

Fosse Green Energy_ISH1_Session 1_06.01.26

Tue, Jan 06, 2026 4:56PM • 1:35:37

00:05

Well, good afternoon. It's now half past two, and time for this issue specific hearing one in respect of the proposed frost, green Foss, green frost. Green

00:18

Foss, Green energy project to open. Can I just confirm that everybody in the room can hear me, yeah? And can somebody online please indicate whether they can Yeah, and you'll see us.

00:33

Yes.

00:35

Thank you.

00:42

Can I also check with the case team that live stream and recordings are both? Yep, thank you.

00:50

My name is Graham Gould. I'm a charter town planner, and I'm planning inspector, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead panel member to examine this application, and I'll ask my colleague to introduce herself

01:07

Good afternoon. My name is Frances Wilkinson. I am a charter time planner, and I'm a planning inspector, and I have also been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a panel member for the examination of this application. Thank you. I

01:29

And together, we comprise the examining authority that will be examining examining this application. I'd also like to introduce colleagues from the inspectorate who are here in support

01:43

Simon Rainwood, who's the case manager, and Jessica Dunlop, who is

01:49

case officer. We're also supported here this afternoon by

01:56

representatives from the audio visual company, production 78 who've been contracted by the applicant to provide the recording and live streaming and other Audio Visual Services, and as you have just seen, they've assisted in addressing an issue I had with a screen

02:14

if at any stage during the course of the hearing you hear either Mrs. Wilkinson or I having any discussions with the production 78 team, it will be because we've encountered some sort of technical issue and for no other reason.

02:34

Now, turning to a couple or a few housekeeping matters, can I ask that everybody turns their mobile phones and other diversity

02:47

gizmos to silent.

02:51

It's the cold.

02:54

In terms of toilets, the ladies toilets facilities are back out in the main corridor to my left hand side, and the men's toilets are on the right hand side.

03:12

We're not expecting any fire alarm tests, so if the alarm does sound, we will be required to evacuate the building. Members of staff from the buildings here will direct us either whether we'd have to leave from an exit behind us, or we exit by the main building. And the assembling point is opposite the branch of Greg's. There's a

03:37

an open space area. We wait there and await instructions as to when we can return to the building.

03:47

Today's hearing is being undertaken in a hybrid manner, which means that some of us are present in the room while others are attending via Microsoft Teams online,

04:01

if you are participating online, will ensure that you are treated in the same way that our participants in the room will be treated,

04:14

as we've requested for participants in the room. For those of you who are online, can you please ensure that devices like telephones etc, are kept on silent or mute.

04:32

If you are participating online

04:36

and wish to

04:37

draw our attention to wishing to raise a point. Can you either use the raise hand function in teams, or if you can't get that to work, just physically raise your hand. One of us will spot that, and we'll bring you in at an appropriate time during discussions. A

04:56

recording of today's hearing will be made available on the.

05:00

FOSS green energy section of the national infrastructure planning website, as soon as practical after the hearing has been completed.

05:10

With that in mind, please ensure you speak clearly, clearly into a microphone, stating your name and who you are representing each and every time you speak, if you're not at a table, a roving microphone is available and will be brought to you, so please wait until that roving microphone has been brought to you before you start speaking.

05:32

A link to the planning inspectorates privacy notice was provided in the notifications for these hearings. We assume that everyone has

05:44

familiarized themselves with that documentation

05:48

and is clear how your personal data and when you participate in the hearing be handled.

05:58

If you aren't clear about any of that, would you please speak to a member of the case team? The

06:10

hearing is being recorded and live stream. The recordings will be retained and published as a public record. The planning inspectorates practice is to retain such recordings for a period of five years following the Secretary of State's decision. Consequently, if you pass it, participate in today's hearing, it's important that you understand that you will be recorded and and you are therefore consenting to the retention and publication of that digital recording. The

06:40

examining authority will only ever ask information to be placed on the public record that we consider is important and relevant. It will will therefore only be in very

06:52

rare occasions that we'd ask you to provide any personal information of a type that most of us would prefer not to be in the public domain,

07:00

therefore, to avoid a need to edit the digital recordings, we'd ask that you try your best not to say anything in public that you'd wish to be kept private.

07:17

Recording

07:19

that is being made here today is the only official recording for this event.

07:24

However, if anyone anybody wishes to record this hearing, you're free to do so, but in so doing, please ensure that you do not interfere with the general conduct of the hearing and ensure that you are respectful to those participating. You

07:43

The hearing will follow the agenda that was published on the national infrastructure planning website for this project on the 19th of January,

07:52

and that's under examination Library Reference. EV, two, hyphen, 001,

07:58

it would be helpful if everyone had a copy of that in front of you. And can I ask the applicants team to display a copy of the agenda on screen? Please?

08:13

I would, however, say that the agenda is for guidance only, and we

08:18

may add other considerations or issues. As we progress,

08:26

we will conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions have been made and all questions asked and responded to.

08:34

But if the discussions can't be concluded, then it may be necessary, necessary for us to prioritize matters and defer other matters to written questions.

08:48

Likewise, if you cannot answer a question that's put to you and required to get the information requested, then can you please indicate

08:58

and we'll then take the response in writing? Yeah. I'm now going to ask those participating in today's hearing to introduce themselves,

09:15

and would ask that you indicate your name you're representing the

09:24

which agenda items you can speak to.

09:28

If you're not representing an organized organization, then just please give your name and summarize your interest in the application again, confirm which agenda item you wish to speak to.

09:42

Introduce. Introducing yourself, Could you please also indicate what title you'd like to be addressed by Mr. Mrs. Miss or doctor, etc?

09:55

So turning to the applicant first, what I was.

10:00

Suggests is perhaps, if you just introduce, introduced those colleagues who are going to be speaking, perhaps to the first item, three, one, and then as we get through the other agenda items, as we progress, if you introduce, on each occasion, it'll be easier. And likewise for the councils, because you've got teams, if you just introduce the relevant person or people for the agenda items, three, one at this point, so turn into the applicant first.

10:34

So thank you. My name is Reuben Taylor King's Council. I'm instructed by Womble bond Dickinson, on behalf of the applicant.

