



Planning Inspectorate  
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## Hearing Transcript

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| <b>Project:</b> | EN010157 Peartree Hill Solar Farm |
| <b>Hearing:</b> | Open Floor Hearing 2 (OFH2)       |
| <b>Date:</b>    | 10 December 2025                  |

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:15 - 00:00:14:08

Good morning. It's now 9:30 a.m., and this open floor hearing is open. I'd like to welcome those present to this hearing.

00:00:16:08 - 00:00:19:14

Can I just check that everybody can see and hear me clearly.

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

Yes. Yes. Okay, great. And can I also confirm with Mr. Stevens that the live streaming of this event has commenced?

00:00:30:10 - 00:00:32:07

Yes. Miss Hudson, I can confirm.

00:00:32:15 - 00:00:33:07

Thank you.

00:00:35:10 - 00:01:04:18

For those people watching the live stream. If the proceedings are adjourned at any point, we will have to stop the live stream in order to give us clear recording files. When the hearing is resumed, you'll need to refresh your browser page to view the restarted live stream. This hearing is in relation to an application made by RWA renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited, who we will refer to as the applicant for an order granting development consent for the Pear Tree Hill Solar Farm project.

00:01:07:03 - 00:01:22:22

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 housing, Communities and Local Government to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application.

00:01:24:14 - 00:01:31:02

And I'm going to ask the panel member, who has also been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine this application to introduce herself.

00:01:32:16 - 00:01:38:10

Good morning. My name is Mary Louise Milligan, and I am a chartered time planner and a planning inspector.

00:01:39:21 - 00:02:02:25

Thank you. Together, we'll be reporting to the Secretary of State for Energy Security, net zero, with a recommendation as to whether the development consent order should be made. The case manager for this project is Jake Stevens. And Mr. Stevens is being supported by Harry Davies. Uh, if you have any questions or queries, uh, they're the first. They're the people who you should contact.

00:02:04:15 - 00:02:21:28

This hearing is being both live streamed and recorded in order to minimize background noise. Can you please make sure that you stay mute unless you're speaking? If you wish to speak, please use the Microsoft Teams up team's hands up function. And please do wait. Please wait to be invited to speak at the appropriate time,

00:02:23:26 - 00:02:54:27

because the digital recordings that we make are retained and published. They form a public record that can contain your personal information and to which the General Data Protection Regulation applies. The Planning Inspectorate 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 hearing, it's important that you understand that you will be live stream and recorded under the digital recording will be published. If you don't want your image to be to be recorded. You can keep your camera switched off.

00:02:57:06 - 00:03:20:14

Will only ever ask for information to be placed on the public record that is important and relevant to the planning decision. Therefore, to avoid the need to edit the recordings. We would absolutely try to not add information to the public record that you would wish to be kept private or that is confidential. If you feel that personal information is necessary, please provide this in a written document that we can adapt to before publication.

00:03:23:02 - 00:03:28:00

And we'll take a break throughout 11 a.m. if it seems likely that we'll need to go beyond that time.

00:03:31:03 - 00:04:10:07

Additional recording of today's hearing will be made available on the project web page as soon as practicable after this hearing. Um. If any individual or group wishes to use social media, report, film or record today during today's hearing and they are free to do so, but the material must not be misused. This hearing will follow the agenda as published on the project web page on the 3rd of December, with examination library reference EB 8001. The agenda is for guidance only, and we may add other considerations or issues as we progress, and we'll conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions have been made and all questions asked and responded to.

00:04:12:24 - 00:04:17:25

I'll now hand over to Miss Milliken, who will outline the purpose and conduct of this open for hearing.

00:04:20:01 - 00:04:54:09

Thank you. The reason we are holding a further open floor hearing is due to a change to the application that was proposed by the applicant and subsequently accepted by the Ex, which engaged the prescribed procedures of the Infrastructure Planning Compulsory Acquisition Regulations 2010.

This open floor hearing provides an opportunity for parties to make oral submissions via the application to the examining authority. It also gives the opportunity to ask speakers any questions about the evidence that they have presented.

00:04:55:15 - 00:05:26:24

Oral representation should be sufficiently concise and to the point to be concluded within ten minutes. May I also remind you that you're invited to include a written summary of your oral submission at deadline six, which is the 19th of December, 2025. Once you have spoken, we may wish to ask questions that will not, of course, intrude on your speaking time. Um, and firstly, the the applicant will be given the opportunity to briefly, um, respond to matters raised.

