

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Springwell Solar Farm
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 3 (ISH3) - Part 1
Date:	16 July 2025

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File Length: 00:58:39

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:12:07 - 00:00:32:07

Good morning. It's now 10 a.m. and time for this hearing to begin. I would like to welcome you all to the third issue specific hearing for the Spring Oil Solar Farm project. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me clearly. Thank you. Uh, can I also confirm with the case team that the live streaming and recording of the event has commenced?

00:00:36:23 - 00:00:51:17

Yep. Thumbs up. Thank you. My name is Ben North. I'm a chartered architect, and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application. I'm now going to ask the other panel member to introduce himself. Okay.

00:00:51:19 - 00:01:00:08

Thank you. Good morning. My name is Jonathan Manning. I'm a charter town planner, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the panel to examine the application. Thank you.

00:01:00:21 - 00:01:31:18

Thank you. Together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. I'll now deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person. Can everyone please set all devices and phones to silent? Uh, the toilets are through the doors behind you and down the stairs on the floor below. Um, there is a planned fire drill, um, today at 11 a.m., so we'll make sure that we take a break, uh, just before 11.

00:01:31:23 - 00:02:05:19

Um, but there's no need to exit, um, the building for the planned fire drill. Uh, in the case that of the fire alarm does sound at any other time during the day, it's the real thing. So please exit through the doors behind you and follow the fire exit signage down through the building that I'm told there will be hotel staff on each floor directing people to emergency exits. The meeting points in for a fire escape is outside the hotel near the Bradford Cadets.

00:02:09:10 - 00:02:18:16

This meeting will follow the agenda published on the National Infrastructure Planning website on the 4th of July. It will be helpful if you had a copy of this in front of you.

00:02:20:23 - 00:02:25:14

And is it also possible to get a copy of the agenda up on the screen? Thank you.

00:02:27:10 - 00:02:59:06

The agenda is for guidance only and we may add other considerations or issues as we progress. We will conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions have been made and all questions are asked and responded to. But if the discussions can't be concluded, then it may be necessary for us to

prioritize matters and defer other matters to further written questions. Likewise, if you cannot answer the questions being asked or require time to get the information requested, then can you please indicate that you need to respond in writing?

00:03:00:20 - 00:03:17:21

Today's hearing is being undertaken in a hybrid way, meaning some of you are present with us at the hearing venue and some of you are joining virtually using Microsoft Teams. We will make sure that however you have decided to attend today, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate.

00:03:19:19 - 00:03:38:19

A recording of today's hearing will be made available on the Springwell Solar Farm section of the National Infrastructure Planning website, as soon as practicable after the hearing has finished. With this in mind, please ensure that you speak clearly into a microphone stating your name and who you are representing each time before you speak.

00:03:40:23 - 00:03:49:08

If you're not at a table with a microphone, there is a roving microphone. So please put your hand up and wait for one of these to be brought to you before you speak.

00:03:52:09 - 00:04:28:18

The recording allows any member of the public who is interested in the application and the examination to find out what has been discussed at the hearing today. As the recordings are retained and published, they form a public records that can contain personal information to which the UK General Data Protection Regulation and UK GDPR applies. Participants. Participants must do their best to avoid providing any information which should otherwise be kept private and confidential. If there is a need to refer to such information, it should be in written form, although this will also be published.

00:04:28:20 - 00:04:55:05

Personal and private content can be redacted or removed before it's made publicly available. Any person who is unclear on this point should ask the case team for guidance before they place personal and private information into the public domain. A link to the planning Inspectorate's Privacy Notice was provided in the notification for this hearing. Please speak to the case team again if you have any questions about this.

00:04:57:15 - 00:05:37:22

In terms of timings, we'll have a we'll have a break just before 11, as I said, uh, so that, um, we're not interrupted by the fire drill and we'll likely break for lunch around, uh, 1 p.m. if necessary. We'll have a mid-afternoon break before finishing no later than 5 p.m.. Um, I'm now going to ask those of you who are participating in today's meeting to introduce yourselves. When I state your organization's name, could you introduce yourselves, stating your name, who you represent and which agenda item you wish to speak on? If you're representing it, if you are not representing an organization, please confirm your name.

00:05:37:24 - 00:05:47:22

Summarize your interest in the application and confirm the agenda item upon which you wish to speak. So, could I start with the applicant and any of their advisors, please?

00:05:49:22 - 00:06:19:22

Good morning sir. My name is Richard Griffiths form Pentre masons LLP. Representing the applicant Springwell Solar Farm Limited. I'm here with my colleagues Alexis Coleman and Olivia Henshall and we'll be speaking on all topics. Uh, today we have representatives from the applicant's consultant team, mainly, uh, in the room. Uh, we have a few online. Uh, given the number of topics, I suggest we introduce those consultants. Uh, as we go through each topic.

00:06:20:02 - 00:06:29:22

Yes. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Now we will move on to invited parties who are able to attend. So could we start with Lincolnshire County Council, please?

00:06:30:13 - 00:06:42:19

Good morning sir. My name is John Hunter. I appear on behalf of the county council. I am Council. Um, and again, we we wish to speak, I think on most topics, I think some more than others. But

00:06:44:08 - 00:07:03:18

for example, there are particular comments to make on cumulative effects landfill, groundwater and waste. but we have people available to speak on other matters in response to any questions you may have. And again, I'll take the same approach. I will introduce the relevant people at the relevant moments. Thank you.

00:07:04:18 - 00:07:06:12

North Kesteven District Council.

00:07:06:14 - 00:07:19:03

Good morning sir. My name is Sharm el Sheikh. I'm of council also instructed on behalf of North Coast and District Council. We have a number of others joining online for various topic items, so I'll introduce them as we proceed. Thank you.

00:07:20:15 - 00:07:24:21

Do we have anyone from the UK Health and Security Agency here?

00:07:31:14 - 00:07:40:21

No, I'm not seeing any hands on line or in the room. Uh, so, do we have anyone from the Environment Agency here today?