10:45

To my right, immediate right, I have Mr. Gillette, and to his right, there's Mr. Snedden, who will be speaking to item agenda three. One, I dare say I'll chip in occasionally. Two,

11:01

thank you.

11:14

Thank you. Can I then turn to North Kesteven District Council.

11:19

Thank you, sir. My name is John Hunter. I am Council. I appear on behalf of the district council.

11:26

To my left is Mr. Ben Hunt, who will be speaking in respect of matter 3.1 and again, maybe some additional points from

11:40

me. Then turning to Lincolnshire county council, good afternoon. I'm Justine Foster. I'm the infrastructure manager at Lincolnshire county council. Immediate to my left is Miss Amy Charlesworth, who's also a infrastructure officer. And to my right is Mr. Andrew Barton, who's a principal infrastructure officer at the council. And Mr. Barton will be speaking on items three, 3.3

12:05

I will also have some points to raise on 3.1 3.2

12:09

we do also have some other technical officers in the room and online, and if we reach the those items on the agenda, I will introduce them at that point.

12:21

Thank you. There was quite a lot of echo with Mrs. Foster's microphone. Is there anything that can be done,

12:31

getting a nod from the back that they're going to try and do something?

12:47

Then turning to national highways. I think we have a representative online.

12:55

Good afternoon. I'm Miss Brittany groven, on behalf of national highways, and we wish to speak on agenda. Items, 3.5 effects for transport, traffic and transport. Items, A, B, C and D. Thank you.

13:13

Thank you. And I also understand we have representatives

13:18

from Historic England.

13:25

And good morning, sir. Mr. Tim Allen, I'm a team leader with Historic England, and there to answer any questions you may have on item 3.4

13:39

Thank you. Mr. Allen, I and turning to colbury, Colby parish council.

14:01

Hello, I'm Teresa Brewer from Colby parish council. I'm a parish councilor, and I would like to speak on items 3.2 and 3.3

14:16

Thank you.

14:18

Then turning to Thorpe on the Hill parish council. Hello. Good afternoon. My name is Nick Lyons, and I'm chair of Thorp on the Hill parish council. Referred to me as Mr.

14:31

And I would like to speak on items 3.1

14:35

3.2

14:36

and 3.5

14:38

Thank you very much.

14:41

Thank you.

14:45

Then turning to

14:49

Cliff villages, solar Action Group is it can be all right, if we just refer to you as the action group as a short handle,

14:58

thank you. Marianne, are.

15:00

Overton, and I am a councilor. And I know I'm not. I am definitely not representing the district or council because they are very expertly already represented, but I am actually acting as a councilor in the time representing the residents. So we sometimes agree and sometimes disagree with what the county council final documents are but so we do have an independent voice, and I am here to on behalf of the cliff villagers solar action group. So I hope that is acceptable to you.

15:38

I'll just

15:40

turn those points.

15:43

Does it give you any concern

15:46

that we referred to councilor Overton rather than Mrs. Or anything else?

15:52

It doesn't give the applicant any concern, but

15:57

the

16:00

councilor Overton might want to check in the rules that she operates under as a councilor to ensure that she's not breaching any particular rule.

16:15

And I'm also just going to ask the District Council whether they've got any observations as to

16:22

how we address

16:25

council or Mrs. Overton,

16:29

I think censuses, sorry, John Hunt, on behalf of the district council, the consensus is that the missus would be the correct that Mrs. Yes, I

16:45

Mrs. Overton or councilor. Are you content then that we we refer to you as, Mrs.

16:52

I've been a councilor for 36 years, and I'm loath to drop the title after all that time, when I do act as a councilor, but I am clear that I am not representing the county or district council here, and I'll just make that clear. Thank you. And I think that's why the issue arises as to what the correct title should be,

17:19

perhaps at an adjournment, and we will have one this afternoon. Perhaps you have a word with the council's team and you can clarify the position.

17:29

Okay,

17:53

and then next on my list, Carl Conan,

18:01

sorry, could. Could you just wait for the mic? Apparently the recording doesn't pick up the voice.

18:09

Thank you. Thank you sir.

18:13

Thank you sir. I'm Karl Kern and a resident of Thorpe on the hill, and I would like to speak to point 3.1,

18:20

thank you.

18:38

And the next on my list is Mark weiter,

18:44

thank you, sir. I'm Mark weiter, resident of Thorpe on the hill, and I'm here to speak to 3.2 alternatives to the proposed development. Thank you. Thank you. And

18:56

then I've got on the list. Andrew Keeley,

19:08

good afternoon. Mr. Gold, yeah. My name is Mr. Andrew Keeling. I am a resident of buzzingham, and I would like to say something to point to item 3.2, of the agenda. Please.

19:23

Thank you. And then.

19:25

Michael Campbell,

19:32

good afternoon. Michael Campbell, Mr. I'm a resident of Thompson, and I wish to speak to your agenda. Item, 3.2 Thank you. And

19:46

then Martin Elvin,

19:58

not seeing an indication.

20:00

Um Thomas Fen,

20:09

good afternoon. My name is Tom Fen. I'm a resident of Thorpe on the hill, and I would like to talk about the impact on the recreational immunity of Thorpe on the hill. The circular wall, I can't see which number that is probably 3.3

20:26

not sure it

20:29

might come into the transportation section.

20:35

I'm going to come on to running order and what we think we're going to cover this afternoon in a minute,

20:41

but it's mainly the impact on the visual landscape with character. As far as, yeah, as far as this hearing is concerned, this round of hearings, we're not really covering any visual matters we expect, so that will be something that we will be looking at in greater detail in the second round of hearings, presuming that we hold those hearings, and we suspect that we will, and part of the reason for that is

21:10

we're waiting to receive both North kesterman and

21:17

lincolnshire's local impact reports and their written representations, which will no doubt go into greater detail on visual matters. So that's part of the reason why we didn't schedule

21:30

visual matters For this round of hearings.

21:35

Okay?

21:42

And then Philip heard

22:08

and moving on, Samuel Wheatley,

22:16

Alistair King,

22:18

Mr. King,

22:23

Hi, I'm Alistair King, Mr. Local resident who enjoys the open countryside.

