

Sequence 01_1

Wed, Nov 12, 2025 5:39PM • 1:51:51

00:05

Good afternoon. It's now a quarter past two, and it's time to resume this issue specific hearing.

00:15

Before we took our lunch break, we were still on landscape in visual effects, item of today's agenda, and we

00:30

I asked for

00:33

Mr. Brown in Lincolnshire county council and North Quincy and county council to actually liaise in terms of prioritizing your intervention this afternoon and what questions were going to be put forward. So before I hand over to you again, can I just ask if anyone will have any objection if we extend the hearing today until half past five, would that be acceptable to everyone? I know that I said that I would aim to finish but five. But I'm mindful of the challenging agenda today, so if we could go further a little bit, please, if you have any difficulties with that online, please raise your hand.

01:17

I don't see any hands raised. So I assume that we can then go until half past five. That's acceptable to everyone. So first of all, over to you, Miss Hall, then please. Thank you. Thank you, sir Stephanie Hall, Lincolnshire county council. First, I just like to say thank you very much for asking about whether we could sit late. That's it's much appreciated. It does make things

01:37

flow a lot easier. Thank you very much. So I'm just going to hand over, actually, to Mr. Brown. We've prioritized, we've had a discussion over lunch. Mr. I say we. Mr. Brown has done all the hard work and come up with a list of six points that we'd like to make before the examination today. The remainder of Mr. Brown's points, I understand, are, in any event, evident from his review of the Lvia appended to the LIR of Lincolnshire county council and norska Stephen District Council, but will be deferred to in the first instance discussions between landscape witnesses on both sides, and then we'll see where we get to. But I'll invite Mr. Brown, if I may, sir, to give his six headlines

02:22

Thank you very much. Miss Hall. Mr. Brown, please. Thank you.

02:26

Thank you. Oliver Brown from the host authorities, would you like me to just run through the six points now? Or do you want to handle them one by one?

02:36

They are more your priority points and more substantive points that you would like to discuss today. Is that correct? Mr. Brown, yeah, we, yeah. We've decimated that. In that case, perhaps I would suggest that we do a quick overall introduction law six, and then we can take each one of those individual points one by one. I think that that might be the easiest way of doing. It gives it gives you context. That's fine. So it's Yep, so the first one is relating to the baseline. We've not been able to identify a clear assessment of the landscape and visual sensitivity by considering the value and susceptibility. So it's just a little unclear how that judgment has been reached in terms of landscape effects.

03:22

We disagree with the reduction in in the effect on the Fenland landscape character area. So looking at wider landscape character effects than just within the site itself,

03:35

we still see this as a direct change to the agricultural character and as well as a direct land use change, which is a key characteristic in this area. So it's just, I think, understanding

03:47

how the applicants will come to that, that judgment,

03:53

as discussed this morning, the concern we have shared concerns over mitigation, planting and it reducing effects.

04:01

There's several identifications of year one, so essentially, when planting is immature, has just gone in, reducing effects. And similarly,

04:13

at year 15, the residual effects, just by screening proposals.

04:19

The assumption appears to be that that will then subsequently reduce that visual effect, when, in itself, the planting could cause the problem foreshortening views, openness.

04:31

Next point is link to just want to link it to the rvaa, and just that discussion about the reduction of effects, and we disagree about that reduction

04:43

on the three properties are, what are three groups? Are one, r2 and R 20. Again, just relating back to that point about planting. And we just do want to note as well that sort of gaseous barn, it's been identified that that will meet the resident.

05:00

Financial, visual amenity threshold, which is quite a high bar, essentially. So we just wanted to question and just see if there's a query, really, if there's any scope there to further change the embedded mitigation, look at increase offsets to maybe reduce those effects. There

05:19

then two interrelated points. Finally, the future baseline. We don't think the the assessment really considers the pressures. And the future baseline of this area, you know, is under pressure from solar development. And we do see this as a landscape that is undergoing considerable change. And that links in, really, to my earlier point about the cumulative assessment. So no cumulative effects.
Landscape

05:47

and visual effects were identified within within the lbia.

05:52

Again, we have concerns about the cumulative effects, both landscape, in terms of the land use change across an extensive area, again, looking at the key characteristics of the area, but also visually. So we're not suggesting that there are multiple places where you can stand and receptor can see two developments in one view. What we're looking at here is that sequential that moving through a landscape across quite a large area, a long distance along public rights of way along roads. So those are the six points lot of information.

06:27

Yes, thank you for that. Mr. Brown, in that case, then if I could ask you to cover your first point, which I believe is baseline then, and are there any specific then questions that you would like to bring forward now, yeah, it's just that we'd like to know how the judgment on sensitivity has been reached to the baseline receptors, both landscape and visual. A

06:56

judgment is made, but it's just, it's just a little, well, it's unclear as to how that's been arrived on. Can you clarify that for me a little bit more, Mr. Bond, please, when you said judgment on sensitivity, you mean how the applicant has arrived to the sensitivity rating that we have. Okay. Thank you very much for that. Can I ask the applicant to reply to that specific issue? Please

07:21

do Thank you, sir.

07:26

David Stokoe, for the applicant.

07:31

Yeah. So in chapter six, landscape and visual

07:36

up 057,

07:39

paragraph, six point 6.8 to six point 6.29,

07:45

we do

07:47

set out an assessment of landscape sensitivity, which does combine landscape value and susceptibility

07:57

in accordance with good practice

08:01

in relation to visual effects,

08:06

we do set out in Appendix 6.4,

08:13

which I believe is up 086,

08:16

in relation to the

08:19

viewpoint assessment,

08:22

susceptibility and value, which, again, is in accordance with

08:29

good practice.

08:32

Thank you for that clarification. I if I understood Mr. Brown's question in point correctly, I think that Mr. Brown acknowledges that you have carried out a judgment on sensitivity. I think that the question here is,

08:53

in relation to how that was actually applied,

08:58

is that the case Mr. Brown, please, that is correct.

09:06

Is there anything else that the applicant would like to add to

09:10

that? No, as I say, Sir, we have combined

09:15

susceptibility and value to

09:19

determine sensitivity in accordance with with good practice. So is there in the document? Okay, thank you very much for that response. Can I ask Mr. Brown, are there any particular Are there any particular concerns that you have in the way that that was applied, and is there any examples that you can bring to the attention of the xi in terms of how that has been applied, which I would assume that you are not in complete agreement with.

09:50

Thank you, sir. Oliver Brown from the host authorities, thank you for the references. I think what I probably need to do is just to go away and just see if those sections cover because there's blocks.

10:00

Of text that I will need to have a read through and just okay, it's that it's that it's providing what we need in terms

10:07

of the the visual sensitivity. I think the main concern we had that it was mostly based on viewpoints rather than receptors.

10:18

Recent guidance so recent clarifications from the Institute have made it very clear that the assessment should be based on

10:27

visual receptors, which it is. But I think the sensitivity assessment was we could only find

10:36

the utilization of viewpoints, essentially, which is also a concern. So I think what what I do? I've got the references now from the applicant, so I actually to review that and make sure we're happy with how that has been.

10:49

Do you believe that you'll be able to do that review today? And then we can actually ask specific we can give a specific example to the applicant. I think it's unlikely. There's quite a lot of text to go through. I can try and I can have a read through in that case. Then can I ask, for that matter, to actually be referred to written questions? Then I think it might be easier

11:12

for that specific question to be referred, but I take note that there is clearly some distance between yourself. Mr. Brown and Lincoln chair in the applicant in terms of how sensitivity has been applied. But if we could actually get to the detail of that, that might be more useful. So Mr. Mac so just very quickly for the applicant, I understand Mr. Brown referred to earlier, there's a meeting scheduled for next Thursday, on the 20th of November, where I think I expect this, and the other five items that I expect Mr. Brown is going to come on to discuss will be subject to that discussion. I think the idea is that they'll be evolved through the socg discussions as well. So yes, we would welcome, obviously, the additional clarification and sign posting that Mr. Brown might be able to provide in the in the summary of submissions. But I think these are also points that have been raised in the submissions to date, and which are, which are subject to ongoing discussion as well. Thank you, Mr. Mac, could you clarify for me again when you are expecting to have that meeting? I understand for sefer next Thursday, the 20th of November, so it will be in advance of the deadline on the 21st one day. In advance, I believe that deadline is on the Friday. Okay,

12:23

in that situation, then can I actually ask

12:29

in terms of action? Because obviously I am mindful of not wanting to lose this specific topic within the examination in case that agreement is not reached. So actually, can I ask

12:41

Lincolnshire county council to actually prepare that as part of the submission, and submit it to us, and obviously amend that in light of any agreement that then is reached with the applicant the day before deadlines. The deadline for is that, is that, is that acceptable for both parties? Yes, Stephanie Hollinger, Duncan, because I think that that might be eminently achievable for Mr. Brown's six points, which could be very easily typed up and then one of them deleted, for example, if it were to be the subject of agreement. That may not be the same for the long list of points, which we were hoping to to discuss at the state Common Ground meeting next Thursday. Just to clarify, Miss all, I'm only suggesting that in relation to the first point, okay, right? Thank you, yeah, just, just on that point. As I said, I would like to take those six points individually, right? Mr. Brown, if I could ask you for the second point, which I believe it's got to do with landscape effects, and effects on the friendly landscape character. Yeah, correct. So yes, Oliver Brown from the host authority. So yeah. So this is relating to wider landscape

effects. So the only residual effects that have been identified in landscape terms are directly within the site. We are looking at how the

13:59

development will affect the wider landscape character

14:05

area and the the the effects go from significant at year one, and then with the establishment of the planting reduces down to not significant.

