



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Peartree Hill Solar Farm
Hearing:	Preliminary Meeting
Date:	22 July 2025

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File Name: PH_22JUL_PM

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:04:09 - 00:00:16:04

Good morning. It's now 10 a.m. and time for this meeting to begin. I'd like to welcome you all to this preliminary meeting. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me clearly. Thank you.

00:00:19:12 - 00:00:47:28

Can I also confirm with Mr. Stevens that the live stream of this event has commenced? Thank you for those people watching the live stream. Can I also advise you that should we at any point adjourn proceedings this morning, we will have to stop the live stream in order to give us clear recording files. As a result, at the points of which we recommend the meeting and restart the live stream, you'll need to refresh your browser page to view the restart on stream. I'll remind you of this again should we need to adjourn

00:00:49:16 - 00:01:20:05

this preliminary meeting. As for the application made by RWA renewables, UK Solar and Storage Limited, who we refer to as the applicant, an order granting development consent for the Pear Tree Hill solar project. Solar farm project. The project includes the construction of a solar solar photovoltaic generating station and battery energy storage system that would allow for the generation, export and storage of electricity exceeding 50MW.

00:01:22:21 - 00:01:50:24

Thank you for attending this meeting. My name is Alex Hudson. I'm a chartered town planner and a chartered landscape planner. I'm a planning inspector employed by the Planning Inspectorate, and have been appointed by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application. I'm now going to ask the other panel member, who has also been appointed by the same Secretary of State, to examine this application to introduce herself.

00:01:52:11 - 00:01:58:08

Good morning. My name is Mary Louise Miller, and I'm a charter town planner and a planning Inspector.

00:02:00:03 - 00:02:12:14

Together, we constitute the examining authority for this application, and we will be reporting to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and net zero, with a recommendation as to whether the development consent order should be made.

00:02:14:04 - 00:02:28:26

The case manager for this project is Jake Stevens, and is the person who is most likely to come into contact with during the course of the examination. Mr. Stevens is today being supported by Sam Stevens, and Elias Pereira is providing support remotely.

00:02:30:14 - 00:02:56:06

If you have any questions about the examination process or the technology we're using, then Mr. Stevens should be your first point of contact. Case team details can be found at the top of any letter that you have received, or on the project page of the National Infrastructure website. Please don't hesitate to contact a member of the team if you need help at today's event or with the technology. Um.

00:02:57:21 - 00:03:27:22

I'll come back to that in a minute. Thank you. Um, this is a blended event comprising an in-person meeting as well as being held on Microsoft Teams. This is being both livestreamed and recorded for those people observing or participating through teams in order to minimize background noise. Can you please make sure that you say muted unless you are speaking? If you are participating virtually and you wish to speak at the relevant point in the proceedings, please use the Microsoft Team hands up function.

00:03:29:00 - 00:03:36:20

Although advised that there may be a delay before we see it, please wait to be invited to speak or ask and speak at the appropriate time.

00:03:38:06 - 00:03:49:26

Alternatively, please turn your camera on so we can see if you wish to speak. Um, can I remind people also that chat function on Microsoft Teams will not work, so please don't try to use it.

00:03:51:19 - 00:04:03:07

If you don't manage to ask your question or raise your point at the relevant point in time, there will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting for you to raise this under item six. Any other matters?

00:04:05:25 - 00:04:15:04

The cost of digital recordings that we make are retained and published. They form a record that can contain your personal information and to which the General Data Protection regulations apply.

00:04:16:20 - 00:04:43:09

Planning inspections practice is to retain and publish recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary of State's decision. Consequently, if you participate in today's meeting, it's important that you understand that you'll be live streamed and recorded and the digital recording will be published. We don't want your image to be recorded. You can switch off your camera for those in this room who don't want to be recorded. There's an area out of camera shot.

00:04:45:14 - 00:05:02:16

We would only ever ask for your information to be placed on the public record. That is important and relevant to the planning decision. Therefore, we need to avoid the need to edit the digital recordings. What we would ask is that you try your best not to add information to the public record who would wish to be kept private.

00:05:04:12 - 00:05:15:26

If you do feel that personal information is necessary. Please try this in a written document that we can redact before publishing. Does anybody have any questions regarding matters I've just raised?

00:05:20:04 - 00:05:20:25

Give me. Okay.

00:05:28:12 - 00:06:02:26

I don't think the microphone's picking me up. Is it? Or is it? The microphone is working. I'd like to tell you my name, but I made an inquiry when we arrived here this morning. And there's a very impressive and very friendly technical team sitting at the back of the room. Uh, but they couldn't tell me who they were here on behalf of know if this has all been recorded and my statements are being recorded. I would like to know. Apart from anything GDPR, I think kicks in and data protection laws.

00:06:03:27 - 00:06:16:15

I'd like to know who's going to be handling that information. Do they work for the Planning Inspectorate? Because if not, I'd like to know who pays the wages or who is paying for them to be here today.

00:06:17:05 - 00:06:23:05

Okay. Thank you. So it's the, um, that here, on behalf of the applicants, the applicant pays for the applicant.

00:06:24:03 - 00:07:03:00

The is paying for the technical support for this to be livestreamed to the public and to be prepared for a transcript to be provided to the Planning Inspectorate is being paid for by the people who are promoting the project and who have a business model, which will make them an enormous amount of money. About the project. Isn't there a vested interest there? And I ask you that, sir, because although I won't tell you my name yet, I won't reveal that I used to work at the Foreign Office, and we had internal government communications who always took responsibility for holding people's information securely.

00:07:04:09 - 00:07:25:12

I no disrespect at all. I've met some of the guys from. I'll be in the next bunch, but how can I trust this and all these technical aspects to be properly cared for by a party who clearly has a vested interest?

00:07:25:19 - 00:07:32:11

Okay, so in terms of all national infrastructure projects, meetings like this and hearings, it's standard practice for.

00:07:33:23 - 00:07:34:08

Standard.

00:07:34:10 - 00:07:34:25

Practice.

00:07:34:27 - 00:07:44:05

And practice. Um, when we publish anything on our national infrastructure website, we redact any personal information. The Planning Inspectorate role is to do that.

00:07:45:29 - 00:07:49:23

I can assure you that none of your personal information will be published on the project.

00:07:49:25 - 00:08:09:19

I really do have to take issue with that. And if this is standard practice, I would like to know who came up with the idea that every meeting of the Planning Inspectorate such as this should be a live stream, should be recorded, and should be paid for effectively as far as technical backup by the main promoters of these.

00:08:09:21 - 00:08:42:17

So the idea behind it was it started over Covid when we weren't able to hold hearings in public like this or meetings and public. So we held them over teams where it was video conference, and it's remained that way because the Planning Inspectorate feels it's a more open, um, format to hold this type of hearing. So or meeting. But thank you for your thank you for your comments and concern anyway. But as I say, it's standard practice and it's nothing that we can change today.

00:08:42:19 - 00:08:48:17

If you have a problem with that, it might be that you can talk to Mr. Stevens and you can contact the Planning Inspector directly.

00:08:52:01 - 00:09:15:09

I really do apologize, chair, because if I had been aware of this beforehand, I would have raised it as an issue. I made the automatic assumption that from my past experience, given the responsibilities under GDPR in particular, that the planning this was the Planning Inspectorate Day and this was our opportunity to engage with you.

00:09:15:15 - 00:09:16:03

It says that's.

00:09:16:06 - 00:09:23:29

Correct. And I would have expected RWA to be here, obviously, but I wouldn't expect them to be in charge of all the technical back up for the meeting. Well, that.

00:09:24:01 - 00:09:31:03

Can be it can be quite a costly experience. And it's because the applicant is their application. Then they're expected to pay for that.

00:09:31:27 - 00:09:44:06

But it's not their meeting. It's your meeting. I'm here to talk to you and to listen to them and engage, hopefully constructively. But not. But I'm here because you're here, not because they're here.

00:09:44:08 - 00:09:48:06

And that's why you'll have your say during this morning's meeting.

