier, and Heath Lane, the proposed name substation. The applicant has incorrectly decided the cumulative assessment should exclude the traffic from both. And this is a point which the inspector. Alluded to earlier. Or the examining authority. Um, if I can just refer to, um, first of all, the, uh, Nathan B, uh, grid substation.

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The applicant in. If I can get the quote, um.

00:23:54:07 - 00:23:55:09

And I find it.

00:23:57:10 - 00:24:30:16

I can't find the paragraph to quote it, but the applicant does consider, uh, the Nathan be, uh, best within their consideration. But then it says in relation to the traffic and this I quote verbatim, provided there is adequate mitigation for the Navy grid substation development, there should be no inter project cumulative effect. This is something I think the examiner alluded to. So what is stated in the written documents is contrary to the impression I was gaining earlier, but they said they recognize it's within scope.

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But having considered it, they regard it as not their problem. It's National Grid's problem. So I think that needs to be examined further in the light of what we were saying previously. I think turning to the Navy base, um, which runs on which is proposed to be on Greenman Road, they've dismissed it on the basis that, uh, it's just a screening opinion which has been provided, uh, currently. In fact, it was a scoping opinion. So the applicant is incorrect in the statement.

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And a public consultation has already begun on that proposal. Uh, for the best. So I fail to see why they've not included the transport implications of that in their assessments. So that's in relation to the junctions. Um, my second fundamental point is the area. The study area excludes the villages to the west of the A15. It's too narrowly drawn. The applicant does not recognise that traffic will join or leave the A15 at points between the B1 178 and B1191, and travel through the centres of nave and B and or Hobson.

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For example, the shortest route from much of the Springwell onto the A1 at Newark is not via the holding roundabout, but via nave, and B accessing the A17 at another tricky junction on the A17 in both nave and be enhanced in the road to the west is called Church Lane, and these roads are both very narrow and unsuitable for certainly unsuitable traffic, and unsuitable for the existing volume of LGV and private cars they currently have.

00:26:13:27 - 00:26:57:21

Um, to illustrate this, um, if we look at the, um, the problems we get typically because of partly because of the problems that the, uh, heat load junction, a lot of vehicles, when they come from the wrong direction, turn left onto the A15, then they turn right, come down Greenman Road to get into through November to get to Newark. That way we have a major problem on that road with, uh, speeding. Um, yesterday afternoon, uh, there was data which, uh, identified that 20 out of 250 vehicles were actually exceeding the speed limit by more than five miles per hour, the 30 minute, 30 mile an hour speed limit.

00:26:57:28 - 00:27:30:20

Because the nature of the road is a very straight road and quite wide in place until it actually hits me where it gets very restricted and it's a major danger to pedestrians. There's a lot of information available about the inadequacy of that going down where Greenman Road joins the High Street in Avon, be display is totally inappropriate for the HDTVs which go down there, which is very visible if anyone looks at the curbs and the HDTVs need to cross into the opposite side of the carriageway, and indeed leaves do as well, posing a risk of collision with oncoming traffic.

00:27:30:26 - 00:28:06:04

They then move down short stretch of the High Street, turn right heading down Church Lane again, compounding the problems. I would really recommend that the examining authority should actually look at the road conditions through. Naomi Harmsen is similar. Very difficult uh, road for vehicles to work through. Totally unsuitable for the volume of traffic that is likely to emanate from this and the other solar related proposals. Um, so I would suggest that to exclude that area from the traffic assessment is unacceptable.

00:28:07:01 - 00:28:07:16

Okay.

00:28:07:18 - 00:28:37:15

Can I just jump in? We are sort of straight into quite wide transport related subjects now, which a lot of the detail will come through examination through, you know, as we move through the different stages. So if you could say anything you wish to in relation to the discussions we've had already on traffic and transport. You're more than welcome to provide that as a written submission at deadline one. Um, but I'm keen to avoid a broad, a very broad, wide transport discussion now simply because we just don't have the time here today.

