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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

heritage impact, public rights of way, permissive paths, tourism economy, landscape and visual, community benefits, mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, local economy, visitor accommodation, environmental statement, planning policy, development consent, local impact report, action points, Landscape assessment, visual impact, public rights of way, recreational users, susceptibility tables, environmental statement, local footpaths, Viking way, mental health benefits, design principles, view corridors, solar panels, methodology, subjective assessment, open floor hearing.

## SPEAKERS

Speaker 6, Speaker 17, Speaker 8, Speaker 9, Speaker 4, Speaker 11, Speaker 7, Speaker 14, Speaker 2, Speaker 16, Speaker 10, Speaker 13, Speaker 15, Speaker 3, Speaker 12, Speaker 5, Speaker 1

00:05

Well, it is two o'clock, so the hearing is going to resume just before I hand over to Mrs. Wilkinson, who's going to deal with part of agenda item, 3.3 this afternoon, we had a quick chat over lunch. We are clearly not going to get to agenda item 3.4 which is heritage. So if either the applicant or the council's in particular, have got anybody in attendance to deal with heritage type matters, and could usefully use the time this afternoon doing other things, by all means, Leave the hearing by

01:22

Well, good afternoon. As we set out this morning for population effects, item 3.3, we're going to focus on agenda items, point D and D given staffing availability. So on that basis, I'll just turn to the applicant just to indicate who's likely to be speaking on to this. On Your Side, please.

01:49

Reuben Taylor, for the applicant, it's Mr. Tidley To my right

01:56

in the same question to the District Council, please,

02:00

North casing District Council. I likely to be a double act between myself and Mrs. Thompson, hurt

02:13

Nico to council, and it's eight eels who sits two to my left, who's the council's transport and growth manager. Do?

02:34

So my first question is to the District Council, please. And with this one, it's really referencing our second set of questions. In particular question reference TT, 207, and I apologize some of these questions. There's a little bit of a preamble from my side before I get to the questions, so you can just bear with me. And obviously, if you you need me to repeat anything then, then please let me know. So

in the District Council's local impact report at paragraph 7.22, which is on page 61 of rep one, zero, 56 you conclude that there would be a net adverse effect on the users of the rights of way and permissive PaTH Network, which has not been fully assessed or mitigated, in part because the assessments have not been taken, have not taken a fully holistic approach to the consideration of the full range of benefits that rights of way can bring. Can you briefly expand on your reasoning for coming to that conclusion for me?

03:47

Please certainly before I do that, would this be an appropriate time for me to expand somewhat on an issue of sort of quantity, if you like, in relation to permissive paths and the stepping out network, because I think it forms an important part of the baseline on which judgments of impacts and benefits flows, both for tourism, but also for things like landscape and visual impact.

04:26

When you see quantity, what do

04:29

you mean? It's to do with the amount of permissive paths that exist are provided by the applicants, and how they relate to the stepping out network and the other statutory rights of way in the area.

04:47

And does that? Would that tie in with the point about whether the applicants treated the network or the resource in a holistic sort of manner?

04:57

Is it? I think it's. Part of what underpins that? Yes, okay, so you'll remember that issue specific. Hearing one, we raised a question about whether the applicant has shown all the existing pursuit paths in the area, whether they've been identified on plans, and the extent to which the applicant had taken those into account when making statements about the amount of pass now proposed as part of the

05:33

development, excuse me,

05:37

so the applicant has said. And you can find these references in various places, but including in R, E, p2, dash, 030, which is the applicant's response to written representations at paragos. 134, to 136, the applicant says that they have identified seven permissive paths within the order limits. It says that it has mapped those routes, and it makes a statement, and I quote here, that the existing permissive paths are being retained, and as such, are labeled on retained permissive paths. The drawing figure three, dash three, which is document as dash 024, the applicant goes on to say that in relation to stepping out paths, not all parts of the stepping out will coincide with public rights of way, and some sections are using permissive paths, which is the case, but the applicant also, but I'll just point out in that context that the applicant only show as retained a small number of permissive paths on the ASO Two form around Williamson, Hughes, the applicant doesn't identify any retained visit past in the area between the villages of Morton and Thorpe on the hill. For instance, the applicant goes on, say, on page 140 of its response to written representation, Oscar Stevens written representations, and again, I quote, in addition to the retained existing permissive mass, 9.5 kilometers of additional permissive mass are proposed, linking together existing walking routes and creating enhanced connections to the surrounding villages. The outcome also says, in response to a statement by Thorpe on the Hill parish council on page 178 It is also important to note that the stepping out walks that interact with the

proposed development require use of private land that is not a public right of way or permitted path to complete these walks, and therefore they cannot be walked in their entirety currently. So there are a number of statements by the applicant there. And what I would say is that on the basis of information, the evidence we've got to date, we don't think though any of those statements are accurate. So I visited the site on the 20th of February, and I walked the entirety of the two stepping out walks in the area between Morton and silcom hill.

09:04

So they were all open, all available and unobstructed. They were clearly heavily used. That was that was evident.

09:18

They were extensively waymarked, including with stepping out pointers, which you'll have seen an example of on the site inspection yesterday. In addition to that, at three points on those walks, there was some more, much more substantial signs, which made it clear that they were permissive pass, and they refer, for instance, to the Highways Act 1980 now the result of that, when you compare it with as 02, Fourth is that amongst the applicants proposed new permissive paths, there are likely to be lengths of those which are, in fact, actually existing permissive paths. And since I've identified a stretch of about 300 meters, which is not shown as a an existing retained visit pass. It is shown as the new posted pass, and it's also shown as such on the streets, rights of way and access plan. So

10:47

it also, as far as I can tell, also the presence of these signs and the accessibility of the walks indicated to me that where they are not on existing statutory rights of way, they are all on permissive paths. I saw no evidence of that. Contrary.

11:11

I've also done a preliminary exercise based on as 024, to measure the length of permissive path the applicant says they're creating now, except I haven't done that on the more detailed, large scale, access and rights of way plans, but measured off as 024, I made it that the applicant claimed additional permissive path length was closer to eight kilometers, not 9.5

11:50

and it's also us observing that some of the existing permissive paths that I walked, excuse me Again, some of those paths are not shown as either retained or new on the proposed plans, and that comes to about 1.8 kilometers. So as far as I can tell at the moment, the net increase, and this is where I come to the quantity questions. The net increase in permissive bath length as a result of the development would be more like in the region of six kilometers, not 9.5 and again, just in quantity terms, that has implications for the scale of the suggested benefit, or degree of mitigation, and therefore also the weight to which you would Give the claimed benefit. And as a suggestion, what I wonder was to try and bring us sort of close together on this issue. What we might do is ask that we, perhaps jointly, even carry out a sort of clarification exercise on all these paths. What is existing, what is proposed, what is new, what is retained.

13:20

Do? Thank you. I think in terms of trying to come to an agreed position on the permissive paths and where they are in the roots and whether they're new or existing the lens and so on, we would find that very helpful. I'm conscious that we've got deadline three A which is the statements of common ground coming up not too far away. Is that something you could do by then, or sooner than then?

13:54

Ben hull for North Coast and District Council. One sort of suggestion I can make is I've already drafted a response to the question, which is quite close to this that you've raised. I could probably complete that a bit further and send that to the applicant and yourselves as early as possible, ahead of deadline three, and we could then take discussions forward more rapidly. To be fair to the the applicant.

14:31

Does the applicant have comments

14:32

on that? Ruben Taylor, we're very happy to move forward in that way. We have been trying to get hold of information about further information about permissive pass. For example, we asked the Council for a plan, but they didn't have one, but it sounds like further work's been done. And so perhaps, with the benefit of sharing that and and more discussions, we can get to an agreed position, which is obviously much more helpful

14:58

to you. Okay, thank you. Thank. Okay, that's probably another action point, I think, to take away Thank you Duncan,

15:08

North Coast, even District Council, I guess you'd like me to return to your actual question, which is around the around the sort of basis for our statement that there is an adverse impact on tourism writing from changes to user experience of the stepping out walks,

15:29

yeah, I think it was just, it was the point that you'd made in your local impact report about you referenced a holistic approach that you consider the applicant hasn't taken With regards to the assessment of public rights of way, I think it was just, if you could give a very just a brief explanation of why you've concluded that, just to make sure that I'm understanding exactly what your

15:53

point is, certainly understood. I don't have the references in front of me, but I think you'll probably find in Section seven of our written representation, District Council's written representation, which is document, re, P, 1057, section seven deals with public access, but specifically with the stepping out walks, and it summarizes how they've been created. And Mrs. Johnson hurt can expand further on because she's been involved in over a lengthy period, but essentially they're identified with a number of, if you like, criterion objectives, and that's where part of the cumulative and cross cutting and holistic approach statements come from. So they're identified as walks, which are first and foremost attractive a number of reasons. And that includes in large part, things like being able to experience wider, open, undeveloped views.