00:09:51:03 - 00:10:00:17

And there's lots of production companies. So lots of production companies involved in this. And they're absolutely they're independent from they're not they're not they're hired by the applicant.

00:10:01:16 - 00:10:04:24

By the applicant and hired by the planning inspector.

00:10:04:26 - 00:10:18:27

No, no, but we we make sure that they're professional and capable of doing the job, which is to the job is to make sure that it can be live streamed, recorded and then redacted if need be and published.

00:10:18:29 - 00:10:20:23

I just need to step out the room for a minute.

00:10:21:09 - 00:10:21:25

Okay.

00:10:24:16 - 00:10:25:25

Right. I'll continue.

00:10:28:23 - 00:10:50:07

I'll. I'll deal with a few housekeeping matters. Um, can everyone please set all devices and phones are silent? Um, we're not expecting any fire alarm tests today, but if there is one, um, then the procedure is to leave by the fire exit there or here. Walk around the building and congregate in the car park at the front of the hotel

00:10:52:05 - 00:10:58:10

toilets located through the door at the back of the room on the right, just down the corridor and again on the right.

00:11:01:24 - 00:11:23:19

We'll be taking a short break around 1130. If it appears that we need to continue much beyond that time. If this happens, those of you who are participating virtually will need to ensure their cameras and microphones are turned off during the break. For those of you watching, the livestream will have to stop this at the break and then restart it when the meeting resumes. As a result, you'll need to refresh your browser screen at that time.

00:11:25:16 - 00:11:28:04

Can I just check that if there's anyone here from the press today?

00:11:29:28 - 00:11:30:13

So.

00:11:35:00 - 00:11:52:24

A digital recording of today's meeting will be available on the project web page as soon as practicable after this meeting. With this in mind, Please ensure that you speak clearly into the microphone. If you're not at the table with the microphone, there's a roving microphone. So if you could please wait for one of those before you speak. If anybody else turns up.

00:11:55:17 - 00:12:12:01

If an individual or group wishes to use social media, report, film or record today's meeting or any subsequent hearings, please do so responsibly and with the proper consideration for the parties. This must not be disruptive and the material must not be misused.

00:12:19:17 - 00:12:53:23

You're all here today because you're in one of the following categories. You are the applicant or representative of the applicant. You represent the host, local authority or neighbouring authority. You represent bodies that are statutory parties. You are sent in a relevant representation and have therefore become an interested party. You've been invited by the examining authority as an other person. An individual or a body affected by the application for compulsory acquisition or temporary possession of land or rights over land, or you're a combination of any of these categories.

00:12:54:10 - 00:13:09:24

There may also be people who say they are not covered by any of those descriptions. Whichever you are, you're all very welcome. This means you follow the agenda set out in our letter of the 24th of June 2025, which we shall refer to from now on as a rule six letter.

00:13:11:19 - 00:13:28:23

I hope you have a copy of the rule six letters at hand. If you do. Annex eight sets out the agenda for this morning's meeting. We're currently on item one. The letter and agenda are also available on the project web page, where they can be found in the examination library. Reference PD 006.

00:13:31:00 - 00:13:57:16

So let me briefly explain the purpose of this preliminary meeting. We're here to focus on the way in which we, the examining authority, intend to examine this application. We'll be discussing only the procedural aspects of this examination this morning. We're not taking any evidence of this meeting. We're not discussing either the merits of or concerns that you may have regarding the application. We would like to emphasize that we have made no decisions yet on any of these matters.

00:13:59:12 - 00:14:17:00

Merits or concerns will only be considered once examination of the application begins, which happens following the close of this meeting. Notes have been taken of this meeting, and these will be placed on the project web page as soon as practicable after the close of the meeting. Together with digital recordings,

00:14:18:27 - 00:14:40:18

this would be beneficial to us. If each time you speak, you can say your name and whom you're representing. Please also bear in mind that the only official record of today's proceedings are the notes of the digital notes and the digital recordings. Tweets, blogs and other similar communications arising out of this meeting will not be accepted as evidence into the examination.

00:14:42:22 - 00:15:00:22

I'm not going to ask those of you who are participating in today's meeting to introduce yourselves. When I say to your organization's name that you introduce yourself, stating your name, whom you represent and how you also wish to be addressed. Thank you. Um, can we please start, first of all, with the applicant?

00:15:02:18 - 00:15:27:11

Good morning sir. Um, and, uh, good morning to everyone in the room and online. My name is Tom McNamara. I am a legal director with the law firm TLT. Uh, my firm is acting for the applicant in relation to this matter. Um, I'm joined today by various members of the applicant team. Um, would you like me to ask those people to introduce themselves now or as and when.

00:15:27:28 - 00:15:29:15

I may be useful just now.

00:15:29:17 - 00:15:30:02

Okay.

00:15:34:17 - 00:15:41:16

Um, miss Sophie Reese. Um, also at tlt, LLP. Uh, and appearing for the applicant.

00:15:44:29 - 00:15:47:29

Ben Suess um, associate director for.

00:15:50:26 - 00:15:52:10

Appearing for the applicant.

00:15:54:14 - 00:15:56:05

Jonathan Harrison I'll do it for you.

00:15:58:21 - 00:16:00:11

And Lily Hunter. How do we.

00:16:10:12 - 00:16:13:05

Thank you. Um, we now move on to the local authority, please.

00:16:14:03 - 00:16:18:00

Hello. Rachel Hodgson, principal planning officer, East Riding Council.

00:16:25:14 - 00:16:26:03

Thank you.

00:16:29:12 - 00:16:43:29

Um, and then the only other, um, legislation is from local group, which has expressed their wishes. Um, and my understanding is George McManus. Is that yourself?

00:16:45:08 - 00:17:16:06

That is great. And thank you for introducing me, sir. I just I don't actually have to repeat my name. I want to place on record my extreme reservations and concerns as to how this meeting is being conducted, and in particular, the fact that the technical backup for this is funded by the project promoter, which I find extremely. I'm a bit weary about having a cup of tea now, because in the past, when I've had a cup of tea at an event, it's been declared that RWA was providing the tea bags.

00:17:16:08 - 00:17:41:09

Now, this might sound churlish, sir, but to be told that RWA are funding the technical backup of this meeting, whether it's standard practice or not, and whether it evolved through Covid as a result of Covid, I. It's bluffing and really undermines my confidence and the objectivity of of the process.

00:17:41:19 - 00:17:42:08

Okay. Thank you.

00:17:42:24 - 00:17:53:04

Yeah, sure. That's a matter of record, but my name is George McManus, and I live in. I'm a resident of the East Riding, and I represent the East Riding against solar expansion.

00:17:53:06 - 00:18:04:04

Yes. I was just going to clarify that. So I know you registered as an interested party individually, but today you're here to represent an organization called.

00:18:04:20 - 00:18:07:07

East Riding Against Solar Expansion. That's correct.

00:18:07:09 - 00:18:08:06

Okay. Thank you.

00:18:10:28 - 00:18:13:28

And thank you for coming. And welcome to this Riding of Yorkshire.

00:18:17:06 - 00:18:24:20

Um, so thank you. Uh, there's nobody else today who's, um, request to speak, but is there anybody else in the room who would like to.

00:18:28:06 - 00:18:33:27

Okay. And, um, is there anybody who's joining virtually who wishes to speak today.

00:18:39:03 - 00:18:45:20

Okay. Mr. McManus, can I just, um, clarify? Is there a particular agenda item that you wish to speak on today?

00:18:48:02 - 00:19:22:04

This morning's meeting? Yes. Uh, no, I am not to. Um, this is the first time I've been to a meeting of the examining authority. And I've seen the agenda. Whether or not my questions about the wider process are more appropriate for this afternoon, when we're talking about the details of the actual project and the consultation process itself. I will take advice from you on that. I do have deep concerns about how the consultation process has been conducted, and but I'll take your advice on that.

00:19:22:06 - 00:19:27:09

Is that appropriate to discuss now or later? Because I've got separate questions for this afternoon's event.