22:31

I'd like to speak on 3.1

22:38

David Crampton,

22:44

good afternoon. David Thompson, my resident of North East even, yes, refer to me as Mr. I'd like to make a comment of about 3.1 but I'm sure there may be other points I'd like to make comment upon once I've heard the presentations. Thank you.

23:12

Is there anybody else here in the room that wishes speaks? Yes, sir.

23:23

Mark Williams, member of Springwell solar Action Group and local resident of north of Stephen

23:30

would like to have the ability to speak on several of the agenda points,

23:34

but we'll probably avoid 3.4 I

23:43

bikes just coming,

23:49

Barry Smith, who referred to as Mr. Resident or student on a member of the North solar Action Group, was to talk on cybersecurity issues.

24:09

Is there anyone else in the room?

24:14

Not seeing any indications, then, is there anybody online?

24:26

I'm not seeing any indications there. Thank you.

24:39

In terms of what we think we're likely to cover this afternoon,

24:46

we expect that we will cover,

24:51

hopefully, all of agenda item 3.1,

24:56

which is about the scale and generating capacity of the proposed.

25:00

Development, and certainly get into and hopefully conclude item 3.2 which is alternative to the proposed development.

25:10

And we'd hope that we will get part the way into item 3.3 which is effects for agriculture.

25:20

I think it's

25:22

sitting here as we start off this, this hearing that we will not

25:27

get to cultural, cultural heritage or archeology, which is under Section 3.4

25:36

and therefore anything thereafter, which would include transport and proposals for biodiversity net gain. So if there are either anybody in the room or online for items 3.4 onwards, if you wish to do something else this afternoon rather than listen to the hearing, then by all means,

26:01

either leave or log off. Certainly the examining authority has no concerns about that. But if, however you wish to stay either in the room or online, then again, by all means, do so. But we don't want you to compel anybody, particularly perhaps on the council side. If you if you've got people in the background who could be doing other things, then by all means, they can be released to do other things this afternoon. Equally, if the applicants team have got people in the background

26:34

maybe wish to do other things, by all means, do that.

27:03

So that takes us. That takes us to Agenda Item two, which is the purpose of the hearing this afternoon. So I'll just very briefly touch on that before we get into the substantive matters. The hearing will be a structured discussion led by us. Its purpose is to give us an opportunity to hear evidence concerning a range of environmental matters. Please be assured that we are familiar with what you've already submitted to us so you don't have to repeat at length what you've already put to us in writing. And I'd also just like to point out at this point is that submissions carry equal weight, whether they're given to us verbally at hearings or in written form.

27:49

When you are answering the examining authority's questions, please ensure that you provide succinct answers where a question is deserving of a yes, no type answer, then please respond yes with a yes, no, followed by any amplification if necessary. It's important to note that we are just at the very start of the examination, and we will be exploring matters of detail on the application at future hearings and in writing as we progress through the examination,

28:24

we've prepared the agenda for this afternoon tomorrow, having regard to the applicant's submitted documents and the relevant representations that we've received to date from other interested parties.

28:37

Just in terms of timing, we will depending on how the discussions are going, we will aim to have a break of around 15 minutes at some point in the afternoon, and depending on where we are with the discussions, that's really all I wanted to say, really on the purpose of the hearing. But before we start on the substantive matters of the agenda, are there any questions about the proceedings that anybody wants to raise with us at this point? Anybody in the room

29:11

not seeing any hands? Is there anybody virtually,

29:18

I'm not seeing any hands either. So in that point, I'll hand back to Mr. Gould to start us off with the matters for discussion at the hearing. Thank you.

29:37

Thank you. Before we actually begin the discussion of the proposed development scale and generating output.

29:45

I've just got a couple of potentially higher level questions for really seeking clarification from the applicant.

29:56

So the first of those questions relates to the.

30:00

Review of connections that the National Energy System Operator niso, for short, has been undertaking with the government of gem and the generation and transmission industry

30:16

as part of the decision making process that niso has recently been through.

30:21

Has the applicant been notified as to whether it continues to have a good connection offer,

30:30

and in terms of any communication that niso has provided, does the offer or the confirmation of the grid offer have any implement sorry, implications for the assumptions that have been made

30:48

about, for example, the commencement of construction

30:52

and the rolling out of the proposed development.

31:00

Reuben Taylor for the applicant, I'm going to ask Mr. Gillette to take that question.

31:07

Good afternoon, Simon. Sorry, that's loud. Good afternoon. Simon Gillette for the applicant.

31:12

The applicant has heard from niso regarding its applications,

31:19

and

31:21

the details of those are

31:24

will come kind of in later in time. But it's been told that it has achieved a gate to connection for the solar scheme and a gate one connection for the battery scheme.

31:41

And that doesn't get exactly the wording you use so but that is that does not change any of the assumptions on the

31:51

scheme as proposed.

31:58

Thank you. In terms of gate one AND gate two. Can you just very briefly explain what that actually means in terms of timings?

32:08

Certainly. So Simon, get it for the applicant, the schemes gate two connection for the solar

32:16

provides for a connection within the window 2031 to 2035 and that is concerned. Consistent with the grid connection offer

32:28

that the scheme

32:30

has

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and has included within its documentation,

32:36

the gate one offer is effectively in a

32:42

kind of a parking position where the

32:48

date of that connection has not yet been confirmed. So

33:08

and as niso yet indicated when it's going to give confirmation in respect to gate one offers

33:16

so Simon Gillick for the applicant, from an industry perspective, that's an ongoing process involving a number of different forms of communication from both niso and the distribution network operators to applicants in terms of your specific question in relation To this scheme. I don't have that information to do.

33:44

Sorry, Simon, get it for the

33:47

applicant.

33:49

The applicant, I don't think, has, has that specific information a when the letter will arrive, I

34:04

thank you, Mr. Gillette,

34:07

and second question relates to

34:13

national grids transmission. Sorry, national grid electricity transmission proposals for the substation near navenby.

34:25

If the proposed development, your development is was consented,

34:33

but the proposed naven Beast substation did not receive permission and or was not built. What implications would that have

34:44

for the delivery of your proposal?

34:50

Simon Gillick, for the applicant,

34:53

our understanding is that National Grid is preparing a separate application for.