17:21

They're seen as relatively unchallenging and relatively easily accessible, and therefore appear to a wide range of people.

17:37

They are designed to harness things like information on the tourist economy, which suggests that a proportion of visitors come to the district and stay there so they can experience walks like this. And finally, they also tie into an issue which I think will be discussing separately, which is things like health

and well being. And you'll see a sort of quick summary of that, and also more specific comments on each of the walk which we say are affected by the proposal, and all of that set in the policy context,

18:30

which, as the applicant said, we set out an extensive piece on that.

18:37

And I don't think it's too much to suggest that our current feeling is the applicant has perhaps missed the point we are making, which is not that the stepping war out walks are specifically mentioned in, For instance, the local plan.

19:01

And in that in Section seven, of our written representation are even quite clear about that that's that's not really the case, although it does crop up in the active travel strategy. The point about the point we're making is that a number of policies and strategies are aimed to deliver on exactly the sort of things which for which the stepping out walks have been identified and that they are promoted to meet those ends, and it cuts across all those issues that I mentioned now in its various documents, and particularly in the socio economic study, what we see, for instance, as an example, is that North of Stevens tourism strategy is only mentioned in the context. Text of visitor accommodation, it doesn't address tourism as an economic factor in relation to things like stepping out walks, and as far as the holistic point goes, is that we would also expect it to be included in things like any documentation on health and well being and and the applicant hasn't submitted a health and well being strategy To date, but we would encourage them in any draft to cover those documents that we have put in Section seven of our written presentation. So that includes, for instance, the Lincolnshire walking strategy, which I don't believe is mentioned in any documents. We would want to see more extensive reference to the tourism strategy. We would also expect in a health and well being document, and probably in a socio economic impact assessment, to see things like North kiss Stevens active travel strategy. These are all things that play into that. And what it means in sort of more simple, straightforward terms, I think, is that the applicant has identified that the routes used by these stepping out walks do suffer from significant adverse visual impacts. I don't think we might disagree somewhat on the scale of those or level of significance, but they are identified, and we point this out, and we think two things, one, the impact on those individual components of how will that affect the tourism economy and the attractiveness of coming to North custeban to do things like those walks, if, instead of the wide open, attractive views, they are presented with more Developed countryside, and think in relation to that, you need to take an approach to mitigation which recognizes you can't fully mitigate for that. And stemming from that, those changes, those adverse impacts and user experience, we perceive the potential for adverse effect on tourism, health, mental health and physical well being, all flowing from that those, those adverse impacts and those things need, first of all, adequate mitigation. But if it is not possible to fully mitigate them, and we say it's not we need compensatory measures to offset that impact. Is

23:14

it okay if I just ask Thompson hertz see if she'd like to make any further comments? No.

23:25

Hello. Jean Johnson hurt from North Kesteven District Council. I think it's worth just noting and just give you a little bit of background information. Stepping out walks were introduced in the early to mid 1990s and have been a key part of North Kesteven District Council's commitment to the health and well being of district of the district's residents, and are a key part of the sport and physical activity strategy, where we aim to make more people, more active, more often, and just to give you an idea of the impact of the stepping out walks last year, so that's 2420 I've got more years, right? 24 to 25 we saw over 251,000

people accessing our stepping out walks across the 34 walks that we currently have, the ones that are most impacted, the four up on the hill and Thompson walks had over 7594 walkers that were registered on the routes, so if they went through where we had the footfall counters. And we also advertise all of our routes on all trails. And we recorded 4919 page views for those walks. Thank you.

24:45

Gentlemen was receiving the sickness. So yes, and a couple other things occurred to me is that these walk are clearly promoted walks, and the applicant recognizes some promoted walks, gives them some sort of status. And. And it's also worth noting that the monitoring and counting it that's referred to is quite extensive. So there is data about these walks. They are not a n other path route that exists. So we do say that they have they should be given additional weight in the decision, weight and consideration because of the cross cutting impacts and the status they have. Thank

25:39

you. Thank you. Mentioned 34 walks across the district. Do you know how many miles they cover in total?

25:49

Gina, northcast, even District Council, I think it's in the region of 310

25:53

miles. Thank you. Thank you. Do

26:05

you. I'll just turn to the applicant. Now, can you comment on the points made about, I suppose, more widely, the holistic approach to assessment that the district council has mentioned in their submissions, what you've heard just now and when you're answering it would be helpful for my understanding, if you could touch on whether the wider benefits that the council has mentioned, that public rights of way, permissive paths and so on offer has that informed the categorization of importance that's set out in table 12, seven of the ES chapter 12. I think that's the so table 12, seven is the public rights of way, impact sensitivity one. So if you could try and pick that one up in when you're responding to the question, please.

27:05

Reuben Taylor, for the applicant, we're happy to do our best to respond to the points that have have just been made. It would help us. I think going forward, perhaps we can do this as part of the discussion about permissive paths, if the council can share the evidence that it's got, presumably surveys which show that people are specifically coming to this part of Lincolnshire in order to walk on the stepping out path, which seems to be what was suggested. We haven't seen any, any of that yet, so we got we'd be really grateful to see that, but I'm going to pass over to Mr. Titley

27:49

Neil totally on behalf of the applicant, to repeat a little bit of what Mr. Taylor mentioned at the start of the process. We reached out to both councils to see if the council's had maps of the permissive paths, and the answer was no. If that mapping is available, we would very much appreciate that. What we went on was discussions with landowners and their their memories and their awareness of permissive paths, and that's what we've mapped. So if you do have new information, would very much appreciate that, and as we mentioned earlier, would be very open to that meeting. And I know Mr. Hunt reached out yesterday with regards to a similar meeting of a similar category, and perhaps we can add that topic to that agenda next week when we meet with our specialists in terms of the the holistic comment. And I

was just having a look through, reminding myself about the commentary that was made by nkdc on that, and had a quick reminder of how we'd assess public rights of way we draw in chapter 12, social economics, which I think is As document as 16. It draws on other technical assessments. So as was pointed out, some of those technical assessments do identify effects at specific locations. Example is chapter 10, landscape and visual, where it looks at specific viewpoints from some of these stepping out routes and some of these public rights away. And as we suggested, some of those are identified as major adverse or moderate adverse and significant. The assessment on usage of the public rights of ways and permissive paths and visitor and tourism takes into account assessments like that and some of the other assessments in the environmental statement, and it also draws together some of the benefits that the applicants delivering in terms of permissive paths, and it's perhaps a topic for discussion next week, Mr. Hunt, but the sort of takeaway I took from how you described it at the moment, we we lump those together in chapter 12, and we bring the adverse effects and the beneficial effects together to give a single categorization of effect. On public rights away and permissive paths together. So we can look at looking at that in a more granular way as part of the statement to common ground, if that was the suggestion. But I think we'd appreciate the conversation next week a little bit more around that holistic comment, just so we make sure that we are understanding that the other point that was mentioned, just to bring it up now, Mrs. Wilkinson was Mr. Hunt mentioned about health and well being and the absence of an assessment there. Obviously, that stems back to the origins of the IA process and the scoping phase. We have actually now taken into account the comments that we've received in relevant reps, the written questions and so forth. Previous deadlines have prepared a health and well being summary statement that draws together that information from the environmental statement, sort of a way finding guide, collating those effects and brings it together in a single document because of the time period between deadline two and three, we've shared that with both councils, informally, they've not had that for long, so we've not had an opportunity to receive comments back, but that's with the council's to look at, with the aim that if there's time, we can look at that feedback and address that before sharing it with yourselves and in the examination at a Future deadline, hopefully deadline three.

31:22

Okay, thank you. That's helpful to know, because that may well cover some of the points that we're going to raise in the earlier parts of item 3.3 so tomorrow, that's helpful to know. Thank you.

31:34

Might I just bring up one or two other things just in Duncan for North Castine? District Council to try and avoid the risk that we slip into a sort of similar problem that we did between deadline one and now I'll just come back to Mr. Taylor, Mr. Ted Lee, about this. Mr. Taylor asked if we could share evidence that people come to the district specifically to walk the stepping out walks. That wasn't actually the point I was making it. They come to North Coast even for nice walks. We don't, we won't have, necessarily that specific information, but the stepping out walks are there to try and harness that. It's a bit like the point about where stepping out walks mentioned it in policy. We don't say they are we say they are supported by policy, and they are way of delivering on policy. And that's the first point. The second one is totally asked for mapping of all permissive paths. As far as I'm aware, the county and the district do not have maps of all the permissive paths. What we do know is that the permissive part of the stepping out walks we've identified contain permissive paths, and by process elimination, those parts of the stepping out walks which are not on the statutory rights of way network are permissive paths we we've had no indication otherwise. And indeed, I kind of throw it back to the applicant to say the applicant has asserted that people using those routes are walking on private land without any authorization, and I'd ask the applicant to show us where that is happening, because Mr. Certainly says that the permissive paths have been marked by asking landowners well in the written statement, the applicant has said that wasn't the only source. They said they did it from site visits. Well, as I say, I did a site visit, and I saw

three substantial signs, as well as waymarkers going quite clearly the permissive paths that are being used, they are there.