00:19:27:20 - 00:19:35:25

Okay. That may be maybe more suitable to this afternoon. Um, if there's an agenda item we come across, you do wish to speak, then you're more than welcome to.

00:19:43:15 - 00:19:49:27

Okay. Thank you. Um, I didn't see any hands going up virtually either, so I'll move on.

00:19:53:06 - 00:19:57:06

Um, are there any other comments anybody wishes to make under agenda item one at all?

00:19:58:22 - 00:20:01:04

Okay. If not, that concludes this agenda item.

00:20:03:15 - 00:20:09:19

I will now turn to agenda item two on the agenda, which is the examining authority's remarks about the examination process.

00:20:12:15 - 00:20:32:10

In order to streamline the running of this event in NXP of our rule six letter, we provide an introduction to the preliminary meeting and the examination process, explaining how it will be conducted and how you can participate. For expediency, I'm assuming that everyone has read this and therefore I don't propose to spend time reading it out.

00:20:35:08 - 00:20:46:03

This is important to the examining authority that you are clear in your understanding of the process. Therefore, if there's anything you're unclear about or in which you need clarity, then please do ask.

00:20:47:28 - 00:20:59:14

What are the advantages of holding the preliminary meeting and hearings as physical events is, or when the formal proceedings have ended? The applicants and parties who have attended the events can take the opportunity to talk face to face.

00:21:01:00 - 00:21:29:13

People seem to find this informal interaction to be a useful way to discuss matters which may be outstanding for some time, and being in the same room can be a spur to action. For those who are attending this event, virtually the same opportunities won't occur. Nevertheless, we would ask the applicant to engage in dialogue with both parties who attend today's event and with others attending virtually to try to make progress. Progress where matters are still in dispute.

00:21:33:00 - 00:21:51:18

We decided to hold a blend of events this week and this afternoon. However, we will continue to review the most appropriate format for future events which may be blended or virtual. And we would welcome any comments on how events should be conducted. And we will deal with this and try some for

00:21:53:18 - 00:22:09:23

if you have any specific points to make regarding the draft timetable. These will also be considered later in the agenda under agenda item four. So on the basis of the information set out and Alex B, are there any questions about the way in which the examining authority intends to examine this application?

00:22:14:29 - 00:22:29:09

Can we receive assurances that this will be a wholly objective process, and that RW will be organizing the future agendas and future technical backup? up or are out of you.

00:22:31:19 - 00:22:44:14

So in terms of future agendas, that's the that's for the examining authority to deal with. Um, RWA would be you want to send any hearings and all to answer questions that we had, we had for them. Um, of.

00:22:44:16 - 00:22:52:05

Course, I'm just wondering if you've got venues and you've got events and you've got places to go and and we're all going to be going on site visits and stuff.

00:22:53:23 - 00:23:09:27

Who's going to be who's going to be paying for all that? Uh, this is a this is a big rural area that I take it I'll probably live 20 miles from here. And this is close. Uh, so there are logistical challenges.

00:23:10:08 - 00:23:20:12

So you will come on site for this later, but you may or you may have seen that we've already carried out, um, quite an extensive site visit, just myself and Miss Milliken.

00:23:20:14 - 00:23:25:27

And did you have. Yeah. Yep. So I'm thinking from from now on after today.

00:23:28:00 - 00:23:39:06

Presumably. I'm just wondering. I'm not. I'm not trying. I do feel very uncomfortable. And it's not that I distrust RW, that being really pleasant and dealing with so far.

00:23:39:24 - 00:23:40:27

The the answer.

00:23:40:29 - 00:23:42:00

But this is a bit of planning.

00:23:42:02 - 00:23:45:29

Process is a very that's why we hold these public events in the open.

00:23:46:02 - 00:23:46:17

Yeah.

00:23:46:29 - 00:23:55:24

You're allowed to ask any questions I think matters around hiring. Production companies are possibly something that you should take up with the the Planning Inspectorate.

00:23:56:07 - 00:24:16:08

But I'm your guest. I'm I'm here I'm, you know, to speak as I say because like I said, would you like to come to this event? Uh, I love the green shuttle. I've been to many events here. I know that it's expensive. It's a wonderful venue. So the reason for that.

00:24:16:18 - 00:24:24:12

The reason we have to select venues, is, size wise, we don't know how many people may come to these events. There could be all the chairs behind you could have been filled.

00:24:24:14 - 00:24:25:15

I know, I know.

00:24:26:08 - 00:24:34:14

We looked around at numerous, um, venues, all of which seemed good. This was one of the closest to the application sites.

00:24:34:16 - 00:24:40:26

Oh, this is a fantastic venue. I don't have any. I just wonder who's paying for it. Who's paying for us to be here today?

00:24:41:15 - 00:24:58:11

Again, this is the applicant. This is the applicant application. Therefore, the applicant has to foot the bill for any costs, um, incurred. It's not for the planning inspectors to to bill higher venues and tie productions.

00:25:07:06 - 00:25:25:18

For the benefit of anybody watching on livestream, this room is virtually empty. Uh, I don't know if that's obvious, but then, uh, I'm not sitting with the technical team. So which really gets to the core of my main concern about the consultation process, which is why I mentioned earlier. But you advise that I should bring that up this afternoon?

00:25:29:13 - 00:25:56:05

Yeah. So we have to make sure that a venue is booked very far in advance because it takes time. And then there's a whole consultation process, as you will have seen. And then, you know, we can't go and see whether there'll be two people or 100 people turning up on the day. So we have to make sure that we're accommodating for the, you know, theoretically, the most people who may turn up, whether they do or not is it's not really a matter for. Um.

00:25:56:18 - 00:26:34:19

Absolutely. So but I've organised government events in the past and I know the costs involved. And, uh, we should have I, I'm very I'm just uncomfortable with the whole process. I think I'm probably uncomfortable because I was taken by surprise. This is basically an RWA event today. Uh, if the hotel is being paid for. The technical teams being paid for tea bags are being paid for. Uh, I assume that I assume that the civil servants who are here are declaring all this, uh, to the departments, because.

00:26:34:21 - 00:26:45:06

So today is a planning Inspectorate event, and it's part of it's called the preliminary meeting. And it's it's written in legislation that we have to hold this event before we open the examination.

00:26:45:08 - 00:26:45:23

And I know.

00:26:45:25 - 00:26:46:16

That's the reason that.

00:26:46:18 - 00:26:48:17

We're having to get my point across.

00:26:48:19 - 00:27:15:15

Quite clearly here that there was a conflict of interest and the Planning Inspectorate holding an open meeting that is being financed by the promoter of the project, whether it's standard practice or not. Is that something that the Planning Inspectorate has to look at? Because I would like to feel confident in this process, and I'm afraid that undermines my confidence.

00:27:15:17 - 00:27:24:03

Okay. I think if you have a serious concern, that's something you're going to have to take up with the Planning plenty of spectators rather than examining authority. Who's been appointed to examine this application?

00:27:24:05 - 00:27:24:20

Okay.

00:27:25:07 - 00:27:32:23

It's a wider issue if that's if that's a serious concern of yours. Serious issue. You'll have to take that up with the planning inspector or. Yeah. Yeah.

00:27:34:22 - 00:27:37:16

So you can speak to Mr. Stevens at the back of the room for contact.

00:27:37:22 - 00:27:46:04

And reassure people from R.W. at no offence. Not having a go at you, having to go through the process. And that's what I'm here for today.

00:27:51:09 - 00:27:57:18

Uh, so are there any hands virtually who have any comments to make on this agenda item before we move on?

00:27:58:05 - 00:28:06:25

I can ask a question. How many people do you think are on line? Do you know how can the technical team at the back tell us? Or is that something that only they can know?

00:28:07:09 - 00:28:10:06

Um, there's 23 at the moment.

00:28:10:08 - 00:28:12:07

23 people on line.

00:28:12:09 - 00:28:17:06

That's not necessarily wanting to participate, but we give everybody the opportunity.

