



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Beacon Fen Energy Park
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH) – Part 2
Date:	24 September 2025

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

It is not a verbatim text of what was said at the above hearing. The content was produced using artificial intelligence voice to text software. It may, therefore, include errors and should be assumed to be unedited.

The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

Beacon Fen_ISH1_Session2

Wed, Sep 24, 2025 12:00PM • 50:43

Speaker 1 00:05

Hello again. Can I just check that everyone can hear

00:12

me? We can, sir, thank you.

Speaker 1 00:14

Hello. Okay, thank you very much for that. It's not 12 o'clock and it's time to resume this hearing. I sh one. Before we had a short break, we finished item three of the agenda, and I was moving us on to Item four, which going to be need site selection and alternatives. Before I do though, I would just like to highlight and check the rest proceedings for the rest of the diabetic relation to times. So I am proposing that perhaps we break for lunch at around one o'clock and take approximately 45 minutes to an hour for a lunch break, and then we continue from approximately, say, around two o'clock until five o'clock this afternoon. Can I just check if anyone has any problems with those times or not? And obviously we would have, we would have a break in the afternoon as well. At some point a short break. Can I just ask if everyone is in agreement with that, or if anyone has any comments that they would like to make or problems on that specific issue?

Speaker 1 01:38

I don't see any hands raised. So I assume that everyone is okay with those timings. If not, please do let me know. So if there are no further comments, then I would like us to move on to item four. Then need site selection and alternatives. A key list of written submissions that will inform my questions. Has been included in the gender publishing expression of this hearing. Again, as it is a long list, I do not propose going through it in detail now, but can ask if anyone has any comments that they would like to make on the list included for this item, please raise your hand if you do. I don't see any hands right, therefore, I assume that no one has any comments. So the purpose of this item is to examine the applicant's case for need, particularly in relation to generating capacity, energy storage and type of photovoltaic technology proposed to be used, as well as the applicant's approach to site selection, to proposed cabling corridors and accessibility to the site. Please do bear in mind that we will be looking at accessibility to the site and the item six as well in terms of access and traffic. So the information that I am going to be looking at, and the item four is going to be linked with alternatives and not explore in detail the proposed access. Are there any queries on that? Or can I just kick off with my first question to the applicant? If you have any questions, please do raise your hand now. I don't see any hands raised, therefore, I will start with my questioning for the applicant then, and I would like to ask the applicant, first of all, to set out the process for such selection, how they have arrived to the proposed location, and what alternatives, if any, were considered for site selection and for the site

Speaker 2 03:52

Thank you, Sir Ian Mac for the applicant, I'll just give Mr. Turnbull a couple of moments, because I think he'll principally speak at this point. So you'll be aware that a site selection report was submitted as appendix two to the planning statement, which is a PP 277, I suspect that will be the principal document that Mr. Turnbull refers to, to give that that general overview context. So Mr. Turnbull, I'll pass across to you now if that suits.