34:00

So in terms of the work that you're going to do on this, it would be helpful, as opposed to understand areas of agreement, but also if there are any outstanding areas of disagreement, for example, that point that you mentioned about, whether they're permissive paths or private land, in effect. So it would be helpful, from our perspective, if there are any areas of disagreement on this particular matter as well. I absolutely agree in terms of when you were asking about sharing data, Mr. Taylor, were you meaning about the usage counts that the council had mentioned?

34:35

No, I wasn't my understanding. My takeaway, sorry, Reuben Taylor for the for the applicant was that Mr. Hunt was suggesting that there was a direct connection between the stepping out network and tourism. And so I was seeking to suggest that as part of the process of the agreement process. Yes, the Council could share the data that links the two. Now we're told, I think I've understood, maybe I've got this wrong too. There isn't any so that's fine. We can explore these things outside of this process and hopefully get to an agreed position, and we can present what data there is what data there isn't what's agreed and what's not, clearly, the closer we can get to agreement, the better for everybody.

35:27

Okay, thank you,

35:31

Gina from North Coast, even District Council. I think it's probably just worth saying that within four upon the hill and the area where the solar is proposed to go in, we do have Wisby Visitor Center, which attracts over 240 visitors per year, and to a size 240,000 sorry visitors per year, and having a stepping out walk literally within a stage row from the visitor center allows tourists to further enhance their visit by taking in the stepping out walk. And we know that that people do go on the walks after coming and visiting Wisby from talking to customers at Wisby Visitor Center. And we also include the TUM and wood walk within our NK walking Festival, which does attract people From nationwide and international visitors as well. Thank you so

36:46

so this next question, we may have touched on it already, but I'll put it to the applicant first, and you can tell me if that is the case or not. And again, I've got a little bit of a preamble. So paragraph 1720, on page 60 of the District Council's local impact report, which is rep 1056, identifies that research indicates that the target group most likely to visit North Kesteven has a preference for rural destinations with walking opportunities and a focus on natural beauty, the council suggests that such users are likely to be particularly sensitive to the changes in the user experience along stepping out walking routes and associated sites within Valley Country Park Lincolnshire County Council's local impact report on page 39 refers to the look and feel of routes, and considers that these would likely be there would likely be adverse impact from the proposed development which would make the routes less attractive to use. So question for the applicant is that if visitors to the area who use the footpath network, whether it be permissive, definitive, routes would be affected by the proposed development if they were to go to other areas to access walking routes. Would that have any effect on local businesses, for example, local accommodation or food and drink establishments? Has that type of potential for effect being taken account of in your assessment.

38:29

Neil totally on behalf of the applicant. So this, this, again, it draws from chapter 12, social economics and land use as zero 16, which does touch on the effects in construction and operation, in terms of the the impacts on the setting and the views, and, in fact, on visitor accommodation as well, that tends to be greater during the construction phase, and that's acknowledged in the the assessment, Generally from many of these areas that you mentioned, which, if I understood the question right, are slightly further afield from the the site, beyond the stepping out routes we were talking about within the site. They either wouldn't, or they have a view, or they have a partial view into the site during that early stage of construction and year one of operation. It's effects like that, where we've taken into account in the design the need for new planting. So we talked about new planting earlier being needed for landscaping, visual effects for people residences, but also used as a public rights away and recreational areas. And there's examples of that around Norton Disney that's recognized in the assessment, where there's partial views into the site during construction, partially screened by existing vegetation, where the planting will help mitigate those impacts after a few years of maturing. So.

40:03

Thank you did that. Hopefully that answered the question, Mrs.

40:07

Wilkinson, to an extent, I think, I think from, from what I can understand, what you said in your assessment, you're, you're, you're, you're position is that you're mitigating some of the adverse effects that users of the public rights of way network would experience, and therefore, are you saying that there probably wouldn't be any displacement because of that? When I say displacement, I mean in terms of people who would come to the specific area of the site to walk the rights of way if they felt that they no longer wanted to walk the rights of way because of the proposed development and went elsewhere. I suppose my point is, has that type of loss to the local economy been assessed by yourselves as part of the Yes?

41:09

Neil tipley on behalf of the applicant, in terms of the economic impact it's assessed. But as you know, in the IA process, there's not a need to report extensively on effects that are not significant. The focus is on those that are significant, so therefore, on economic impacts. It tends to be dwarfed more by the the effects, the employment, the spending generation in the local area, rather than focusing on the change in the visitor attraction to recreational facilities. The assessment itself does conclude a not significant effect on that economic change for visit attractions and recreational facilities. We acknowledge there's a change for experience in some localized areas. Many of these public rights away or permissive paths are extensive, and they form parts of extensive walks, a change on a small part of that is not considered to change the visitor numbers or the visitor spending in the region or the wider area is anticipated by the applicant there their local effects. And in some regards, that becomes a subjective effect as well, in how people would experience walking near or getting views of a soda farm. Thank you.

42:36

Thank you.

42:43

Do the Councils want to come back on what you've heard about potential impacts on the local businesses close to the area? I'll turn to the District Council.

42:52

First hunt for North seam District Council, I suppose, if I've heard it correctly,

43:01

in response to the question, has the potential socio economic impact in terms of tourism, local businesses been assessed? It sounded this as if it hasn't, and that's been the view we've had. As I say, for instance, we see no reference to the tourism strategy other than relation to visitor visitor accommodation. And we don't see that in the section of the transport on transport in the yes that it's it's somehow captured that either. So no, it seems clear that hasn't been assessed. And it is worth pointing out that local effects, in our view, should still be mitigated where possible, and if they can't be mitigated, they should be compensated for.

44:01

Thank you.

44:08

Thank you. Does the county council want to come in on this matter? Please?

44:12

Kate hills from Yankee county council, we picked up that there's been some analysis of the visitor accommodation. However, it was very high level, and we have got quite significant concerns around the cumulative impacts and the likelihood that there will be some overlapping construction periods with other solar farms in the area. Appreciate. The numbers are all very much estimates at this stage, but there are some estimates out there within sort of the environmental statements of those other schemes the numbers were given for within the 30 minute drive time and the 60 minute drive time, which, knowing the area, we think are quite generous. Of how far you can travel that peak. And it does identify that the 30 minute drive time, the accommodation will all be utilized. You know, the capacity will be taken up by temporary workforce. Obviously, this raises concerns with us, knowing that there are other schemes, and very easily, there could be an overlap where there's potentially five 700 temporary workers all looking for accommodation at the same time as obviously, all the knock on social effects that we're not actually talking about right now. But there's also the economic knock on of that could cause issues of longer term for some of our businesses, around annual events. And, you know, problems start to be encountered. Those annual events may well not happen anymore or be moved, and it's just that, and it's not quantifiable, but that change over time that could really be quite impacted, especially around Lincoln itself. Thank you.