35:00

For the navee substation to be submitted under TCPA in I think they use the words early, 2026

35:10

there is no obvious reason that we're aware of, sir, as to why that substation should be refused its planning application.

35:23

The reason that National Grid is taking forward the application itself, as opposed to the applicant taking forward the application as part of this scheme, is that the substation is proposed to service a number of separate applications, some of which are in the public domain and some of which are not.

35:48

It's important to note, sir, that national grid has a commercial obligation under the grid connection agreement currently signed by the applicant to deliver a grid connection to the applicant

36:03

and under M gets, national grid electricity transmissions, transmission owners, license, standard license condition, Delta four, alpha d for

36:16

a m get is required To undertake all reasonable steps to obtain the required consents

36:28

in terms of implication, therefore, sir,

36:31

if the nav and B substation was not consented, the immediate next step would be for n get to find An alternate connection point for the scheme under that commercial agreement so

37:31

thank you. Mr. Gillette, does anybody want to make any observations about what the applicant has just said? Really,

37:41

those two questions were more of a factual nature for us to understand

37:46

what happened on the grid connection front because of the work that niso has been doing in the background.

37:56

And we're also acutely aware from the relevant representations that have been made that a number of parties have queried the fact

38:04

that the proposed generating station would be reliant on another bit of infrastructure that will be provided by national grid electricity transmission or N Get but does anybody wish to make any observations on

38:30

me, John Hunter, on behalf of North Coast even District Council. So we've obviously made representations on the need for a requirement linking the DCO to the duvenby development. I think so we,

38:47

in light of what's just I think we will just combine our oral submissions to that part of the I don't think we want to add anything else you say was a factual clarification as to the position. So I think, I don't think we need to add anything more in response to that.

39:00

Thank you, Stanton for the clarification. This is potentially a matter that we will pick up on in

39:07

issue specific hearing two, which is the DCO one, where potentially the examining authority might be asking you what you think a mechanism might be. No doubt the applicant will respond, and then we'll take a view.

39:20

Was there anything from Lincolnshire Council?

39:24

Thank you, sir. Justine foster for Lincolnshire county council,

39:29

we did, in our relevant representation make some comments regarding nabenby substation and the timing and two projects, and we did say that we would expand on that in our local impact report, which we have done, and I appreciate that isn't submitted into the examination at this point.

39:45

So I think the only thing I'd like to add, just following on from the applicant's responses is in relation to the reasoning for the separate applications. We don't feel that that is well evidenced within.

40:00

The current application documents, and also the reasoning on why the application should not be refused is also considered to be lacking within the application documents. But as I said, we have set out our detailed case within our local employer.

40:30

See and

40:36

Mr. Barry Smith, president of Norfolk Steven and solar Action Group, although the applicant has highlighted the end gap

40:44

commitment, what hasn't been discussed at all is the SSEP, which is the strategic plan for the lay down and the great grid upgrade, or the resp, which is the regional plan, both of which will not come to fruition until about 2028

41:03

and I believe that until that time,

41:07

the requirement for the Navy substation has not yet been affirmed at either the national or the regional level. Thank you. Thank

41:46

Alistair King,

41:48

the applicant, volunteered that they have a commercial agreement with the national grid, who are obliged to provide them with a connection.

41:59

He didn't mention what the other side of that equation and we, as we all know,

42:05

National Grid may not be able to provide the naven B connection. He didn't tell us what the other side of that equation was, if this proposal doesn't go through, but naven B does.

42:19

Is there

42:21

a side of the contract whereby the applicant has some kind of obligation to national grid because they didn't take up An offer. So

42:57

hello. Michael Campbell, Selby,

43:02

I think that the recent moratorium announced by nesso on the battery storage issue is very important because apparently two of the key elements for the Navy substation are a couple of proposed battery storage units. Now it is well known at this moment in time that national grid has a very significant backlog in its work of connecting up renewable energy resources. It's somewhat of depending on one's opinion, a national scandal that there's something like a billion pounds a year currently being paid to renewable energy resources that have been put in place but do not have a grid connection, and that is obviously going to be the priority for national grid for those that already exist. Thank you.

43:59

Does the I couldn't want to respond to anything that's been said. In response to what you initially said, in response to my questions, we got a lot of responses in there.

44:12

Simon Gillette for the applicant, in response to the question on the applicant's obligation to deliver,

44:22

I guess the kind of a contractual form is that the applicant has asked grid for a connection

44:30

at different points in time, the applicant's commitment to that connection increases, essentially to ensure that the

44:42

appropriate costs are paid at the appropriate time towards

44:46

the the amount of that connection that the applicant needs to needs to fund. And that's different on a project to project basis. But there is no obligation on the applicant to to the.

45:00

Deliver that. But clearly, sir, it

45:03

makes little sense to spend money on something which

45:08

will has no

45:11

chance of being delivered or is deciding not to be delivered.

45:17

In

45:19

response to the question, question on

45:27

National Grid paying

45:30

money to renewable generators that are not connected,

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not yet connected, that is not my understanding of how

45:42

any monies are flowing to

45:44

to app, to to applicants, if you like, who have not yet connected and are not operating the system.
There's, there's, there's no

45:54

money that flows in that regard. So

46:13

thank you. So Michael Campbell and so again, just on that last point wasn't trying to say that problems were flown to applicants. The point is there is lots of renewable energy resources being switched off, which are being paid for switching off those resources. And the latest figure that I've seen is in excess of a billion pounds. The point about it was not so much the money, but the timescale and the priorities for connecting things up. One of the reasons is I understand it that neso has issued the moratorium is because there is a decade or more work to be done on connecting up a significant infrastructure of renewable resources already in place on the ground that do not yet have access to National Grid and

47:46

think what may assist the examining authority is perhaps post hearing you could produce a note that explains precisely what niso is doing to manage the process of grid connections, both for generating stations and batteries, and what the implications Are

48:08

for this project in

48:12

that mix,

48:15

yep

48:22

and tell. Taylor for the applicant, yes, so we'll, we'll ensure that that's done.