00:07:43:12 - 00:07:51:10

Good morning sir. My name is Annette Hewitson. I'm representing the Environment Agency and I'm here to assist with item six.

00:07:52:11 - 00:08:07:07

Thank you. Okay. Now. Now, if I could ask if there is anyone else in the room who wishes to speak today. If they let me know now. And again, if you could introduce yourself and let us know on which agenda item you wish to speak.

00:08:12:06 - 00:08:15:10

Thank you. That's a roving microphone coming down to the front.

00:08:21:01 - 00:08:39:04

Hi. Good morning, I'm Paul Frost. I'm a resident of Scott Quick. I'm a member of Scott Parish Council and also a member of the Springwell action Group center action Group. Um, I have registered to speak and I would like to speak today on item 4.2 on the agenda, please.

00:08:41:05 - 00:08:41:21

Thank you.

00:08:42:23 - 00:08:49:09

Good morning. My name is John Anderson. I'm a resident of Scott Wick. Um, I'd like to speak on this afternoon's

00:08:50:24 - 00:08:52:14

area on soil.

00:08:54:04 - 00:08:54:22

Thank you.

00:08:55:20 - 00:09:05:18

Mark Williams, Parish Council, Springwell action Group and resident of Skopje. All agenda items. Thank you.

00:09:06:03 - 00:09:06:19

Thank you.

00:09:08:16 - 00:09:16:22

Hello, I'm Stella Reid and I represent Ashby de la Land, blocks home and Temple Brewer Parish Council. And I wish to speak on the cumulative effects.

00:09:20:17 - 00:09:26:16

I was just going to say I reserved the right to speak later, depending on the conversation. I'm a county councillor, Paul Locke.

00:09:27:10 - 00:09:28:01

Thank you.

00:09:30:19 - 00:09:37:07

Barry Smith, Hampton parish council. And I'd like to reserve being able to speak on cumulative effects, particularly traffic.

00:09:38:16 - 00:09:39:09

Thank you.

00:09:40:20 - 00:09:51:21

James Gallagher from Navan be a member of the Community Speed Watch, which is sponsored by Nathan, the parish council. And I would like to speak on the cumulative effects on the traffic aspect.

00:09:54:14 - 00:10:06:20

Philip Heard I have registered to speak against item 5.2, please. I'm a member of Nathan B, so I am a resident of Nathan B. I'm a chartered engineer and I'm an ex RF engineering officer.

00:10:07:07 - 00:10:07:23

Thank you.

00:10:12:08 - 00:10:28:07

Is that everyone in the room who wishes to speak? Yes. Thank you. If I could now move on to virtual attendees. If you're with us on Microsoft Teams today, please could you raise a virtual hand? And again, if you could introduce yourself and let us know which agenda item you wish to speak on?

00:10:33:23 - 00:10:40:15

Yeah, I'm, I just see the initials S, m. So could you please introduce yourself?

00:10:42:01 - 00:11:07:16

Uh, yes. Good, good. Good morning sir. Thank you for the opportunity. My name is Simon Mountjoy. This morning I'm representing myself. I'm a fellow of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants, a fellow of the Institute of Agricultural Management and associate of the British Society of Soil Science. I wish to speak particularly on item six on land classification, land use, irrigation, and I have some comments to make on battery storage later in the day.

00:11:08:12 - 00:11:09:11

Okay. Thank you.

00:11:11:02 - 00:11:14:12

Are there any more virtual attendees who wish to speak today?

00:11:16:00 - 00:11:25:08

I'm not seeing any further hands. Uh. Thank you. Let me briefly explain the purpose of the issue. Specific here.

00:11:26:22 - 00:11:27:20

Uh, sorry.

00:11:35:04 - 00:11:48:06

Thank you very much. Apologies. Uh, Marianne Overton, chairman of the Cliff Villages Solar Action Group. And I'd like to contribute on the cumulative effects. And if you're doing battery storage, that. Thank you.

00:11:49:13 - 00:11:50:05

Thank you.

00:11:55:09 - 00:12:23:24

Thank you. Okay. Let me briefly explain the purpose of the issue. Specific hearing. This hearing seeks to consider a range of issues which come under the broad umbrella of environmental matters. This hearing will consider matters relating to cumulative effects. Air quality, including the bass. Climate change, land, soil and groundwater biodiversity population including health and wellbeing, and other matters including waste.

00:12:25:14 - 00:12:59:05

I'm sure many of you will be keen to have your say today. You will have heard our proposed timings and we're keen to ensure that these are adhered to. Adhered to. As mentioned previously, we will. We aim to finish by 5 p.m. at the at the latest, um, if necessary. Any items not considered during today will be carried forward into our second written questions. We have a fairly extensive list of questions which are primarily aimed at the applicant, but questions may also be aimed at other parties, particularly the local authorities here today.

00:12:59:09 - 00:13:33:16

The purpose of this hearing is to enable us, as the examining authority, to gain a further understanding of the evidence relating to the topics within the agenda to help the hearing run as smoothly as possible. We will run through all of our questions on each topic agenda item before then asking for contributions from interested parties. Any oral representations from interested parties must relate directly to the discussion undertaken, and it's important to say that today is not an open floor session to give wider submissions on each of the topics in the agenda.

00:13:33:19 - 00:13:50:16

If you do have wider points to make, please provide them in writing at deadline three, which is the 12th of August. Please note that written submissions do have exactly the same weight as oral submissions. Are there any questions so far on the purpose of today's hearing?

00:13:54:13 - 00:13:58:04

I'm not seeing any hands. I'll hand over to Mr. Mac.

00:13:58:11 - 00:14:29:00

Okay. Thank you. Um, just before we delve into our first subject of discussion, uh, I just want to remind everybody that the examining authority will ensure that all parties have a fair chance to have their say during these events, and that includes the applicant. And hostile behaviour of any kind. Won't be tolerated, either during the hearings or in adjournments. So I just wanted to point that out again. I have, um, made several reminders over the past, uh, events.