46:10

I'll come back to the applicant. I mean, the District Council consider that you've not really approached the local economic impact. And then there's the change over time and the knock on effects, especially the cumulative accommodation side of things, which the county council touched on, is there, well, I suppose whether you agree or disagree with that point, but also in terms of if there is any other way of assessing this, I suppose, the change to the landscape and how that could impact visitors to the area and therefore their spend, or any displacement of tourism spend because of no accommodation available, is there a way To assess those sorts of things? I guess, is the question

47:05

Neil, totally on behalf of the applicant, in terms of accommodation, local accommodation, that the council was right in terms of the within a 30 minute drive time, what we've done is, is assess with again, within Chapter 12, the ES number of workers that would be expected during the construction period in peak time, and the expectation of the numbers that would be both within a 60 minute drive time, which we consider to be a reasonable expectation for a workforce, and beyond that 60 minute drive time, and who may therefore need to stay in local accommodation. And looked at that versus the accommodation

that's that's available. It's table 1219, of section 12, five of chapter 12. That notes there's 7606 rooms in hotel, bed and breakfast and inns accommodation within that 60 minute drive time from the site now, even during the peak summer occupancy, when most of those rooms are being used up there, that the peak period for the the accommodation sector, coinciding with the peak month of construction workforce, there would still Be 811 rooms available. So 17% remain available for visitors. So that would be if there's more visitors during that summer period than there is now. So there still remains that capacity with the proposed development that's during that peak month, we have also considered the cumulative effect with other developments now, some of those we have information for. Some don't because they're at a much earlier stage. They are obviously in a slightly different location, by the nature that there are different different project, different site, and therefore they have a different catchment area. Within that 60 minute drive time, there are large areas of population. So so the numbers that we've been looking at, look at the hotel bed, the breakfast the inns, not necessarily things like the Airbnb and the smaller accommodation which would be available. Still on top of that for local visitors, a contractor for the construction phase of a solar farm would focus more on the larger, scaled accommodation hotels that are available and that demonstrates there would still be that availability of 17% of the accommodations in that 60 minute drive time. So in terms of the the economic impacts, sorry, to conclude on on that side, and the change in spending, we don't anticipate a change in the in the visitors to the local area, or that they may not be able to identify any accommodation there's there is a benefit as well from the proposed development. During that construction phase, staying locally in the spend that they during, especially. During the outer season stage, months where that spend would be on those local accommodation, giving a boost to the economy. It's worth mentioning, using the average spend per construction worker for the East Midlands region, the construction activity will contribute an estimated 27 point 4 million pounds to the economy, of which 12 point 3 million pound the applicants estimating would be spent within the local area, within the study area. Thank you.

50:32

Thank you. Sorry. Ruben Taylor, for the applicant, in terms of your question about, How, about how you assess the impact on tourists, from from, from changes such as those that we're discussing. The the environmental statement assesses a number of different aspects of impact within Chapter 12, the socio economics and land use. Chapter no visitor attraction, recreational facility or area is identified to have significant adverse residual effects, either in chapter 10, which is landscape and visual. Chapter 11, noise and vibration. Chapter 13, traffic and transport. Chapter 14, which would be the other environmental topics, and and so on that basis, because there is no likely significant impact arising, there is no basis to then extrapolate a significant impact on tourism. That's that's the the basic outline in terms of the public rights of way, the applicant's position is that it doesn't consider that where a public right of way can be identified as forming part of a stepping out walk, that public right away has any enhanced policy status or protection the impacts upon those public rights of way to be assessed in the same manner and given the same weight as any other, whether they're a stepping out walk or not. Overall, the assessment in chapter 12, the socio economics and land use, Chapter of the ES concludes that the scale of changes to journey length, travel patterns and access opportunities is limited, and that effects on the public right of way users, whether local residents or visitors, would be negligible and therefore no significant impacts would arise. And given that that is the position in relation to those public rights of way, as assessed by the by the applicant, is unsurprising that it doesn't identify a likely significant adverse impact on tourism. So it's not a question that it's not been assessed. It's not reported, because there's no likely significant effect.

53:38

I'll come back to the councils to see if they want to respond. And then I see we've got a few hands up, so I'll come to the to the floor after we've heard from the councils. Thank you. So if we go to the District Council, Ben

53:51

hunt, north of Stephen District Council, I don't think I can add much further that really, I think we've sort of set out our stall and we'll discuss it in the next week

53:59

or two. Okay? And

54:00

county council, Hi, Katie, or swingers. County council, going back to the point about the travel time, we appreciate you know that map has been set out, and that's the number of rooms within that period. We do have quite serious concerns that it overestimates how many, how many rooms are available. For example, it shows Peterborough, as in, within the hour for a 60 minute commute, peak travel time. I live just outside Peterborough. It can't be done unless you've got broomstick and similar sort of with the edge of Derby and Nottingham on miles distance, I can see how that will be arrived at. And we think, in lieu of that, and in terms of going back to the cumulative impact, we've got 25 ncips around at the moment, a lot of workers potentially Okay. Won't all overlap. We've got the Eastern Green Link and the Grimsby to Walpole cable down the east of the county. We've got a lot going on, sort of, round the Gainsborough area, which will leave no accommodation in that sort of part of the county. And beyond that cumulative impact and what's available. Bed space wise for say, This scheme is sort of smaller and smaller once you take everything into account, just feel it's not quite being picked up,

55:34

just on the point of the number of N tips within the county. When you say the county, are you talking about the two tier part of the county as it is at the moment, or are you including the unitary areas to the north? Because there are a few entity projects up there as well,

55:51

Lincolnshire county council, it doesn't include the unitaries now, so obviously that makes more Yeah,

56:02

if I might just add to that point, general shape for Lincolnshire county council. I think the point is summarized in the County Council's LIR, which is rep 1053, and it's paragraph 16 point 2016, point 23 which deals with the cumulative impacts. I think the point is in respect of the concerns that the council has about the approach to visitor accommodation and temporary workers, and the concerns that relate specifically to this project, they also bleed into and affect the cumulative impacts that are assessed in Section 12.7 of chapter 15 of the ES, which is as 016, so those points equally apply, if not more so to the cumulative impacts and the points raised in the County Council's lar.

56:53

Thank you so so from what i My understanding is that you consider that the applicant has underestimated the effect on tourism or visitor accommodation, both stand alone by itself and obviously cumulatively as well, because of the timings and the number of schemes that might feed into it. Okay, does the applicant want to respond to that particular point.

57:25

Reuben Taylor, for the applicant, we've set out our basis of assessment. We've seen no alternative. Thank you. Do

57:46

I'll come to the floor now I can see Mr. We'll go to Mr. Lyons first.

57:53

Thank you very much. Nick Lyons, Chair of Thorpe on the Hill parish council, given my previous preoccupations with stepping out routes. You perhaps be pleased to know I'm not going to raise that today, because I think it's been adequately covered, and others may do so. I just want to make a brief statement on behalf of the parish council. Then I'd like to pick up the contribution from Andrew Keeling, if I may. So in terms of the parish council, we believe the importance of the visitor common economy has been understated. The importance of this sector is recognized in our neighborhood plan. I refer to that previously. And Thompson Hill is unusual because it's got a high for a small parish, it's got a high concentration of visitor economy sites. There are several caravan sites. There are lodges at the golf course and at Cathedral view. And visitors are attracted to Brisby Nature Park, which is central to the village, central part of the village, and also the Golf Center and also the water park opposite the golf course. So for a small parish, partly because of its geographical position, with with the valley running through it with all the lakes, but also the villages elevated status makes it attractive. It stands out. But furthermore, it's unusual that it lies just outside the ring rows with very easy access from Lincoln or Newark. So it's kind of one of the easiest parts of countryside people can very readily access. And Doddington Hall, for example, is another visit attraction which is very close by. So these is the it is the integrated effect. So they're not divisible in terms of specific a walking route, but each mutually attracts and builds on the other. Weather, so it's a disproportionately important element of our economy, and we believe it's inevitable that if consent is granted, there will be overall adverse impact directly on the factors, which are predominantly in terms of outdoor kind of activities that attract people to the area, a diminution of its appeal, which will in turn affect the hospital, the economy of the hospitality sector, which, as we know, is Currently under extreme pressure. So that concludes my contribution from Thorpe on the hill. I like to just now, I propose to just read Andrew's out without, without paraphrasing it as he's he's given a summary, if you like. So Andrew Keeling is a resident of Buzzingham and formerly one of the leading tourism consultants in the UK, He submitted his expert opinion on the likely impact of the FOSS Green energy project on the wider visit to economy in document re p2 zero, 66 which he submitted at deadline two. Unfortunately, Andrew is unable to attend today's hearing, but he's asked me to say a few words on his behalf. I'll not repeat what document re p2 066, says, As you already have this information, in Andrew's expert opinion, the assessments of the likely impacts of the fge on the visitor economy made by the applicant the District Council and the county council are weak, not informed by any expert opinion, not backed up by any evidence or research that provides a clear understanding of the visitor economy and its potential for future growth. The applicant of the council failed to understand that the most significant visitor economy impacts will be felt by the non service accommodation businesses in the area. There are several holiday lodge parks, touring caravan and camping sites and holiday rental properties in the areas immediately surrounding the fge site, including three sizable businesses. The applicant fails to identify any of these businesses and has made no attempt to speak with them or to try and understand why their customers come to the area. Andrew has spoken to hundreds of similar accommodation businesses, and in his experience, the customers are primarily drawn to escape to the countryside for a relaxing break, peace and quiet and to enjoy the countryside activities such as walking, cycling, fishing and sometimes more active outdoor pursuits. Their countryside setting is a key part of their market appeal, the destruction of the countryside setting of the non serviced accommodation that are located in the area immediately surrounding the fge site is thus likely to impact on their ability to continue to attract Customers

1:03:19

that are looking for such experiences, the applicant also fails to consider how the fge project might affect future investment in visit accommodation in the area, in terms of investment in existing accommodation businesses and then developing the development of new ones. There is evidence of potential for new investment in non service accommodation in the area, which Andrew believes is likely

to be deterred if the fge scheme goes ahead and the area's countryside is lost to solar panel arrays. Number one, a site at Thompson is currently being marketed for Lakeside holiday lodge accommodation, with 103 holiday lodges. There are also opportunities for farmers and other landowners to diversify and to arrange a non service, visitor camping sites, motor home stop overs, glamping sites, eco lodges and cabins and holiday cottages. The applicant also fails to understand that the areas immediately surrounding the fge site attract visiting walkers and walking groups, including those visiting the friends and relatives in the area that often frequent the pubs in basingen, Auburn, Norton, Disney and Thorpe on the hill. The degradation of walking routes around these villages that will result from the fge project is likely to result in a loss of trade for these businesses. On balance, Andrew's expert opinion is that the impacts of the frost Green energy project on the area's visit economy will be negative, whilst there may be some positive benefits in terms of increased demand for service accommodation during the construction phase, this benefit will be short lived and will be outweighed by the more permanent negative impacts on the. Existing non service accommodation business, the potential for future investment in non service visitor accommodation and development and the loss of businesses from local pubs and walking visitors. Thank you very much.