00:28:38:13 - 00:29:12:15

Can I make two brief points then? Yes, please. Okay. Uh, the applicant says construction of the North Hykeham Relief Road and is anticipated to be completed. A similar timing to the start of the production of the project, and that the North Hykeham Relief Road is also expected to reduce traffic flows on the A15. I fully accept that. However, um, I don't think they can anticipate that construction. The term North Hykeham Relief Road understates the importance of that road for actually relieving the traffic I referred to earlier. So I think there's an assessment there by the applicant that is unfound.

00:29:12:17 - 00:29:53:06

And I think that needs further probing by the examining authority, uh, in my opinion. construction should be delayed to what's termed the North Hike and Relief road that should be completed. Otherwise the impact on these west traffic will be unacceptable. A final point, um, at the, uh, consultation events that took place, uh, there was a lot of discussion about factors like inconvenience, temporary road work, temporary road closures, etc.. And the applicant said he recognized that would exist, but as compensation, there would be significant community benefits, such as providing energy efficient, uh, measures to assist the NHS locally.

00:29:53:08 - 00:30:04:08

I've seen nothing so far about what compensation will be given to the local community, uh, through the community benefits for any inconvenience that would follow. Thank you very much.

00:30:04:14 - 00:30:09:22

Okay. Thank you very much. Uh, Mr. Elvin, I think you, uh, next in line. Thank you.

00:30:12:17 - 00:30:16:06

So if you could just wait for the microphone. It's just behind you. Thank you, Mr. Elvin.

00:30:18:01 - 00:30:55:12

Yeah. I'm glad we're having this conversation or this this discussion, this examination, if you like, because I think there's been a lot of talk about the impact of the solar complex itself, assuming it's built. But in fact, what we're looking at here is something that's going to amount to four years perhaps, or maybe longer of hell, really, as far as local people are concerned, it's going to be like having an army of occupation coming in to the area, and that's one more reason why you need to reject it.

00:30:55:21 - 00:31:29:29

However, whilst I don't want to go on about that too much because I know you're short of time, I would like to ask a couple of specific questions. Um, it concerns me when I hear again, like we heard earlier, we've, you know, statements of common ground, things like that. Yeah. Well, you're you, making your your pacts and your deals and your, uh, agreements. What about the people who live in that area and will be, uh, really hit hard by it? Uh, so, for instance, I'd like some details.

00:31:30:01 - 00:31:51:17

You may have published them, for all I know. A lot to read. Uh, what level of vehicle movements is being proposed? That would be useful. Some numbers. So I say, well, we're going to have a lot of vehicles turning right here and left out. What actual numbers of vehicles are we talking about on a daily basis?

00:31:51:25 - 00:31:56:25

Okay. Make sure that they are set out in the application documentation. I'm sure the.

00:31:56:29 - 00:32:00:07

The size of those vehicles and the type of those vehicles.

00:32:00:09 - 00:32:21:26

They are split between, uh, what we call LGB like good vehicles or uh, HGVs, obviously the construction lorries, those sorts of things so that that level of information is there. Um, I'm sure the case team are happy to point you in the direction of where that set out in the application documents, or I'm sure someone from the applicant would be also happy to help you and to show you where that is.

00:32:22:08 - 00:32:39:22

Last question what is being done at the moment or planned to be done to inform local people and involve them and let them know what is being planned for their country lanes, their roads, their high streets and so on, where they live and what have you.

00:32:40:01 - 00:32:56:20

Okay. Again, the application documentation does show where there may be new junctions, new accesses, and there is that information there. So again, either you know the case team or or the applicant should be able to help you with with that detail and explain where it's presented.

00:32:56:22 - 00:33:06:21

Yeah I'm thinking more in terms of on the doorstep, you know, through people's letterboxes to having it on websites, but not everyone looks at those websites or would know how to steer their way around them.

