



## Hearing Transcript

<b>Project:</b>	Frodsham Solar Farm
<b>Hearing:</b>	Compulsory acquisition hearing 1 (CAH1) - Part 2
<b>Date:</b>	24 February 2026

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:09 - 00:00:42:02

Good morning everybody. I make it 1110. And, um, the compulsory acquisition here in number one is resumed. So welcome back everybody. The next point on the agenda is point three C is when we hear from any affected persons. Now we've already had a number of people speak and there wasn't anybody else in the room or online who announced themselves as an infected person. I just wanted to double check in case anybody has, um, joined us since the the opening of this hearing.

00:00:42:09 - 00:00:51:09

Anybody in the room? No. And are there any other affected persons who wish to speak who've joined us online?

00:00:55:09 - 00:01:21:27

No, I think I can, um, I can see all the names there and nobody's putting their hand up. So thank you. We'll move on to point 3D which is a discussion on protective provisions now. Mr. Fox, you already ran through quite a number of protective provisions in association with the summary earlier in the hearing. Are there any of the points that you would like to raise on this matter?

00:01:24:02 - 00:01:30:06

Let's talk about that. No, I think I think I tried to cover every party's in the schedules at the DCA. So thank.

00:01:30:08 - 00:02:00:26

You. The the other item I've got on my list is the Liverpool back's limited representations. And I think we last heard from them on the 19th of July. January of July, January 2026. Um, that was, in my mind, a more of a holding response, saying that discussions were ongoing with them. Have you got any update on those discussions?

00:02:02:03 - 00:02:22:21

Mr. Fox asked applicant. So we had a helpful meeting with them a week or two ago. Um, I don't want to preempt some of the discussions on this two agenda, but I think everything's interrelated in terms of this point around cumulative effects and the various scenarios that we've talked about in our technical note.

00:02:22:27 - 00:02:39:25

Well, if you could give us an update on where you've got to, and then we can always come back to any specific points further down the line. I know Mr. Wallace will have some questions for you tomorrow. Um, and Mrs. Bello may well have some as well, but could you just give us an update on your position, please?

00:02:40:06 - 00:03:14:26

So, Mr. Fox, about the applicant. So, um, the I suppose the position of both parties is best expressed as it is in the statement of common ground. Um, that was submitted and that sets out both parties. Um,

both parties position um on all of the issues um raised, uh, you know, in summary, our, our our position is that, um, if if we are building at the same time, we've put sufficient controls into our consents and the question is if sufficient controls are put into their consent and if they're building their cable.

00:03:14:28 - 00:03:33:25

So their, um, pipeline, after we've built our scheme, then, you know, we set out what we think our position is, which is that we have no control of how they do that. It's for them to mitigate. Um, but I we shouldn't say more than that without them here. I think the position is is is an SSG.

00:03:34:13 - 00:03:40:22

So when you said you've had some discussions a couple of weeks ago that nothing's moved along since the SOC.

00:03:41:18 - 00:03:49:01

Yes, sir. I think I think it was it was generally a repetition of our respective positions in that it is a.

00:03:49:03 - 00:03:57:01

And I know you haven't got a crystal ball, but do you think you'll move things forward Or do you think it'll just stay as it is.

00:03:57:19 - 00:04:02:18

At home apart the applicant? From our position, I think it's most likely it will stay. Stay as it is.

00:04:02:25 - 00:04:26:20

Um, I'm just asking that because, of course, we need to get our head around how we proceed on this matter. Um, and we'll be giving some thought to that ahead of the questions tomorrow. But, um, I wonder if the council can help me with some information as well. What's the current status of the the Runcorn planning application with your council?

00:04:28:27 - 00:04:29:27

Um, Paul Friston.

00:04:29:29 - 00:04:43:22

Cheshire West and Chester Council, um, application is still pending. Um, with, uh, going through the consultation process and discussions with them. Yeah, I'm not the case, officer, but, uh, so I don't know the detail of it, but.