04:21

Thank you. Colin Turnbull for the applicant. So as Ian Mac has said,

Speaker 3 04:28

the site selection report is appendix two in a planning statement. We also at chapter three of ES volume one, which is a PP 054, described the process of assessing alternatives that you know that that's because the EIA regulations require reporting of the actual alternatives considered where they're reasonable. So I will come on. I will, I will cover the some. Selection reports. And if you have any questions on the ES chapter three, I would suggest that that would be from MS Wayne in the room. So the site selection reports gives an overview of the process adopted by the applicant to identify suitable land. This is covered in sections two. Well, section two, which includes section 2.1, which covers principles of site selection. That really explains, you know, what the need for the project was always going to be, the accessibility that we're going to need for it, the ability to accommodate on site, energy storage, and would it have sufficient land? And these are justifiable, reasonable criteria. These have policy basis. And section 2.1, refers to em three policy. So that's national point national policy statement, em three criteria. And then at 2.2, we describe the regional benefits of locating in the in the East of England in terms of irradiation and sort of large areas of land, the grid capacity, which is fundamental to delivering a project of this scale, you cannot, you know, you cannot supply to the grid without a grid connection. And these are only available at certain times in certain parts of the country, and there's a sort of lead in time for those. And then we reviewed large land holdings, and there's a particular focus spatially on minimizing the extent of land within flood zone three, and the minimization of best and most versatile agricultural land, and I would just say that point that's to do with using desktop data. So you would not it would not be proportionate to carry out intrusive surveys across hundreds or 1000s of hectares, and that's that's been discussed, I believe, on other DCO examinations for these projects. The so you may be aware so that the bickerfen point of connection is characterized by a degree of flood risk, but that's the point of connection that we were provided with by national grid. And there is also a lot of best and most versatile land in proximity to that substation. But once you get several kilometers out, the flood risk zones reduce to zones two and one, and the best and most versatile land reduces to sort of 3b and with small areas of three A on the desktop data. And that's you know, that typifies the site that we have for the solar array area. There was a second plot of land, or a second large expanse of land at the very early stage of this project that was called beacon Fen south. It was some distance away to the south. This was removed from the project at an early stage because angling water had carried out a essentially sort of private or semi private process, working directly with affected local authorities, I believe, to evaluate something like 1000 but let's just say, several 100 potential sites. Through reservoir, they published a short list of sites after we had announced our projects, and we took the decision, following discussions with Anglian Water, to remove beacon Fen south from our DCO proposal. And that has now that land is now being proposed for Anglian Water to reservoir. So there was, there was no realistic possibility of aligning those two projects in the in the same timescales. At the very least, it would have delayed the delivery of solar by many years. So that just fell away as an option. So we are left with what we previously called beacon Fen north, and that's just beacon fan solar array. A area. So at that point, I'll just pause, and then I can sort of come on to the process of demonstrating that there are no more suitable sites for that solar

Speaker 1 10:13

Thank you. Thank you for that, Mr. Turnbull. Can I ask Mr. Turnbull in terms of illustrating and most appropriate figure to illustrate the point that you have made. Do you have any specific suggestion that the applicant can perhaps share now that we could use I'm particularly looking at Figure nine combined constraints, which is within the planning statement, so that would be a PP, 277, page 159, out of 512

10:58

would you agree that that would be suitable?

Speaker 3 11:03

I'm just looking this up, sir, if I may. I

Speaker 2 11:27

Yeah, sorry. So just whilst Mr. Term so Ian mag for the applicant, just whilst Mr. Turnbull seeks to find that reference, can I just double check we got that correct in the room as well? Did you say E, page 159, of the planning statement, which is figure nine combined constraints, yes, yes, perfect. We're just pulling that up on screen now as well.

Speaker 1 11:46

Mr. Turnbull, I think that the applicant is now sharing the image, so maybe it if you could confirm by looking at that specific

Speaker 3 11:59

yes that will be suitable. I mean, depending on people's screen size and so on it, you know, obviously we're aware that this shows a great variety of different colored constraints. We do also have in the ES, some figures that show agricultural land and flood risk on on their own, and that's both desktop data and then model data. But I think this will probably do for now.

Speaker 1 12:35

I believe that in terms of flood risk to two or three images, two images up from that image, which will be figure SEVEN, SEVEN flood zones, I believe, will probably illustrate the level of flood zone three and flood zone two that has been identified.

Speaker 3 13:05

Yeah, absolutely so thank you for the screen sharing and yes, as you can see, this demonstrates the point I was making about flood risk. So on the available data from Environment Agency, you have very large areas of flood zones, three, which is the hatching, and then two, which is the sort of turquoise solid fill. And then it's you have to get really many kilometers away from the point of connection, before you get to a suitable large area of solar you know that would be suitable for this scale of solar project, that is not near to settlements.

Speaker 1 13:58

And just to clarify, for everyone that is following this conversation, the point of connection is obviously the center of that 10 kilometer radio search area that is highlighted within the map. So that would be the point of connection that you have been mentioning in terms of Beacon fan, which was the center of your such location? Is that the case?