00:33:07:06 - 00:33:10:07

Okay. Thank you. Mr.. Rowan. Thank you. Thank you.

00:33:11:26 - 00:33:13:27

Okay. Mr. Williams, thank you.

00:33:18:06 - 00:33:54:15

Thank you. I know I'm making you smile now. So, uh, I've achieved something today. Uh, look, I think a couple of things, uh, on this occasion, I'll talk on behalf of Scotland Parish Council. Um, a little bit. We do collect a huge amount of traffic data, so I'd be very keen to make sure that we supply the inspectorate with that data. So you can get a clear view on the, uh, the amount of traffic that comes through Scotland currently. So we do visit a significant increase. Also, I'd like to thank the gentleman from, um, from the, um, Lincolnshire county for mentioning a bond.

00:33:55:24 - 00:34:28:16

I think, you know, bond is something that needs to be raised a little bit more, particularly when we look at the the structure of the business that doesn't have a great deal of assets. Um, but also, I think one of the key things that we, we need to address when we look at, uh, traffic and transport. Um, first of all, road maintenance. Who will be responsible? Obviously, there's going to be a hell of a lot of construction traffic. I don't think it's right for County or North Kesteven to be responsible for repairing the roads that are damaged by a significant increase in heavy goods traffic.

00:34:28:20 - 00:34:35:00

So I think that should be something that gets looked at. Um, obviously the within the applicant's, um.

00:34:37:14 - 00:35:09:08

Station, it talks about traffic, um, movements between 7 a.m. or working actually between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday to Friday. So that means people will be, um, on the move before seven and after seven. So, you know, that's extending the amount of traffic on our roads considerably. And also working Saturdays 7 to 12. Again, those would be times and we would envisage our our communities getting quieter, not busier. And the other thing I would really like to raise this.

00:35:09:10 - 00:35:29:02

We're talking here about the construction phase. Well, let's let's be absolutely honest. I think most of us would would accept a the panels have a lifespan of about 14 to 15. Sorry, about 14 to 20 years. This is a this is a 40 year, um, project.

00:35:30:22 - 00:35:58:12

I'm fairly well informed on the fact that I believe batteries have about a ten year lifespan. So in a 40, in a 40 year lifespan of a project, the batteries will probably need to be replaced four times. Panels will probably need to be replaced twice. So in fact we're looking at two sets of construction traffic, not

just one. So I think as an inspector, I think it's really important that we address that point as well.  
Thank you.

00:36:00:02 - 00:36:02:04

Okay. Thank you. Yes, Miss Overton.

00:36:02:06 - 00:36:35:11

Thank you very much. Councillor Marianne Overton, just to add strength to the comments. Um, the smaller villages do need to be taken into account. The really important the roads along those side, roads that go east west off the A 607 are really narrow. They are some, you might call them substandard. They are not wide enough for vehicles to pass. And if you go there, you will see parts of the buildings that have already been scraped by number of vehicles trying to get by. The same with Church Lane as been mentioned out of down out of even be there.

00:36:35:13 - 00:36:42:19

Two vehicles cannot pass there and they are so they are not adequate for any additional traffic. Thank you.

00:36:43:13 - 00:36:48:23

Thank you. Okay, I think there was another hand at the back. Um,

00:36:50:13 - 00:36:57:12

I can come to you first. Yeah, it's more towards the center. But again, please, please ensure it's related to the discussions that we've had today.

00:36:57:16 - 00:37:14:16

Absolutely. Um, we were talking earlier about the cumulative effect of these developments. I would have thought that should apply to traffic and transport. Now, if I've misunderstood Understood. The local authority was saying, was then taking no account of the fact, the potential Beasant having been. That was my point. Thank you.

00:37:14:18 - 00:37:16:05

Okay. Thank you I understood.

00:37:18:27 - 00:37:19:12

Thank you.