14:15

However, we still see this as a direct effect upon this landscape character area is still replacing extensive areas of agricultural land. I think there's often a danger with landscape character areas of looking at these bigger areas and just, you know, if it's a small percentage of that character area, then it'll have limited effect, which is, you know, in my opinion, the incorrect way of doing it, I still see as a direct effect on a key, on the key characteristics of this area. Okay. Thank you very much for that. Mr. Brown, may I ask if the applicant would like to comment in terms of how it has taken into consideration the effects of the proposal on the wider Finland landscape? Please.

14:59

David.

15:00

Stoke off the applicant,

15:04

as we set out in the earlier session. We've assessed effects in relation to the site area

15:12

of the solar area as being significant.

15:17

We've also determined that

15:20

the visual influence of the solar array area will not extend widely beyond the perimeter of that area,

15:31

and that was the basis for the conclusion that the characterizing influence of the proposed development will not be significant for the final and sub areas. I hope. Thank you for that clarification. Mr. Stoke And can I ask when you say that the area will not be visible, that the proposed development will not be visible for the for the wider area, are you including the mitigating measures? Are you including the planting that you are proposing to do as part of mitigation of the proposed development, and is that not

what's going to be viewed within the wider area, or is it the proposed development itself, ie the solar panel area and all of the construction?

16:16

Yes, we're including both of those factors in the consideration. Do so do i The mitigation and and in the solar ripeners themselves? Yes, yes. Thank you very much. Does that clarify your point? Mr. Mr. Brown, Oliver

16:32

Brown, for those authorities, yeah, I think it's clear whether the their position is and I think there's probably just a difference of professional opinion in terms of an effect there.

16:42

Thank you very much. I'm assuming that, as we heard earlier, this might be another topic that will be discussed shortly between both parties. Can I ask that you might come back to the examination with a view in terms of where specifically there is a difference of opinion on that between both parties

17:05

and what ground needs to move in order to achieve consensus on that, on that, on that specific issue from your representation, Mr. Brown, I assume it's linked with the mitigating measures and how those have been actually taken into consideration, but I'm happy to be corrected if that's not the right interpretation. Oliver Brown from the host authorities, it's predominantly land use. It's a land use change, predominantly land use. Okay? Thank you for that clarification. Mr. Brown, so as I said, if we could then

17:41

have that as part of a submission,

17:44

and include that as part of the discussions that both parties will have in the near future. That will be useful as well,

17:52

very quickly. Mr. Brown, if I could ask you to then cover the other items. So I think that next item was mitigation planting in the facts that this has been caused, which I think it's also linked with, sort of the examination and the ground that we have covered this morning. So in the interest of brevity, what I was going to say is that, is there any specific issue that you would like to add to what we have already covered this morning and discussed?

18:20

I think the key issue is covered. This has been raised. Okay? Thank you very much.

18:26

I've agreed to actions on this specific point with the applicant, so I would park that specific issue now. But Mr. Brown, thank you very much for your comments as well. Along the lines of the questioning that was posed by DXA earlier. This then leads us to, I believe,

18:45

point number four, LV, aa,

18:50

yes, and it was again linked with residential units that we have mentioned in gasses barn. And I think that I have a similar question for you as I did for item three before. So is there anything additional that you would like to raise now that we have not covered earlier, Oliver Brown from the host authorities. I think we've covered a lot of that, and I think it's linked back in the planting. But the key one from this is, really, is what, what opportunity there is around gasses barn to reduce those, those effects because they're obviously, you know, significant and high. So am I right in assuming, Mr. Brown that, in line with the excess questioning on this specific issue, does this mean that Lincolnshire county council has similar concerns in terms of how those effects have been taken into consideration, in terms of it, of its significance of the effect, and how the mitigation has taken. That was taken or not as part of a significant effect in the change in the in the in the amenity, that's correct. Yes, okay. Thank you very much. Again, I think I have a.

20:00

Read future actions on this specific point with the applicant. So

20:05

then that leads us to the next point, Mr. Brown, which I believe is future baseline

20:10

on that one, I would actually quite it would be quite helpful for me to understand a little bit more in terms of how that is linked with cumulative effects in what the key points are. So maybe, again, in the interest of gravity, I would suggest that perhaps if we could take point five and point six together and that will cover the six points that we want to cover. Now from you, is that acceptable? Yeah. Is it

20:39

acceptable for the applicant as well, I assume yes. Thank you,

20:43

Mr. Brown.

20:45

Thank you Oliver Brown from the host authorities.

20:49

So this, this relates to the pressure that this, the landscape regional scale is under, both at a local scale and a regional scale. We're seeing, and mentioned it previously an unprecedented amount of both

applications and approvals for solar as well as other renewables and energy projects such as National Grid upgrades across the region.

21:15

And it's looking at essentially to drill down into it. When is that tipping point to when we can calibrate this in terms of this becoming solar and renewables becoming a key feature within this landscape, and this change so typically, with the cumulative effects, we would look at

21:37

character areas as baselines. We would look at individual characters as baselines from local, regional and well so local, district and national. However, the scale of this change spans across multiple character areas.

21:56

And so what the approach that we've been looking at on other schemes is, what are the common characteristics across this landscape? And essentially, it's an agricultural landscape. It's relatively flat, gently undulating, sparsely populated, so that you can see these common characteristics, and then we start to look at how those key characteristics across these common areas would subsequently be changed by solar

22:22

and again, going back to the previous point in terms of landscape, it's predominantly land use change. So just want to stress that landscape effects do not necessarily have to be seen to have a change or to have a have an adverse effect. So we're taking arable agricultural land, and then we're replacing that with soil development. That's, that's, that's a clear change, obviously visually, across both the baseline and in tune and cumulatively, it's that sequential. It's that travel through this landscape. And the views of development don't necessarily have to be open and panoramic. They can be glimpsed. They can be, you know, frequent views to change that perception of what is currently a rural landscape into one that contains development. So it's just, it's a slightly different,

23:16

I suppose, approach to the cumulative assessment. But we think it's a very important point, and we've

23:24

we've discussed this at previous

23:27

hearings and previous examinations on other schemes, where we're seeing these multiple schemes being presented and proposed within this landscape. So this is clearly a landscape is going undergo change, and then to calibrate that and to underpin it, the way we've sort of looked at it, is thinking, Well, if we were going to redo or update character assessments from a national to a local scale, how would solar appear within there? And we judge that if all these schemes are approved, solar will become a key characteristic within this landscape when currently it doesn't appear at all. Thank you, Mr. Brown, I have a couple of comments to make on this specific point. So first of all, obviously, as I'm sure that you

are aware, one of the topics that we are proposing to cover in tomorrow's hearing is going to be cumulative effects. So it might be that the applicant would like to address some of the points that you have raised with us under that specific section session. Apologies. However, for me to actually understand a little bit better what concerns are, can I just ask that, you know, obviously one of the starting points in terms of how the applicant has considered cumulative effects has been through consideration of a series of proposed developments that were identified by the applicant is having a bearing and having to be considered.

25:00

As part of cumulative, cumulative effects within this development, it is my understanding, and I would ask local authorities to confirm this, that North receiver District Council and Lancashire county council have both agreed with that list in general terms.

25:15

So

25:17

if we take that as the starting point, I do take on board the point that you have made in terms of the level of a change. I guess that what I'm trying to understand is,

25:31

is your point linked with

25:35

certain developments not being included and therefore not being counted, in terms of the overall effect by the applicant, or is it how that judgment has been made in terms of the collective impact of those developments by the applicant?

25:55

Thank you.