Speaker 3 14:19

That is correct, sir. So as you can see in the red, that is our solar array area, and there is under 50% of it covered by flood zone three, a much smaller area that's flood zone two, and then around 50% is flood zone, one which is not affected by flood risk. So I hope that illustrates the point on flood risk. And I believe you would also like me to show a map of the desktop agricultural land quality,

Speaker 1 14:58

if that was. One of the key factors in terms of your selection in alternatives, then, yes,

Speaker 3 15:09

it was so. So we'll just show here. This is the this is the desktop data so I believe we may go into more detail on another agenda point, but at this scale or at this stage of a project, you will use the they call it a provisional data set, but it was formed by Defra. It's an official government data set, and it shows at a sort of district level, or a sort of, you know, parish level, effectively, that sort of scale. It shows you the likely agricultural land quality, again, in proximity to the point of connection, bickfen substation, you can see that the pale green is grade two, which is very good quality. That's one of the best and most versatile land grades. Grade One is the darker green fill, and that's excellent quality. So that's the highest grade of agricultural land. And then the provisional data from Defra does not distinguish between grades three A and 3b but it's important to recognize that three A is best and most versatile, whereas 3b is not, and that it shows you three in the pale yellow. And you can see that our solar ray area corresponds to pretty much the nearest large plot of land to that bickfen point of connection. That is mainly grade three. There are only, there were only, potentially some sites to the west at around the same distance that would also have grade three.

Speaker 1 17:06

Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Turnbull. Just very quickly now, just for points of clarification, so in this was the basis the desktop information that you are sharing with us and explaining to us now was the basis of the information that the applicant used in order to look at alternatives in site selection correct so no more detailed work or surveys were work was carried out for that specific stage,

Speaker 3 17:44

it would be that would be correct, sir, it would be unusual for an applicant to carry out intrusive or year long surveys of ecology or agricultural land quality or other constraints before any agreement with a landowner had been obtained for this type of project, it's probably appropriate that we provide a written response if you have a particular question around that site selection stage. And the site selection report in Appendix two of the planning statement describes in section two, it describes the actual process adopted. And sections three onwards, it describes a process by which we have evaluated all reasonable alternatives to the site that was picked by reference to a wide range of appropriate criteria, and demonstrated that there were no more suitable sites that could have been picked

Speaker 1 18:40

I'm happy with that response for this for the purpose of this topic, thank you, Mr. Turnbull. Now, could I ask the applicant to also provide some further information in relation to alternatives? And only alternatives. I do not want to get into the detail of that now further than that, but any alternatives to the proposed cabling corridor corridors, if any alternatives were considered, and also accessibility to the site. So if I could start with cable corridor first, and then we'll move on to accessibility.

Speaker 2 19:27

Thank you, sir. Ian knife for the applicant position, I'll introduce my colleague, Leon kullo, who can discuss those two elements for you, sir.

Speaker 4 19:34

Thank you, sir, Leon kullo for the applicant. So in relation to the cable route, corridor. Es, Appendix 3.1, the cable Route Corridor appraisal document that's reference a, PP, 079, details the process undertaken by the applicant to refine the cable Route Corridor, which was an iterative process that has taken place from early 2023 the process undertaken to date to be to identify and. Find the cable Route Corridor within which the final exact cable route will be located once the detailed design process undertaken, post consent, the factors considered by the applicant are listed in paragraphs 2.1 point two and two point 1.4 of that cable Route Corridor appraisal document. In summary, the aim was to identify a cable Route corridor that would allow the safe and efficient construction of the cable route whilst

minimizing as far as possible interactions and impacts on sensitive environmental receptors. The applicant has submitted a series of figures more generally into the examination that show the proximity of many of these receptors. I'll just give you a summary list of those now, sir, which you might want to take as a note for your future. Reference figures, 6.6 6.7 7.1 to 7.4 8.1 and 8.2 examination library references for those, A, P, p2, 082092, 082092392402244

Speaker 4 21:06

and 245, the applicant was also mindful its obligation in Section 122 of the Planning Act to consider all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition, and therefore sought to select corridor that minimize the number of affected Land interest will be subject to acquisition under the DCA, and the general approach the applicant in that regard is further detailed in the statement of reasons that's as 013, I can give you a summary overview of the appraisal process that's set out in that document.