00:37:20:18 - 00:37:59:06

Rob Kendrick, county councillor, medium rural, um, gentleman from Navan. We mentioned the junction of the A15 and the B 1202, which actually falls within the area I represent on the county council. I'm well aware of the issues in relation to that junction. It is a great concern to residents and other road users passing through there as as is the whole of the A15 that's been mentioned, a major concern in in terms of traffic flows and accident. Um, although obviously it's a hypothetical, uh, thing potentially in the area I represent, there's a possibility we may have two major construction projects in addition to spring.

00:37:59:08 - 00:38:33:23

Will they relate to anaerobic digestion? As I say, they're only proposed, But should they go ahead? We'll have construction traffic for two other projects in my area. Then generating increased traffic flows. And also, if they were to go ahead at the conclusion of those production projects, we would have HGV traffic passing through my my area to the farms. I admit that's hypothetical because it doesn't even make the application as I'm aware, but it's in terms of the cumulative effect I can predict.

00:38:33:26 - 00:38:44:02

I can foresee, I can't predict there being a similar amount of traffic passing through my area. I just wanted to flag that one as bagged that one up.

00:38:45:24 - 00:39:00:07

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, in terms of the applicant, is the applicant happy to respond in writing, just in the interest of moving on swiftly? Um, if you do wish to make any sort of just very quick points, then in the next minute or two, then that's fine. But, um, there was quite a lot of detail there.

00:39:00:09 - 00:39:35:11

Thank you. Yes, I would definitely respond in writing, and I think in particular if Mr. Gallagher can, um, submit what he's said in writing, perhaps as a written representation. Um, at deadline one. That would be helpful, I think. Probably just worth mentioning just one point amongst several of them. It relates to the um, Community Liaison Group that would be in effect, um, pursuant to requirement six of the DCO during construction. Um, and that's picking up on the point about informing, um, local people about what's happening and as particularly during construction. Um, in addition to that, and as a sort of subgroup of that in 6.2 of the outline construction traffic management plan.

00:39:35:13 - 00:40:00:04

And we also have that also gives a bit more detail about how that community liaison group would work, um, in relation to traffic and talks about the traffic management working group as well. So there are certainly measures in place to deal with that sort of thing. Um, there are definitely other measures in the CTP that deal with various points, such as highways, condition, survey, maintenance. Um, many of the points mentioned, but I'll take your steer and we'll follow up in writing on those.

00:40:00:15 - 00:40:08:20

Thank you. Thank you. That's appreciated. Okay, we'll move on to the next agenda item, which is the water environment.

00:40:10:21 - 00:40:40:15

Um, the first question relates to the new flooding coastal erosion risk data. Uh, and the Environment Agency advised in additional submission 0 to 1 that new flood and coastal erosion risk data had been published, and that may affect the consideration of the proposed developments. Um, could the applicant advise ultimately what implications the new data might have for the proposed development? And, uh, whether you plan to provide any amended assessments to take it into account? Thank you.

00:40:40:26 - 00:40:47:27



It's common for the applicant. Thank you. I'm going to introduce Mr. Colin Whittingham, who's a director at risk, who will be able to respond on that question.

00:40:47:29 - 00:40:48:18

Thank you.

00:40:50:12 - 00:41:16:14

Thank you. Um, there was there's actually two sets of mapping that's been made available since the flood risk assessment was originally produced. Uh, the first set came out in January of this year, which was the surface water mapping. This generally shows a. Slight reduction in areas of of risk. Um and there's no implications in terms of the, the development. Um,

00:41:18:14 - 00:41:30:00

the the majority of the, the changes are related to where water was backing up against roads. So the updated mapping has taken into account the culverts that we find that mapping.

00:41:31:26 - 00:42:01:11

In March of this year, um, the Environment Agency updated their national flood risk mapping. Um, so this is the fluvial flood zones. Um, and again, it shows largely a reduction in, um, the flood risk extent. Uh, and the the outlines are more comparable to the detailed hydraulic modelling that's carried out as part of the the assessment. So generally, there's no,

00:42:03:05 - 00:42:22:11

uh, no real change to the to the assessment. We've carried out some initial consultation with the Environment Agency, uh, in relation to this, and they're happy that there's no sort of changes that are needed to the the mitigation and the flood risk assessment will be updated and submitted at deadline one.