25:56

Oliver Brown from the host authorities, no, I understand those two points, and yeah, how did it confirm that that that list was has been approved. And I completely take on board that that point in terms of

26:09

having to assess certain schemes,

26:12

and I understand that, I think locally, with the

26:17

schemes that are in closer proximity to

26:22

to be confirmed, which have been identified. I still, you know, the judgment is that they will still maintain

26:30

adverse effects, both in terms of landscape and visual

26:34

and, yeah, understand the point in terms of that wider regional area, those haven't been identified earlier on, and I think it's, yeah, it's a difficult area to sort of to quantify and to define and to pin down, and it's something that has been sort of ongoing and developing as we are seeing more and more and more of these schemes coming through. So Mr. Brown, just to clarify, then, in that case, your question is linked with the inter effects are in the effects of this project with other similar projects within the area,

27:07

and also it's about interpretation of that and how that has been taken into consideration. Okay,

27:13

in relation to landscape and visual obviously, can I ask if the applicant would like to comment on that very specific point. Then now please. Thank you.

27:24

Yes. Thank you, Sir David Stoker, for the applicant.

27:30

So, as has been stated, the

27:35

cumulative schemes that have been considered in the landscape visual impact assessment

27:42

were agreed at scoping stage, and they have been included in the assessment.

27:48

The the wider scenario in relation to cumulative schemes, more generally, across

27:56

Lincolnshire has hasn't been considered because it's beyond the scope of the assessment. It's these schemes are well beyond the lbia study area,

28:09

and

28:12

we have responded to some similar points in our representations

28:18

and our summary of

28:22

the situation is that there's very limited potential for the beacon fan scheme, the proposed development in association this with this wider cumulative scenario to result in meaningful cumulative effects, either in sequentially or in static views.

28:50

Thank you very much for that clarification. Mr. Stoke

28:57

right. Is there any further point that I would ask Mr. Brown, on behalf of the host local authorities, if you would like to raise sorry Stephanie Hall, Lincoln County Council. I just need to clarify one point, I think about Mr. Brown was asked about, I think the question was whether his

29:14

response agreed the list of projects on the cumulative impact assessment, and whether it was that something was missing, or whether, can I ask a little bit closer? Oh, sorry, yes, thank you.

29:27

I think the question put to Mr. Brown was whether he agreed, part of the question put to Mr. Brown was whether he agreed the list of projects that's been assessed for the cumulative effects chapter of the environmental statement. Just for clarification, the council agreed that list of projects at the point it was asked to look at it, which I think was the back end of last year, things have obviously moved on. So yes, it's correct that at a point in time when we were asked to specifically consent or not to a list of projects on that list, that list was accurate, that list does need Review.

30:00

And I think our LIR does deal with that point, that their things have moved on slightly, and so there may need to be an update to it.

30:07

Thank you very much for that

30:10

and that list, the updated list, has actually been submitted to examination as part of your local impact report. Oh, sorry, not sorry Stephanie or Lincoln County. Has it? Not that we know, so we haven't taken it upon ourselves to update the list. We mentioned that the list requires updating, and that's at paragraph 17.6 of our LIR, oh, okay, in that case, Miss Hall, can I ask for that to be added to the list of issues for the meeting that both parties will have shortly in relation to Inv, yes, Stephanie, Hollington county council, absolutely, we can. We can add it to the list. I suspect it's actually an action point possibly for the applicants broader EIA team to go and have a look at rather than just being relevant to

landscape, because obviously there are other potential cumulative effects with other projects. John
benscape, thank you. I accept that completely. Thank you, Miss Hall. So can I ask the I guess that my
request for you, Miss Hall, is to just provide, if I may think that my request is just provided information.
Obviously I do accept, and I ask agreement from the applicant. That is irresponsible to actually update
that list, but obviously they can only update the list with the information that is given. So can we just
agree to do that? Please both parties. Thank you. Thank you. Certainly that's probably because I agree
with Ms Holland so far as the issue of the list for the cumulative assessment isn't specific to our via so I
think it's probably a topic that can be usefully returned to in the relevant agenda item tomorrow. So we
can do that, and we know the comments have been raised on in relation to specific projects, and so we,
I believe, responded to that in the LIR. But we can also pick up tomorrow quite Mr. Mac however, so
that we don't lose track of that action, can I just ask for the applicant to make a note of that, just to
make sure that that is actually covered as well. Thank you very much.

32:04

Before I move us on, can I just ask if there are any further comments that North Coast, even District
Council, would like to make on this specific point?

32:15

No. Thank you very much, and we obviously jointly instruct Mr. Jordan so we adopt his points. Thank
you. Thank you very much. Right. Can I ask if any of the other host local authorities Boston that is
represented in this hearing today have any concerns that they wish to raise in terms of Inv issues?

32:37

Mr. O'Sullivan,

32:42

thank you, sir.

32:46

Just a point of clarification. Well, point of clarification in terms of

32:52

who Mr. Brown is representing.

32:56

Obviously, the Borough Council have their own, have made their own views, and they are different than
Mr. Brown's in terms of his not representing us. So

33:09

our concerns are outlined within

33:13

the written representation, R e p1

33:16

060, and the local impact report, r e p 1059,

33:21

at section 5.3

33:24

in the interest of brevity,

33:28

those concerns center around the loss of vegetation, that vegetation that is to be retained,

33:36

the level of mitigation and How those matters are controlled within the draft DCO and within

33:45

the outline control documents,

33:49

clearly in terms of the impact on the Borough Council, they are in relation to the southern extent of The cable corridor route and the connection into bigger Fen substation and the extension of bigger Fen substation

34:10

in terms of the vegetation loss and retention plans. They're obviously updated a deadline to

34:16

which we welcome and clarifies some of that vegetation loss, but we still have

34:25

concerns in relation to how that is secured and controlled within the draft DCO requirements,

34:34

we have had meetings with the applicant in regards to some of these issues where

34:42

the potential for some additional enhancement measures

34:46

have been raised.

34:50

I guess we're at the point where we're still in those discussions. We had originally suggested that

34:57

if mitigation can't be achieved.

35:00

Received on site, then there may be a possibility of a six, one or six contribution towards

35:07

improving connectivity in the landscape,

35:11

in a similar vein to what was agreed at Eckington Fen,

35:16

again,

35:20

those matters are really subject

35:23

to further discussions with the agreement of the applicant, but we just wanted to raise those particular points are already within the examination in writing from the Borough Council,

35:35

and that we hope to try and resolve some of those issues In the statement of common ground process.

35:42

Thank you, O'Sullivan. Thank you, Mr. O'Sullivan, for that update. Can Can I just ask that obviously, just for clarification, your comments that you have just made in terms of the impacts of development on landscape and visual are linked linked with the works that are proposed within the boundaries of Boston Borough Council, so particularly linked with the substation works and cabling, is that correct? Yes, that's correct, sir.

36:12

Thank you very much. And you also mentioned that you are having productive discussions with the applicant and are aiming to resolve that within statement of common ground, is that the case as well?

36:25

Yes, that's our intention. Chair. We've we've had a couple of meetings about landscape.

36:31

We've got the latest version of the statement of common ground to make comments upon the Borough Council. Hope that we can have more meetings with the applicant on the

36:41

specific enhancement measures that may or may not be introduced

36:46

either part of landscape matters or perhaps part of biodiversity net gain.

36:55

Thank you very much for that. Mr. O'Sullivan, can I ask if the applicant would like to comment on what we have just read from Boston county council. Please. Thank you. Apologies, yes. David Stokoe for the applicant,

37:10

as Mr. O'Sullivan mentioned, we've had a recent meeting

37:16

regarding clarifications in relation to vegetation removal and potential landscape enhancements at the substation. And subsequent to that, we have commenced works to

37:35

provide updated landscape enhancement scheme

37:40

that will be

37:42

illustrated in an updated landscape strategy plan,

37:47

which we will then discuss with with Boston Borough Council.

37:54

Thank you for that update. Mr. Stock,

37:58

right. Can I just ask now if there are

38:03

any other comments that anyone would like to make in the landscape and visual before I move us on some opening now to other IPs or anyone that would like to make any comment on this specific item, if I can ask first, if there is anyone else in the room that would like to make a comment on this specific topic. Please raise your hand.

38:24

I don't see any hands raised. Can I ask if there is anyone joining us online that would like to make a comment on landscape and visual?

38:33

Yes. Councilor Chapman,

38:38

good afternoon.

38:40

So I'm Carol Chapman. I'm the chair of South Kyne parish council. South Kine parish council believes that the energy Park will bring about a fundamentally altered visual landscape, and we share the concerns of the host authorities regarding the cumulative impact of multiple solar applications. The statement of common ground that we have with beacon, Venn

39:06

en 151,

39:10

has highlighted the need for growth in solar

39:15

earlier this morning, we discussed the best,

39:18

and I have a better understanding of it now, however, the applicant has stated in the statement of common ground that they are not planning any future developments. My question is, would the 600 megawatt capacity support additional panels, either now or in the future? Our concerns are that other developers may use the 600 megawatt capacity as an argument to place additional future development of solar arrays in this vicinity, which we would see as resulting in an even greater negative impact.