00:28:17:12 - 00:28:18:08

To you live stream?

00:28:19:02 - 00:28:20:15

I'm watching live stream. Of course.

00:28:22:20 - 00:28:30:00

Thank you. Okay, so I'm now going to hand over to Miss Milliken, who will deal with agenda item three, which is the initial assessment of principal issues.

00:28:32:04 - 00:28:47:05

Thank you. For this item, it would be useful if you could have annex of the rule six letter in front of you, please. And can I ask that the applicant shares the examining authority's list of the initial assessment of principal issues on the screen?

00:28:49:23 - 00:29:04:09

If you could move down to the list of issues, that would be helpful. I don't know if you're able to scroll a little bit for the time. Yes, you could zoom out and try and included it all in the screen. That would be helpful.

00:29:09:15 - 00:29:51:17

Thank you. So this list provides an initial framework of issues for the examination of the application, though it does not preclude us from amending the list by removing or adding to the principal issues at a later stage in the process. You will also note that the examining authority will examine the application in accordance with the relevant national policy statements, which have effect and the requirements and documents associated with the Planning Act 2008. In addition, matters relating to compulsory acquisition and the Draft Development Consent Order, whilst not listed in the initial principal issues, will form an integral part of the examination.

00:29:54:11 - 00:30:05:28

I have nothing further to add at this stage. Nevertheless, parties here today may wish to comment on the principal issues themselves. The applicant can stop sharing document and I thank you.

00:30:07:17 - 00:30:14:10

Can I ask if anyone in the room or virtually wishes to make any comments on the issues at this time? Mr. McManus.

00:30:14:12 - 00:30:41:06

Can I ask a question on the landscape and visual? One of the one of the hats that I wear is as a Dutch ambassador for the North York Moors National Park, which isn't that far from here. And I am very worried about light pollution. Now, we do have a section on noise and vibration, and we have a separate section on landscape and visual, including good design. Would you say that light pollution comes under one of those sections?

00:30:42:18 - 00:30:59:20

So for the initial assessment of principal issues, as you can see it's a very high level list. So it doesn't preclude secondary and tertiary matters of which light pollution is one of the considerations. All considerations are before the examining authority and will be dealt with.

00:31:03:20 - 00:31:05:11

Does anyone else wish to comment?

00:31:08:24 - 00:31:10:29

Anyone virtually wish to comment?

00:31:13:08 - 00:31:27:29

No thank you. I have no further points or questions on this agenda item. Um, so if there are any other points that anybody wishes to raise nigh on the initial assessment of principal issues, is there anything before we move on to the next agenda item?

00:31:30:16 - 00:31:33:02

No. Okay. Thank you for your participation.

00:31:35:06 - 00:31:40:20

Mr. Hudson, for item four on the agenda, which is the draft examination timetable. Thank you.

00:31:46:00 - 00:31:55:27

Thank you. Um, for this agenda item, you have, uh, annex D of our rule six letter in front of you. Um, it'd be also useful if the applicant could share that on the screen, please.

00:32:04:08 - 00:32:40:02

So Alex sets out our draft examination timetable. Um, please note that the examining authority is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of a period of six months, beginning with the day after the close of the preliminary meeting, which would be the 22nd of July January 2026. However, we set an earlier date for the intended close in line with other similar development consent applications and to align with government expectations. This is on the 22nd of December, 2025, a few days after the final deadline.

00:32:40:04 - 00:32:55:04

Deadline sets. Should we consider it necessary to extend the completion beyond this date? For example, because we consider further examination of the issues is necessary. We will inform all parties of this by way of a procedural decision.

00:32:58:26 - 00:33:33:15

The annex sets out the draft dates for any hearings and deadlines for the submission of written documents. It also includes dates for examining authority to issue documents such as our written questions. Any proposed schedule several changes to the Draft Development Consent Order and the report on the implications for European sites, if necessary. Please note that the time of submission on each stated deadline is 1159, or one minute to midnight. As you'll see from the draft timetable, there are six proposed deadlines for information to be submitted to the examining authority.

00:33:33:21 - 00:33:41:19

In the interest of brevity. I don't intend to go through the draft timetable in its entirety, so I will highlight some key points.

00:33:43:24 - 00:34:09:04

Following the start of the examination, which occurs after the close of this meeting, we'll hold an open floor hearing this afternoon at 3 p.m.. This provides an opportunity for individuals, community groups and other parties to speak directly to us. As the name suggests, open floor hearings are open to any interested party to attend and are not about a particular location or topic in relation to the proposed development.

00:34:11:16 - 00:34:26:25

As soon as possible after this preliminary meeting, we will issue our rule eight letter, which will finalize the timetable. At the same time, we will also issue our first set of written questions. Deadline one is timetabled for the 27th of August 2025.

00:34:28:27 - 00:34:48:27

You will see from the draft timetable that, if required, a second set of written questions is pencilled in for the 24th of September and the third set for the 14th of November. We may also, at any point during the examination, issue specific requests for information from named parties if necessary, and this is known as the rule 17 request.

00:34:50:21 - 00:35:25:07

Time is reserved for any issue specific compulsory acquisition or further open floor hearings, and an and and accompany site inspection again if necessary, and that will be in the week commencing the 20th of October. We will give advance notice of these. Should they be required and with aim to avoid any hearings during the main school holiday periods. The applicant will note the request for updates are included in all deadlines in the draft examination timetable, as per the information annex to the rule six letter.

00:35:28:06 - 00:35:42:16

We received some comments on the draft timetable from the applicant only relating to deadlines two and three. It might just be helpful just to briefly summarize those and just explain why you think they should be reviewed in your view.

00:35:43:19 - 00:36:41:24

Thank you, sir. Tom McNamara, on behalf of the applicant. Yes. Um, in our letter of the 9th of July, uh, which is, uh, examination library reference PD 001, we we did set out two comments, as you say, relating to deadlines two and three. Um, now just starting with deadline two at the moment your timetable and XD of the rule six letter has that as Wednesday the 10th of September, and it seemed to us just looking at the nature of the submissions requested for that deadline in particular, um, the responses to the information that we submitted at the deadline, one which is quite voluminous in scope, that the addition of two extra days in that week went into Friday, the 12th of September, might just assist interested parties in providing um informed responses at deadline two.

00:36:42:27 - 00:36:43:12

Okay.

00:36:43:21 - 00:36:50:19

When you say interested party, are you talking because no interested parties have raises concern? Are you talking about the applicant as well as.

00:36:51:09 - 00:36:52:06

I am I am.

00:36:52:09 - 00:36:52:24

Okay.

00:36:53:06 - 00:37:46:11

Um, yes. Um, so that deals with deadline two. Should I move to arguments on deadline three as well? Yeah. Um, so at the moment, the timetable, uh, has Monday the 6th of October as the relevant deadline for deadline three. And again, we we felt, um, that it would be beneficial if that date were moved out by two working days to Wednesday, the 8th of October. And we based that on the assumption that the second written questions would be published on the 24th of September, I appreciate that it's no later than the 24th of September, but if indeed that was the date for publication of the second written questions, by my calculation, that would give seven working days to form responses to the second round of written questions.

00:37:46:13 - 00:38:08:26

And so an additional two days would just, would just provide a bit of a buffer. And we felt in the rounds that those minor tweaks to the timetable could probably be accommodated without having a knock on effect elsewhere. But obviously we're in your hands there. And, um, those were the only comments on the timetable which we felt was a good timetable. Um, and we broadly agreed with it.

00:38:13:12 - 00:38:17:21

Okay. And you have no more comments other than those on behalf.

00:38:17:23 - 00:38:19:24

Yeah. No, that was the totality.

00:38:20:06 - 00:38:20:29

Thank you. Yeah.

00:38:21:06 - 00:38:49:08

Um, we'll obviously take that away and consistent with that. Um, you know, obviously there's our, our own deadlines to look at as well. For example, you know, making sure we have enough time between getting responses and, um, preparing for hearings, for example, should that need to be the case. But we will take that away and consider that. Thank you. Uh, does anybody else have any questions on the timetable whilst we're here? Yes. Mr. McManus.