00:42:23:06 - 00:42:23:21

Okay.

00:42:23:23 - 00:42:24:08

Thank you.

00:42:24:29 - 00:42:37:25

Um, the Environment Agency, uh, I think you've probably been waiting very patiently all day. Um, would you like to, to possibly jump in on that point and comment maybe on what you've just heard from the applicant there and whether you're content with that?

00:42:38:21 - 00:42:39:06

Yeah.

00:42:39:08 - 00:43:11:10

Jennifer Moffatt from the Environment Agency. Um, yeah. I confirm that I am, um, content with that. We set out our position in our additional submission, um, which you referred to earlier as as 021, just expecting, um, the applicant to assess whether the new data has any implications for the proposed

Development. And we didn't actually expect there to be implications other than where the flood risk categories, um, might have increased. Um, the applicant says that they've they've done that assessment, so I'm satisfied with that.

00:43:11:22 - 00:43:25:14

To my knowledge, we haven't seen it. Um, but they have just said that they'll submit that at deadline one. So we would be happy to, um, review that, um, when that, when that comes our way.

00:43:26:15 - 00:43:30:08

Okay. That's very useful. Thank you for for confirming that.

00:43:30:14 - 00:43:31:08

That's okay.

00:43:31:19 - 00:44:03:18

Okay. Thank you. We'll move on to to my next question, which is relate to flood risk in the sequential test which will be to the applicant first, um, the proposed development seeks to locate solar PV, uh modules in areas of flood zone two and three A and B, um. Therefore, the sequential test must be met as set out in NPS m one, the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting guidance in the planning practice. um for the MPs. M1 states energy projects should not normally be consented within flood zone three.

00:44:03:20 - 00:44:20:09

Be at paragraph 5.8.41. Um to the applicant, please, in line with what I've just described. Can you explain fully why solar PV modules must be located in flood zone three, be for operational reasons?

00:44:23:01 - 00:44:28:06

Um. Thank you. I'm going to pass you over to, um, Mrs. Sarah Price, who's the director at WD.

00:44:28:14 - 00:44:29:03

Thank you.

00:44:30:20 - 00:44:32:23

Thank you, Sarah Price for the applicant.

00:44:34:18 - 00:45:15:00

So I think the first point that I would make before coming on to your question, sir, is that the vast majority of the site falls within flood zone one and at a high level is set out in the site selection report. The applicant was seeking to avoid areas of higher flood risk, for example, the vast swathes of flood zones two and three and further east, which were part of the reason for the three kilometer search area identified along the overhead line, and in terms of the applying the sequential test then to the landholdings that were being considered.

00:45:15:18 - 00:45:37:27

The applicant has set out in the planning statement. And if I just draw your attention as to the relevant paragraphs, which is 8.5.21 and 8.5.22, that deals with the location of solar panels in flood zones, freebie in particular, and

00:45:39:23 - 00:46:08:16

discounted areas of lower flood risk, and because they were less suitable when considering other planning, environmental and design factors. And there's some examples set out in the planning statement of where land was considered at lower flood risk, but was removed on the basis, for instance, of reducing potential impacts on the setting of Scott Wick and also RF Digby.

00:46:11:07 - 00:46:58:29

In terms of the location of solar within flood zones three B, as we were setting out earlier in relation to the very significant need for solar as critical priority national priority infrastructure. The applicant was seeking to maximise the capacity of solar that could be delivered within the grid connection that had been agreed with National Grid, and as part of that was taking into account this balancing exercise that we talked about earlier, taking into account a range of factors, the areas of flood zones two and three are, as my colleague was talking to earlier.