00:04:43:28 - 00:04:47:21

Is there a planning performance agreement in place? No.

00:04:49:19 - 00:04:50:28

Um, I'm seeing a head shake.

00:04:51:00 - 00:05:00:18

That Cheshire West and Chester Council. Sir, I don't think so. Um, as far as I'm aware, there isn't a planning performance agreement in place, but I'll check that for you and confirm.

00:05:00:20 - 00:05:07:09

It would be helpful for us to know if there's any, um, target timescales for determination

00:05:09:00 - 00:05:10:27

absent. I'm sorry. Would you like to say.

00:05:10:29 - 00:05:24:25

Yeah, that's absolutely fine. We'll get an idea of that from you. I know the case officer is not in this week, but we'll find out and come back to you on the planning, performance, agreement and timescales for determination so that you've got an idea of what's going on with that.

00:05:24:27 - 00:05:42:00

Okay. Well, we'll take that down as an action point for you to come back on timescales. There's a couple of other points I'd like to ask you about. So, um, perhaps just provide us with a summary note on all of the points that we're discussing today. Um.

00:05:44:11 - 00:06:13:20

Now, looking at the, the extent of that proposed development. Part of it appears to go into Halton Borough Council. Is that correct? Yes. And does Cheshire West and Chester and Halton Borough Council have any and joint working arrangements, or have they agreed a protocol for the determination of that cross boundary planning application?

00:06:16:12 - 00:06:21:11

For some Cheshire West I'd have to check anything formal. I don't believe so.

00:06:21:13 - 00:06:57:20

We'll take this in the the action points. Um, I'll summarize what, um, what I'd like in this note then the. The reason I'm asking that is because of course, um, Liverpool Basics Limited as suggesting a planning condition could deal with this. And if it's a cross boundary planning application and depending on the protocol that's been agreed, I would assume that both planning authorities would need to agree to that condition, and we haven't heard anything from Halton Borough Council about this.

00:06:58:11 - 00:07:06:24

Um, and similarly, we haven't heard anything from Holton about their prospective timescales for determination.

00:07:08:14 - 00:07:09:02

Um,

00:07:10:23 - 00:07:43:00

so we'd like to test that a bit more with in the benefit of that information. So just to summarize for the action point, um, an update on the planning application from Cheshire West and Chester Council,

please. Um, an update in respect of Halton Borough Council, whether there's any agreed protocol between the two local planning authorities, because it may well be that the consideration is travelling at different speeds.

00:07:43:02 - 00:07:53:25

So we'd like to know what the prospect is of them being determined within the timescales for us not only examining but reporting.

00:07:55:22 - 00:08:05:19

And that will be July, when we have to submit to the Secretary of State. Um, and then whether any

00:08:07:09 - 00:08:20:03

whether the Liverpool Basics Limited proposed mechanism for dealing with this matter has been discussed with Halton Borough Council, and how

00:08:21:27 - 00:08:29:05

any approach to conditions would be dealt with between the two authorities. Yeah. Thank you.

00:08:31:23 - 00:09:08:04

Sir. And if I may, just to make a couple of conceptual points, if I may. Um, it was just it was just really to note that, um, on 18th of December, Natural England submitted their response to that planning application and quotes, it said. Naturally, the advice is insufficient. Information has been provided to inform the conclusions of the HRA, and further information is required to demonstrate that the proposed development will not impact on existing mitigation land for the project, wind farm and or have any combination. Impact on mitigation proposed as part of the Frodsham Solar Farm Development Consent Order, which may impact on birds populations outside the designated sites.

00:09:09:06 - 00:09:19:07

So I think Natural England has set out their position on that application. There's currently on the portal for that application. There's no response from the applicant on that, but obviously we're not aware of any private discussions.

00:09:19:19 - 00:09:36:07

Thank you. Well, at this present time, I'm just looking at the mechanics of how it may work from a planning point of view. But as I said earlier, Mr. Wallace and Mrs. Bellow will have questions on on that point you've just raised. So we'll be coming back to that point.