00:38:49:10 - 00:39:03:12

General question. How set in stone is a deadline of 22nd of December. Do you have flexibility? I'm thinking in case any major issues arise, that the Planning Inspectorate thinks Merit further investigation.

00:39:03:21 - 00:39:36:09

Yeah. So, um, that's the that's the intended close. But the the the the actual deadline as written in, uh, the, the planning Act is the 22nd of January. So as I mentioned before, if we feel we need to extend that because we need further, we need further examine the documents or the application, we will issue a procedural decision, um, changing the the closed date examination. So, you know, that's the intended date.

00:39:36:11 - 00:39:40:21

Yeah. It's the, the the absolute set in stone date is the 22nd of January.

00:39:44:05 - 00:39:54:11

Okay. And, um, is there anybody online virtually who has any questions on the dissemination timetable. Right.

00:40:04:18 - 00:40:34:25

And, uh. You're okay. You've got no comments on that either. No. Okay. Thank you. Um, it's worth just saying that the examining authority is also considering making some very minor amendments to the timetable. Um, these are so making provision for any comments on procedural deadline A

submissions by deadline one. So there's no change to any dates. It will just be adding in an additional bullet point.

00:40:39:04 - 00:40:43:29

Um, also removing the second bullet point from deadline three.

00:40:46:17 - 00:41:06:09

Um, because requests for a further open floor hearing or a compulsory acquisition hearing are provided for a deadline. Two. And should we hold an issue specific hearing or further open for floor hearing or compulsory acquisition hearing and we will set out in a notification letter matters around attendance.

00:41:12:16 - 00:41:20:18

And then finally, um, adding in a new item 12 before the current item 12.

00:41:22:27 - 00:41:39:01

And this will be for the publication by the examining authority of the report on the implications for European Sites on the 7th of November, 2025. So bringing that forward by week effectively to allow interested parties longer period to comment on it.

00:41:41:03 - 00:41:50:10

Um, and then we would obviously then make changes to the current item 12 to reflect this number as item 13 changed in the numbering of subsequent items also.

00:41:53:03 - 00:41:56:25

Um, like, would anybody like to comment on this? The applicant.

00:41:59:23 - 00:42:14:27

On behalf of the applicant. Thank you sir. That's very helpful. I, I don't have any comments on on those changes. They seem sensible to me and I think it will be achievable for, um, uh, for us to fall in line with those changes.

00:42:15:19 - 00:42:28:21

Okay. As I say, there's no change in dates. The only change in dates gives people more time to comment, so. Okay. Thank you. Um, any other parties just comments on those matters. And anybody? Virtually.

00:42:33:15 - 00:42:35:03

Any hands raised? Okay.

00:42:37:21 - 00:42:46:12

I would also like to seek your views. Oh, you can take down the timetable now, please. Um, Mr. Stevens, um, we'd also like to.

00:42:48:25 - 00:42:59:16

Take your views on whether you have a preference for future events to be blended or fully virtual. Um, late today, or if you'd rather than be fully virtual. So you can start with the applicant.

00:43:01:07 - 00:43:29:13

Thank you sir. On behalf of the applicant, um, I think that blended formats works well. Um, there aren't there advantages of being in the room, um, with everybody here? Um, and equally, I think we appreciate that the opportunity to to join online is is welcome. Um, so we'd be perfectly comfortable with, uh, continuation of the blended format.

00:43:32:09 - 00:43:37:03

Okay. Um, does anybody else have any views on that? Yes. Mr. McMullen.

00:43:37:16 - 00:44:09:15

As future events are concerned that I'm interested in the use of the term blended. I mean, we would call it hybrid. Given that we've got both our people online and people in the room. Uh, this proposal covers a large geographical area, and I would suggest that future meetings should be a bit closer to where in Tekton, which Tekton itself is not directly affected by this, but there's a whole line of settlements running north to south.

00:44:09:17 - 00:44:47:15

There is. And if there's going to be future meetings, not only would I like them to be closer to the community so that people living there would be able to access it easier. As I say, it's some distance for me, but from the bottom end of this, uh, venue is probably 7 or 8 miles to a nameless people living in North Hall who are affected by the substation. So I would like to see more local events, and I would rather that if you need, if I would rather they were not paid for by the major party, who's going to be the beneficiary for if this if this project is given.

00:44:47:17 - 00:44:54:04

Okay. We understand your points on that. However, that will continue to be the case because that is standard practice. As I've said.

00:44:54:12 - 00:44:56:15

That's the practice. So it can't be changed.

00:44:58:00 - 00:45:08:29

It's going to remain like that and unless it is changed. But as I say, if that's a major concern you have, you're going to have to take that up with the Planning Inspectorate separately to this to myself.

00:45:09:01 - 00:45:41:00

And I can I can organise a community hall and long rest and free of charge. So, so nobody has to pay for it. And people might not feel as uncomfortable as I feel at being. The case of RWA has been the guest of the Planning Inspectorate, and I think, you know, I might I would hate this to reflect on the work of the Planning Inspectorate as an independent body, because people will be asking questions about how the Planning Inspectorate can be independent when the bills are being paid for by the promoter.

00:45:41:02 - 00:45:47:03

Yeah, because they are the applicant. So it's their responsibility. I'm just I'm talking about public service. I mean.

00:45:47:05 - 00:46:21:22

Public perception I know from the Secretary of State Eight is very important. And when it comes to these applications, I know that he wants to get the public's confidence that he is making the right decisions and that the process is appropriate. So I, I hope this doesn't come back to haunt the Planning Inspectorate in months to come. I really do. I speak as a former civil servant. I'm very I was very, very cautious about protecting the civil service from potential damage.

00:46:21:26 - 00:46:30:03

And so many, many, many answers have been examined this way and in this format and in the same circumstances. And I'm not aware of any.

00:46:30:29 - 00:46:34:20

Nobody's ever. Nobody's ever, ever raised this as an issue.

00:46:34:29 - 00:46:39:28

Nothing but no, because it's because, as I say, it's the only thing that's done. It's standard practice.

00:46:40:00 - 00:47:15:29

I'm glad, I'm glad. I'm glad you held it together. Because it's it's the sort of things that I've spoken to thousands of members of the public. We've spoken to thousands of members of the public in the East Riding in the last year, and the sight of the most common comment that is made is we do not know anything about it. They're not for, they're not against, they just don't know about it. And there is such a restricted process involved in this whole carry on that I feel that people don't have confidence and people come to us.

00:47:16:10 - 00:47:28:27

Okay. So I know that there's been many coming to you. There's been many rounds of consultation on this. There's been there's been adverts in the papers. There's been the infrastructure website. There's been correspondence.

00:47:28:29 - 00:47:38:05

We have distributed more leaflets about this project in RWA, and they're talking about spending £1 billion in the project. We've spent £200.

00:47:38:22 - 00:47:47:23

So I think if you continue to have major concerns, you can also put it in writing and the applicant can respond to your concerns in writing as well.

00:47:48:27 - 00:48:00:20

Well, I hope they respond a bit quicker than they have in the past. That's all I can say, because waiting three months, three and a half months for the answer to a single question seems to be how the applicant works. And I'm going to raise that this afternoon.

00:48:02:06 - 00:48:03:16

Okay. Thank you, Mr. McManus.

00:48:03:18 - 00:48:05:20

If I'm not switched off by the technical team.

00:48:07:13 - 00:48:22:15

Thank you, Mr. Madison. Obviously, myself and Miss Milligan, who are the examining authority, operates in a totally open and impartial manner. Our reports will be there for everyone to read. At the end of the process, as will the Secretary of State's final decision.

00:48:24:00 - 00:48:49:12

I was paying for the hire of this room today so the Planning Inspectorate could come. People would rightly accuse us of not acting impartially, because clearly we have a vested interest in this project not going ahead. And they were saying they would quite correctly, I think, allege that we were using that influence in order to try and influence the outcomes. I think that would be a mistake. I think it would be wrong.