00:46:59:07 - 00:47:32:01

Um, small areas on the edge of fields and actually, uh, in the submitted information. Also a small part in the middle of a field in the spring. Well, east portion. The revised flooding is the flood risk mapping as we will be submitting in, um, uh, written submissions actually means that that area of flood zones two and three are now only just around the edge of fields. And so these fields, for all other reasons, were considered suitable from a planning and environmental perspective.

00:47:32:11 - 00:47:37:07

And therefore, um, it's considered the

00:47:39:06 - 00:48:19:08

they ought to be maximized, um, for solar, for generation capacity and therefore it's, um, essential infrastructure that meets that test. Um, it couldn't be provided elsewhere because, you know, essentially that fields are already being used in our proposed scheme for, for solar. Um, also for the discussions with the Environment Agency, the Environment Agency are content to see solar in those areas, and no sensitive electrical infrastructure is proposed within flood zones two and three either, as set out in the planning statement.

00:48:19:28 - 00:48:42:26

Um, so accordingly, the applicant considers that this approach follows, um, the approach set out in paragraph 5.8.1 of Ian one, which shows that lower flood risk areas have been appropriately discounted, um, accounting for wider sustainable development objectives.

00:48:43:04 - 00:48:43:19

Okay.

00:48:43:23 - 00:48:55:26

You mentioned that the the sort of affected areas are on the periphery of the fields, maybe on and on the site so they don't perform a particularly important operational function within the site overall. Is that fair to say?

00:48:57:19 - 00:49:21:18

They're important that it is to be able to maximize the generating capacity by themselves. Um, no, you're you're correct. I also just draw attention to the policy reference, which I'm sure you're, um, aware of. The N one talks about projects not normally being consented in areas of freebee rather than a.

00:49:23:26 - 00:49:42:20

Flat out that they shouldn't be. Um, and in this case, we believe that the additional justification that we provided in the updated planning statement and as hyphen 018 sort of sets out why those areas have been included and why it's appropriate to in that case.

00:49:43:05 - 00:50:13:13

But I think my understanding of reading that part of the paragraph is it relates to operational reasons, which might be required to sort of step away from the fact that it says it should not normally. Um, normally is normally for operational reasons where there's particular important reason why the overall site has to function from that area. And that's what I'm just trying to get to the bottom of how critical, in operational terms that area within the flood zones actually is to the delivery of everything.

00:50:13:15 - 00:50:14:13

That makes sense.

00:50:14:25 - 00:50:21:12

Yes, but we can come back to you with written submissions on that point as well. Okay.

00:50:23:00 - 00:50:47:09

Sorry, a further point, which doesn't go directly to your question, but is set out in our, um, updates to the planning statement as well. Is all of that land is within the area which has an existing consent for solar farm development. So that did fall within our considerations and appropriate sort of fallback position that that area would be developed for solar in any case.

00:50:47:11 - 00:51:01:20

Okay, well, we'll come on to the the, uh, the potential fallback position shortly. Um, but in terms of the sequential tests, you mentioned that you spoke to Environment Agency and they were content in terms of having the infrastructure there. Um,

00:51:03:08 - 00:51:13:10

is it fair to say that's more to do with the exceptions test than the sequential test in terms of whether development can be safe for its lifetime? Uh, where it's located in flood zones?

00:51:17:14 - 00:51:29:15

My understanding from the discussions with the. Sorry, Sarah Price for the applicant. My understanding from the discussions with the Environment Agency is they're commenting on the technical suitability. So, yes, of solar within that area.

00:51:29:24 - 00:51:35:02

Um, so in terms of the sequential tests, whether it can be made safe for its lifetime is irrelevant, isn't it?

00:51:39:12 - 00:51:42:27

The sequential test comes before you get on to the exclusions.

00:51:42:29 - 00:51:48:19

Sorry, sir, I understand your point. Yeah. So it's. Yes. The exception test comes after the sequential test.

00:51:48:21 - 00:51:49:06

Yes.