00:14:29:02 - 00:15:12:02

So, um, let's keep that in mind moving forward, please. Um, okay. We'll come to cumulative effects. So, um, the first question I have is actually for the county council, please. Days. Um, and deadline two of your response, you noted that the entire project, uh, report, um, you were of the view that you believe the Oda scheme and combination might have more significant effects than is set out in that report. Um, and I think you also disagree with the applicant's assertion that the interrelationships between Springwell and some of the other some of the other projects, um, which the applicant considers are not anticipated.

00:15:12:20 - 00:15:26:24

Uh, is is, uh, also not a fair position. So obviously, I think that's a fairly broad statement. So I was just wondering if the county council could offer any more specific examples where your concerns lie. Please.

00:15:28:00 - 00:16:06:13

Uh, John Hunter. Uh, El-Sisi. Uh, I will hand over, I think, for the main part of this discussion to, uh, Justine positive sits to my right, uh, infrastructure manager. But just by way of introduction, if I could just refer back to what was said yesterday, so far as landscape and visual effects are concerned, Mr. Brown explained that view and the county council's position that although they. The schemes may have effects on different landscape character areas, types and national character areas, um, a it was insufficient to just look at that.

00:16:06:15 - 00:16:37:04

Uh, given the, for example, the kinetic experience that one would have travelling through the Lincolnshire landscape. So that I think that's one key aspect which really hasn't been captured in the other, the cumulative effects, uh, chapter of the ES or the interrelationship report that, for example, which is geographically quite close, but said to be in landscape terms in a different area, uh, the position differs from the county council's on that. But in terms of further detail, if I could hand over to Miss Foster.

00:16:39:11 - 00:17:18:08

Good morning, sir Justine Foster, infrastructure manager at Lincolnshire County Council. Um, the council very much welcomed the submission of the interrelationship report into the examination. Um, it is felt that such document does help to sort of give, um, a better picture of how the schemes will relate, particularly during the construction phases for all these developments. Um, so that's very much welcomed. Um, we have seen a couple of these reports, um, now, um, in Lincolnshire, in response to concerns raised by the council, um, around the cluster of schemes that were established around Gainsborough, initially with the examining authority requested it.

00:17:18:18 - 00:17:55:24

And we also have in existence a interrelationship report for the cluster of energy schemes on the east of the county. Now, um, the I think that the comments that we made at deadline to having reviewed the report that came in, I think we felt that the content of the report generally was a little bit on the light side, and probably then there was could be more detail could be provided within that report. Um, the leader was cited as an example. Um, so we felt that, um, we just sort of agreed with the minimal impact statement within the report, and we used the leader as an example.

00:17:56:01 - 00:18:31:00

But I think equally, um, because we have got, um, such a concentration of, um, solar and other major infrastructure projects in Lincolnshire, it's unprecedented in the UK, what we are seeing in Lincolnshire. So I think just to sort of state there'll be minimal impact and we're going to have so many major infrastructure schemes in construction, um, over a relatively, um, short number of years. Um, is probably a little bit we thought was probably maybe an understatement or perhaps a little bit more explanation of that is required. Um, there are a number of specific points, um, that we sort of we pulled out.

00:18:31:05 - 00:19:12:05

Um, I think one of the key points we highlighted was that there would be five schemes under consideration at the same. Under construction at the same time as spring while and three during that that peak period. Um, that obviously doesn't take into account any potential for slippage in those schemes that that finger could, could increase or equally, it could decrease if there was any slippage. Um, sort of in those schemes. Um, I think areas that particularly perhaps ought to be looked at is around construction traffic. Um, also construction workers, um, you know, the structural work accommodation where all those construction workers are going to be housed, um, and, you know, material supplies, um, you know, that impact on the local economy.

00:19:12:11 - 00:19:43:11

Uh, so they're sort of the areas that we'd probably like to see, um, perhaps explored a little bit further with within the, um, interrelationship report. And also, um, we'd like to see perhaps some consideration of, um, the developers talking to each other around any shared mitigation. Um, the there is some precedent for that. Um, within schemes in the, in the east where people are the developers are working together. Um, and, um, potential for mitigation, I appreciate. You know, the obvious one for mitigation is going to be Navy Navy substation.

00:19:43:13 - 00:20:02:18

And, and, um, you know, I appreciate that the applicant has said that they are open to that, um, dialogue and coordination with National Grid, but I don't think it necessarily should be just limited to the, the, to the Navy substation. There are other developments that the other vessels example that are in close proximity, um, where I think that dialogue could happen as well.

00:20:04:09 - 00:20:35:13

Just a slight follow up question you mentioned in terms of the the sort of events and the dialogue in the report being slightly light, um, maybe compared to some of the others that you've seen. Um, taking, for example, the gate, Burton, West Burton and Tilbury and cotton solar projects. Um, I understand that those have sort of overlapping order limits and are very tightly contained. Um, would you expect to see the same level of detail for this scheme given its individual circumstances compared to, say, that example.

00:20:37:12 - 00:21:16:02

Justine Foster for Lincolnshire County Council. Yeah, I appreciate that the cluster around Gainsborough um, were more confined. Um, um, they all share a similar cable route corridor. Um, but I think there is some analogy here with Springwell because they are all going to be connected to the

same substation, which is going to be sort of central between the schemes. Um, so what's the the order limits don't overlap to the same extent. I think there is still potential for those, um, those interrelationships between the schemes, um, because geographically, you know, that they, they're not they're not a million miles away from each other and they're all going to be using sort of similar, some similar road networks, for example.

00:21:16:04 - 00:21:46:14

Okay, they might have different access points at different points, but on the wider network they're all going to be on that same wider network. They're all going to need facilities to house construction staff, certain traffic coming in and out. Um, so I you know, I appreciate that that that was that was more clustered. Um, but I think you I think because of the unprecedented number of, um, large scale solar and major energy infrastructure primarily. And then we also we do have a proposal for a reservoir, but that is obviously I appreciate the time scale is further down the line.