00:48:52:27 - 00:49:30:16

Okay. Thank you. Um, as I'm sure you're all aware, there are many competing aspects when drafting a timetable, including several internal deadlines for the Planning Inspectorate, which also needs to be built into the timetable, such as the publication of notifications. Uh, as such, it is a difficult task to draft a timetable which everybody is fully happy with. And we will, however, take all the comments made here today. Um, and a procedural deadline into account when producing our rule eight letter uh with the final timetable, but is ultimately up to us as examining authority to decide that.

00:49:32:01 - 00:50:02:27

I'd also like to highlight the importance of ensuring that information is submitted in accordance with set deadlines. Whilst we do have the ability to accept late submissions into the examination. This is at our discretion and would only be done in exceptional circumstances. This is because late submissions restrict the ability of other parties involved to respond to the information, which can jeopardize the examination timetable. It is therefore important for you to note that if you do something, do submit something late.

00:50:02:29 - 00:50:07:02

There is always a possibility that it might not be accepted into the examination.

00:50:09:25 - 00:50:15:14

Are there any other thoughts anybody needs to raise now on what I've just run through before we move on to the next agenda item?

00:50:17:21 - 00:50:19:16

Which is the procedural decisions.

00:50:20:15 - 00:50:26:12

Sorry Rachel Hodgson, I was just to say that the blended hybrid approach works well for us.

00:50:26:14 - 00:50:27:20

Okay. Thank you for that.

00:50:38:18 - 00:50:43:12

And do you have any views on sort of venues, geographical extent of venues?

00:50:44:09 - 00:50:52:12

I did think this was quite a good venue. Um, being on transport routes, main highway network, not too far from the affected villages.

00:50:53:12 - 00:50:54:08

Okay. Thank you.

00:50:58:28 - 00:51:09:22

Um. And anybody? Virtually. I can't see any hands raised. Uh, so I'll now hand back to Miss Milligan for agenda item five, which relates to procedural decisions taken by the examining authority.

00:51:12:09 - 00:51:42:04

Thank you. I would now ask that you turn to annex G of the rule six letter, where you will see that we've made some procedural decisions about the management of the examination. And our next year explains in depth the reasons for these procedural decisions. I've assumed that you have all read the annex, and so I'm not going to go through them all in detail. However, I will comment on some of the decisions before inviting questions or comments.

00:51:44:08 - 00:51:56:27

Statements of common ground. The aim of the statement of common ground at this early stage is to record areas of agreement, and, importantly, to identify areas of differences.

00:51:58:13 - 00:52:05:19

Can I ask that the examining authority's list of statements of common ground that we are expecting to be shared on the screen, please.

00:52:15:27 - 00:52:23:26

You can find the details for each one of these in section one of annex G of the rule six letter.

00:52:26:15 - 00:52:43:25

The slide shows a list of parties to whom we would expect the applicant to prepare a statement of common ground. The range of topics that we would expect to be included in these statements of common ground is also set. Does anybody have any comments that they wish to make on the statements of common ground.

00:52:45:11 - 00:52:46:05

The applicant.

00:52:47:24 - 00:53:12:06

Thank you. On behalf of the applicant. Um, no need to say that that list, um, that seems fine to us. Um, and I can also confirm that we we have made contact with each of those parties and are already in the process of progressing. Just statements. Common ground. Um, and we know that the, uh, the deadline one. Um,

00:53:13:29 - 00:53:17:02

sorry, I'm just looking at my draft timetable. Um.

00:53:20:00 - 00:53:23:20

I think it's right to say it's the deadline. One makes provision for submission of the first draft.

00:53:23:27 - 00:53:27:01

So, yeah, this is all the first draft statements coming round by deadline one.

00:53:29:24 - 00:53:37:07

Local authority. Any comments from yourselves and from anyone else in the room or virtually. Thank you.

00:53:39:12 - 00:53:46:20

But does the applicant intend to prepare statements of common ground with any other parties not listed in section one of annex G?

00:53:48:11 - 00:53:55:19

Tom at the bar on behalf of the applicant. No, I'm not aware of any additional parties. I think all of them are covered in your your annex lists.

00:53:56:17 - 00:54:06:11

Okay. Thank you. Whilst it's not listed, can I have your view, the applicant's view on whether this statement of common ground should be prepared with the Beverley Pasture Masters, please.

00:54:08:01 - 00:54:13:02

So I'm at the mall on behalf of the applicant. I'm just going to turn to my colleagues to the left and we'll come back to you.

00:54:31:08 - 00:55:03:06

On behalf of the applicant. Thank you. Um, I can confirm we have reached out to the to the past masters in the past with a view to, um, not only discussing the project, but putting together a statement of common ground. And I understand we've had limited engagement from the past few masters. And so, um, the extent to which they would be willing to come forward and enter into a statement of common ground, I'm not I'm not clear about, I think we'd be happy to commit to having that dialogue again and and seeing if they, they would be amenable to a, to a statement of common ground.

00:55:03:18 - 00:55:08:21

But whether or not that manifests itself in a, in a formal document, I'm not sure.

00:55:11:18 - 00:55:13:04

We'll take that away. Thank you.

00:55:15:16 - 00:55:16:03

Sorry.

00:55:18:22 - 00:55:52:25

On the list, have you considered contacting Visit Holland, East Yorkshire? The tourist industry is incredibly important in this part of the country, and a lot of people come here because of the beautiful, beautiful landscapes that will be impacted not just by this, but by all the other large scale solar farms being planned for the East Riding. I can't help think, because we get hundreds of thousands of visitors from other parts of the country who remark on the fantastic countryside where they are drawn to the East coast, which

00:55:54:12 - 00:56:15:05

we've got enormously important holiday resorts. And whether or not I would have thought this might be something the East Riding Council would like to consider as well, because Visit Hull in East Yorkshire is a major employer, and it's the original landscape of the East Riding that attracts so many visitors each year. I would have thought Visit Hall in East Yorkshire might be good people to talk to.

00:56:19:00 - 00:56:21:03

The applicant have anything to comment on this site?

00:56:21:22 - 00:56:39:04

Comment more on behalf of the applicant. Um. Not immediately. We can take away the suggestion. Um, I would obviously know that there is a, uh, a statement, a draft statement of common ground with East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Um, so that might be the place in which those, those sorts of issues could be addressed.

00:56:39:19 - 00:56:42:09

Okay. Thank you. If you could take that away, that would be appreciated.

00:56:46:03 - 00:56:46:29

Mr. Hudson.

00:56:47:18 - 00:57:18:07

I just also checked there's obviously a lot of statutory undertakers, um, affected, some of whom have sent in, um, relevant representations. We didn't ask specifically for statements of common ground, but I think I remember seeing in some in the consultation report that you thinking of doing it, but is that it's mainly around protective provisions. So, um, are you considering not entering it into common ground with them? Because you can deal with that in a different way.

00:57:19:13 - 00:57:50:10

On behalf of the applicant. I'm not aware at this stage that there are formal discussions around the statements of common ground with statutory undertakers. Clearly, we are in discussions with those

bodies regarding protective provisions, um, and potential side agreements. Um, now those discussions are at a relatively early age. Um, and to the degree that issues, um, come up in the negotiations, that might merit documenting in a statement of common ground.

00:57:50:15 - 00:58:20:15

You can obviously do that. But at this stage, I don't think there are any of those sorts of issues. Um, so we we'd propose to, to provide updates to the, the examining authority in a slightly different way, perhaps through the, the negotiations tracker. Um, and that might be sufficient. I can't imagine that there will be so many points of difference that it would merit a statement of common ground. So I think we will we will try to do it through through other means.

00:58:21:07 - 00:58:21:25

Okay. Thank you.

00:58:21:27 - 00:58:22:12

For that.

00:58:24:18 - 00:58:53:26

Turning now to local impact reports, section two of annex G sets out a request for local impact reports from East Riding of Yorkshire Council. We would also welcome local impact reports from any other relevant local authorities that may wish to submit one. As a reminder, our Local Impact Report should be submitted in final form. Draft by draft deadline one. Are there any comments from local authorities or anyone else on this matter? Can I turn to the local authority first?