39:58

Thank you. Councilor Chapman, for.

40:00

For that intervention. Can I just ask as a point of clarification, when you are mentioned 600 megawatts, are you referring to the battery, energy storage system, and that is the source of your concern in terms of allowing for more panels to basically be built in the area without

40:22

a it's as part of this application,

40:25

or if, in addition to this application, yes, in addition, in future, additional solar arrays being built in the area because of this available capacity.

40:39

Okay. Thank you very much for that clarification. Councilor Chapman, can I ask if the applicant would like to comment on this specific issue in terms of the possibility of the solar array panels being expanded? Please? Thank you.

41:00

Thank you, sir. I'll try and give, I suppose, some simple answers, and councilor Chapman Can, can last us. No, no, that should if there's any further clarification, I mean, we can confirm that we're not planning any further development in the area beyond what we've we've applied for under the terms of the development consent order, and the parameters within which we're restricted under the under the DCA, principally the the works descriptions that and the outline design principles, I think, are clear in that respect. And we're not seeking any, any increase. Obviously, beyond that, what other developers may or may not do in the area is out with Arkansas. And obviously we can't offer any, any commitments in respect of that. So I think that's probably the limit of what we can say in terms of we're restricted by our DCO, in terms of what we can do in ours, and we've assessed the upper extent of it, but we can't offer any any comments on any other third party development. Thank you for that, for that response. And can I also confirm, can also confirm that,

41:58

obviously,

42:01

the maximum

42:04

number of solar panels proposed within solar array is something that is actually contemplated and protected within the DCO itself. Can the applicant just confirm that, please? That's correct, sir. Thank you very much. Councilor Chapman, anything that you would like to add? No. That answers my question. Thank you. Okay, thank you very much. Thank you.

42:25

Can I ask if there is anyone else that would like to comment now on landscape and visual effects, before we move on from this topic, please raise your hand virtually.

42:37

I don't see any further hands raised, so I believe that we have now covered all of the questions on this specific topic. So proposed that we move us to the next item on the agenda,

42:51

which is Item five, historic environment.

42:55

So the purpose of this item is to examine issues linked to the effects of the proposed development on the Historic Environment again, a kiss, a key, a list of the key written submissions that will inform my

questions has been included. Can I ask if there are any comments that anyone would like to make on that specific list before we move on?

43:14

Raise your hands, please. Online or in the room,

43:19

I don't see any hands raised, so I assume that there are no comments. However, I would like to add to that list, rep three, Dash 005,

43:32

and that's obviously the statement of common ground that the applicant has submitted at deadline, five, signed with Historic England

43:42

and

43:43

perhaps I would like to first of all,

43:46

similarly to what we have done to the other chapters, in order to set the context of the questioning, can I ask the applicant to provide a brief overview of Yes chapter eight, that's cultural heritage, A, P, P, 059, particularly focusing, again, on the assessment methodology, the effects, embedded mitigation and obviously, then the proposal, the residual effects, if any, have been identified. Thank you.

44:14

Thank you. So you'll see. We've swapped out our speakers. I'll just introduce Mr. Anthony Hannah, who's a technical director for archeology and heritage SLR consulting, and he produced the chapter in question. To his left is Mrs. Charlotte Bellamy, who's an associate director of the same team. Sorry, Mr. MC, it's Mr. Anthony Hannah. Anthony Hannah, okay, thank you. And Mrs. Charlotte Bellamy, now it will be almost certainly Mr. Hannah, who will do the majority of the speaking on this topic, sir. But if, if Mrs. Bellamy, or indeed others, speak to a point, I'll ask them to introduce themselves at that point. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you,

44:56

Tony, Hannah, for the applicant. I.

45:00

Thank you, Mr. Hannah, if you would like to then

45:04

ask the question, please.

45:07

Shall I repeat all? No, yeah. Okay. Thank you very much. Mr. Hannah,

45:13

an answer to your question, sir. Chapter Eight, cultural heritage a PP, 059,

45:21

has been prepared following the accepted standards and guidance for assessing effects and cultural heritage assets, both non designated and designated.

45:32

The assessment methodology is in accordance with the guidance on heritage impact assessments for cultural world heritage properties, International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS 2011

45:47

and the principles of cultural heritage impact assessment in the UK,

45:52

at the Institute of environment, environmental management and assessments, the Institute For historic building conservation and the Chartered Institute for archeologists.

46:06

The assessment is based on a review and scoping of assets likely to be affected and a review of likely significant effects arising from the proposed development.

46:18

This is based on the legislative framework, planning, policy and guidance

46:24

following consultation and scoping, a P, P 071,

46:30

the assessment criteria were was agreed and the baseline was prepared For archeology, historic landscape and built heritage, a p p 117,

46:44

and a p p 118

46:52

the assessment methodology defined the extent of the study area and identified historic heritage assets to be brought forward for assessment under agreement with the statutory consultees. This was agreed during the scoping stage with Lincolnshire County Council, where a methodology was agreed, which included direct physical effects on archeological assets during the operational construction and decommissioning phases which were scoped in, as were impacts to the historic environment.

47:29

Archeological mitigation is further set out within the archeological mitigation strategy, A, P, P, 153,

47:42

scope scoping was also agreed with Lincolnshire county council and North casteven District Council for a methodology to include the results of consultation with the Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire and consultation with the Local list of non designated heritage assets for North casteven.

48:04

This ensured any additional non designated built heritage assets were included within the heritage statement.

48:13

These issues were agreed with North casteven District Council and also and also agreed with Lincolnshire county council

48:27

for built heritage, the study area for identifying designated assets, heritage assets potentially sensitive to the proposed development is set at five kilometers from the order limits

48:40

shown in figure 8.3, field reference, a P, P 246,

48:47

and figure 8.5,

48:49

geophysical survey interpretation, DC order limits, A, P, P, 248,

48:58

This was agreed in consultation with LCC Lincolnshire county council

49:04

set out in table 8.1,

49:06

chapter eight, at the cultural heritage

49:10

environmental statement A, pp 059,

49:15

however, this approach is robust and considers and asked an asset's importance or value against the impacts of the proposed development. Designated heritage assets beyond five kilometer study area have also been considered.

49:33

This was assessed by the technical team and agreed with Lincoln County Council archeological advisor and the local planning authority, conservation officer,

49:44

where appropriate, these assets have been considered within the assessment.

49:52

The chapter assessed the potential for significant effects on buried archeological remains within the site.

50:00

Eight informed by appendix 8.1

50:04

archeological desk based assessment, a P, P 117,

50:10

Appendix 8.2 heritage statement, a P, P 118,

50:17

and appendix 8.3 aerial and LIDAR assessment the solar array, a P, p1 9119,

50:27

Appendix, 8.5 written scheme of investigation for geo geophysical survey on the solar array. A P, P 121,

50:38

and appendix, 8.10

50:41

a trial trenching report, a P, P, 150

50:47

to 151,

50:52

in terms of the assessment of effects. The methodology considered construction,

50:59

operational and decommissioning phases and potential impacts on archeology, historic landscape and built heritage.

51:08

The assessment concluded that effects on buried archeological remains would be managed through a combination of site Pacific investigation, monitoring and recording, as outlined within the supporting appendices, a P, P 115,

51:25

sorry, 117,

51:27

effects on historic landscape and built heritage have been assessed, taking into account visibility, setting and significance of the assets. A P, P 118, the embedded mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposed development.

51:52

These include preservation by design, avoidance and preservation by record,

51:59

archeological investigation through strip map and record will be undertaken where evaluation has identified archeological potential and where the development is likely to result in harm, in areas specific within shown within the archeological mitigation strategy, R, E, p2,

52:23

019,

52:25

these areas have been identified through the evaluation stage and are located in areas defined within the bespoke access corridor.

52:36

Areas of archeological potential considered to be of low significance are addressed through archeological recording as part of a staged approach to evaluation and mitigation.

52:50

In accordance this will be in accordance with agreed written schemes of investigation, in consultation with Lincolnshire county council,

53:02

all identified heritage assets will be recorded in line with current best practice.

53:11

Appropriate designated heritage assets have been assessed and will be mitigated through screening and enhancement of existing hedgerow boundaries to ensure that visibility from these assets to the proposed development areas is significantly reduced wherever possible.