00:21:47:02 - 00:21:53:13

Um, I do think we need to be looking at this in much more of a round in the more, more strategically across the county.

00:21:54:10 - 00:22:03:17

Okay. Thank you. Before I come to the applicant for a reply, same question to the district council. Do you have any further comments about the interrelationship report.

00:22:05:09 - 00:22:07:13

And district council? So we don't have anything to add?

00:22:08:04 - 00:22:11:17

Okay. Thank you. In that case, I'll come to the applicant for a reply please.

00:22:12:13 - 00:22:48:02

Thank you sir. Miss common for the applicant. Um, so firstly thank you for the comments from Miss Foster on on the report. Um, I think we'd agree in terms of, um, the distinction, but also the similarities with the with those gains for um, projects. Obviously, as Miss Foster said, they have deliberately shared a cable corridor there as a as a mitigation measure to minimize impacts in that area, so there is more of a physical overlap. I think also in terms of some of the comments in the submissions from Lincolnshire, there was also more of an overlap in terms of the timing of when those projects were coming forward and the construction period.

00:22:48:04 - 00:23:18:17

So a few of them were actually in examination at the same time, which which fed into the need for the cooperation agreement there. Whereas in this case, yes, there is some potential for overlap of order limits, although just around the connection into neighbourhood B, um, we're also in a situation where Springwell is really the most advanced of those projects. So, um, we certainly understand the need to consider the effects, and that's obviously very important. And we understand the need to make some commitments around, um, exploring opportunities to work with those other developers.

00:23:18:23 - 00:23:52:03

Um, we can only do the assessment and the commitments based on the information available to us though. So we do have that, um, we are being the most advanced of those, I think Fast Green, for example, is due to be submitted within the next week or so. And Leo is sitting further beyond that. So, um, we are speaking to those, um, developers and I'll ask one of my colleagues to expand on that shortly. Um, but there is also needs to be an appreciation that we are ahead. And what I would anticipate, which is what has happened with those Gainsborough projects, is that we will update this information report throughout the examination.

00:23:52:05 - 00:24:23:23

And what will most likely happen is then, um, Foss Green will pick it up and update it throughout that examination so that, um, it sort of is almost passed between projects to make sure that it's, um, it picks up as more information is available. Um, I think one of the I'm picking up on some of the other comments, um, where the old order limits do overlap, it may well be that we need protect provisions with those other parties, which, um, I think the other parties are open to, and perhaps we will just get that confirmation and record that in the Updates and Relationships report.

00:24:24:00 - 00:24:58:20

It is slightly premature for us to be discussing at this stage, given the order limits, the other projects aren't set. Um, but if that is the intention, if those are needed, that we can discuss and agree those with other parties. Um, similarly on the cooperation agreement, I think those are the kinds of projects that first co-operation agreement very much dealt with their participation in the examination and how they would, um, work together and share information and, and deal with the examination process, which, as I mentioned, was more to do with the overlap of timing. And then they had subsequent, um, commitments for subsequent cooperation agreements, which led more into the construction phase.

00:24:59:01 - 00:25:45:12

So, um, we're we're aware of that. We've worked on those agreements before. So if as the need for that comes around, you know, we will we'll definitely pick that up. But it is a little bit premature given the uncertainties at this stage and the order limits of the other projects. Um, I think what we will do at deadline three is when we update the comp, the outlines, um, construction, traffic management, planning, the outline construction environmental management plan is I think we just need to put some acknowledgement in there that even though at the moment we don't anticipate an interaction in some of those schemes, and in most cases we don't anticipate cumulative significant effects that should circumstances change or the construction periods in particular change, we will seek opportunities to explore any, um, um, shared or joint mitigation measures with those other parties.

00:25:45:15 - 00:26:21:05

It's difficult to commit a lot more than that because obviously it relies upon us reaching agreement with other parties, um, that we can't sort of find under this order. But I think we can go a bit further in terms of the commitment around that, just to provide some reassurance that that's very much the intention, um, that that we're, you know, where there's construction programs happening at the same time, for example, we would definitely be talking to those other schemes to try and minimise and manage impacts, in particular around things like traffic. And, um, we're already in discussion with, with several of those developers in that respect. I have others with me who can speak to more the dialogue with the other developers, so I can invite a colleague to do that.

00:26:21:07 - 00:26:29:18

That's helpful. And, um, if you want to get more to the technical side of the actual assessment and what we say about those impacts, I've also got someone who can speak to that.

00:26:30:04 - 00:26:37:04

Thank you. If you could give us an update on, um, discussions with Leda and Nathan B um, best project that would be useful, please.

00:26:37:06 - 00:26:42:16

Thank you. Sir, I'll introduce my colleague, Miss Emma Jane Hayward, who's an associate director at DWP. Thank you.

00:26:44:05 - 00:27:16:14

Good morning, sir, is Emma Jane Heywood. Um, so we have been in engagement with the developers at, um, Navy Base. They are currently got their planning application and at the moment it has been through a statutory consultation. Um, they have got feedback back from those statutory bodies and reviewing them and looking into them what the feedback is. Um, there hasn't been a decision made yet. That decision isn't, um, made going to be made until the 8th of August? What? That's based on the planning website.

00:27:16:16 - 00:27:56:08

So it may be extended. We're not sure. Um, but we are in conversation with them. And that information that has been updated as part of the cumulative assessment at deadline to um, we also have been engaged with Liotta. Liotta are currently in the process of refining their cable route and also doing some more design work. Um, and that will be put forward as part of their consultation at the end of this year, starting next year. Um, we are having that offline conversation to see if we can get some additional information to know what's going to be part of their assessment, to be able to do more work within our assessment.

00:27:56:18 - 00:28:25:10

Um, we've also had conversations with Foss Green. Um, Foss Green are planning on submitting at the end of this week, um, the application and they um, and then with National Grid, I know you didn't ask these questions, but um, with National Grid, they have, um, submitted their EIA scoping and, um, they informed us of that a few weeks ago. So we're just waiting for that additional information to be made public. And that's the conversations at the moment.