00:58:54:06 - 00:59:01:16

We will be providing the local impact report. It's due to go to a committee on the 14th of August. So it'll be with you shortly after then.

00:59:03:29 - 00:59:08:09

Okay, so we will definitely expect that by deadline one. Yes. Okay. Thank you.

00:59:10:03 - 00:59:14:18

Thank you. Does anyone else in the room virtually have any comments to make on this matter?

00:59:17:09 - 00:59:18:05

The applicant.

00:59:21:02 - 00:59:23:20

On behalf of the applicant. No further comments. Thank you.

00:59:27:23 - 01:00:01:20

Moving on to accompanied site inspection, Section four of annex G sets out matters relating to an accompanying site inspection and accompanying site inspection, if required, is scheduled in the draft timetable for the week commencing the 20th of October 2025. Complete site inspections can assist the examining authority to gain an understanding of the proposed development within its site and

surroundings, as well as its effects. There is no discussions of the merits or concerns about the proposed development during such a site inspection.

01:00:03:03 - 01:00:40:03

Suggested locations for site inspections, including the reason for nomination issues to be observed there and whether the locations require access to private land, was requested. A procedural deadline a. The only response that we received, procedural deadline A, was from the applicant regarding viewing the sites from the two proposed on site substations. I would like to firstly ask the applicant And for its view on weather viewing. Those locations could be carried out by the examining authority on an unaccompanied basis, with permission from the landowner to gain access.

01:00:42:09 - 01:00:45:06

To them on behalf of the applicant. Um.

01:00:47:12 - 01:01:17:17

That that may well be possible. Um, I would need to, um, ask the question of my colleagues to the left, which I may do in the, in the in the interim between this, this meeting and this afternoon's hearing. Um, but in principle that that would, I think, be achievable. Um, subject, of course, to discussing it in advance with the relevant landowners. Um, and if that were the case. Just to be clear, we didn't have any further proposed locations.

01:01:18:11 - 01:01:33:22

Um, having regard to the extensive locations that you've already visited as part of your unaccompanied site inspection in June. Um, so, yes, bear with me. I'll take it away and I'll come back to you. Um, perhaps at the start of this afternoon's hearing to to confirm the position.

01:01:34:23 - 01:01:46:04

That's right. I suppose the point is, why would the applicant necessarily need to be there? But just know we don't need to organise a minibus to travel, right? We don't need to do any of that sometimes up on the other side visits.

01:01:46:06 - 01:02:14:24

Tell me about them on behalf of the applicant. So I think that's that's fine. I think the reason we, we suggested it was simply, um, that it was, you know, in respect of comments for an accompanying site inspection. So we took that as, as read. Um, and the other factor, of course, is that with it being on private land, we thought, um, that given our relationships with, with landowners, it might assist. But if we can work it a different way, then we'd be very happy to accommodate that. Of course.

01:02:16:05 - 01:02:53:28

Okay. Thank you. You can take away what was said and we can make a decision in due course. Thank you. Subsequently, any comments or suggestions on a proposed itinerary if required, Wired together with requests to attend an accompanying site inspection, should that be necessary. Should be provided to the examining authority by deadline to the examining authority. Will publish the final itinerary if required. At least three weeks in advance of an event taking place. It should be noted that any submission of procedural deadline A does not preclude any further requests for site inspections, including suggestions of prospective locations during an examination.

01:02:54:21 - 01:03:23:02

This may be after you've had the opportunity to review what's been said at any hearings and in any additional documents. However, there should also be a good reason for doing so. It may be that the examining authority decides to carry out further unaccompanied site inspections from publicly accessible land, or access required site inspections from private land during the examination as necessary. Any notes from such inspections will be placed on the project web page.

01:03:24:20 - 01:03:57:00

Please note that the examiners authority has already undertaken an unaccompanied site inspection from public, accessible, publicly accessible land on the 17th and 18th of June, 2025. The inspection was principally undertaken for us to view the proposed development site and its surroundings, including from identified viewpoints and with the aid of photo montages and other visualisations. The note of the inspection is available to view on the project web page with examination library reference EV 001.

01:03:57:25 - 01:04:13:02

It is not normally necessary for us to revisit places during an accompanying site inspection, which we've already visited during an unaccompanied site inspection. And I ask if anybody has any questions or comments in relation to site inspections.

01:04:14:22 - 01:04:16:01

Anybody? Virtually.

01:04:18:27 - 01:04:20:09

No applicant.

01:04:22:22 - 01:04:51:07

No atomic on behalf of the applicant. No further comments. But, um, in the period of time that's passed, since we were discussing those two locations, I've been informed that it shouldn't be a problem to make arrangements for you to visit those locations on an unaccompanied basis. Um, I'm told that the access road to the area C substation is is challenging. Um, it's a bit of a rocky road to get there. Um, but, um, but yes, I think I think the answer is yes. It can be. It can be done.

01:04:51:27 - 01:04:53:08

That's helpful. Thank you.

01:04:56:27 - 01:05:00:19

Moving on to acceptance of additional submissions into the examination.

01:05:02:06 - 01:05:31:03

Following the acceptance of the application, additional submissions from various parties have been accepted and published with examination library references as 0012 as 014. Additional submissions accepted by us at the point of publication of the rule six letter are set out in section five of annex G. Further to this, we accepted a submission from the Coal Authority on the 17th of July, 2025.

01:05:33:13 - 01:05:35:28

Change request and other documents submitted.

01:05:37:18 - 01:06:14:06

Following on from the applicants notification to make changes and corrections to the application. We accepted the applicant's change request and associated documents which were submitted a procedural deadline a with library references PDA 001 to PDA zero 20. Our procedural decision to accept these can be found at Library Reference PD 007. In addition, an updated flood risk assessment was submitted by the applicant at procedural deadline. A with library reference PDA 021 to PDA 028.

01:06:15:27 - 01:06:44:05

Furthermore, the applicant will note the submission from Hall Farm Wind Library reference EDA 030. If anyone has any comments to make on any of these documents, please do so by deadline one. Whilst we have accepted and published these documents prior to the examination commencing, we would advise parties that any documents submitted between deadlines will not normally be published until the subsequent deadline has passed.

01:06:46:06 - 01:07:06:05

We would now like to discuss the applicant's intention to update documents at deadline six, as per the change request and yes, addendum information with deadline five. Be better to allow sufficient time for the examining authority and interested parties to review documents before the close of the examination.

01:07:08:29 - 01:07:19:17

On behalf of the applicants, the answer is yes. We we'd be happy to do that. Um, just to be clear that we bring it forward to Friday the 28th of November.

01:07:19:19 - 01:07:24:11

Can you. Can you speak up, please? In fact, switch your microphone.

01:07:24:29 - 01:07:26:11

Um, my microphone is on.

01:07:26:15 - 01:07:27:20

I think it's switched off.

01:07:27:27 - 01:08:00:21

No, it's definitely on. Um, just just to repeat what I said there. So, Tom, on behalf of the applicant, I was asked the question whether it would be possible to bring forward the date for submission of updated plans and documents from deadline six is currently proposed to deadline five. And my response on behalf of the applicant to that request is to say, yes, we can do that. Um, and that that would bring forward the dates 28th of November so as to allow all interested parties to do the documents in time before the close of examination.

01:08:00:29 - 01:08:03:11

Thank you. That's helpful. Mr. Hudson, you have a comment?

01:08:03:15 - 01:08:26:29

It's, I suppose the point there's going to be there seems to be a lot of documents that stemming from the change from the older limit slightly. Um, there's a lot of document that. I mean, that's why we're kind of Threats and to the deadline. Six um, you might want to just review those all again, just to make sure that that you think that they definitely all need to be updated.