53:33

This will be in line with the embedded mitigation technical note, R, E, p3, 005, 005,

53:43

supported by the landscape strategy plan, a P, p2 332,

53:51

A P, P 235,

53:56

following these mitigation measures, the residual effects are anticipated To be at the lower end of less than substantial harm for most heritage assets, with the exception of St Andrew's church, as could be, which has been assessed as having a moderate effect during the construction phase and a slight effect during the operational phase due to its high value as a grade one listed building and with the medium of impact,

54:29

residual impacts are expected only in certain areas where physical disturbance cannot be avoided. This is for archeology, but these will be recorded and managed in line with the mitigation measures described within the archeological mitigation strategy, R, E, p2,

54:51

019,

54:57

all mitigation measures are proposed.

55:00

To be secured through requirements in the DCO, including adherence to written scheme of investigations and monitoring programs agreed with Lincolnshire County Council and the local planning authority conservation officer. Thank you, Mr. Hannah is is that

55:21

in summary, chapter eight, cultural heritage, A, P, P, 059,

55:27

provides a robust assessment methodology, carefully considers the likely effects, incorporates embedded mitigation, identifies residual effects and sets out clear mechanisms to secure mitigation measures for archeology. This mechanism is secured through the archeological mitigation strategy and

the approach is agreed with Lincolnshire County Council. Thank you. Thank you very much for that. Mr. Hannah, in just

55:57

to finalize in

56:00

the applicant, please confirm that, in line with rep 3005,

56:04

statement of common ground with Historic England, the applicant has reached agreement on all matters with Historic England, and there are, at the moment, no outstanding concerns between both parties that case.

56:17

That's correct. Thank you very much. I would like to touch on two points that you have highlighted on your presentation, Mr. Hannah. One of them is in relation to

56:29

the one historic asset that you have identified as having significant effects after mitigation has been put in place in that as correctly have mentioned, this church of santangeo, which is a great one listed building in asgardia, which I believe that you have recognized in your presentation. And then I would also like to

56:49

question further the applicant's assessment on another asset, which would be South kind tower. But if I could take then Church of St Andrews first, you know,

57:03

obviously, as you have recognized, there is going to be a significant effect that cannot be mitigated by the applicant on this specific Heritage hazard. Has any further consideration been given into potentially potential further mitigation that could be deployed in order to minimize the impact of the purpose development on these assets, and if not, then why not

57:39

to? Liana applica replica,

57:44

in terms of

57:45

St Andrew's church, as could be,

57:50

if I might go through some preamble.

57:55

Initially, a discussion was held on the 15th of August, and as a result, we arranged a site meeting on the for the fourth of September

58:04

for both North caverson and Lincolnshire county council.

58:12

Officer for a Lincolnshire county council was available, and during that meeting, a number of issues were discussed, potential solutions for agreement were also considered.

58:25

Although there was no firm agreement, we agreed to continue discussions.

58:32

There was a general agreement on the methodology and the overall approach. For example, I noted a certain that certain effects were on the lower end of less than substantial harm, while Lincolnshire county council considered them to be to the middle of less than substantial harm,

58:52

they thought they also sought clarity Regarding embedded mitigation for St Andrews church and other heritage assets.

59:05

Following consultation

59:09

with our landscape specialist,

59:12

who recently spoken with it was confirmed that the embedded mitigation proposed for many of these assets was already in place

59:21

and is outlined within the landscape strategy plan as 233, to 235,

59:31

the landscape strategy plan

59:34

all setting assessments have considered the effect of the introduction of change within the setting

59:42

of the assets set out with section 8.6 within Chapter Eight of the cultural heritage A, P, P 059,

59:52

of the environment statement, the effects have been fully considered for these assets, and is clarified below and.

1:00:00

And if you permit me to

1:00:02

go through my reasons for the assessment, certainly, Mr. Hannah, please. Thank you.

1:00:10

The Church of St Andrew, as could

1:00:14

be, is of the highest designation. It's grade one was considered as such.

1:00:20

The impact is from the construction of the bespoke access road, which is approximately 400 meters to the west of the asset. The

1:00:30

effects of the asset will be moderate during the construction and decommissioning phases,

1:00:37

and considered slight during the operational phase. During the opera operational phase, the road will be screened beyond an existing hedge and tree boundary.

1:00:50

The road will be a low lying feature and will be barely noticeable because of the use of the road will be only for maintenance during the operational phase, and therefore that use will be limited.

1:01:05

The setting will be changed through the introduction of an access road, which will be

1:01:12

in limited use during the operational phase, and the regular and regular construction use during the construction decommissioning phase, resulting in a temporary, moderate adverse effect. There will be a slight adverse effect on the setting of St Andrews church through the operational phase. The bespoke access road

1:01:34

the church is screened by the existing hedgerow, as I said, 400 meters to the west,

1:01:44

you can view the top of the church by

1:01:49

that's that's unavoidable, and that is

1:01:53

a requirement for such a church that's to be seen across a large, flat landscape.

1:02:00

The church itself and the church are views from the church are will be barely visible,

1:02:08

and there will be glimpsed views

1:02:12

during the operational phase. There will be views during the construction and decommissioning phase.

1:02:20

Therefore, the assessment

1:02:24

indicated that there would be a slight adverse effect due to the glimpse views

1:02:32

to and from the church. Thank you, Mr. Hannah, for that, for that further explanation, I would like to unpick a little bit what you have just presented to us in relation to St Andrew's church, particularly when you have mentioned

1:02:53

the effect of the Proposed bespoke proposed access road.

1:03:00

And you have also mentioned that you have taken into consideration the fact that, particularly during the operational phase, which obviously will be the longer phase of the proposed development, that

1:03:16

the the effect of that would be

1:03:19

reduced because of it being used for maintenance purposes. However, I would like to question if the applicant believes that considering the importance of the asset, and considering the protection that the Secretary of State must give to historic assets as such,

1:03:41

and considering the setting of St Andrew's church, if the use or not use of the new vehicle asset will be significant, a significant consideration in order to Change the overall impact of significance on this asset.

1:04:05

Tony Hannah, for the applicant,

1:04:09

yes, I did look at this in detail. And

1:04:13

when you're viewing

1:04:16

the area where the proposed access road will be constructed,

1:04:20

as I said, it is behind an existing hedgerow.

1:04:24

But my eye is drawn by the noise and visual aspect of the A 17 Trunk Road,

1:04:33

and

1:04:35

in my view that part of the setting is diminished

1:04:42

and yes, during the construction and decommissioning phase, there will be

1:04:49

a higher level of impact, hence the moderate adverse effect on a grade one designated asset. Mr. Hannah.

1:05:00

If I may interject on that specific point, I accept

1:05:05

your argument in relation to

1:05:09

already compromised setting through the presence of da 17. However, as I'm sure that you were aware, the key test here is if it contributes positively or maintains the setting of an historic asset. And am I to interpret then that the applicant believes that the creation of the new access road will positively contribute or maintain the existing setting so

1:05:43

no, it won't.

1:05:46

In that case, then can I ask why we have assessed the impact

1:05:56

of the proposed development on this specific asset, particularly during operational stage in the way that we have

1:06:13

setting

1:06:15

his contribution to significance,

1:06:19

the significance of this heritage asset.

1:06:24

It lies within its use and function, its architectural value, its communal aspect within the local community and and its visual impact within the local landscape.

1:06:41

And it's in it for me, it's, it's, it's structural, architectural value as an asset of national importance, and value

1:06:53

setting, as I said, contributes to that. And I believe the contribution, or the effect on that contribution is slight, because standing next to the church in the graveyard, looking across at that view,

1:07:14

I presume that you will only see the Hedge line, and there will be a very rare

1:07:24

movement from a vehicle

1:07:27

during the operational phase. It's a low line asset, and because of the construction of the asset, cut into the ground and with

1:07:39

it's not black tarmac, it will be barely noticeable. So in my opinion, it was a slight adverse effect. I'm not denying that there is an introduction, and it does have a net negative

1:07:55

view of the asset, but that is slight. It doesn't draw your eye away from the magnificence of the church or its immediate surrounding of the graveyard or the village

1:08:11

at all, but it will do during the construct during the construction decommissioning phase, there's no doubt, during the operational phase, I think slightly that in adverse effect is appropriate.

1:08:26

Thank you, Mr. Hannah, for that consideration, for for that intervention, in that explanation. Further, I would like to also bring into discussion now the applicant's response to ex Q, 1h,

1:08:41

E, N, point one, point 11,

1:08:46

where I would like to question some of the detail of statement made by the applicant and how that sentence should be interpreted. And within that question, one of the issues that should relate to was in relation to the impacts of proposed development on South crime tower. And the applicant states that views west towards the proposed development are not important in respect to understanding the historic and architectural interest of the asset. Does the applicant mean that the views to the west towards the proposed development do not make a positive contribution to the significance of the asset in relation to its setting. Or is it in or is it a different interpretation that we should have in terms of the statement of a not important in respect of understanding the historic and architectural interest of the asset

1:09:48

Tony Hannah, for the applicant,

1:09:54

I find this,

1:09:56

this particular site, extremely interesting and.