48:43

Just before we take any more comments, there was something that we meant to ask the applicant,

48:51

if you could keep a running list of action points as we go through the hearings, we'll be keeping our list. But sometimes it's difficult for us to keep on top of the list, and there's only two of us working on that. The applicant has got a slightly bigger team. And then what we will do at the end of the hearing is review that list to see with whether what you've got on your list tallies with what we've got on ours. Is that something that the applicant can arrange

49:24

and we've now got the first action for that list.

49:34

Ms Williams,

49:50

of this process, we spent pretty much nine months dancing around this subject when we were dealing with the spring roll up in.

50:00

Application, let's be absolutely brutally honest, there is no connection. Currently. There is no possibility that the FOSS green application can connect to the grid. And it's really critical that the planning team

50:17

outlines that without National Grid substation, this application cannot go forward, and for the applicant to make assumptions that that

50:29

substation will be granted is preposterous and to some extent, absolutely scandalous towards the community that is fighting against these applications is to an Can I just and supplies to all parties? Can you just moderate the language? Words like scandalous are generally not acceptable in this kind of forum.

50:57

Understand there are concerns in the community, and that's part of the process that we're hearing those concerns weighed against what the the applicant

51:09

considers it is appropriate.

51:13

But yes, can we just be a little bit careful with the language that's used? I um,

51:23

in terms of

51:28

a project that's dependent upon something else, another piece of infrastructure. Is there anything that the applicant wants to say in that context? Because

51:38

it's it's not unheard of

51:42

for projects, particularly national infrastructure projects, to proceed, but there are other elements of infrastructure required that other parties, either concurrently or at a later date pursue consents for but is there anything that the applicant wants to say in that regard?

52:06

Reuben Taylor for for the applicant,

52:09

so you'll know from the suite of NPS is that the essential policy approach for the situation facing the applicant, in this case, it's the same as is to be applied in relation to, say, an offshore wind project which doesn't yet have an onshore connection. It's commonplace for actually significant infrastructure projects such as offshore wind to be promoted without an onshore connection. And the guidance set out in en one in three and en five in relation to solar farm projects is that the same approach should be applied. So what is being done here is not unusual. Indeed, it is after the course

53:00

we've set out our position in relation to label B in the application documentation, and no doubt, others will want to question that, and we will have an opportunity to respond during this examination process. I think that's all I can say for now.

53:28

Thank you, Mr. Taylor, think

53:31

two more from floor, and then we'll move on.

53:37

We'll take three more, all right?

53:40

Um,

53:43

gentleman about first, and then we'll come forward.

53:51

Thank you. Andrew Keeling, resident of buzzingham, the comment I'd just like to make is that National Grid's September 24 consultation document for the substation clearly states that is only bringing the substation forward as a response to the grid connection requests from a number of solar farm proposals in the area, including FOSS green energy.

54:15

So I think it's evident, therefore, that it is the solar farms that are driving the substation proposal rather than national planning policy for solar deployment. So my request to the examining authority is that you look very carefully at whether you think the substation supports national policy for solar deployment, particularly as the application might well come to the planning Inspectorate at appeal.

54:47

Thank you.

54:53

Just before anybody else says anything we we need to be very clear the examiner for.

55:00

Authority's role, and for that matter, the Secretary of State

55:04

in determining

55:07

this current application is to look at this application, neither the Secretary State nor the examining authority look further in terms of any other consents that may be necessary for the substation

55:23

the substation will be an application made to North Kesterman District Council. It will be for it to determine whether or not, in the first instance, approval is granted to that

55:35

if, for whatever reason,

55:39

it doesn't approve that application, then it will be for n get to decide national grid energy transmission, to decide whether or not it wishes to make an appeal,

55:50

and then some other inspector will determine that appeal. But I think we need make it clear that where what the processes are, they are different. There are two regimes in play,

56:06

and they can both work independent, or they do work independently of one another.

56:22

Councilor, Mrs. Overton, Thank you very much indeed, Chairman, Inspector sir, a

56:30

couple of things I'd just like to pick up, and I appreciate the excellent discussion that we've just had. Firstly,

56:38

we are looking at this application, but we are looking at the benefits of this application. If the need is already fulfilled, that significantly decreases the benefit.

56:53

That's why it's important.

56:55

Looking at what niso thinks is needed is important, and I've looked through the figures as to the needs that are given out by the government January the second 2025, off their website, and it seems that the needs are fulfilled, or very nearly fulfilled for certainly for solar. And that's why I think we have to think carefully about this, because it changes the balance from past history which has been discussed. We're no longer in a situation where desperately we're trying to find places to increase the amount of renewable energy. That benefit is all but gone, and that's why I think it is important to also look at the cumulative impact. And when you rightly asked, I think to get an update on what niso is actually doing. I think it is also worth looking at the other 11 connections that are on the niso website with very little detail on many of them. They may not exist at all. We don't know, but I think it would be worth looking at, looking at them in order to get an idea of any cumulative impacts we might be seeking. And certainly in terms of priority,

58:20

if I was National Grid, I would be looking to receive renewable energy from places where you do not have to build a great deal of infrastructure from scratch

58:32

in the middle of open countryside.

58:35

So I think it is important, and I appreciate that you rightly picked up these critical points at this early stage. Thank you, sir.

58:50

Sorry we don't have clapping in hearings. I

59:09

And North Kesteven, I think you.

59:14

Thank you, sir. Nick Feltham, development manager at North Kesteven District Council, I accepted with possibly straying into issue specific hearing two session and a discussion about development consent order. Just a point in relation to the discussion a couple of minutes ago on the certainty, I suppose, the deliverability of nameby substation. This is a point that will be set out in the council's local impact report, which I accept, is not currently before you. However, it has been through our planning committee, the council's position is, in brief, that

59:47

on the back of en one requirement for an applicant to justify and explain the reasons why, although why, there being no obvious reasons why, linked infrastructure element is likely to be refused.

1:00:00

Used. This is the point about the connection and the reliance on the even be substation. The council's position is, in brief, that that

1:00:09

position has been made at only very high level by the applicant, and that we require some further information as to those, no obvious reasons, as set out in the wording of the n1 so I accept this is not yet before you in the council's LIR, but this will be one of the points that we are making formally through that process. Thank you.

1:00:35

Thank you, Mr.

1:00:37

Belford. Before we move on

1:00:40

to your summary on this

1:00:43

section the agenda. Is there anything that the applicant wants to add further?