21:38

That would be helpful. Sir, yes, please.

Speaker 4 21:42

The appraisal process is undertaken by the following steps. First, an initial search area was identified being land between the solar array area the former beacon Fen South, as has been previously explained by Mr. Turnbull, and the bigger fence substation that's shown on drawing st 19595, dash, 503, which is within that cable Route Corridor appraisal document at electronic page 32 within that area, desktop studies and an on site server were undertaken to establish a high level baseline and identify key environment constraints. And that was undertaken prior to the submission of the scoping report. The area was then refined into what was called the cable route search area, which was presented in the scoping report. Examination reference for that a PP, 071, you can find the cable route search area electronic page, 241 of that document. This area was defined taking into account statutorily designated sites, residential properties and settlements in the area, existing infrastructure and physical constraints within the initial search area. Now you've heard earlier from Mr. Turnbull about the removal of Beacon Fen south. The reasons for that, the cable route search area was identified, while beacon Fen South remained part of the proposed development, and therefore that area concentrated on the area to the west and south of heckington to ensure connectivity with beacon Fen south. But once beacon fence South was removed, and following receipt of the scoping opinion, the cable route search area was reviewed to ensure that the potential routes to be considered in the next stage of the appraisal remained appropriate. And at that point, the area to the east of heckington was brought back into consideration as that would enable a shorter corridor, reducing the scale and geographic extent of effects, potential corridor options within the revised search area were then identified that were technically feasible and avoided the key constraints identified as part of the process, as far as possible, these constraints included designated and non designated heritage assets, local wildlife sites, settlements and residential receptors, public rights of way, existing planning application boundaries and existing infrastructure. As a result of that review, three potential cable route corridors were identified. These are shown in ES figure 3.1, alternative cable corridors. That's a PP 197 and it was at this stage the applicant also committed to installing the cable route underground, as we've already discussed today. As well, the potential environmental constraints of those options were reviewed in greater detail using a full rag assessment to identify a preferred option, and this was undertaken prior to statutory consultation to ensure that the select group could be considered within the pier the assessment considered the respective likely impacts the three routes across various of the ES chapters, and you can see that set out. And in Section 4.3, of the cable record or appraisal document, again, examination, reference back being a. Pp 079, electronic page 17,

25:10

I believe the reference is a. Pp 199, rather than 179,

25:21

just

25:23

bear with me, sir.

Speaker 1 25:24

Appendix, 3.1, table, root, corridor appraisal, that's app 079, and then alternative access routes is app 199, I believe. Yes.

Speaker 4 25:37

Sorry, sir. I meant, if I didn't say I meant to say cable Route Corridor appraisal document, a, PP, 079,

25:44

thank you. Yes, Continue, please

Speaker 4 25:48

of the three options, option two and option three had at least one red rating in that rag assessment. Option two had no red or indeed orange ratings and was therefore identified as the preferred route. Across a number of environmental aspects, there were no significant constraints for any of the options, or little distinction between them. In such cases, option one was preferred as the shortest route. The following constraints, in summary, by drawing on that document, were therefore the key considerations in concluding that option one was the preferred option, option three passed closer to residential receptors and thus had greater potential resulting effects. Option three could not be easily adjusted either to avoid a group of local wildlife sites, and thus had greater likely ecological impacts. Options one and two, the resulting two were similar for many of the environmental aspects, with a preference, therefore for option one because it's shorter. However, option two also passed closer to a scheduled monument and other heritage assets, and therefore was discounted in favor of option one due to those potential aspects following that option one was further. Sorry, sir, I'll pause

Speaker 1 27:07

for you. I think that that's that that's clear enough in terms in terms of where we got to that answers the question that I had, Mr. Mountain, I believe that you have raised your hand. Can I invite you submit your comments now?