1:10:01

And and I viewed it from completely holistically.

1:10:06

So I'll just set set up my preamble before

1:10:11

the physical attributes of the asset

1:10:14

will not be impacted. The immediate setting of the asset will not experience change,

1:10:22

the proposed development may have a slight will have a slight adverse effect on the asset through change within the wider setting of SOUTHCOM tower, which is to the west. This feels to the west. The original use and functionality of the asset is from its intended enclosure and its siting within the bend of a river and with protection from the inaccessible area, mostly inaccessible to the west,

1:10:54

the area is enclosed, providing seclusion to the asset That was once surrounded by a moat and comprised also of an attached manor house.

1:11:07

The tower was originally built to provide protection to the fortified to the heights of the manor house

1:11:14

as a fortified manor house, and to guard the village and the strategic point close to the river Slea to the south and east, which may have been an important transportation and trade artery,

1:11:31

any intended interaction with the wider landscape to the West was limited because this would have been inaccessible Fen land outside the functional cat or the asset,

1:11:45

and I say, inaccessible for

1:11:48

beyond six months of the year.

1:11:52

The key views from the asset are to the east, towards the village and the manor house,

1:11:59

and towards the north towards the church, all contemporary features associated, and these are all contemporary features associated with the function of that tower.

1:12:12

The views west towards the proposed development

1:12:17

are not as important in respect to understanding the historic and architectural interest of the asset,

1:12:27

the wider setting is not considered to cause substantial harm to the asset

1:12:33

any less than substantial harm has been minimized through embedded mitigation.

1:12:41

Overall the change within the wider setting is assessed as not significant, in line with relevant national policy statements, en one and en three.

1:12:55

May I also add that,

1:12:59

having viewed the site several occasions.

1:13:05

It really does deserve its designation. Is extremely important asset.

1:13:11

The Tower itself is all that remains of a once larger defensive complex, what we term as a fortified manor house.

1:13:23

There are roughly 200 such sites within England.

1:13:30

This particular site consists of a tower which was attached to a manor house, and you can see from the structural mains how it was attached.

1:13:42

There was, there's evidence for other buildings, earthwork remains and platforms. There's evidence for a moat, which is probably derived from an earlier moat, and there is evidence of some further fortification.

1:13:58

So this was a really well defended manor house set within a river, the loop of the river, providing protection,

1:14:07

surrounded by a moat next to the village garden, a strategic point the land to the west and possibly to

1:14:16

the south. During the time that this was constructed, the medieval period, 14th century was, I say, inaccessible, because this was mostly Fen land. I agree times it was common ground,

1:14:29

but Fen land that was

1:14:33

not well drained during that time

1:14:37

and was prone to constant flooding, I found 19th century documentary evidence that suggests that this was a lake during certain times of the year,

1:14:50

and the only access was from the use of coracle or scary boats, coracle, circular boats made of skins and and what.

1:15:00

Possible.

1:15:01

So

1:15:03

overall, yes, it is part of the wider setting,

1:15:09

but it is not intrinsic to its functionality as a

1:15:15

fortified complex, a manor house that controls that area that interacts with the village that provides status,

1:15:27

living, dwelling and fortification for the lord of the manor,

1:15:34

and therefore, my assessment is on the wider setting of which most of that western area is, I may add that

1:15:44

the proposed development is approximately 1.25

1:15:49

meters from the boundary of the river, and it lies beyond a Significant hedgeline, which is the midfodder dike, which connects to the

1:16:04

car dyke, which is shown on historic maps, and was probably in situ when the fortified manor house was constructed.

1:16:16

Therefore, I believe that my assessment of slight adverse effect on the wider setting

1:16:25

remains. Thank you, Mr. Hannah, for that clarification. I would like to perhaps bring to the attention of the examination a couple of points following from that intervention. First of all, I would like to say that the fact that, as is you have mentioned in relation to South Kim tower.

1:16:45

The fact that an asset is inaccessible, or there is an inaccessible area that does not actually preclude its significance, and is you have quite eloquently exposed just just explain to us now the setting does make a very positive contribution towards that specific asset, and it's particularly relevant exactly because of its location and it being one of the few visual remains of a much wider context that needs to be understood within that landscape. So I do not believe that the issue of accessibility or inaccessibility

1:17:28

bears a direct relationship with the overall significance of the surrounding area in the setting to that specific asset.

1:17:43

And I think that that is

1:17:46

the same situation to which we were exploring early in terms of Church of St Andrews. And I do accept what you have just explained in terms of this, of the impacts not being significant in ES terms,

1:18:03

however, I think that what is important for me to actually highlight now, and what I would like to highlight, and perhaps invite you to comment, is the fact that obviously we know that the key test here, in terms of a policy test for Secretary of State, is it's

1:18:21

that Secretary of State is required to give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving all heritage assets from any harm or loss. IE, significant or not significant any harm is something that the Secretary of State is required to give considerable weight and importance to therefore, in light of that, I would just like to clarify, to ask the applicant to clarify if

1:18:52

it agrees that actually the setting of the assets that I have just mentioned, and I would like to wait that list Church of Saint Mary and all saints make a positive contribution, and therefore it would be appropriate for the Secretary of State To give considerable importance to any interference on that setting.

1:19:27

And then I will invite to host local authorities to give me an apologies. Thank you.

1:19:42

Tony Hannah applicant,

1:19:45

I understand what you're saying

1:19:48

from from an archeological point of view, from looking at this holistically.

1:19:55

So archeology, for me, is not just below ground, it's above ground. It's the whole.

1:20:00

Historic Environment and

1:20:04

the value of of this asset. And I'm not just talking about coin tower, but I'm talking about the archeology that's underneath it,

1:20:13

the the church, the whole lot

1:20:17

is extremely important as a site. But for me, it's its association

1:20:23

with the the

1:20:24

tower, the archeology, the moat, the manor house and the church within an enclosed landscape. It was deliberately constructed to be within an enclosed lands landscape. It was deliberately constructed to be within an area that's

1:20:44

out within the Fens, but protected by the fence,

1:20:51

and that area, the field leading up to the mid fodder dyke and beyond, for me, represents the fence

1:21:00

and that area

1:21:04

is,

1:21:05

is not going to be removed. It's, it's, by inaccessible, I mean, it's, there was no access to anybody approaching the manor house with malevolent intent,

1:21:19

so

1:21:21

it was safe and that it's part of the overall defenses. It's like building a castle on the edge of a sheer cliff, and then the other the part of the castle that's not defended by the sheer cliff is protected by extremely high walls and a moat. It's using the the topography and the landscape as added protection,

1:21:42

and I don't think that has changed

1:21:46

too much. Yes, there is an introduction of change, but the fact that that area is still inaccessible doesn't change how you appreciate or understand that that is part of a defensive manor house. I accept that Mr. Hannah, but as I said, I think that

1:22:07

I would just like to highlight that I'm not convinced that non significant harm is the same as no harm.

1:22:16

And that is the statement that I would just like to make that and I believe that that is an important and significant consideration for the Secretary of State. I would like now to invite the host local authorities to come in on this specific point, historic environment. So may perhaps

1:22:38

with me, may I perhaps start with Ms Bell, please, North

1:22:45

Coast, Stephen district comfort, please. Thank you, yes. Thank you very much. The consanza Bell for North Coast, even if I could, please introduce at this point Mr. Matthew Bentley, who sits to my right. He is the conservation officer for North casteven. Thank you.

1:23:03

Good afternoon. Yes. Matthew Bentley, on behalf of North CAIR Steven District Council.

1:23:08

Firstly, yeah, I would like to raise the point, particularly with regard St Andrew's church in ASCO be and draw out some more comments with regard to

1:23:18

that, as has been identified consistently through scoping all the way to the present, the present day feel the impact on the grade one church at ASCO be has been not thoroughly, not considered thoroughly enough, and has been sort of downplayed with regards to the level of impact. Most of the assessment that we have heard has been made principally from the churchyard and from the church itself, looking towards the bespoke access road, looking in a westerly direction. In fact, when viewed from the East St Andrews church, as could be, is fully visible in the landscape. It actually sits on a rise. It sits above the landscape. And intervening that landscape is the proposed bespoke access road.

1:24:09

I feel that at construction phase, the bespoke access road, which has been attributed a moderate effect, is actually going to have more of a large, very large effect at construction phase, and actually during operational phase, the effect will then probably drop towards more of a moderate level. However, the assessment is, I would say, flawed, in the sense that we have a very little understanding of what this bespoke access road is actually going to look like. We have no details of the junction. We have no details of the surfacing. We do have a cross section which shows the approximate level of which it will sit within the landscape. But again, no further details regards fencing, with regards lighting, regard signage, all of which, alongside the traffic, will contribute a negative impact.