1:00:51

Reuben Taylor for the applicant, no, sir, I think the summary will will address some of the issues. I

1:01:08

then, if we can move on to the summary,

1:01:16

I'm guessing Mr. Gillette is going to lead on this.

1:01:24

No doubt we're going to receive this post hearing in a written form.

1:01:32

Simon correct, sir, because I'm just wondering how much note taking all of us need to potentially take.

1:01:42

Not very much.

1:01:50

So Simon Gillick for the applicant,

1:01:55

in terms of this summary, I

1:01:57

think it'd be helpful to provide some context around UK's need to decarbonise with homegrown, affordable, low carbon generation.

1:02:08

In doing so, sir, we'll signpost to some relevant policy, including the NPSs and the Clean Power 2030, action plan.

1:02:16

It's important to explain how solar technology fits into the government's plan to deliver a clean power system. And with my colleague, Mr. Snedden, we will address specific scale aspects of your question.

1:02:31

And this summary cell will be relevant both to action point three point agenda item 3.1 and also 3.2

1:02:41

we will refer to the applicants planning statement that's as 098,

1:02:47

read two statements of need, app 184, these are all documents that

1:02:55

you listed as As maybe

1:02:59

referenced as well so the national policy statements for energy en one and en three, those

1:03:07

November 2023 versions as designated in January 2024

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and also the government's clean power 2030 action plan of December 2024 will also refer to the newly designated energy NPSs,

1:03:25

and so

1:03:27

it's important to go through is because it's imperative that the scale of the proposed development is considered within the context of a policy framework which requires a rapid and continuing response to climate change, the world is warming.

1:03:46

Well, I have to say that today it doesn't feel like that, and it will continue to warm until carbon emissions are sufficiently reduced.

1:03:56

We're also very aware that international relations have become tensioned and international supplies of energy have been weaponized.

1:04:06

Consumer pockets, sir, have paid for this and continue to pay the price.

1:04:11

Yet we require, as a society, secure energy supplies. Why? For our communications, for our transport, for our industrial processes, for heating, for cooling, for light, for entertainment and for our companies.

1:04:30

But sir,

1:04:32

carbon has a cumulative warming effect in the atmosphere,

1:04:36

so the need to reduce carbon emissions increases the more carbon we emit into that atmosphere. And so time is and always will be of the essence in relation to bringing forward low carbon generation schemes.

1:04:54

Government's response to these energy challenges of decarbonisation energy.

1:05:00

Security and affordability is to require the urgent, unprecedented and continuing delivery of low carbon, secure, low cost, UK generated energy,

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and this is required not only to ensure that our current electricity demand is met from low carbon supplies,

1:05:23

but also so that sufficient electricity is produced to power a growing number of electric vehicles, so petrol cars can be taken off the roads and to power homes, so that gas boilers and gas cookers can be removed from homes, and also so that all other fossil fuels can be removed as an energy source for industrial processes.

1:05:48

Referring to our application documents,

1:05:51

section 2.3, of the planning statement as 098,

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and chapter four of the statement of need, it's app 184,

1:06:01

set out the applicant's explanation of the national policy position of en one and en three in favor of low carbon developments. I won't go through the import the all the points that we make in those paragraphs verbatim, sir, but I wish to point to two key aspects of national policy which support the view that the proposed development is needed at the scale proposed,

1:06:26

and the first is around the critical national priority

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infrastructure designation set out in en one and described, I'm sorry, section 4.2 of en

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one and describes in Section 7.4, of the planning statement,

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and that carries a presumption in favor of consent for applications such as proposed development

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and the second First to paragraph 3.2 point six to three point 2.8

1:07:03

of en one where government establishes that there is a need for such applications or such developments, that the weight to be attached to that need is substantial and further so that specific contribution of Any individual project does not need to be separately considered because that need has been established.

1:07:33

Moving to the statements of needs, let's try put some numbers around

1:07:39

the level of need, and this answers one of the points that was made to you earlier, sir. Section 5.3 of statements of need provides information on the range of future electricity demand consistent with decarbonisation, which is on track with the UK's legally binding, binding targets. And section 5.4 of that document to the statement of need, provides an enumeration of the growth required in low carbon generation capacity required to meet that demand. Broadly, sir, electricity demand through the process of electrification, as I explained earlier, is expected to roughly double by 2050

1:08:23

and in order to meet that demand, electricity generation capacity in the UK will need to increase by three to four times the currently installed, approximately 110 gigawatts of generation capacity. So the need is substantial, sir.

1:08:46

Government is driving to

1:08:49

a clean power system,

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and its definition of a clean power system is set out in the clean power 2030, Action Plan. And we summarize that, sir at paragraph 5.4, point one of the statements of need,

1:09:07

the Clean Power action plan and the statement of need also both include government's capacity ranges for large scale solar schemes,

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which effectively shine a torch

1:09:22

a fixed period down the road towards decarbonisation.

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And those capacity ranges are currently 45 to 47 gigawatts of large scale solar by 2030,

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and 45 to 69 gigawatts by 2035,

1:09:42

but it's not just the growth in solar technology that's needed to achieve a clean power system.

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And government's Action Plan

1:09:54

finds also or establishes also challenging capacity ranges for wind, for new.

1:10:00

Clear for energy storage and for other low carbon flexible schemes, all of which are required to achieve its clean power system on the way to achieving net zero.

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For example, the Clean Power 2030 plan establishes a capacity range currently of 24 to 29 gigawatts of battery, energy storage, online operating by 2035

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but there are significant risks, sir, with the development of projects of all technologies. And

1:10:36

government acknowledges in its plan and its action plan, but not all technologies may deliver to the capacity ranges it has established in full, there may be shortfalls,

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and that in turn, may require additional capacity of one or more of the clean power technologies which is delivering

1:10:58

To deliver more than its current clean power capacity range, the

1:11:04

government has foreseen this by stating that it needs to maintain or retain, I should say, a degree of optionality in its approach to achieving its aim to deliver A clean power system.