01:08:27:25 - 01:08:58:09

Tom McNamara, on behalf of the applicant. Yes, we can do that. I mean, the point is that in our submission on the 9th of July, we have been through the process of verifying which documents do need to be updated. So we're we're clear that that is an accurate list. What we've sought to do so that everyone is aware is to provide updated documents immediately, insofar as the changes toward the limits, in particular, are perceptible.

01:08:59:00 - 01:09:37:15

And so all interested parties therefore have access to the most up to date documents where that is the case for those documents that we're proposing to update later in the examination. Previously we had intended that to be deadline six. That is really because the changes are almost imperceptible given their minor scale. So we're talking about such small changes to the old limits that we felt it would, that no party would, would suffer a detriment by those documents being submitted at that point. But we understand the request, and I don't think it would be a problem for us to submit those at deadline five so that so the parties have a period of time to consider them.

01:09:37:17 - 01:10:12:13

Okay. Could I also ask so in the addendum document, I think it was the second to last table. You've set out a list of documents and then which part of the document needs updating. So for example figure three of x whatever. Can I just check. Are you planning on submitting just that figure three or the whole document with that figure three updated? Because if it's just the figure, then that starts to break up documents and makes it very difficult to, um, kind of follow what's going on.

01:10:12:15 - 01:10:14:25

So could I just request that if

01:10:16:17 - 01:10:28:07

if you're updating a feature rather than just submitting the figure, because I would have to say, well, the figure in this document is not correct, but use this one. You submit the whole document with that figure updated within it.

01:10:30:04 - 01:11:01:04

Yeah. Thank you sir. That that that is our intention. Um, and it's important that we do that because those to the extent that they're figures in the year, those are, those are proposed to be certified documents. And so it would be very difficult, I think, to achieve through the through the draft of the consent order, a position where you've got that piecemeal approach. So everything will be wrapped up into a single submission, um, so that we avoid the paper chase. Um, so yes. No problem. We can make sure that happens.

01:11:03:29 - 01:11:09:11

Okay. Thank you. Does anyone else have any comments to make on the matter as I've just raised? Mr. McManus?

01:11:10:10 - 01:11:40:15

Thank you. And it comes back to the question I was asking earlier about the deadline set in stone. And you said that the real deadline is the 22nd of January. Does the applicant have the option, if circumstances or issues arise, to ask for an extension to this timetable? Because it does strike me that, especially towards the end. It's quite a tight timeframe in the run up to Christmas and everything else.

01:11:41:00 - 01:11:43:15

Uh, do they have that option?

01:11:44:25 - 01:11:51:21

Do you mean the 22nd of January deadline? Or do you mean the 22nd of December? Um. Intended deadline. Well, I would.

01:11:52:05 - 01:12:36:11

I would think that if the applicant thought they needed an extension, it would be before the 22nd of December. But if the 22nd of. And which gives you a certain amount of wriggle room between December and January. But again, I come back to the fact this is Christmas in New Year. Uh, there's a. I tend to be quite busy at that time, and I'm sure everybody else says so. In the event that the applicant, because the applicant obviously has got a lot of a lot invested in this, and it's only fair that they should be allowed extra time if need be in order to get the application correct, rather than have it rejected before it goes to the Secretary of State.

01:12:36:17 - 01:12:48:03

So I'm just wondering if there is going to be slippage in this timetable, or are we still saying that the 22nd of January is the absolute deadline for this process?

01:12:49:19 - 01:13:26:00

So the 22nd of January is the absolute deadline in order for that date to be extended. It requires approval from the Secretary of State. So, um, I've never come across that in any of the, um, infrastructure projects I've worked on. It's quite unusual for that to be the case. Um, 22nd of December. We. That's the intended deadline are closing time. As I mentioned before, if we feel we need to do more examination on some of the matters, um, we we can extend that up until the 22nd of January, which is a statutory deadline.

01:13:28:09 - 01:13:29:12

Okay. Thank you.

01:13:30:21 - 01:13:35:23

Okay. Thank you. Um, does anyone else have any comments they wish to make on this matter?

01:13:37:09 - 01:14:09:03

No. Thank you. I'll now move on to agenda item six. Any other matters? Uh, Mr. McManus, I just want to take the opportunity to respond to your earlier point about funding for the venue. Um, I've been directed that the the fact that the applicant pays for the venues written into legislation. And, um, I know that Mr. Stevens will can direct you to that part of legislation.

01:14:09:17 - 01:14:40:05

Um, when we close. Um, and that might be help for you to witness that, I suppose. Um, a few points. The first of which is that, you know, myself and Mr. Hutson abide by the civil Service code of conduct, which includes impartiality. And on top of that, we're also, uh, members of the Royal Town Planning Institute. And we have our own code of conduct to abide by. Um, so that just to make you aware of that.

01:14:40:23 - 01:14:49:11

Um, but certainly, um, Mr. Stephens can, can direct you to that part of the legislation, if that's helpful. Um, after after the event.

01:14:51:28 - 01:15:07:23

I've had no other matters referred to me under the agenda that people wish to raise during the meeting. Um, but, um, if there are any items in relation to procedural, uh, or other relevant matters that anyone wishes to raise, um, can they raise them now, please.

01:15:09:02 - 01:15:53:27

The applicant met them on behalf of the applicant. Yes. Thank you. Um, there was just one final matter and I could have taken it under agenda item five, and probably I should have done that. But it relates to, um, changes to the application now. Um, I can confirm that we have, um, an emerging request for further minor changes to the to the application. Um, these are at the developmental stage, but I would anticipate that prior to deadline one, we will be able to come forward with a formal notification of the changes where we've just launched a period of, um, engagement with those persons with an interest in land affected by the minor changes.

01:15:54:20 - 01:16:18:23

Um, and so that was simply in line with the guidance on on seeking changes following acceptance. We just wanted to bring it to your attention so that, um, so that you're aware of it. Um, and I'm not seeking to lay out the changes or to seek any procedural advice on those changes. For the purposes of this hearing, it's simply to put it on your put it on your radar.

01:16:20:24 - 01:16:26:05

So can you clarify is that. Are you talking about additional land or removing land from the older limits?

01:16:26:07 - 01:16:56:24

There is there is a comment, and I'm sorry that there is a mixture of changes in some cases. Um, we're looking at minor changes to the order limits to bring further land within the old limits. And we are we're working through the implications of that. Clearly, we're aware of the, um, the compulsory acquisition regulations and what what they provide for, um, which is why we're we're in discussions with landowners at the moment to work through that, through those issues.

01:16:57:03 - 01:17:28:24

And when we bring forward our change notification, we will set out the implications of the changes in terms of the compulsory Competition regulations to the extent that we think they will be engaged.

Um, but what I didn't want to do was to not say anything about it today. And then for you to be surprised by the changes we we want, we wanted to make you aware of them. And I think the guidance on change, on changes to to applications following submission talks about the, um, flagging changes at an early stage.

01:17:28:26 - 01:17:38:14

So that was simply the purpose of this. Um, and I don't propose anything more about it at this stage. And to leave it for the for the formal notification.

01:17:40:18 - 01:17:42:22

Okay. Mr. Hudson, any further comments?

01:17:45:09 - 01:17:49:26

Does anyone else in the room or virtually wish to raise any other matters?

01:17:52:10 - 01:17:57:03

No. In which case I'll hand back to Mr. Hudson to close the meeting.

01:18:02:00 - 01:18:13:20

So I'd just like to thank everyone, including virtual participants, for contributing to this meeting or watching the live stream as well. And we look forward to commencing the examination of this application.

01:18:16:02 - 01:18:48:18

Uh, may we remind you that both notes and the digital recording of the proceedings today will be made available as soon as practicable on the project web page. May we also remind you the next stages of the process? Uh, that is an open floor hearing here today at 3 p.m. this afternoon. Um, the issue of the examination timetable and first written questions as soon as practicable, and deadline one, which is, uh, timetable for the 27th of August, 2025,

01:18:50:06 - 01:18:58:08

time is now 1119. And this preliminary meeting for the Pear Tree Hill solar farm project is now closed. Thank you everyone.