1:25:00

On the setting of what is a grade one listed building.

1:25:03

None of that has been considered because it can't be considered because, as far as I'm aware, it's it's not, it's not been designed to that level of detail as it stands at the moment.

1:25:14

Further to that point, the

1:25:18

impact on the church has not been, doesn't appear to have been assessed from the public right of way, which crosses the bespoke access road, which also proposes, which also gives even further, wide ranging views and a full experience of that of that designated heritage asset as well. So

1:25:39

with regards, say, St Andrew's church. I feel the impact has not been thoroughly assessed enough and has not been considered in enough detail, and that the and the impact it will have will be negative

1:25:53

in and I think if we're talking about less than substantial harm terms, it's towards the potentially during construction phase, towards the higher end, certainly above, above medium, not the lower end, of less than substantial harm that has been identified

1:26:09

with regards time tower. Mr. Bentley, sorry, apologies. Can I just take one asset at a time? If that's all right? So if I could ask the applicant, if the applicant would like to comment on this intervention just now, Mr. Mac

1:26:26

or Mr. Hannah. Thank you, sir and Mac

1:26:29

for the applicant. Would you mind just give me one minute just to confirm my with such? Thank you. Thank you. Thank

1:27:32

I'm Tony Hannah applicant,

1:27:37

yes, I totally understand

1:27:40

what's what's been said, and we did discuss this on site.

1:27:46

And yes, you can view

1:27:49

the church in full from the side of the road, looking looking from the south southwest,

1:28:01

and in my mind that if the road was constructed

1:28:10

sensitively, in that it was the construction materials were sensitive,

1:28:19

and there was a barrier limiting the site of the road, then I think that the assessment would stand.

1:28:31

So just, just very quickly as well, just for complain this, in terms of the design site here now for the applicant,

1:28:38

didn't catch your name, so, Mr. Bentley. Mr. Bentley, thank you. And in terms of the comments around the design principles of the bar, so you'll know that we have outlined design principles secured under the draft DCO, a number of which are referenced in respect of the bespoke access road, which Mr. Bentley might have reference to, which provides minimum commitments in respect of in respect of the design of the road, which should provide some assurance there, I think, to the extent that there is any residual concern about any uncertainty that is linked to that, or where Mr. Bentley or colleagues think that improvements could be made to those design principles, then we're happy to receive them, and particularly where that would be influential to his assessment conclusion.

1:29:18

Thank you for that, Mr. Mac I believe that Mr. Banklin's intervention was clear in terms of stating that he does not believe that design criteria that have been agreed at moment are sufficient. I think that we all recognize that some design criteria have been agreed. It's about the detailed design of of the of the road that I believe the issue is,

1:29:43

my position at the moment, is that obviously, although those principles in terms of design normally are sufficient, because we are talking about the type of heritage assets that we are.

1:30:00

Now, with the protection that it requires,

1:30:04

I do believe that it might be useful for us to go further than that, because of the need to guarantee that there will be as minimal effect as possible. So I think it's more within that context that Mr. Bentley was hoping to get some response from the applicant. Thank you, sir, for the applicant. So that's understood. Obviously the design itself is subject to approval prior to commencement, so there will be another opportunity for that approval to follow the outline design principles on minimum standards at this point. But as I said, we we understand that it's not agreed at present. Like we welcome specific suggestions

as to where those enhancements could be made, we will obviously take that away and consider as well, sir, because we've heard your your point today as to the need to seek to minimize harm in so far as possible. I think Mr. Hannah's position was that we thought we had done that to the extent that was that was necessary and reasonable within the confines of the assessment, but we understand that there is a there's a suggestion that we could still do more. So we will. We will take that away. Thank you, Mr. Mac I agree with you, and I understand your answer in the context of Mr. Bentley's intervention just now, in terms of there being a process for the agreement of the design between both parties. However,

1:31:24

for the XA at the moment, the key situation here is actually how we can present that type of security to the Secretary of State as part of our recommendation report

1:31:39

to ensure that actually the harm to that very important asset has been minimized. So although I do accept that that might be something that can be achieved between

1:31:52

the local the host, local authorities, and the applicant, that still remains a concern for the examination. Thank you. So Ian said that's understood. We will, we will see what we can do to provide you and and Mr. Bentley and his colleagues across the table with further assurance for the purposes of your

1:32:11

report. Thank you, Mr. Mac Mr. Bentley, please.

1:32:16

Thank you very much. Yeah, Matthew Bentley, on behalf of North Kesteven District Council, and yeah, just to

1:32:23

further that point slightly, if I may, just to ensure that that bespoke access road is actually included in a reasonable regard within the embedded mitigation strategy as well. Because at the moment, there is no proposed mitigation between the views from the east and the access road. The mitigation is proposed to reinforce the hedgerow between the road and the church, but the road will be still in full view from the east, so ensuring that it drops into the mitigation strategy as well. If that's okay,

1:32:58

certainly, Mr. Bentley,

1:33:01

can I ask the applicant to comment? But I believe that

1:33:05

actually, can I ask the applicant to please make a commitment in order to address that specific concern in writing, perhaps falling from from this hearing, and that probably might be the easiest way of dealing with that specific issue in terms of the mitigating measures proposed. Thank you.

1:33:24

So just, just to make sure, I think that builds on the conversation we had in the previous agenda item, wasn't it as well in terms of the mitigation, planting, screening around that so we will, if that was correct, we'll pick that's already picked up.

1:33:36

Yes, I believe that this one is specifically linked with an historic asset, and therefore I would urge the applicant to give that specific consideration within that context. Sure, that's it. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Bentley, thank you very much. Yes. Matthew Bentley, North Coast, even with regards the point of South time tower, I do think Mr. Hanna has done quite a lot of detail and robust research with regards South Kine and the group of heritage assets within there. I do think that the level of impact is, however, still slightly low.

1:34:16

The South kind tower, as has been made in discussed in detail, already does make a significant contribution to the landscape and setting around around the area, and there will be

1:34:32

visual connections, though limited, between the tower and the solar array To the

1:34:39

west of mid the mid fodder dyke. I do personally feel that the level of impact ascribed is too low, and it should probably be at a medium level, at least. This is reinforced in the secretary of state's response to the hackington Fenn

1:34:56

application, where the level of harm was attributed.

1:35:00

To medium with regards their impact on climb tower with heckington fen and this solar rate is closer and will have a greater impact. So I see no reason why a similar level of response, at least, shouldn't be attributed through this that should therefore trigger the requirement for a more closer look at Bespoke mitigation between the inter visibility between current tower and the solar array. So thank you, Mr. Bentley, for that. Can I just ask the applicant to please clarify if the Secretary of State's view on hackington, hackington solar,

1:35:38

hackington solar, has been taken into consideration as part of the assessment, and if the applicant is aware of that and amount of weight that was given to this issue by the Secretary of State,

1:35:52

thank you so much for the applicant. I'll let Mr. Mr. Hannah by the club saying hackington fence over decision postdated the preparation of our assessments, so it wasn't a factor in the original preparation. But clearly we've had regard to the decision. Subsequently, I'll let Mr. Hannah comment to the extent it's think of being addressed in, at least in lar or written reps. I'm pretty certain I gave a response in that context, but I'll let Mr. Hanna speak now as well. Thank you very much. Mr. Mac, Mr. Hannah, please.

1:36:22

Um,

1:36:23

it. Hector fed solar project is is

1:36:28

further safe.

1:36:31

It's to the site of the A 17,

1:36:36

and therefore

1:36:40

looking to towards heckington Fenn from southcombe, or from heckington Fenn from southcombe, you will have that barrier of the A 17, both views,

1:36:55

and therefore,

1:36:58

I considered

1:37:02

the assessment of site crime, as I said, from a holistic point of view, in terms of its contribution,

1:37:10

offsetting to the significance of the asset and of the association and functionality, functionality within The surrounding landscape.

1:37:20

The effect is from the wider landscape, and that's why I deemed a slight impact. I looked at how you could view the

1:37:33

proposed development from the site, and I stood at the pathway near the river, where you could see where the Solar Site is, clearly. And there are glimpse views, but they are glimpsed views,

1:37:48

and therefore, looking from the site,

1:37:52

it's slight impact

1:37:56

from the proposed development to the

1:38:00

asset. Yes, you can see the tower, and the tower is

1:38:07

set within a tree line,

1:38:11

but you can't understand or

1:38:16

appreciate what that tower was. You can see a tower, I think you have to be a heritage professional or an archeologist to sort of get a really good idea of what that tower is and why that tower is important. It could, from a distance, merely be an 18th century folly set in design grounds.