00:28:25:12 - 00:28:44:24

Okay. Thank you. That's a useful update on, uh, discussions. Um, the county council, uh, do you accept that the points made in terms of this kind of a living document and as we move through the examination in more information, more information comes to light? It will probably grow in terms of what it contains. Is that a an accepted position?

00:28:45:18 - 00:29:05:22

Justine Foster for Lincolnshire County Council. Yeah. Yes it is. And that's what we've seen um, with the other relationship reports and I appreciate Springhill are they are the first ones is the initial

developer of the document. And yes, we'd be very happy to provide further comments on the updated version that the applicant is going to submit to the next settlement.

00:29:06:06 - 00:29:09:04

Okay. Thank you. And the district council, same question please.

00:29:10:20 - 00:29:15:00

District council. Yes, sir. Our position aligns with the county council. Is that respect?

00:29:17:00 - 00:29:21:15

Yep. So I'm just also pass on to Nick Feltham who's the development manager at the council.

00:29:23:04 - 00:29:47:14

Good morning sir. Nick Feltham, North Kesteven District council. Um, just in terms of the the timescale for the determination of the Green Man Road, Nathan beat best proposals at that date is an indicative one. So the the that's the sort of the target decision date as it were. There hasn't yet been any decision made nor indeed any, any date for referral to the council's planning committee. Um, just to confirm on that particular point. Thank you.

00:29:47:16 - 00:29:51:22

Okay. Thank you. That's useful. Um, okay. Um,

00:29:53:17 - 00:30:27:05

in terms of when the applicant intends to update the interrelationship report, will that be deadline three, the next iteration? And through that process, do you discuss with the local planning authorities, um, the content or the revisions that might be made? I just wonder if those discussions might be quite useful. Rather than have a you submit a version, they then comment. It might be more, more, um, um, constructive to, to maybe have ongoing conversations as those iterations come forward moving forward.

00:30:27:20 - 00:30:47:09

This comment for the applicant. Um, the intention was for deadline three, but I'm picking up on your point. We'll obviously have been engaging in any event with the local authorities, but if that means that it might be the subsequent deadline to make sure we've picked up on comments, um, just to make it more efficient and more efficient process, as you suggest, than it may be the next deadline, but we'll certainly aim for deadline three.

00:30:47:11 - 00:31:12:14

Okay. Thank you. Okay. Moving on to, uh, the revised cumulative assessment, which was, um, provided by the applicant, a deadline to, uh, I appreciate there's not been any deadline since in terms of any views that, um, the local authorities might have had. Um, do you have any comments on the revised chapter of the year? Um, that was provided at deadline to come to the county council first, please.

00:31:15:12 - 00:31:50:02

Thank you. Um, John Hunter on behalf of the county council. I think I should have commented on that already in relation to the landscape visual matters, uh, that obviously there are subsequent questions to be asked in relation to waste, for example. And um, EMV, which I suspect are probably better answered in respect of that. I think the overall general picture, I think the one that's been articulated in relation to the interpolation report, which was a county councillor, disagrees and thinks some of the other conclusions that there will be no significant effects or minimal ones have been understated potentially.

00:31:50:10 - 00:31:54:18

But I think beyond that, I don't think I have any of the comments on this one does.

00:31:54:20 - 00:31:57:22

Okay, I might for this. This kind of topic session is a kind of a no.

00:31:57:24 - 00:31:58:16

Uh, an.

00:31:58:18 - 00:32:06:19

Overarching, broad, overarching, cumulative topic, and we'll delve into the specific cumulative effects of each subject area in later sessions.

00:32:06:21 - 00:32:07:11

Yeah. Thank you.

00:32:08:15 - 00:32:10:22

Thank you. And the district council, please.

00:32:11:12 - 00:32:19:24

North District council. Um, so we don't have any specific comments at this stage. We might need to make some in due course in writing, but nothing to present at this moment.

00:32:21:14 - 00:32:22:21

Okay. Thank you.

00:32:24:12 - 00:32:48:10

Okay, that's all the questions I had. Okay. I'm very mindful that specific cumulative effects for each subject area will be discussed in those areas. Um, I know there was a few interested parties who wish to say something on cumulative effects, but if it's specific to a topic and you can attend that session, then that's the most appropriate time to raise them. Um, with that in mind, does anyone wish to say anything?

00:32:51:09 - 00:32:57:03

Yes, Miss Overton. I think there's a Roman MC coming towards you. Thank you.

00:33:03:11 - 00:33:40:14

Thank. Thank you very much. Uh, Marianne Overton from the Cliff Villages solar Action Group. Um, just a couple of things, if I may. I did send in a contribution after the last, uh, hearing that you had here. Um, pointing out that the distance over which we can see, if you like. So therefore, the impact of developments is substantial from the cliff edge. We can see, I think I sent 55 miles and I sent a map with the, you know, the lines marked on it so that you could see where we you know what I'm talking about.

00:33:40:23 - 00:34:14:15

So I do feel that the, um, it's important and correct and absolutely right that you're looking at the close ones that are attached or planned to be attached to the National Grid connection at Navan be, um, absolutely right. And I also pointed to a there is a graph, a table somewhere in there, a map which shows a ten kilometer radius around the grid. And you can just see, you know, what a huge impact these developments together are proposed for this specific area.

00:34:15:05 - 00:34:47:17

So it's not only the immediate area, it's also the more distant ones that we've got on the Newark border there as well. And as was said about the distance traveled, you know, as you travel through, that's actually a really short time as well. So as you're moving through what should be an attractive rural countryside which attracts tourists and local economy, instead they're driving through an industrial area, which they may not. I don't think they will find that as attractive because they used to coming for the more rural areas.