Speaker 5 27:29

Please? Yes. Thank you, Inspector. Um, I'm Matthew mountain, director of Icj Mountain farms, limited a directly affected landowner with over a third of the cable route 3.2 kilometers running through our farm, which has just been discussed, first by way of update since our second of July submission, the AGR three solar and battery project on our land, which is 49.9 megawatts, was consented at appeal on the 13th of August. This is now a committed scheme, and its interaction with the DCO route needs to be considered. We are also in active discussions on further expansion and associated infrastructure, which reinforces the need for future proofing. Second, on reasonable alternatives, see environmental statement, chapter three, alternatives and design evolution, A, P, P, 054, in November 2021, we offer the applicant 516 acres only 2.7 kilometers from Becker Finn, mostly grade three A and 3b as a willing landowner, the land has since been independently classified under the AGR three appeal process as predominantly grade three A. In other words, the land was offered was of the same quality, now confirmed by detailed als assessment, but far closer to bigger fen and without the long cable corridor.

This was discounted early on the grounds of cumulative impact, when the zone contained only 99 megawatts on the tech register. Today, that figure has grown by over 2,000% to more than 2100 megawatts. Yet our alternative has never been revisited, even after beacon fence South fell away. That is not consistent with en one and en three requirements, national policy, policy statements en one and en three require minimizing loss of best, best at most land and demonstrating efficient use of infrastructure that has not been met here for on in on inaccuracies and emissions. See Appendix, 3.1 cable route, corridor appraisal, a, PP, 079, local wildlife, site 4722, has been misidentified. That's a site I created. The proposed route directly affects it, cumulative impacts with Viking link, the interconnected from Denmark and its compounds have not been properly assessed. Soil impacts are understated before and after. Soil surveys from Viking link, from the cable show lasting degradation despite so called embedded mitigation. Fourth on coastals on consultation and procedure. Drill, adequacy, C, planning statement, A, P, p2, 77 despite our clear interest in battery storage, data center demand and a glass house project, we were not meaningfully engaged as a statutory consultee After our 2021 land offer, or even after our March 2024 objection letter via Mr. Conderere, instead, the applicant chose to approach third party developers such as IB Voight, who, at that time held no rights over our landing over the landing question that raises real questions about whether consultation duties under Section 42 to 44 of the Planning Act were properly fulfilled. Fifth on integration and grid efficiency. See electricity grid connection statement, a PP, 285, the scheme has been designed as a sealed, linear export. In practice, this area is becoming an integrated energy and demand hub with AGR three now consented route powers consented 100 megawatt best Ecotricity fan and sip and AGL licensed idno position. The scheme proposes 600 megawatts of Bess against 400 megawatts of PV, as discussed earlier, that 200 megawatt headroom is precisely the capacity that could support local final demand. For example, the AGR data center via safeguard by set by a safeguarded spur node substation options. En one expects efficient, multi use infrastructure, a sealed linear export forecloses that opportunity. We raised this directly with low carbon earlier this year through Brown and Co. Their response was that no headroom was available, and even if it were, National Grid would not allow it to be transferred. That answer demonstrates the problem. The DCO scheme has been hardwired as a closed export pipeline. It is not designed to enable local integration. Despite lan one's clear expectation for efficient, multi purpose use of infrastructure, importantly, when we offered our alternative in 2021 we also shared a letter of comfort with National Grid Viking link, safeguarding safe crossings of their assets on our land. Yet the current design brings a cable from 10 kilometers away to converge at this very point that creates a direct conflict with existing national infrastructure, contrary to lan one's requirement for efficient use of grid assets. So in summary, we respectfully ask the examination examining authority to ensure that one alternatives are robustly assessed. Two environmental effects are accurately tested. Three consultation duties with the correct parties are properly fulfilled. Four infrastructure conflicts such as Viking link are resolved. And finally, five, integration and efficiency of grid connections are fully examined, supporting expert evidence on these points will be provided at deadline, one on seven, October. Thank you.