1:38:39

It's hard for the lay person to pick that up. Yes, it's sits within the landscape. It's viewed within the landscape. But part of significance is also understanding the functionality, the association and the purpose of that asset. And that's the view that I was taking in my assessment.

1:39:02

Thank you for that clarification. Mr. Hanna,

1:39:05

can I just clarify as well, following from Mr. Bentley's intervention, just very quickly

1:39:11

in terms of the inter effects on heritage assets, particularly following the intervention that we had from Mr. Mac is, has hackington solar farm been considered

1:39:26

so much for the applicant to correct my previous statement as well? I think the hackington fund this year was made in January 2025, so predated our the submission of our application, and

1:39:38

it was considered, and it

1:39:41

was a feature of the cumulative assessment because of that. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Bentley, is there any further points that you would like to make in Historic Environment? Matthew Bentley, not CAS District Council, no. Not in relation to St Andrew's church in as being South current tower. Just one slight point of correction and.

1:40:00

The hickington fen is north of the A 17. Higgins and Fen solar farm is north of the A 17, so it is more visible in the landscape and potentially triggers into that cumulative effects that I believe will be potentially discussed at a later time. No, my, my only further point regards a historic environment is in and around the surrounding area, with regards to Andrews church in asgobee,

1:40:24

as could be Hall, and a element of design park land is set within the setting of that church. This is has been raised in our local impact report as having an impact as well. So there's also a cumulative impact on a number of heritage assets at as good be the bespoke access road will impact all of those, and I think greater weight should be prescribed to the assessment and understanding of those assets in as well as the church in isolation as well. Thank you, Mr. Bentley, I I'm of the view that through my questioning, even though I did not mention all of the specific assets that you have mentioned, I think that the principle of situation has been mentioned. So I would propose that perhaps if that issue has already been raised by yourselves within written representations, then we leave that to be dealt in writing by the applicant.

1:41:20

So in that case, then I would now just ask quickly if Lincolnshire county council would like to make any further comments on this specific issue.

1:41:30

Thank you. Stephanie Hall, Lincoln County Council. I'm joined by Mr. Mark Knighton, which is K, N, I, G, H, T, O, N, or

1:41:37

Lincolnshire County Council this issue, I'll just ask him if he wants to say anything. Thank you very much. Miss Hall, yes. Thank you, sir. Most of the points have been covered. The two things I'd like, if people just confirm your name, please, Knight and Lincolnshire County Council. Thank you, Mr. Knighton, if you would like to continue playing. So the two points I'd like to raise in addition to what has already been said, the first one concerns chime tower. So from the assessment where that's been done already, it would be helpful if we had a Z TV from the tower, from the top of the tower, considering that that was part of its historical function.

1:42:15

Currently, the assessment doesn't include that information. And I think when we're considering its setting, is certainly pertinent to include that. The

1:42:24

other point I'd like to raise is on historic farmsteads. This is non designated and designated assets. Whilst I appreciate that the applicant has gone to great lengths to

1:42:35

undertake assessment work for the individual farmsteads, it would be appropriate, I think, in the context of Lincolnshire's rural landscape to consider a group value in terms of heritage for this. We've put this to the applicant, but so far, they haven't been forthcoming with wanting to undertake any further assessment work in this area.

1:42:58

Those both points that you wanted to raise. Mr. Titan, yes. Thank you very much. Right. Can I ask the applicant to comment on those two points, particularly in relation of the suitability and appropriateness of

1:43:17

views from the top of the tower, in relation to assessment of the impact of the proposed development on heritage assets and then the funds that issue that was raised as well by Miss Knighton. Thank you. Thank

1:43:44

Tony Hannah applicant,

1:43:48

thank you for that.

1:43:50

Regarding the Z TV,

1:43:54

it's, it's something we've we've done before on other fortified assets,

1:44:00

I think for this particular site, it would be extremely difficult to get to the top to the the tower and to do a visualization, I think, from the base of the tower,

1:44:14

a Z TV Looking southwest, east and north would be, would be agreeable?

1:44:25

Mr. Knight, and can I ask you to please comment on that

1:44:31

feasible tool? Yeah, Martin for Lincolnshire county council, yeah, that's feasible. I mean, we're asking for desktop modeling here, so it should be feasible to do that. I

1:44:44

I would, I would, I would like, would the applicant like to comment on that? I believe that

1:44:52

we have the information that it would be feasible to do that via digital work. So would, would anyone like to comment on that?

1:45:02

If you allow us just one moment, just to confirm instructions with clients to make. Thank

1:45:19

you. Tony Hannah, applicant,

1:45:21

with regards to the desktop modeling for site crime tower, I think that's appropriate. We could consider that. Thank you very much. Mr. Hannah, can we get an action from the applicant to then carry out that assessment? Please. Thank you.

1:45:39

In terms of the farmstead, with regards to the

1:45:44

group value of the farmstead, we would be happy to carry out an appraisal on the non designated second action then as well. Thank you very much. If I could ask the applicant to please take note of that. Thank you very much. Any further else? Anything else from Mr. Knighton, no,

1:46:05

right. I do have councilor Chapman, I note that you have raised your hand.

1:46:13

I assume that you would like to intervene on this specific point.

1:46:17

Yes, sorry. The key is publicly available from for South Kime tower, from the

1:46:26

manor house. So you know, as it's publicly available, I would suggest that the applicant, if they haven't already done so, go up the tower so they can actually see the impact that the solar array will actually have on that and I do believe that you this is the this solar array will have

1:46:51

an intrinsic impact

1:46:55

on the views from the top that tower that the public currently see. That's that's very useful. Thank you very much, Councilor Chapman. Can

1:47:04

I

1:47:06

believe that the fundamental points that the assessment needs to be done? I take councilor Chapman's point that was very useful in terms of it being accessible, and therefore I think that that further strengthens the argument for that assessment to be done

1:47:22

either virtually, as we were discussing earlier, or actually via access, physical access to the tower itself.

1:47:32

If it is possible, I'm assuming that it is as it was just

1:47:37

I'm led to believe that the access to the top of the tower is not possible.

1:47:45

Certainly.

1:47:47

What if I could ask councilor Chapman to please confirm

1:47:54

if it is your understanding, Councilor Chapman that it is accessible to the public.

1:48:03

Yes councilor Chapman, as the parish council, has used the top of the tower to place a variety of beacons at various points over the last few years, and it is accessible to the parish council and there and other members of the public who show an interest, so I see no reason why it would not be accessible. So is that? Is that? Is that a process that needs apologies? Councilor Chapman, just to clarify. So is there a process that it needs we need to go through in order to have access? So is there some sort of system, locked system that we would that prevents free public access. Basically, that's

1:48:50

anybody. The people who I know, who've been up there, have just knocked on the door of the manor house and asked if they could use the key. So yeah, it's, it's not, yeah, as long as somebody's in, usually they don't have any issue with providing the keys so they can go and have a look, because it is very interesting.

1:49:10

Okay, thank you very much for that confirmation. In that case, then, as we were discussing earlier, it might be that it might be easier to do this via

1:49:19

digital access, but if we can actually just agree that that view would be taken into consideration, I think that that's the important point that we need to take from here. Thank you very much. Councilor Chapman,

1:49:31

I'm very mindful of the time, and I want to press on. I will ask for a break shortly, because we have been going on for quite some time now. But can I just ask very quickly if Boston Borough Council would like to raise any concerns on this specific issue? I.

1:50:00

That,

1:50:03

Mr. O'Sullivan,

1:50:07

apologies, Mr. O'Sullivan, we can't hear you. Perhaps you are muted.

1:50:14

We still can't hear you. Unfortunately,

1:50:22

stop saying I'm mute. Okay, we can hear you now. Yes. Thank you, Mr. O'Sullivan,

1:50:29

would you please confirm if there are any points that you would like to make in relation to historic, Environment and Heritage? There's no points that Boston Borough Council would like to make, sir Perfect. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. O'Sullivan, right.

1:50:45

Would anyone like to make any other piece, or anyone present in today's hearing that would like to make any further points on this specific issue, on Historic Environment? Please raise your hands if you do either digitally or in the room.

1:51:03

I don't see any hands raised. Therefore I assume that no one has any further questions on this topic. And therefore we will move to item six, biodiversity and ecology, which is the next item.

1:51:17

But I propose that before I do that, we have a quick break. If that is acceptable to everyone, I propose a 15 minute break, perhaps so if we could come back and resume the hearing at 20 past four, and as agreed earlier, we will, I will try and wrap things up today until half past five, please. Thank you very much. Thank you. Bye.