1:05:14

Thank you, Mr. Lyons, and there were a few points there, so I'll ask the applicant whether they want to reply to that now and then. Take a couple of more, two more questions from the floor that I can see, hands up, three more questions on this particular topic before we move on to the next. Thank you.

1:05:34

Neil. Totally. On behalf of the applicant, I think some of those points we touched on earlier, so I won't repeat around the visitors and the public rights away. The caravan and holiday parks were mentioned as a key part of Mr. Keelings notes and cathedral view. Holiday Park is is the what the applicant would consider the more important of those three that were mentioned. It is bordered by the order limits and approximately 60 meters from the solar PV and was a key part of the accompanied site visit inspection for the examining authority. Yesterday, the applicant team took into account comments at each stage from the cathedral view Holiday Park with a setback on the western side of the holiday park, with planting on the eastern side of the holiday park and that fed into the impact assessment and the conclusions on the visual and landscape effects in chapter 10, landscape and visual of the environmental statement, the Other two facilities that were mentioned, Oak Hill leisure and Heath house are further afield. So one of those is one kilometer away, and the other one and a half kilometer, which is sufficient distance that effects are lower on these with no residual significant effects from air quality, noise and vibration, traffic, transport or landscape and visual effects on those caravan parks. So on that, based on those conclusions, the applicant doesn't consider there to be a change in the way those caravan parks would be used, or the attraction to those caravan parks. Thank you.

1:07:20

Thank you. Do Thank you. I'll come to councilor Overton.

1:07:27

Thank you very much, Inspector. Just a few points. Firstly, if you think 60 years is temporary, how about a week? Because permissive paths can be closed without notice. It's not sufficient. I think all paths that are there need to be permanent. Secondly, I completely refute what was said about it, not these changes, not having an impact on those particular visitor parks. The cumulative impact that was raised by colleagues, is really important. It changes the whole nature of the heritage of our home area, our countryside. Hedges in front falling a wall, forming a wall around some park or some item is a hedge wall. It's no longer the long open views which characterize our landscape, and that is the value that people see when they come to our area, is the attractive open countryside, the cumulative effect,

as well as even, well, even the cumulative effect within this one application of the FOS green energy is significant. It changes the nature. And that means it is not attractive well to us who live there, nor to anybody who might think about visiting to the area, distances, like one and a half kilometers away might seem far if you're talking about a momentary glimpse, but when you know that that is there all the time, and it affects the way you feel and see the area you're in, that is The nature of the area that's changed and will detract significantly from visitor impact. And the same goes for traffic and transport all of these things. It's not as if those people sit in their caravan and look out the window and do nothing else all week. We expect those people to be out and about enjoying the countryside and not having to look at an industrialized landscape. Thank you.

1:09:47

Thank you. If we go to Mrs.

1:09:52

Powell, born, oh, sorry. Thank you very much. I'm from Bourne, and I was. Planner for eight years on South gusteden District Council. I've just looked on the website prior to coming here, obviously, and looking up the because I knew it would affect the tourism, especially where I'm where I'm from. And the tourism for Lincolnshire is worth 3.2 billion. The visitors we get just a Lincolnshire are 3 million a year, and that creates 28,700 jobs. The links food chain, which fuels the whole of the food industry in England. That supports just the Lynx. Food Chain supports 75,000 jobs. And taking into account that there are already so many solar panel farms when I'm on the train from Stansted back to Peterborough, I think with three counties, I think it was I've lost my place now. Sorry, yeah, there's Whoa, lost it anyway there. What I would like to say, though, is, with the food industry looking up online, each acre lost represents 2.5 jobs being lost. So with 3000 acres, I believe it is for this and 2.5 jobs, that's 7500 jobs, and that's just food that isn't anything to do with with the tourism. So that's all I've got to say. Thank you. Yeah, thanks. Thank you. Mrs.

1:11:36

Powell, Mr. Elvin, thanks very much. Yeah, it's working, yeah. Mr. Elvin from Digby and Cliff villages, yeah, I'd like to say a few things about the travel and tourism side of things. I think there's a misunderstanding about Lincolnshire, because away from the coastal resorts, you know, Cleethorpes, skeggy Skegness and Mablethorpe and others, I haven't mentioned, apologies to those you don't experience a surge of summertime visitors. It's not like Cornwall, it's not like Devon Sussex or even parts of the Norfolk coast, but there is a steady, continuous flow of short stay and longer stay people coming to Lincolnshire throughout the year in the back lanes around where we live. It doesn't change much, except for the number of tractors and combines you see in the you know, July, August, September, time. But there are a lot of people coming, and I think that that's been misunderstood by the developers at FOSS green. A lot of it, as I say, is short stays, holiday, let's and stuff like that. But that adds up over the over the course of the year, because they those people frequent, the pubs, the restaurants, the shops in Lincoln, in Sleaford and in other towns around this area, and it'd be the same. It very similar in other parts of rural Lincolnshire, rural tranquility. And you often get the question asked, Do many people come here? There's nothing to do. There are a lot of things to do. There's a lot of attractions. People who are interested in the RAF and its heritage. People are interested in the history of Lincoln. People are interested. But a lot of people do come here for nothing to do. That's what they want to do. They want to get away from the rat race. They want to get away from the stress. They want to get away from busy lives, long working hours, bosses putting the pressure on them at work and all the rest of it, it all adds up to a lot of mental health issues as well, and things like, they come here for a week or for a few days, and you don't see them much they apart from, you know, going to the pubs and the restaurants, they just want to take it easy and unwind. And that is what this area offers. That's what the area around orb and Thorpe Hill, Thorpe on the hill, that sort of beautiful countryside. But also on

the remember, cumulative effect we've talked about. It also applies to that beautiful area on Lincoln Heath. It's quiet, nobody much there. You can go for a walk and see nobody for miles. I've had people tell me that who have come from from the peak. You know, they used to walking in the Peak District, and they find it, it's altogether different. But. And that's all threatened by cumulative development, the navonby substation, the spring Well, FOSS green here, the odor at Bruton and so on and so forth. And we need to understand that that's not the way to go. That's not where we want to go. We want this area to retain its high agricultural productivity and production, and also to be a place where people can escape from places you know, as nearby as Nottingham, Sheffield, the other side of Humber, that's where they come in. So I'll ask you to consider that please.

1:15:38

Thank you, Mr. Relevant, and I'll take one more question. Mr.

1:15:43

Overton, Thank you very much indeed. Peter Overton, Councilor, Peter Overton, the potential impact of this proposed development on Lincoln's tourism economy should not be underestimated. Tourism is the country's second large year economic contributor after agriculture. This is around 2 billion a year, but I won't repeat further figures. The proposed FOSS green development lies at a key gateway into Lincolnshire, forming the first impression for visitors arriving from major population centers such as Nottingham and Sheffield. This concern is not hypothetical. In February 2020, Lincolnshire county council refused permission for an animal processing plant on a nearby site. The decision recognized that such industrialization of a prominent rural approach would damage both the landscape character and the visitor economy that depends upon it. Many hospitality businesses in Lincolnshire rely on the county's open agricultural landscape as a key part of their appeal. While we cannot offer the dramatic scenery of places such as Cornwall, we can provide something very different. This is precisely what attracts visitors from the heavily urbanized Midlands. I just ask you briefly to consider a simple analogy. Imagine placing scaffolding along the seafront properties in Skegness, while reassuring local businesses that it will be removed in 60 years, developers might argue that the scaffolding occupies only a small proportion of the promenade, yet its visual dominance would clearly undermine the setting on which the local tourism economy relies. The same principle applies here. Even developments occupying relatively small areas can fundamentally alter how a landscape is perceived and experienced, with direct consequences for businesses that depend on that character. And finally, I'd say that in weighing this proposal, the long term interests of established Lincolnshire businesses, communities and landscapes should carry far greater weight than the interests of a large scale infrastructure project whose developers may ultimately have only a short term financial stake in the area. For these reasons, and given the clear conflicts with local planning policy, the application should be refused. Thank you.