Speaker 1 32:44

Thank you, Mr. Mountain, for that. Before I go to the applic to the applicant on this, can I just confirm with you that you'll be submitting your presentation to us in writing by deadline, one as part of the written submission from your representation today, but also as part of your overall objection to the proposal, which obviously we have registered as part of the two relevant traps submitted, I believe, relating to this point, which I think is relevant rep out to six and relevant rep zero to eight, which cover some of substantial points that you have put forward. Is that case

33:39

yes, we will be yes.

Speaker 1 33:41

Thank you very much. Obviously, some of the points that you have now raised go outside of the realm of this specific item, which is alternative. And for that reason, I believe they are probably they are probably better addressed and more thoroughly addressed through the written representation process. So I would ask you to please be mindful of that. However, I will ask if the applicant would like to comment on the points just just now, raised by Mr. Mountain, particularly in relation to consideration of alternatives.

Speaker 2 34:30

Thank you, sir, for the applicant. So yeah, the point, and I appreciate the time we are at the agenda and Mr. Mountain, the substance of those points are in, is relevant or will be in this written up. So we will respond to those in full deadlines, one and two respectively, as they as they come on. But to make a few short submissions on the consideration of alternatives, I'll just pass to Mr. Cooler to briefly summarize.

Speaker 4 34:55

Thank you, sir Leon kullo, for the applicant in relation. The assertion that there is, or was an alternative solar array area site preferable to that being advanced by the applicant. The applicant would just refer again to paragraphs 6.2 point 36, to six point 2.49, of the planning statement A, pp 277, that sets out the applicable law and policy on the consideration of alternatives. Essentially, the applicant has to include in its es a description of the reasonable alternatives it's studied and national policy is clear that that exercise should be undertaken in a proportionate manner. The multi stage process that the applicant has gone through to identify the side is, as was summarized by Mr. Turnbull earlier, and as is set out in great detail in the site selection reported appendix two to the planning statement at again a, pp 277, also Yes. Chapter Three, alternatives a, PP zero, 54 the exercise concluded that there are no more suitable locations to make use of the capacity of the bigger, thin substation and the site that has been selected for the proposed development. And you were taken through some of the figures in support of that conclusion on the in the meeting earlier,

Speaker 1 36:15

if I may, I just, I just think that it is important to clarify one point first, which I don't believe that that you are addressing now in your response, which is to very clearly state, if the alternatives that Mr. Mountain has put forward and has justified why, in his view, those alternatives are reasonable alternatives, and from the evidence before me, I don't have any reason to disagree with that view. Have those alternatives been considered or not? Mr.

Speaker 4 36:50

Mountain site was within the search area that was considered as part of the site selection report and that exercise. So in that sense, they have been considered through that exercise. The applicant recalls that the site proposed by Mr. Mountains, corporate interest that he discusses was divided across several non contiguous areas, and the applicant would draw your attention, sir, to the discussion around the difficulty of developing that kind of site in power of 3.4 point seven of the site selection report. And the conclusion was that the location of the areas proposed by Mr. Mountain were disadvantageous as compared to the applicant's solar array area from the perspective of agriculture land classification and flood risk amongst others,

Speaker 1 37:40

when you say difficulties in developing the site, what do you actually mean by that?

Speaker 2 37:50

So I just introduced Mr. Hartley bond to discuss that more from the technical perspective, if that's appropriate. Thank you. Yes.

Speaker 6 37:59

James Hartley bond, for the applicant. From a technical point of view, having a non continuous site introduces further cable runs, what we refer to as inter array connections. So not only is that additional cabling, it can often or certain, in some instances, can incorporate further third parties to deliver those connections. The other aspect to that is that in order to link those parcels together, it can also include further electrical infrastructure. So you may also require additional substations, which introduces a further impact in delivering the scheme so

38:52

part of the

39:03

I do strict.