00:09:36:09 - 00:09:36:24

Yes.

00:09:36:26 - 00:09:42:03

Only raised in the context that given the Natural England have said that that would like the impact on timescales is onerous.

00:09:42:05 - 00:10:12:15

Yeah. Thank you. That's helpful. Um, I don't think I've got any other points on the protective provisions. So that takes us to 0.3 on the agenda. And it's any of the matters that the examining authority wishes to raise in respect of land and rights. I don't have any. I'll check with my colleagues. Mr. Wallace, do you have any? No. And Mrs. Bello. No you don't.

00:10:12:17 - 00:10:23:08

So just before we begin to wrap up. Would you like to go through the the points that you said you'd come back to us on.

00:10:24:24 - 00:10:50:14

Uh, Mr. Fox and the applicant? Um, I think so. I mainly have, um, checking the land registry for the option and whether that's been registered. Um, for the Cheshire Green property, uh, land. Um, we will, um, make submissions there on on the on that on their plot and clarify that bullet point in the name of the reasons that you had been questioning us about.

00:10:50:22 - 00:10:54:11

Um, sorry. Did you say you'd update this thing to reasons. I didn't quite catch her?

00:10:54:16 - 00:11:18:05

No, I think we did just clarify in submissions, as per, um, the discussion that we had. Um, we will, um, be updating the various trackers to account for for what I've said today. Um, and within that, we will, um, you know, we plan to be able to be saying that we have provided the undertaking and the plan that intervention had asked for.

00:11:19:03 - 00:11:19:24

Okay.

00:11:21:24 - 00:11:38:10

So will that, um, is that something you're going to go away and do with, deal with as a matter of urgency? The end of it point? Yes, sir. Um, because ideally we would like, um, an update from anyone to tell us that things have progressed a deadline for.

00:11:38:12 - 00:11:38:29

Yeah.

00:11:39:02 - 00:11:41:09

So we absolutely hear you, sir. Thank you.

00:11:42:10 - 00:11:48:04

Thank you, Mr. Wallace. Mrs.. Do you have any other points that you took down today?

00:11:48:14 - 00:11:51:24

Um, yes. Yeah, it's just about the, um, the joint.

00:11:51:26 - 00:11:56:23

Statement we've got, um, that you sort of read out. You said you're going to submit that. So.

00:11:56:25 - 00:11:57:10

Yes.

00:11:57:12 - 00:11:59:02

That's part of the course, I guess.

00:11:59:04 - 00:12:00:02

Yes. That's all for.

00:12:00:04 - 00:12:00:19

Me.

00:12:00:21 - 00:12:01:20

Thank you. And this is below.

00:12:03:06 - 00:12:13:24

Okay. That's it. So I'd just like to provide an opportunity for anybody else in the room or online to raise any points before I close this hearing.

00:12:15:20 - 00:12:18:12

Nothing knowing. Is there anybody online?

00:12:22:00 - 00:12:45:26

Okay. So thank you to everybody for participating in this hearing today. We do appreciate it. And as we've just been through, we've taken down a few action points. Um, we'll publish our action points as soon as possible. It's usually within the week following the hearings, and they'll be published on the national infrastructure website.

00:12:47:19 - 00:13:25:04

Um, we will be hoping that all of those actions are addressed by deadline for. I know it's a pretty short timescale, but, um, it is a compressed overall timescale for this project. Um, and just a reminder that if you gave oral representations today, I did cover this with the event that we'd like a submission of those deadline for. So thank you all for attending this morning. And, um, hope you have a refreshing break before the hearing this afternoon, which is scheduled to commence at 1:30 p.m..

00:13:25:14 - 00:13:31:07

So thank you, everybody, and I'll now close this compulsory acquisition hearing. Thank you.

00:13:31:09 - 00:13:31:25

Thank you sir.