00:34:47:21 - 00:35:20:02

We heard there in the submissions, there is also the number of applications that we've got and the number that are on the tech register that are not even, uh, evidence. We can't even see them yet. Some of them. So, you know, as I said, right at the very beginning, it's really difficult for anyone to consider cumulative effects when we've only got such a tiny proportion of the effects visible. So how can you consider the cumulative effects? I recognize the applicant said they're only going to consider them ones that are already on the table.

00:35:20:13 - 00:36:11:14

But you know, as we can see with the ones that haven't actually gone to planning yet, there is a significant amount of detail already there that's gone out to public consultation, the preliminary public consultation, and I think those documents should be kept up to date all the time. So as of today, what do we know today is happening? And I'd like to see that in the documents, rather than waiting for everything to have gone through the formal process and saying, oh well, now it's decided. Because the question that arises in my mind is we've talked about discussions, which is good, but what changes did the application applicants make following those discussions? Did they change their time scale? What changes did they make? Because it's good to talk, but actually we want to see the impact of those conversations.

00:36:12:02 - 00:36:12:19

Thank you.

00:36:14:13 - 00:36:43:07

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, the the comments that you provided and the written submission about, uh, landscape matters and visibility. Um, I think filtered into the discussion that we had yesterday. Um, so that's, um, you know, we we did see that. Thank you very much. And in terms of the other comments, um, in terms of the register, I don't know whether the, uh, the applicant could just comment on the approach taken to the register and how you consider whether developments are considered relevant or not.

00:36:43:24 - 00:37:16:03

It's common for the applicant. Thank you. I think the first point to note is that we only have access to the same information, so only publicly available information. Um, I'll pass over to our EIA, um, expert shortly just to talk through briefly the approach. Um, but there is a, um, a specific approach in line with guidance as to how we do the assessment. Um, I think the other point to note is that schemes coming up later after us, when there is more information available. This is this is a requirement of the EIA regulations. So any scheme coming forward does need to consider cumulative effects.

00:37:16:06 - 00:37:44:07

And those schemes that there may not be information about at the moment. When they come forward, they will need to consider this scheme and all the other schemes that that fall within the guidance in terms of the list of developments to be considered. But I'll just pass you to, um, um, our expert. Um, I'm just going to get her title. Um, miss Jade Garner, um, principal environmental consultant and RSC, just to talk through, um, at a high level, just the approach in terms of identifying the developments that we have for the assessment.

00:37:44:18 - 00:37:45:09

Thank you.

00:37:45:12 - 00:38:15:19

Jake, for the applicant. Um, firstly, I'd just like to thank you for your contributions. Um, these were reviewed at deadline two, and the updates were made to the cumulative effect structure in line with those updates where the sufficient information was available. So thank you for that. Um, in terms of the way that we undertake the assessment, um, we undertake it based on what we call a zone of influence. So the zone of influence is the largest area where we determine where significant effects could occur.

00:38:15:21 - 00:38:52:19

So for the purposes of this assessment, it was ten kilometers. So in those ten kilometers we create a shortlist of development whereby we have sufficient environmental information to understand what those effects could be. There are some developments whereby they don't have sufficient information at the moment. Um, some of those developments that may be on the tech register, as my colleague mentioned, whereby we don't have sufficient information to undertake the cumulative effects assessment. However, we do have the interrelationship report that we previously discussed, and we are committing to updating that and seeking engagement with those developers.

00:38:52:21 - 00:39:28:10

So we're hoping that that document can facilitate any mitigation that might be required. Um, once we get that further information from these future developments, um, it's also worth noting that we've done

a wider cumulative assessment on a regional scale for best and most versatile agricultural land. And that was in discussions with Lincolnshire County Council noting the number of large scale solar schemes that are in Lincolnshire. And there was also an assessment done on population factors and based on tourism and construction workers, which will probably go into a little bit more detail on on the further agenda items today.

00:39:29:18 - 00:39:38:22

Okay. Thank you for that. Um, any other interested party would you say, Mr. Gallagher, would you like to? So there was a roving mic on its way. Thank you.

00:39:47:20 - 00:40:23:06

Thank you. My particular interest is traffic and the cumulative facts. I'll pick that up tomorrow, as you indicated. My question is really to build on what Councillor Overton has mentioned. And that's the scoping for the cumulative effects. I think the applicant's case that they can only look at the ones which are there presently they can actually look at concretely is flawed. And I would suggest that we ought to apply a broader principle. Um, the precedents have been set, for example, with the Rochdale envelope talking in terms of look, where there are uncertainties, you look at a reasonable, uh, worst case scenario.

00:40:23:09 - 00:40:28:20

And that is the approach that I believe should be adopted generally to the cumulative assessments. Thank you.

00:40:29:04 - 00:40:32:12

Okay. Thank you. Anything the applicant would like to say?

00:40:33:22 - 00:40:37:18

Miss the applicant I won't add much more, miss. Um, uh,

00:40:39:09 - 00:40:49:19

sorry. Um, has explained the approach. The approach is in line with the, um, guidance from Pins. Um, it's been discussed with the authorities, and it's an accepted approach. Um, and there's not much more I can say. Really?

00:40:51:24 - 00:41:13:11

Okay. Thank you. Okay. Um, I think that's everybody. So we'll move on to agenda item number four, please, which is air quality, including, ING at best. Um, so the first question is for, um, the applicant. Um, sorry. Do you want to swap teams yet? Of course. Yes.

00:41:13:13 - 00:41:14:03

No worries.

00:41:14:06 - 00:41:15:17

30s. I'll give you a few seconds.

00:41:15:19 - 00:41:16:13

Thank you very much.

00:41:44:21 - 00:42:27:15

Okay. All set? Fantastic. Okay. So, yeah. The first question is for the applicant, please. And the revised outlined battery safety management plan. Uh, reference rep one versus 048 states that the applicant and the UK hsa concur that at the detailed design stage after battery system selection, a plume assessment would be commissioned based on atmospheric dispersion modelling. Um, on this basis is the current position, um, that ultimately the UK HSA is still not content with the existing Bess Plume assessment, but considers a revised one can be undertaken post consent.