Speaker 1 39:13

Hello, can I just because from that people can still hear me,

Speaker 2 39:20

hello, so we so we can now, I don't know if it was just our feet, but we lost you for basically the extent of comments. And Mr. Hartley bonds comments. So if you

Speaker 1 39:32

apologies, this is the nature of relying on technology. I will, I will repeat my question. Mr. Hartley bond. So, following from your explanation, you mentioned non continuous sites, what? What are the restrictions that you are particularly worried about? So I, is it physical? Is it environmental constrictions? What? What does not make this a. Viable option for the applicant?

Speaker 6 40:04

Yeah, so I may defer to others on the sort of planning and environmental aspect, sir, if there's if there's a sort of follow up point, but purely in terms of the technical it introduces further costs in terms of the cable runs, but also the infrastructure so, so if you introduce more substations to gather in the electricity generated by each parcel that is non continuous, you're introducing a further feature which impacts the viability

Speaker 1 40:34

I see. So you are meaning not the cable corridor itself, but actually the panel array area,

Speaker 6 40:41

that's correct, but I'm referring to it, sir, as at a project level, so within the overall project costs, right?

Speaker 1 40:50

Let me just go back to Mr. Mountain, because my understanding was that Mr. Martin was referring to the cabling in not actually the panel array area. Mr. Martin, I noticed that you have raised your hand. Can I just ask you to please clarify on this point, just so that I am clear in terms of your concerns raised here in terms of alternatives, is it in relation to the cabling, or is it actually in relation to the photovoltaic the panel area that you raised your concerns in terms of the alternatives and how your land and land that you have offered has been considered as part of those alternatives.

Speaker 5 41:34

The land we offered wasn't in one block, but many AGR two, which is next to bigger substation, is not contiguous in a single block, so I don't accept the comment from James Hardie bond,

Speaker 1 41:48

but my question, my question, Mr. Martin, sorry, just just to clarify, I understand that my question is, is this in relation to the cabling? Was this in relation to the panel areas,

Speaker 5 42:05

and we've been 2.7 kilometers from vicar substation. It's related to both, I think, the cable and and the area, right? As opposed to, as opposed to a 13 kilometer cable,

Speaker 1 42:17

okay, okay. In terms in that case, then I think that the applicant has adequately replied and provided with their reasons or their justification as they see it, in terms of the panel areas. Can I ask the applicant to actually reply to this question in terms of alternatives, particularly from Mr. Mountains land, sort of perspective and alternatives in relation to the cabling please.

Speaker 2 42:46

Thank you so for the applicant. So just to be clear, so this, this response now will be in relation to the cable Route Corridor, alter consideration of alternatives. So I'll pass to my colleague, Leon cooler to address that. Yes.

Speaker 4 42:58

Leon kue, for the applicant, yes, the previous response was in relation to a potential solar array site, which we understand Mr. Mountain proposed previously, in relation to an alternative cable Route Corridor, which Mr. Mountain has also proposed, despite there being no strict obligation on the applicant to consider specific proposals suggested by third parties, where the applicant has already undertaken a lawful and policy compliant consideration of alternatives. The applicant, in this case, did review the alternative cable route proposed by Mr. Mountain and addressed it specifically in paragraphs five point 1.8 to 5.1 point 11 of the cable Route Corridor appraisal document, a P, P, 079, and as set out in the conclusion in paragraph 5.1, point 11 of that document, the alternative proposed by Mr. Manager was considered to introduce additional potential impacts to those as compared to the applicant's cable Route Corridor, as well as impacting a greater number of land interests, and as a result, the applicant concluded that its cable Route Corridor was preferable.

Speaker 1 44:11

Okay, thank you for that response you've mentioned now on both responses to alternatives into the points raised by Mr. Mountain that one of the key considerations for that was actually the cost and how that would imply how that would implicate a higher cost and higher difficulty in terms of delivering the proposed development can the applicant please point out to me why that has actually been a consideration in terms of the environmental statement?