00:05:27:01 - 00:05:40:13

Um, after all speakers have been heard either orally before the close of the hearing or to submit a written response at deadline six. Um, I'm going to firstly ask who will be speaking for the applicant today, please?

00:05:43:13 - 00:05:53:04

Thank you. Um, my name is Tom McNamara, and I'm here representing RWA, the applicant for this, uh, development consent order application.

00:05:57:16 - 00:06:05:06

Thank you. Are there a further members of the team. Do they wish you wish to introduce them now or just as they speak? Perhaps.

00:06:05:15 - 00:06:20:18

Thank you, Tom McNamara, for the applicant. I think, um, if the opportunity or sorry if the if the need arises, I will introduce people at the relevant time. Um, and I think we will proceed on that basis.

00:06:21:11 - 00:06:45:03

Okay. Thank you. Um, I'm now going to move on to agenda item three, and that's to run through the list of parties that have notified that they wish to be heard today. Um, and the following person or organization has notified us that they wish to speak. And that is, um, Mr. George McManus. Is that right? On behalf of East Riding against solar expansion. And that's a race.

00:06:46:24 - 00:06:47:27

That's correct.

00:06:48:12 - 00:06:53:26

Thank you. Can I ask if there's anyone else attending today who wishes to speak?

00:06:58:05 - 00:07:21:12

No. Um, can I ask that if you wish to refer to something you've submitted before? We would be grateful if you could give the appropriate examination library reference so that we can all follow along. In addition, when using an abbreviation or an acronym for the first time, please can you give the full title? Are there any other comments anyone wishes to raise on this agenda item at this time?

00:07:25:15 - 00:07:33:06

If not, that concludes this item of the agenda, and I'll now hand back to Mr. Hudson, who is going to invite oral submissions. Thank you.

00:07:35:16 - 00:07:44:28

Thank you. I now invite Mr. McManus to turn on the camera microphone. Um, so introduce yourself and, um, explain who you represent. Thank you.

00:07:45:21 - 00:07:58:24

Hello. Good morning, everybody, and thanks for watching this morning's meeting. I'm George McManus, and I'm representing the race, which is East riding against solar expansion. It's my voice. Can you hear me? Quite clearly.

00:07:59:02 - 00:08:04:14

Yeah, I can hear you. Okay. Thanks so much. I'll just take that. Everybody else calm, though.

00:08:06:10 - 00:08:15:16

Yeah. Okay. Thank you. Mr.. Um, so yeah, we just we set out. You have ten minutes. So if you'd like to, um, proceed with your oral submission. Thank you.

00:08:15:22 - 00:08:45:24

Okay. With your permission, Mr. Chair, I'd like to raise a couple of issues that I came up at the previous meeting and a couple of issues that have arisen in recent weeks. Uh, I appreciate that this meeting has specifically been organized because there has been a change in the applicant's application. And, uh, which just helps to highlight that this is, uh, a rolling program of investigation.

00:08:45:26 - 00:09:19:01

So, uh, I hope you'll allow me to introduce what might be some relatively new, uh, factors into this. But first of all, I would like to refer to the meeting of the specific hearing of the 20th of October. One of the most important issues we spoke about was transport and access. And I wish to issue I wish to highlight issues relating specifically to the applicant's proposals for the use of car lane to access the solar farm, particularly during the construction period.

00:09:19:27 - 00:10:00:01

At the meeting, there was a lot of discussion on the unsuitability of Park Lane and issues surrounding that with with regard to access, but please correct me if I'm wrong. As far as I can recall, Caroline was not actually included in the discussion, although I know that the applicant has has been engaging with the people involved. But just to. For anyone that is not aware, Chas Lane is a very long, narrow, single track country lane that leads off the A1 65, and my contention is that it is totally unsuitable for use by its JVs.

00:10:00:13 - 00:10:36:15

It leads to land owned by the peel family, and I have their permission to speak on their behalf. They have a smallholding of 20 plus acres at the end of Kaleen, from which they operate, a small business which is a nursery plants, so they regularly rely on customers accessing their business by driving

down the single track road. If the project proceeds as planned, the their smallholding will be totally surrounded by solar panels solar panels.