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And indeed,

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in the 2025 consultation response the Government published entitled planning for new energy infrastructure,

1:11:30

the government confirmed that I'm quoting from their report clean power. 2030 is a milestone that reflects the scale of ambition required to meet our net zero, 2050, targets. It is not a fixed ceiling on technology deployment or project approvals. The

1:11:51

government does not seek to retain, sorry, to constrain ambitious deployment of clean energy technologies, bringing forward many schemes, including large scale schemes, will go towards meeting the government's current capacity ranges, and will mean that there are options and competition between schemes at later dates, at latest stages of project development, for example, at contract award,

1:12:17

it is against its landscape of a significant, urgent and continuing need that the applicant is bringing forward opposed development I'm

1:12:27

going to hand over so having provided that overview to Mr. Snedden, who will continue with our response.

1:12:38

Thank you, Mr. Gillette,

1:12:40

Mr. Snedden, on behalf of the applicant. So I'm going to address the bullet pointed areas that you have,

1:12:48

so in terms of the design of the specific development, the scale of it and the associated infrastructure required. So in point A you have the design of the focus on the amount of land identified for the proposal.

1:13:05

So

1:13:07

the amount of land identified for the proposed Generating Station, which is work number one of the work plans, is 460 hectares, excluding the on site substation and the on site best and the cable corridor, but including field 46

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which has been proposed to be removed from the scheme,

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and which is seven hectares. So if that amendment is accepted, the work number area will reduce from 460

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hectares to 453

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and the amount of land identified for the associated development is 3.7 hectares for the centralized best, which is work number two of the work plans,

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or around eight hectares for the distributed best, which is distributed throughout work number three

1:14:09
and the cable corridor.

1:14:11
So the cable core corridor is work number five

1:14:17
A, and at the moment, the full extent of the work number five A is 384

1:14:22
hectares.

1:14:24
This is primarily to allow micro sighting of the development detailed design.

1:14:31
We anticipate that the construction width of the corridor required will be around 60 hectares once it's established in detail,

1:14:42
and that post construction 24 hectares would be retained as the way leave post construction for the maintenance and operation of that cable to the proposed Nathan Bay substation

1:14:58
in terms of the next home.

1:15:00
Point on your agenda, you had the anticipated generating capacity, including load factors, the quantum of the proposed solar array over planting, and the anticipated contribution to the proposed development would make to meet the UK's need for electricity generation.

1:15:17
So throughout the process, we've retained flexibility between two options for the solar areas,

1:15:26
single access tracking or SAT system, and our fixed south facing system, so

1:15:36
FSF layouts and primarily that application, that flexibility is retained within the application, so that we can

1:15:46
install the best system come the time where the app, where the detailed design is considered

1:15:57
naturally with us, project of This scale and a good connection at 2031 to 2035

1:16:04

in an ever evolving industry, it could be that the balance between those two optionality

1:16:13

solutions might push us one way or the other in future

1:16:20

to

1:16:22

make the application, we obviously based our assessment on particular layouts. And for that, we had for the fixed south facing of 383

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megawatt DC

1:16:38

solution, which is 571,000

1:16:41

modules.

1:16:43

Or panels.

1:16:45

And this equates to an acres per megawatt ratio of three, around three so.

1:16:54

And then for the single axis trackers, they take a little bit more land space per megawatt that you install. So that's 317

1:17:03

megawatts DC.

1:17:05

And that equates to about 473,000

1:17:09

modules. And equates to a megawatts, an acres per megawatt of 3.6

1:17:17

and these ratios are comparable to the ratios set out in the guidance in NPS en three paragraph, two point 10, point 17.

1:17:32

So Mrs. Snell, could you just run through those numbers again? I'm struggling to hear a little bit. So for if you can go through the fixed and then the tracker again,

1:17:44

megawatt install number of panels and density per hectare, yeah, sure. So the fixed south facing is 383 megawatts DC,

1:17:56

which is five, about 571,000

1:17:59

modules.

1:18:01

And this equates to the acres per megawatt to be three acres per megawatt

1:18:09

for the single axis trackers, it's 317

1:18:13

megawatts DC, which is 473,000

1:18:17

modules. And this equates to an acres per megawatt of 3.6

1:18:26

and

1:18:27

obviously we, what we've had to do is is base the design on a relevant technology that's available now.

1:18:35

Throughout my time in solar, solar modules get more efficient. They get a higher power density per area

1:18:42

by the time we come to hopefully, if this is consented, to deliver

1:18:48

on a detailed design, it's very likely that the

1:18:53

technology will have moved on, and it's likely that to install 383

1:18:59

megawatts DC, you would need less modules, because they'll be more efficient. But you know, given the realistic nature of what I have to do, I have to base on something that is available on the market at the moment.

1:19:19

Within the application, we have provided the anticipated generating capacity of the scheme.

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And as said, these are indicative, and we're not proposing to control that as part of the design

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because we have other design parameters that will control the development from that perspective,

1:19:45

in terms of, as you stated, load factors.

1:19:51

Load factors for the scheme are typical of solar load factors in the area

1:19:57

the fixed south facing scheme.

1:20:00

Two has a load factor of about 10 and a half to 11%

1:20:05

and the single axis trackers have a load factor slightly higher. Typically, Single Axis Tracking performs about 20% better in terms of the power out for each megawatt installed. And that works out it's about 12 and a half to 13% load factor equivalent over the year,

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and that information has been gathered from doing modeling of the scheme that we've designed

1:20:34

based on historic weather data over 20 years for the site. So

1:20:43

in terms of the discussion around over planting.

1:20:48

So sure you've worked out that we have a 240 megawatt AC capacity, and

1:20:57

383

1:20:59

megawatts is higher, so the over planting on the scheme is about a 1.6

1:21:05

over planting

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1.59

1:21:08

to be precise, and

1:21:13

then finally asked for some anticipated contribution of the proposed development.

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So to meet the bottom of the 2030 capacity range that my colleague spoke about earlier,

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it's the equivalent of two projects the size of the proposed development would need to be commissioned each and every month between the end of 2024 and 2030

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and for the 2035 range, there would be one project of the size we'd need to be commissioned each and every month between 2024 and 2035

1:21:52

in terms of the passing

1:21:55

obviously 02

1:21:57

40 megawatts is 0.24 gigawatts. So you can see from there the numbers required.