Speaker 2 44:56

Sorry, am I on behalf of the applicant? Sorry, just as a point of time. Application, we can come back from the cable corner appraisal to the extent that cost was was inferred as a sort of determinative factor, that that's not the case. So we can elaborate on that insofar as it was a reference back to the one of the potential sort of difficulties in developing a non contiguous site for the solar array area. Mr. Hardly bond noted the additional infrastructure, but that good demand of which, yes, clearly, cost is, is a

consequence of that. But I think other points to consider are the potential associated impacts that go with that infrastructure. Which is, which is another consideration that that comes with it, with all of that out in our in our

Speaker 1 45:39

stomach, the additional additional environmental impacts, I will accept, however, in your response just now, you have relied on evidence linked with additional cabling and additional support infrastructure that would actually be needed. I for me to consider that it's part of justification. I would need a lot more information on that and how that would actually impact the proposed development if that's going to be part of justification for those alternatives.

Speaker 2 46:14

I think what would possibly benefit that this response is, is, is a sort of macro response in the round. I mean, a lot of the submissions Mr. Mountain has made here are referenced within his relevant representation and within his written representation we're responding to his relevant representation at deadline, one which will touch upon an element of this. I imagine his written representation will follow will pick up that element, if not within our summary of submissions or an action in response to this. Certainly have those later response deadlines when we have the benefit of all of that, and hopefully that will give you that additional information, sign posting to where it is, within our original site selection report and relevant appraisal and alternative considerations. But we can elaborate on that as well with hopefully that additional information that you've requested.

Speaker 1 47:02

Thank you. Mr. Mac Can I take that as an action for the applicant to do that, please. And in addition to that, Mr. Mack, my main concern is actually not so much where that is set out within the applicant's documents. Is actually how does that link with national policy and the considerations that I am duty bound to inform secretary of state of that will be my key priority in terms of understanding how the alternatives were assessed.

Speaker 2 47:33

I'll say on that for the applicant, we'll make sure that that is from the center of our response on this subject.

Speaker 1 47:41

Thank you, Mr. Mountain, apologies for that. If, if I could just ask you very clear quickly if that sort of covers your if you if you believe that's a suitable response for your intervention and your comments now at this point in time, particularly considering what the applicant has just said in terms of responding in writing to your considerations and to your submissions in future deadlines,

Speaker 5 48:14

yep, I will obviously submit a lot more as well in my written submission.

Speaker 1 48:19

Thank you very much. Mr. Mountain, right. I propose, considering that we are 10 minutes to one, and I did say that would probably have a bracket around one o'clock approximately, I propose that perhaps if I stop us here and not actually continue with my questions on this specific item, but maybe we break for I would probably suggest maybe 45 minutes, if that's okay with everyone, and then we will resume later on this afternoon. Can I just check if that is okay with everyone? If anyone has any objections with us, stopping now,

Speaker 2 49:09

no, so that's absolutely fine for Mark. So just to flag, obviously the next the next questions on this agenda is still on this, on this particular matter, we then move on to water. You might just have to indulge us a wee bit of room rejigging when we move on to water so that we can read. We rearrange our speakers so if there's not a natural break after the next two questions, if you wouldn't mind just pausing for a couple of minutes to allow us to

Speaker 1 49:34

bring in the new the new speakers. Is that for item five and item six? Correct? In that case, then, uh, yes, I'll definitely allow that, but I probably suspect that then I would just ask us to have a quick break after we finish item five and before item apologies, before we finish item four and before we start item five. And that will probably. Give you an opportunity to do that. So I wouldn't rejig anything now, I would actually wait until we finish item four, and then I'll have a quick break to allow you to do that, if

50:11

that's okay. Perfect. Thank you. Yeah,

Speaker 1 50:15

okay, in that case, then it's now 10 to one. I suggested we return and resume the hearing at 35 minutes past one. So this hearing is now adjourned and it will resume at 35 minutes past one. Thank you. You.