00:51:49:08 - 00:52:18:24

Yeah. I'm happy to provide a map. Um, because the examiner authority at the current time aren't satisfied with the level of information in terms of whether the applications met the sequential test to provide a map with any supporting evidence that demonstrates why, um, PV panels couldn't be located in any other area within the order limits, which currently doesn't have them, or any, um, land directly around the order limits.

00:52:21:03 - 00:52:22:25

Um, yeah. So we're happy to provide.

00:52:23:05 - 00:52:34:11

Bearing in mind. Um, paragraph 177 of the NPF, which says talks about wider sustainable development benefits. Um, if that's, uh, understood in terms of what we're looking for.

00:52:35:12 - 00:52:36:29

Yes, sir. We're happy to provide that.

00:52:37:01 - 00:52:55:14

Okay. Thank you. Um, coming now to the, um. I'll just come to the Environment Agency before we move on to the potential fallback position in terms of the sequential test. Would you like to say anything at all from the Environment Agency's point of view? Uh, in relation to what I've just discussed with the applicant?

00:52:56:17 - 00:53:08:06

No, it's not for the Environment Agency, really to comment on whether or not the sequential test has been passed. That's that's for the decision maker to come to a decision on. So no, I don't have any further comments to make on that.

00:53:08:21 - 00:53:17:04

Okay. Thank you for that. Okay. We'll move on to the fallback position. Um, or suggested fallback position from the applicant. Um,

00:53:18:29 - 00:53:51:08

I understand the as you suggested, the extant permission for the solar farm, um, does have solar panels within the same flood zone areas. Um, could you provide further justification? Why, in your view, the extant permission is realistic as a fallback position? And is it directly comparable to this development in terms of matters such as scale? Uh, and I will also ask afterwards, you can maybe include it all in the same answer. But whether the applicant intends to implement that permission should this one not be granted?

00:53:55:20 - 00:54:08:10

Um, for the applicant, um, I think we'll probably, um, uh, come back in writing in detail, I don't know. Mrs. Price might be able to just talk to that briefly now, but, um, we can pick up the more detailed points in writing.

00:54:08:12 - 00:54:13:12

So I'm just trying to establish whether it is actually a realistic fallback position or not. And that's what I'm digging at.

00:54:16:26 - 00:54:35:28

Sarah Price for the applicant. Uh, I think we do need to respond in writing, but my understanding is that the Commission has implemented and is therefore extant, and that it is a realistic position that that would be built out. Um, if.

00:54:38:02 - 00:54:47:04

This area didn't come forward as part of the Springwell scheme, but I will just take sort of further discussions with the wider team on that and we'll come back in writing.

00:54:47:29 - 00:55:13:05

Okay. Thank you for that. Okay. That's all the questions I had. Um, anything from, uh, interested parties that, uh, we've just run through? Again, I'm keen to avoid, uh, a general, um, discussion on flood risk and land drainage and those sorts of things. Um, you can provide those in writing at deadline one, but if you'd like to say anything in relation to flood risk that we've discussed, then please do so now.

00:55:14:25 - 00:55:18:17

So gentleman on the far left, is it Mr. Manny?

00:55:24:22 - 00:55:45:06

Regarding the sequential test. Um, I am rather worried about the lands that are east of the 11 at 1188 and got very disappointed that neither the applicant agencies appear to have addressed the issue of potential damage to the

00:55:46:23 - 00:56:17:11

um, the underlying lands um in this area in drains since the enclosures. Most of the underground consists of fragile clay pipes running into mains or ditches through channels called laterals. These clay pipes are about 75 to 100mm in diameter, very fragile by virtue of their porosity. Also very worried that the method of percussion piling will fracture this drainage system.