00:42:28:11 - 00:42:31:00

Is that reading between the lines of fair

00:42:32:22 - 00:42:42:21

assumption about the position between the parties? Unfortunately, they were not here today, so I kind of lead for the the applicant to provide an update on the discussions that took place, please.

00:42:43:20 - 00:43:00:13

Thank you, Sir Richard Griffiths, on behalf of the applicant. Um, I'll pass to, uh, Mr. Paul Gregory, who is the applicant, battery safety and testing consultant, um, who has had those discussions with the UK, um, Security Health Security Agency to confirm the position.

00:43:00:20 - 00:43:01:11

Thank you.

00:43:04:13 - 00:43:41:14

Good morning, sir. Uh, Paul Gregory for the applicant. Um, so, uh, following, uh, on, uh, from the first issue, uh, then the applicant and the UK Health and Security Agency, um, agreed also to share the workings behind the original, uh, plume study. So the UK Health and Security Agency could be confident, um, that it was a rigorous, uh, assessment to to assess on site, uh, emissions and safety risks.

00:43:42:09 - 00:44:14:13

Um, and that following this, um, a template was agreed, uh, for the detailed design stage, um, where this will give an understanding of what will be emitted and the impact on sensitive Receptors in comparison with air quality standards. This is secured in section 3.2.1 and 4.5.7 of the Revised Outline Battery Safety Management Plan and the Statement of Common Ground with the UK Health and Security Agency.

00:44:15:17 - 00:45:11:23

This was signed and will be issued at deadline three. To confirm the full lines of agreement. Okay. Um, the revised Outline Battery Safety Management Plan, section 6.1.2 defines the scope of the plume study for detailed design. Um, this scope follows uh, draft revised FCC guidelines, which are, uh, probably due to be published later in 2025, where the specific best system and final site design analysis study will be conducted to assess the environmental impact of a site incident to sensitive

receptors within a one kilometre radius of the area, and toxic gas emissions to sensitive receptors must be below relevant public health exposure levels when the battery system of the best is fully burnt out.

00:45:13:02 - 00:45:38:01

In addition to toxic gas emissions, production of particulate matter in a best fire will also be included in the assessment, and the plume study will also include a visibility impact of any transport links within a one kilometre radius. The best area, which is aligned with the Ndphe revised guidance for plume study, as I said, due to be published later this year.

00:45:42:21 - 00:45:43:14

Okay.

00:45:45:05 - 00:45:55:17

Is there a particular reason that the applicant can sort of explain about why the UK HSR is taking the view that it's content for that to be done post consent?

00:45:58:21 - 00:46:31:05

Yes. So all for the applicant. Typically this is always secured through the obs MP. Bearing in mind that the Annie Plume study um, at the DCO stage is generally a generic system, so it doesn't involve the final site design and the actual battery system that will be integrated into site. And again, uh, I would say that this field of consequence modeling, uh, is not defined.

00:46:31:07 - 00:47:11:14

So typically for any other, uh, DCO, uh, hearing that I've worked on, typically just HIF emissions are modeled. Um, so here we've had obviously the UK Health and Security Agency asking for particulate matter to be considered, which typically, um, is part of their uh air emissions, uh Guidelines where UK air quality is evaluated, and there is another expert who can talk you through sort of their approach and their ethos, um, with regard to that element of, of air pollution.

00:47:11:21 - 00:47:25:17

However, from from the best side, um, the plume study that was submitted and the commitment for the detailed design stage, um, are in line with with every other DCO project.

00:47:25:23 - 00:47:26:13

Okay.

00:47:26:16 - 00:47:57:05

So if I can just add as well, just to be clear, um, the UK, um, uh, Health Security Agency, uh, all matters are agreed, um, with them, they're satisfied the applicant has done all they can at this stage in the process. And we submitted the agreed statement of common grounds, um, into examination, its reference rep one hyphen 081, and the paragraph that confirms all matters have been agreed is at 4.1.1.

00:47:57:07 - 00:48:05:17

Of that statement of common ground. So I know they're not here, but that's the document that's in front examination that confirms all matters have been agreed.

00:48:06:07 - 00:48:36:17

Okay. I think that the examining authority are kind of in a position, I think, where obviously a statutory consultee has raised concerns about the initial plume assessment in terms of its methodology, in terms of not using atmospheric dispersion modelling, and also it's emission of particulate matter. Now, I appreciate that. Obviously you've had discussions and the UK HRSa is obviously happy for that revised assessment to address their concerns and then post consent, obviously as the examining authority.

00:48:37:03 - 00:49:02:06

Um, that sort of leaves a question mark over the assessment that's in front of us and whether we're able to recommend to the Secretary of State, in the absence of that, that there's unlikely to be any significant effects on human health. So the question is whether the applicant is happy to undertake that assessment as part of the examination, um, to address the outstanding concern of the essay.

00:49:04:15 - 00:49:36:15

So I think I might bring in, um, uh, Doctor Smith, who is our equality director at RSP, just to give you some background, um, information as to why we are confident that there be no, um, that the Secretary of State can be confident that there won't be any significant adverse effects on human health. I think that background, uh, from him would be helpful. Um, he is online. Uh, I can see his picture just popped up so I can pass it to, um, to to Doctor Smith to explain the background.

00:49:36:17 - 00:49:54:07

Okay. Thank you. Could I just request that maybe the agenda. Stop sharing so we can see a bigger picture of the people speaking. I think there'll be a bit more in that. The way of people speaking virtually. So rather than seeing a little tiny dot in the corner, it'd be useful to to see everybody. Thank you.

00:49:55:16 - 00:50:26:08

Good morning. Sir. Serena, uh, for the applicant. Um, I will briefly explain what the air quality current conditions are. Um, there are no air quality management areas declared, uh, by the North Kesteven District Council. Uh, and the latest report 2024, available online. It shows that any any of the pollutants assessed monitored are less than 40% of the limits. So there is no air quality concern, um, in the area.