1:18:03

Thank you. I'll just give the applicant an opportunity to come back quickly on some on some of those points if you want to

1:18:15

Reuben Taylor for the applicant, I've just got one small point in response to councilor Overton's comments about permissive paths, because, of course, she is right about the ability for permissive paths to be removed with very short notice, indeed, in some cases, no notice. And of course, that's an important point to bear in mind when thinking about the stepping out network. But of course, it doesn't apply to the permissive path secured in relation to the proposed development in the DCO, because the permissive paths are secured by requirement 17, sub paragraph four, to be maintained until decommissioning pursuant to the decommissioning plan under requirement 20 so the permissive paths

that we are proposing as part of the scheme would be secured for the entire operational period and through into decommissioning.

1:19:18

Thank you, Mr. Taylor, this so I'm just conscious of having to finish at four o'clock before we finish. Sorry, Mr. Kobe, I've seen your hand. I'm going to ask a couple of questions just while we've got the parties here about benefits, and then hopefully we'll still have time to come back to you, if that's all right, okay, thank you.

1:19:56

I'll turn to the county council first and. Okay, so in your local impact report, at page 76, paragraph 1710, you state that the community gain resulting from the development to mitigate negative impacts must be increased, and this was in the context of public health, but I thought it'd be quite helpful to address under population effects. Generally, the applicant responded to that summarizing what they identify as community benefits. I just wanted to ask the council whether you want to make any further points relating to benefits while we're all in the room,

1:20:36

shape for Lincolnshire county council. Mum, that's probably one that we'll have to pick up tomorrow's part of the public health discussion, because the council's offices, in respect of those matters, aren't here today. So perhaps if we could defer our position on that and just respond specifically tomorrow,

1:20:51

that's fine. I'll make a note to do that. Him turning to the District Council, same, same question, I think in terms of you mentioned specifically under, again, the public rights of way side of things about I think you identified a number of mitigation and compensation measures. Is there anything else that you want to add or expand on at this point in time?

1:21:18

Ben hunt from Walter Steven District Council. Do you mean specifically in relation to stepping out, or you saying additional other matters?

1:21:26

So I think it's just generally in terms of benefits of the scheme. I was really just using that as an example, really the fact that you local impact reports, identifies measures for improving footpath as an example, just while we're all in the room together, I just wanted to get your thoughts on. If there's anything else that you wanted to raise specifically about benefits,

1:21:48

certainly, yes, you'll be aware that in our response to your first written question, PE, 1.07 we expand. Expanded a little on the statements in our local impact report, where I say we're seeking a financial contribution to support the framework employment skills and supply chain plan, and we will be providing, obviously, a written full answer to your second written question, PE, 2.05, really, just to highlight first of all that we do accept that the employment skills element of the development is an enhancement rather than something mitigating an adverse impact. But in case, it's not clear, we are seeking to ensure that the benefits of that are maximized and fully secured. And we will be seeking three things. One, will be some further improvements to the framework, employment skills and supply chain plan. Secondly, and we'll probably discuss this on Friday, some tweaking to the drafting of DCO requirement. I believe it's 19. Regarding the detailed plan, it's early implementation. And the sum of money that I referred to as a vehicle for ensuring it's full delivery. And in respect of all this, we would

reiterate our emphasis on NPS in one paragraph, 5.1 3.11 which says that the Secretary of State should consider legacy benefits in relation to socio economic impacts. We've already invited the applicant to have discussions next week. I think we're probably all going to have quite a busy meeting with week with these meetings, because I suspect that in some regards we're that we're not very far apart, and the other bits may be further, but that should help us get to a settled position on the statement of common ground, I think a bit a bit quicker. I don't know if Mr. Felsom wants to add anything, as we saw something the double act on this issue.

1:24:48

Thank you. Nick Feltham for North Coast, even District Council, just to reiterate the point that the council's position in relation to the en one reference that Mr. Hunt has just made is in terms of. Seeking legacy enhancement in terms of skills and education we are pursuing, and we are seeking a vehicle to essentially realize some of the commitments that are in the framework in relation to things like apprenticeship, delivery, bursaries, education, training, skills, which we think is a very neat fit with the guidance in the NPS about how schemes can deliver a legacy and an enhancement. We are clear that this is not mitigation, but similarly, you know, the reference is to a legacy, and we are pursuing the same approach that two of our projects have committed to at Heckington Fen and at Springwell in signing or having an engrossed version of a section 106 agreement, which delivers skill, will deliver skills and education contributions through financial payments or through an ability for the applicant to demonstrate how they are using that equivalency in kind to deliver their own skills apprenticeships, bursary packages in house, for want of a better word. So this does not necessarily need to equate to a payment to the council. It is accounting for a financial commitment to realize some of those things, which are at fairly high level at the moment, we think, in their framework, fess MP, to use the acronym, thank you.

1:26:36

You've mentioned Springwell and Heckington Fen Heckington is a made order. Has a 106 agreement been executed in respect to that project? Or is that still in limbo? Springwell? Presumably, there have been discussions behind the scenes, but of course, a decision is still awaited from the Secretary of State, but at the conclusion of the Springwell examination, was there a 106 agreement, either leased in draft, or had it been executed? Thank you, sir

1:27:11

Nick Feltham, for North Coast, even District Council. At the conclusion of the examination, it was in advanced draft. It has since been signed by the applicant. It is with North Kesteven District Council now for signature and formal engrossment issue. So at the time of the closure the examination at Springwell, no, but it was heavily advanced, and of course, it has been completed for Heckington Fen and is publicly available. So we'd be happy to share the signed version for Spring. Well, if that would assist, I

1:27:45

think that might assist. Certainly examining authority might assist the applicant as well. So that's another action arising out of the hearing.

1:28:18

So I'll just turn to the applicant and a similar sort of question to you just about benefits. Is there anything that you want to say in response to what you've heard from the Councils about benefit, or in addition to what you've already submitted to the examination room?

1:28:35

Taylor for the for the applicant, as we've heard, we've got the busy meeting next week, I think we're just going to explore those issues with them through that process, if that's acceptable.

1:28:46

Okay, thank you. That's fine. So I'll turn back to the floor and Mr. Kobish, apologies for putting you on hold, but we did get time. I

1:29:08

thank you. Gordon Kirby, resident of Thorpe on the hill, apologies for my PC. Chairman, having closed down, stepping out route, I wish to raise it again. Just for the record, I sent a letter, including the count, a copy of the council's leaflet, which don't know somewhere in the system, if anyone wants to look at it. I just wanted to say with that, because I don't think it became too clear. I don't it's not a route that people flock to from all points of the compass. It's more the sort of place that somebody locally might want to have a walk out in the countryside. And because the council have produced a leaflet, they have picked that up and they use it. But what I really want to make comment on is the fact that the village people use it. Most people who've got a dog that's above the size of a chin, Chihuahua or whatever will probably use that route we went down yesterday, down to lay lane at Thorpe on the hill, not the basingham one to the bottom. That that's the start or end of the route, if you come from the Avenue, and the avenue is the other part of it. And most people with dogs, people who run in the village, people who want to walk. My wife and I use it most days, some or all of it, and it's very popular, and it's surprising. I've also mentioned in the past about the fact that there is a existing digestate, and the crops grow when they're growing maize, the maze is up here somewhere, like in that to the high fencing, in the high hedging. I know the hedging won't get going till probably 15 years from when it's planted, but it it's totally different, and people tend not to use it when, when the digest it's growing, its maize, when it's higher than your head and you can't see. But otherwise, as we saw yesterday, there are some magnificent views looking across. Because after all, although Lincoln shears regarded as being flat and therefore not very interesting, perhaps it's actually the northern end of the Cotswolds, the Lincoln edge. And the name Thorpe on the Hill implies that there's some topological topography which can be used, can be taken in, and is very nice area. So please don't just assume that it's people pouring in from other areas. Anecdotally, I don't think it's high area. I'm going to

1:32:06

stop you there, because we actually are straying into landscape and visual. And this is a topic area that I do have some questions.

1:32:13

Yeah, well, I think thank you. I

1:32:24

if, if people are agreeable, given that we've just gone past half past three, but we've got a cut off of four, we'll, we'll start to look at the landscape and visual topic, and then we'll have to resume tomorrow. So I've got a few questions, but just going around the room, are people happy just to carry on to the natural cut off at four? Yep.