1:22:17

So in terms of the storage capacity of the proposed battery energy storage system. The proposed capacity is a two hour storage solution, which means that the battery proposed would be able to deliver 240 megawatts of power for two hours, which means that the

1:22:38

capacity of the batteries would be 480 megawatts.

1:22:52

Thank you.

1:23:29

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson,

1:23:33

turning to interested parties, and I include the councils in that. Do you wish to say anything in response to the summary that the applicant has just given by Mr. Gillette and Mr. Snedden. So turning to North Kesterman.

1:23:52

Thanks Ben Hunt for North Kesteven District Council.

1:23:59

Obviously we've not had this sort of slightly revised figures which I think presented in in the presentation,

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slightly adjusted from what's in the documents. I understand. That's for reasons of slight changes to the scheme which not yet accepted.

1:24:16

So forgive me if I refer to

1:24:19

a number of points in the submitted documentation, which gives slightly different numbers.

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I think our position, more than anything, is that we seek clarification

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on a number of the figures that have been given

1:24:36

and an exploration of what the implications might be for the scheme that's consented and might be built, and its impacts.

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So if I start, I think really was a sort of fundamental number, as I see it anyway. So.

1:25:00

Which has been quoted in the application

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that produces some of the numbers that we've been presented with today.

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I think the calculations are largely based on

1:25:15

a chosen solar panel. Individual solar panel output

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of 670

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watts each.

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That's within a range quoted in

1:25:35

a P, P zero to eight,

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the proposed development 3.3

1:25:44
point six. I believe

1:25:47
the range is 400

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to 850

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watts per panel.

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Clearly that then has a number of implications for the estimated total output of the scheme, because

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if, for instance, an 850 watt panel is chosen in line with the

1:26:18
applicants.

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The choice to go for flexibility, and they may go for that panel in the future.

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That could mean that the maximum output of the system,

1:26:35
if the same number of panels were used, would be sit on the same area of land would be significantly different,

1:26:53
that, in turn, will also have

1:26:57
implications for the over planting ratio quoted

1:27:02
and I note in connection with the over planting ratio, there are some inconsistencies in the existing documentation.

1:27:16
So for instance, for the

1:27:19
single axis tracker panel system,

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we see a figure of

1:27:32
1.42

1:27:36
quotas and over planting ratio

1:27:40
elsewhere in a PP, 184,

1:27:45
the statement of need

1:27:48
at 7.5 point two,

1:27:52
that is only 1.33

1:27:54
so we would value sort of clarification on where the different numbers have come from and maybe where we end up now terms of numbers of panels over planting and total capacity of the system.

1:28:16
And indeed, a similar thing applies to the total output of the scheme that the existing documents have one or two

1:28:25
inconsistencies, and they may not prove to be major, but for instance, again, a P, p1, 84 the statement of need

1:28:38
says the tracking panels will produce 319

1:28:43
megawatts,

1:28:46
whereas the climate change statement, a PP 031

1:28:53
says at Six point 4.31

1:28:58
that it would be 368

1:29:01
megawatts.

1:29:14

So then turning to the best

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one of the queries that we have is that, as mentioned, of it being effectively a

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two hour best, that it could store enough energy to supply the grid at the maximum grid connection capacity of 214

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megawatts. Supply that for two hours, and I understand the calculation.

1:29:46

What we are

1:29:49

less sure about from the documents is how the best will be used.

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I think, I think, yeah, them.

1:30:00

The majority of the documents refer to the best only being used to store energy from the panels.

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And indeed, I think here a PPO, three, one

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and in

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the grid connection statement, a PP, which I think is 200

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it refers to one way, and I haven't seen any mention of the infrastructure, including things like rectifiers.

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But

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the climate change statement, I think it's at 6476,

1:30:42

refers to two way use of the best, in other words, suggesting that

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the best might be used to store energy from the grid.

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So I think all of these sort of uncertainties, and in particular, the

1:31:01

choice of panel and how that affects the numbers.

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They potentially have implications for the scheme

1:31:10

terms of how much land is used,

1:31:17

which land

1:31:19

is used to mount the panels,

1:31:24

obviously with potential consequences for landscape and visual impact use the best and most Versatile land topics that will will be covering later on.

1:31:47

Um,

1:31:49

I also note from and reading the reports of a number of other solar farm and sip examinations that the applicants are often asked to provide sort of coherent, separate document on all of these things, and I think that would be very helpful.

1:32:07

It may be something you're seeing, you're doing, because we have to look around. And I think the documents, and I think that's partly why we've got these, maybe partly we've got these inconsistencies. They may have been prepared at different stages of the scheme, sort of design and development,

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and in relation to that, two pieces of information which I think will be quite helpful in assessing the need and benefit of The scheme

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are things like,

1:32:40

how much of the year

1:32:43

is the scheme likely to generate surplus electricity, in the sense that it would exceed the grid connection,

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and what might be the

1:32:57

estimated total generations

1:33:01

over a year in excess of the grid connection,

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and that might inform your decision on the relationship with the scheme with the best so

1:33:16

how much of the renewable energy generated can be stored

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by the best and subsequently released to the grid, and

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how much might not.

1:33:31

And for each of these, it would be helpful to understand the difference between

1:33:37

the generation and storage from both the fixed panel system

1:33:47

and the single track option,

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given that they will produce a sort of generation curve which is a different shape, and I understand

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the idea that they may be more efficient for that reason.

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I think that's all the points I've got at the moment.

1:34:24

Thank you, Mr. Hunter, then turning to

1:34:28

well actually, before we go on, we've now been sitting for about an hour and a half.

1:34:36

This might be a convenient time to take an adjournment. I um,

1:34:44

would 10 minutes be long enough or 15? I'm just thinking that the toilet facilities the bit congested out there.

1:34:54

Any any thoughts on duration of adjournment, looking

1:34:58

at the applicant first?

1:35:00

Suggestion,

1:35:02

happy to go with whatever you want,

1:35:04

sir, the council's then any suggestions.

1:35:08

So I didn't, after I didn't hear that, I think we're content with 10 minutes, if that's everybody else's.

1:35:21

And I think if we adjourn until 20 past four, which is just a smidgen over 10 minutes, so adjourned to 20 past four. Thank you. Thank.