00:56:17:20 - 00:56:56:05

I don't believe it even has to hit that. The actual pipe vibration in the earth and percussion piling will fracture these pipes. Once this happens, the land will become nothing more than a wet bog. Rainfall will then run off downhill towards the settlement. Talking about 60 to 80 hectares during 25mm of rainfall that could produce up to 8 million gallons. 8,000,000l of water to the moment percolates through the soil into main drains, onward into ditches, and finds its way via a large culvert into Scott wheat Bay.

00:56:56:07 - 00:57:26:25

Okay, so Mr. Money, we are delving into other things, and I'd just like to probably say to say on that point, um, there is a draft written question, uh, which we're going to ask of the applicant, which ultimately asks them to reply to the issues that that you and other have raised on that matter. So, yeah, absolutely, absolutely. And I say if you have a look at our draft written questions, you'll see a question to the applicant on that very matter that you're raising. Thank you. Yes, gentlemen. It's directly in front of me.

00:57:29:13 - 00:58:02:05

The resident of Scott Wick. My concern is, have you considered that when it rains onto those panels, that rainfall is going to be essentially funneled into one channel between each avenue of panels, rather than dispersed across the entire area of the field. That is going to be concentrated into one particular area, and will generate small streams, which will run to the lowest point in the field. You're modeling and taking the rainfall across the whole area of the land is not representative of what is going to actually happen.

00:58:02:18 - 00:58:30:18

And the other area of concern I've got about the rainfall on the panels is when you move up onto the heath, onto the, uh, the lighter land that is going to run straight through off the panels into channels, which will then ultimately find its way into the aquifer a lot quicker, because your pylons will have just split that rock and opened up the aquifer. So you need to consider that rainfall will be channeled into specific places rather than across the entire area.

00:58:33:28 - 00:58:34:25

Mr. Williams.

00:58:36:21 - 00:59:11:01

Very quick point. And, um, it's Mark Williams Parish Council as chair of Scotland Parish Council. I deal with a significant issue which is flooding our, our community, um, already has significant flooding issues and concerns. We recently had a section nine notification which was shared with with the parish. Um, and that is a real concern to us. Um, the water that will come off that land will come off that land much more quickly and will potentially cause a much more significant issue around flooding.

00:59:11:04 - 00:59:14:20

And I, I asked the inspector to really dig deep into that.

00:59:16:15 - 00:59:25:01

Thank you. Okay. Anything in reply from anyone else have got the hand up. So anything in reply from the applicant to those points?

00:59:25:19 - 00:59:36:11

It's common for the applicant. Um, as you said, we will respond to those in writing. I will just pass to, um, Mr. Whittingham, just to respond briefly on some of the points. But we've got the points that we'll respond in detail as well.

00:59:36:13 - 00:59:37:01

Thank you.

00:59:38:08 - 01:00:07:07

Eileen Whittingham, for the applicant. I'll try and give the points in, in order. So the the land drainage thing, we are aware that that is a, um, a concern. So we will be responding with the written, uh, reps for that. The runoff from the panels is a very, very sort of localized, um, potential issue because you end up with a rain shadow under the next row of panels. So over a large area you have net sort of net changing in the runoff.

01:00:08:26 - 01:00:09:14

Um,

01:00:11:09 - 01:00:44:27

in addition to that, there will be where we've got the impermeable areas for the, for the battery and the other, um, infrastructure. There will be drainage systems put in place, so there'll be sods to sort of retain the water and discharge it at greenfield covenant current rates. And that will be designed up a sort of detailed design stage, um, in discussion with the the local authority to make sure there's no, no increase in flood risk.

01:00:48:23 - 01:01:19:10

Okay. Thank you. Okay. We haven't got time for for sort of a two in a row. So as I explained earlier, um, everyone had their chance to speak, and then we asked the applicant for for their reply. But if you have a reply, please put that in writing for the next deadline. Please. Thank you. Okay. Um, that wraps up our discussion on agenda item number eight. Um, I propose we have our 15 minute afternoon break now, and when we come back, we'll resume with matters associated with cultural heritage. So we will return at 3:20. Thank you.