00:50:26:23 - 00:50:59:24

Um, if we we understand we we have consulted with the ESA. We agreed that, uh, a detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling study will be undertaken. Uh, when the details are available, design details are available. Um, however, in the meantime, uh, we have undertaken the Plume assessment study based best plume assessment study. And Mr. Paul Gregory, uh, can provide more details on that one. But I'm here to answer any questions regarding air quality conditions currently.

00:51:00:14 - 00:51:04:22

Um, yeah. Can I pass on to Mr. Paul Gregory?

00:51:05:09 - 00:51:27:14

Okay. I appreciate in terms of your view about air quality, in terms of management areas, but I think the concern here is more about sensitive receptors. Um, and local residents, if there was, uh, a thermal runway incident. What would you know to ensure that there is some sort of assessment that gives confidence that there wouldn't be a significant impact on human health? Obviously an incredibly important subject.

00:51:29:07 - 00:52:02:08

Sure, sir. Um, Serena, as per the applicant, uh, we we will be undertaking a detailed dispersion modeling study to identify impacts of the human receptors. Uh, at the the detailed design stage. Um, however, based on the publicly Available data. So we have seen that the impacts are not that significant. Um, but however the we don't have any particular report prepared for now.

00:52:02:11 - 00:52:23:09

But we have done this uh, best bloom assessment, uh, study, which we have already seen. Um, so all I can say is we will be undertaking, uh, to the satisfaction of the UK, HRSa and your good selves to to demonstrate that the all the health human health impacts will be, uh, will be addressed.

00:52:25:15 - 00:52:26:11

Okay. Thank you.

00:52:26:13 - 00:53:08:00

And so if I can, you know, we have to answer this question in the context of, um, uh, you know, what the UK Health Security Agency has said in the statement of Common Ground, uh, has agreed to the common ground and we, um, in our discussions, uh, which the key point here, we have been discussing this topic with the UK's Health Security Agency. Um, and we have spoken to them and we've explained and they've got the evidence. Hence they've now confirmed they can sign the statement of common ground that will have been agreed, um, that because the buffer zones to sensitive receptors, um, uh, that the any toxic gas emissions to sensitive receptors will be below the relevant public health, um, exposure levels.

00:53:08:02 - 00:53:25:14

And we presented data and evidence to the UK Health Security Agency, and that's all documented in the, uh, in the. So, um, KG and so you've got that for you. Um, and that signed by the statutory body, um, to enable you to report. So I don't see.

00:53:25:24 - 00:54:02:17

Unfortunately, they're not here today. And that's the offers a common ground. It does, but the same the common ground simply states that they're happy for it to be done post consent. It doesn't explain why. And that's what I'm keen to understand. Um, I can ask written questions of them in the written questions too. But ultimately, if our concerns remain at that point, it's too late, probably to do anything about it. So this is why I'm raising it now with you in terms of whether you're happy to do an assessment to the best of assumptions that you can, uh, to give you that opportunity to do so before the end of the examination and allow everybody to have the opportunity to comment on on it.

00:54:04:10 - 00:54:07:05

So that's the position, the X area at the moment.

00:54:08:01 - 00:54:44:15

Uh, Paul Gregory for the applicant. Um, so the buffer zone to the nearest, um, residential property is 440m. Okay. And I came into the project to, to peer review the safety documentation, uh, for EDF, who have an excellent internal engineering team and any plume study. So I've been involved with six full scale burn tests, which are fully quantify emissions from current systems which are currently available.

00:54:44:19 - 00:55:20:20

And and one might just draw the examining authority's attention to the fact that the, uh, the detail the best selected at detail design could have a different chemistry, for example. So a plume study at this stage with a 440 meter buffer zone to a sensitive receptor, any emission from any best system that I've ever reviewed and seen. And I've probably reviewed something like 30 different plume assessments and involved with directly testing or reviewing, um, full scale burn tests.

00:55:21:01 - 00:56:05:01

Is that at that distance, any emission will be below one part per million, which which equates with any, um, public health levels modeled in any way. Okay. Um, with regard to particulate matter, um, currently, uh, no best system Them measures that it is sort of a UK specific emission, but typically DMV. For example, who are very well established, uh, multinational uh entity which, which conducts a lot of full scale best testing and emissions would equate, uh, particulate matter, uh, for a best to be equivalent to a diesel fire.

00:56:05:03 - 00:56:44:23

So at the peak of the fire, that would be about 250 parts per million. Um, and in plume studies that have been, uh, sort of carried out this year, looking at, uh, this type of, of impact from a fire, basically, um, levels are below 0.71 parts per million within 30m of the best that was on fire. Um, toxic plumes disperse very, very quickly within close proximity to a Bess unit.

00:56:45:00 - 00:57:16:16

Okay, so I have never seen a single best unit fire of any size, um, where you're seeing, uh, levels of toxic emissions for anything have been the primary concern for, uh, lithium ion batteries, where those levels are sort of below above one part per million, typically 70m maximum radius. Okay. So bearing in mind we're talking about 440m away.

00:57:16:22 - 00:57:59:04

My expectation is that, uh, you'd be looking below 0.2 parts per million. You know that there are many studies out there, um, which are available that have been submitted for DCO and certainly, you know, uh, there are there are plume studies which weren't as thorough as the, uh, The study that EDF conducted, which was based on, I think from memory, about 86l of air being produced per battery rack, which was based on um, racks, rack level testing, uh, for a sort of current chemistry.

00:57:59:09 - 00:58:13:12

So that is very accurate in. So the HF emissions, for example, in the plume study for Springwell is is very, very accurate. And they concluded that, you know, everything was very localized.

00:58:13:14 - 00:58:32:03

Sorry to cut you off mid-sentence. I hate doing it. But we got the fire alarm very shortly. So we're going to adjourn for 15 minutes and we'll come back to to you for your answer directly afterwards. Okay. Sorry to do that, but, um, we we haven't got any choice, unfortunately. Thank you. We'll adjourn until 11:15. Thank you.