1:32:53

And for the questioning in this section, I'm going to be quite strict in terms. I think most of the questions I've got, certainly the early stages are either for the applicant or the councils, and I think we're just going to keep to those for the moment, try and make sure we make some progress. I'm going to suggest if whoever's doing the document handling could get up as 020, that's as hyphen 020, which is the public rights of way plan, and also rep to hyphen 004, which is the streets rights of way and access plans. I

think we'll come to those shortly. And for whoever is getting plans up, if you can just go to probably the first sheet that deals with Thorpe on the hill. It's just an example. I could have picked bassingham. I

1:34:04

So turning to the council's first and particularly Lincolnshire county council, just a point of clarification in respect of what you've said in your local impact report. Rep one, hyphen, zero, 56, and the landscape and visual advice that's been provided by ah planning consultants to both Lincolnshire county council and North Kesteven District Council. The consult, sorry, the Lincolnshire county council have said in your LIR that the Aih report is substantially the same for each of the councils. Now, is it the same report or are. Any differences in terms of the versions of the reports that have been appended to each of the LR,

1:35:15

hello. My name is John Brodie. I'm a landscape architect representing the Councils on landscape and visual issues, and my understanding is it's the same report for both authorities.

1:35:34

Thought we needed to ask the question, because that phraseology suggests it could be two versions of it, and I certainly spent time focusing on one rather than reading two.

1:35:45

Just Just for the record, Ben hunt, Stephen, District Council, I agree,

1:35:51

makes life a lot easier. We can just refer to a report rather than two reports. I

1:36:08

right now. Now we do get to the question relating to the two plans that I drew attention to. We may not actually need to get them on screen, but I just want to be clear about nomenclature for public rights of way. And they generally seem to be, I'm going to again give some examples. LL, hyphen, T, o, t, h, and then oblique 15, oblique one, which is a Thorp on the Hill route. Then for Auburn, for example, I think we've got LL, oblique, AU, Bo, iPhone, 12, oblique, two, and then batting, and we get LL, oblique, B, A, double, s, oblique, 23, oblique, one, etc. Now is there consistency amongst the referencing to those public rights of way within the draft order, versus what we're seeing on the streets, rights and way access plans, perhaps actually, if we could get One of the sheets up for rep to hyphen 004, up might make the point a bit easier. And if it's possible, just zoom in to the concentration of paths to the west of Thompson Hill. If that is actually one or

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we might also, I'm afraid, also need the other figure up as 20, because that does show the concentration of paths.

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I certainly have been struggling to work out where all those footpaths go, given the scale at which that plan has been drawn, it's things one to 50,000 scale at a three, whereas the paths in the

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rep two, hyphen, 004, they're drawn things one to 5000

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they clearly the latter set of plans clearly show the roots, but they're not fully labeled, and we see sections where diversions are proposed, rerouting proposed, and that that nomenclature does relate to what's in the schedule in the order, but it is extremely difficult to try and work out what plan or what routes are being affected from start to finish. And it's perhaps all well and good for everybody sitting around this table, but in five years time, 10 years time, how on earth is anybody going to be able to work out what paths are actually affected by whatever is included in the order? But in terms of the the official nomenclature for these footpaths is it, LI, hyphen, T, o, t, h, and then a number, is that the full nomenclature that should be used, perhaps looking at the council first Lincolnshire for

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in fact, what is the naming convention for the public rights of way, and has that been accurately recorded on the various drawings, without having to. Get three or four different drawings out to actually work out what you're looking at, which is the problem that I've certainly been having. The easy answer to this question might be for the applicant to go away and review the labeling, particularly on rep two, hyphen, 004, and then making sure that the labeling, if that drawing is amended to give the full numbering for the paths, is then consistent with what's in the draft order. That was quite a clumsy way of trying to explain the difficulty that we've been having, but the county council,

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shall we say, the Lincolnshire county council. So I think we need to check the definitive map and come back on that point. We think it's it probably is correct, but we just need to confirm that,

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and as it would be, the county council that ultimately would potentially have to enforce at least whether or not there were issues with access to the footpaths. Are you content with the information that's currently available to you be able to able to work out what was going on, or would you favor what I've just, in effect, tentatively put to the applicant? But I think it's going to become a bit more than just a tentative request that the drawings or the plan are updated.

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John Brody at landscape architects, I would agree with you. I would the more information we've got, the better.

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Looking then at the applicant, while the county council has a think, is the change that I'm proposing, something that you're likely to be agreeable to making,

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Reuben Taylor for the for the applicant? Well, I can't commit to that, obviously, because I don't have instructions, but it certainly we understand the point. We'll take it away. It's definitely a jigsaw that takes quite a lot of unpicking. I can see from the plan just behind you, having looked at that myself. We'll take that away. And if we can improve the plan, we will

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put it this way, that if we don't get a favorable response at the first attempt, we are likely to come back to this and make the point again. Can I?

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I wasn't intending to suggest you weren't going to get a favorable response, but I think

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you probably understand the mood music that this is probably a point going to push harder I can get here. Did North Kesteven want to say anything on in that regard? Have you similarly had issues trying to unpick what's shown on these drawings?

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Bentham, North Kesteven District Council, not too bad. But it is true, there's a whole number of plans, because there are things like the plans relating to permitted pass proposals, which are drawn at yet another scale, which I think is one to 28,000 so you do end up with that, by the way, I found fairly use useful, but it might not be the most accurate.

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I can add, but certainly when I'm doing a sign inspection, I prefer to try and take one plan with me, not four or five, because the wind usually blows at that point. Everything goes everywhere and you completely lost. I

1:43:51

right? The next question is both for the applicants and councils, and it does touch on one of the written questions. Yeah.

1:44:14

This question does touch on ex, q2, LV, 204, 04, where we've we've asked for a bit of clarification the applicant in relation to views experienced by recreational users of public rights of way in the sustain susceptibility tables, 31 to 36 and 38 to 44 in Appendix 10 f of the environmental statement, which is as 120 has quite frequently used the phrase where appreciation of the view is unlike. The to be the primary interest.

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And really the question that we've got is in the context of those using the effective public rights of way, if experiencing open countryside is not the primary interest of the recreational user of those routes. Then what is the main interest for the users of those routes?

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Reuben Tay for the applicant, I'm going to ask Mr. Griffin to explain the meaning of that phrase,

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Sam Griffiths on behalf of the applicant, so standard, in accordance with the guidelines for landscape and vision impact assessment, the third edition, which is the current best practice guidance for Lvia to distinguish between public rights of way which are used for movement, essentially, be it recreationally, be it for exercise, be it simply from getting from A to B to be then separated from public rights of way which are used by people specifically For the view. And the reason for that is, and I'm sure many will be familiar Lvia, particularly the visual assessment does not assess the impact on a public right of way itself, just as it doesn't assess the impact on a home itself, or indeed, a road, it always assesses the impact on a person, and therefore the author has to use judgment and the best evidence available to say what might be the interest of that person. Of course, we cannot, it's not, it's not conclusive on every individual. People will have a different perception. But for local footpaths, typically, they are considered to be of a mid level susceptibility, because they could be used for all sorts of reasons. Using the study area as an example, we've then got the Viking way, a long distance promoted route upon an elevated ridge line, which is therefore reasonable to anticipate. People would go along that route specifically for the purpose of experiencing that view, because there is indeed an extensive view to be to be

experienced, and it is promoted in such a way, and therefore, typically, those people are deemed to have a high susceptibility to a change for that reason. So

1:48:05

thank you, Mr. Griffith, did the Councils want to say anything in response?

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John Brody, landscape architect, representing a local authority on landscaping visual issues, it's true that that what is assessed is, is, is the person not, not, not the actual landscape feature and but I would struggle to separate them in the way that the applicant has. In that I think most people use public rights away in order to appreciate their environment and the surrounding countryside in most instances, and to suggest that local routes are in some way less important to people than long distance routes like the Viking way, I think possibly misguided as well, because people living in villages are going to use local routes more regularly, and they do so for the Mental health benefits associated with appreciating the countryside around them.

1:49:26

This time. Thanks. Ben Hunt, North East District Council, yes, I just sort of expand that slightly in in the context of the stepping out walk issues we discussed earlier. Those walks are designed to have attractive views, and therefore users are likely more likely to give a high priority to the view when they're using those walks, they are promoted, and they've been designed to be widely accessible. So perhaps some of the people. Who might manage a long distance route like the Viking way, some people might not be able to do that as easily, and therefore something like stepping out walk provides an attractive, accessible view. And therefore we say that the impacts and susceptibility on these this user experience has been downplayed by the applicant. Thank you.

1:50:40

Mr. Kobch a little earlier, referred to the walking of a dog by residents of the village, which, strangely, was an example that Mrs. Wilkinson and I thought about when we were compiling these questions. I mean, if I'm a resident of one of the villages, I've got a choice. I'm either going to use public right of way, if there is one, or potentially I can walk around the village on what are the paths or routes. Now, from a local perspective, presuming, if I want to get a break from my home and my backyard and the street, I'm going to go and use whatever public right away there might be, because that's a recognized route that I can use. So in this context, is there an issue with if you rigidly apply the LVI guidance, you potentially come out with an answer that isn't really what most people was going to use riding an omnibus bus, but maybe quite a few in this room don't know what an omnibus bus is, and the the old saying that used to go with that, but it does seem sometimes, particularly with the LVI assessment, that there's a little loss of, dare I say, common sense in the way that the methodology is applied. Mr. Griffiths, any thoughts on that? Is there any underweighting going on in terms of some of the local routes, public rights of way, the definitive routes that could be affected by this development because of the change in character that might arise in the area.

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Thank you, sir. Sam Griffiths, on behalf of the applicant, and yes, several, several thoughts on that. First of all, a considering a local footpath and therefore user of it to have a medium or even medium high visual sensitivity is what the methodology allows for currently, that is quite a an elevated level of sensitivity which could well result in a significant adverse visual effect. And indeed, in our assessment, as has already been alluded to previously, today, the Lvia does identify significant adverse impacts on recreational users of local footpaths crossing the order limits. And therefore, I'd say there's not a danger in it being downplayed, as has been suggested, actually it's it is there in the assessment, in the

examination library, the fact that they are sensitive to change and therefore are experiencing significant adverse impacts the highest it is only the highest level of sensitivity which is reserved for people with a particular interest or appreciation of a high quality view, and this is therefore reserved for those instances which are unusual, set above the day to day experience of a landscape which I think most would agree, there are some views which do cause us to stop and look in a different way to what might be a general appreciation of a countryside view. So it's not a downplaying of the day to day experience. It's making sure that we have a level above that to recognize some views are indeed more important and must be protected in a way that others may not warrant the same level. It is also too worth emphasizing and explaining. We're looking at this from an assessment point of view, but through the design phases, throughout the pre application phase, people's views on the political, public right of way network, irrespective of their susceptibility and sensitivity, have been considered. So, for example, one of the project specific design principles to make sure we respond to the local visual amenity was to make sure that where we have views of Lincoln cathedral, they are retained, they are elevated, if you like, above and beyond, perhaps the everyday view that we may have experienced even yesterday on the accompanied site inspection. And so early on in that process, the applicant took the decision to design a view corridor that stretches on in the northern part of the Ord limits, from the western edge all the way across the Ord limits towards Thorpe off on the hill. And then across the Lincoln cathedral. All other things being equal, those fields are very good fields for solar panels. There were not any other overriding constraints. But it was indeed to protect that high level, that high value view for recreational users, that that view corridor, and therefore, frankly, associated megawatts, was removed from the project in order to respond to that. So I say that as an illustration to not conflate necessarily assessment with the with the design process that has been undertaken here. So

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interests of where we are seeing an indication Mrs. Powell, I

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from born, where I come from, market town, the less mobile people, the elderly which I am. I've been on my pension for quite a few years now, but a lot older than I, I often meet on these footpaths because they too are safe, and they, too, need to get out every day and walk and on those footpaths into our woods, form woods where we get 100,000 visitors plus each year, those people feel safe on those footpaths. There's no traffic around, there's no kids on bikes or anything like that. They are most important to the elderly, which we mustn't forget. Thank you.

1:57:09

Yep, the mic. I think this will have to be the last winter this afternoon.

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This is just a quick one really about sorry. Just introduce yourself. Sorry. Alistair King, local resident, I have some things to say on the methodology in that, but presume that might take a few minutes. So presumably, are we continuing this tomorrow morning

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in terms of, I think this methodological point? We probably will not. I'll move on.

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So all right, can I take a minute to go through what I was going to say now? Okay, well,

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if you can be brief, I've heard what the two technical sides have said. I The applicant and the councils. The methodology is quite specialist. Let's put it that way. But that way.

1:58:03

But okay, let me, let me

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just make your point. Let's see where it takes us. Okay, let's do that.

1:58:09

So methodology, I believe, gives a false sense of precision and accuracy. It's a pseudo science, and it lulls people into a false sense of security about what they know or don't know about the area and the views and all the rest of it. Also, I mean, it's got a number of shortcomings. Is the methodology it's bound to have, really but the other, the other one, is that it's totally subjective, and it's all skewed in favor of the applicant, because they decide who they're going to contract to do the work. Though, the consultant who they contract has got vested interest in making methodology work well for them, and the applicant has, there's lots of judgments to be made along the way using methodology, and that's all in favor of the applicant. And I've got a couple of, I mean, I've walked a number of those walks quite a lot. And I've got just one example. This is just one example I'm going to give you. It's just the first one I picked out. It's viewpoint 22 for example. And and it's a bit concerning that there's only 35 viewpoints picked out, perhaps another nine in the other localities around the area out of what are 10s, 10s and 10s of miles of tracks and roads. And let's not forget roads as well as footpaths, because people driving or riding through the area on the roads, it affects them as well. It, you know, it sort of devastates the whole landscape. But if I just one that I picked out right at the outset, viewpoint 22 following up with the way the methodology approaches. This, it's given, let's say this is just just outside basing them. It's it scores on visual susceptibility, value of views and visual sensitivity, three different. Factors. It judged each of those as a medium, and then it talks about after one year and 15 years. And it says it talks about them as being, I can't remember, low level. Yeah, low and low and low after 15 years. And that all adds up, by the way the methodology works, and comes out and says it's minor adverse. And extending that on it comes out to say, therefore it's insignificant. Now I challenge anyone to go and look at that view and say this, even after 15 years, whatever mitigation is put in place that will not be insignificant. It's going to affect the people of basingham. It's one of the first places they would walk out to get into the countryside, and they will be faced with a mass of solar panels. Even if a hedge is high enough to hide it from one point, it won't hide it from a point a few meters on, which may be a bit higher. And so the point I really want to make is, this was their judgment, not our judgment. It looks as though it's rigorous and it looks as though it's objective, but it absolutely isn't rigorous or objective. It's their view, and it gives them a good score. People around the area will be devastated,

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but Mr. King, both Mrs. Wilkinson and I hear lots of landscape evidence on lots of different types of cases, not necessarily in this context. I won't read out the other 10. Then I felt we're making recommendations. We're not making decisions because we're not determining appeals. But it is common for one side to have one view, the opposing side to have another view, and it's the job of the likes of I and our colleagues to try and make some sort of sense of that and come to a view. And we often go with one side or the other, or occasionally we might even come up with a slightly different route. I've definitely done that in one instance.

2:02:02

So this was me just giving you my view. So yeah, you've got the answer.

2:02:05

We understand the point. It is an assessment methodology, as you've probably heard me indicate earlier. It can throw up some conundrums, and it's for the likes of me and Mrs. Wilkinson to try and make some recommendations on those conundrums, and then for the secretary, secretary of state to decide whether or not he or she agrees with whatever we might take as a line on a particular effect, on a particular viewpoint, or various viewpoints. We sit here independently of the assessments have been undertaken for both sides. And that's that's the role we perform.

2:02:51

One more sentence, if I know, then I'll sit down. It was just stated earlier on. It hadn't dawned on me that the methodology is based on the perception of the person, not the road or the house or whatever. Now, persons don't tend to stand in one place for very long. They tend to walk along the path, and we only get one view, one viewpoint where there's nothing in the methodology that gives us those same things. So if I walked a couple of 100 meters on the part where the next two meters, I might suddenly have a bad view, but we've chosen a viewpoint that's got a good view. That's it. Thank you very much.

2:03:24

No no tapping. Thank you, right. Well, I think that we have gone past four o'clock, so I'm going to get wrapped over the knuckles from some colleagues. I think on the case team we we do have to adjourn because there's a need to prepare for the open floor hearing that will open up five but registration for that has to start sooner, tomorrow morning. I think what we will do is we will complete, start by completing the visual side of things. And

2:04:14

yeah, we'll continue by finishing off landscaping visual. Then we'll return to a giant agenda item, 3.4 finish that. No, sorry, 3.3 finish that. Then we'll do the heritage. That's the risk when you turn things upside down. So is everybody clear what we're going to open up with tomorrow morning. It will be completion of landscape and visual. Then we'll go back to sort of social, economic, yeah, and then we will do heritage. So this hearing is therefore adjourned until. Till 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Thank you very much.