00:10:36:28 - 00:11:07:13

The family will be effectively imprisoned, but more importantly, considerable damage should be done to the operation of their business. If multiple HGV movements take place over a long construction period, specifically on the issue of access, I feel that the developer should have another look at an alternative route off the A1, I-65. I. This is. This would be via mr. Steven Kelly's land.

00:11:07:15 - 00:12:09:18

I understand that Mr. Taylor has already been receptive to the developer's proposals, and the panels are due to be situated on his land. But I also believe that the lack of a suitable turning point at the moment, from the main road onto Mr. Kelly's lane, has proved to be an obstacle. However, it would be my contention that there would be considerable benefit to mitigating this by spending a small amount of money, which I am sure that the East Riding would not object to in planning grounds to allow for a slip lane into the land, and therefore I suggest that the lack of the slip wing could be easily alleviated at minimal cost, and that not only would it mitigate against some of the impact being experienced by the peel family, which is considerable at both on the business front and on the mental wellbeing front.

00:12:10:04 - 00:12:53:29

Uh, identifying and utilizing this alternative route could be seen as a gesture of goodwill, and I am sure it would be looked at that on. On the part of the peel family. I'd also like to mention the other another issue that came up at the previous meeting. This was the issue of decommissioning at the end of what, you know, we have referred to as the temporary 40 year contract when over the over the lifetime of the scheme, a number of people have spoken to me of their concerns that so many, so many things can happen in a 40 year period.

00:12:54:01 - 00:13:31:10

And although I would, I would not wish to see it under any circumstances. We simply cannot predict the future. So with regard to decommissioning 40 or 50 years down the road, I think it is right to give people reassurances that decommissioning will go ahead regardless of any unforeseen developments. I've already taken this up with the examining authority and with RWA, who have kindly responded to say that the use of s e s r o w agreements will be in place.

00:13:31:23 - 00:14:08:26

It will be put in place before, before, before the project goes ahead. My understanding is that an escrow agreement involves the developer putting a fixed sum of money into a protected ring fenced account bank account looked after by a firm of solicitors, and that that money can be accessed in the event that the decommission is about to take place and the developer, RWA, has either gone bust or has maybe sold its interest in the project to a third party.

00:14:08:28 - 00:14:55:00

And I think if we can give some reassurances and that I realize that obviously as a not as an individual or an organization, I wouldn't expect to see the specific details of such a contract. But I would like to ask if this is a this is a term that I have been advised to use if the heads of terms of the agreement

could be available, because I think if we could, if we could give that basic assurance that at the in the, in the unlikely event of something happening unforeseen, that that money would be definitely available so that whoever happens to be responsible for the land at the time of decommissioning will be, will be fully reimbursed.

00:14:56:10 - 00:15:01:13

I would like to mention another couple of things. I hope I'm not running over overrunning much here, but.

00:15:01:15 - 00:15:04:00

You have three three minutes left, Mr. McNulty.

00:15:04:11 - 00:15:37:19

Because these might be a couple of issues that are more appropriate to the issues specific hearing yesterday. They relate to issues of flooding, and I've sent the examining authority photographs that were taken last week of the Holderness Drain, which is within 12in at the moment of overtopping and causing massive flood damage. I realize that flood risk assessments have taken place, but over the course of a 40 year period, I think that is something that has to be looked at again, something that could impact on fire safety.

00:15:37:21 - 00:16:13:11

I believe that there might be someone from the fire authority attending the meeting tomorrow, in which case I can put the questions to them, because a number of stories have arisen recently about fires, particularly in solar farms that were developed some years ago. There is also the issue that has come up, you might remember at the very start of this process, Mr. Chair, I raised issues about supply lines and the potential for enforced labour to be used. Given that we are so dependent on panels and infrastructure being supplied from China.

00:16:14:13 - 00:16:58:18

Only last week I got a case involving two alleged Chinese spies had to be dropped because the government was not in a position to identify China as a risk to our national security. I have written to the Defence Secretary about this because he is ultimately responsible for this, and he has only recently objected to a solar farm in his constituency in South Yorkshire. I have also written to the the chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee to get their reassurances that if these projects go ahead and we are talking obviously this is a much wider issue than pear tree health.

00:16:58:23 - 00:17:28:06

It applies across the country, but what we have in common is this dependence. Likely dependence for the foreseeable future on imported technology from China, and the security risks to our national security that are involved. And I will be happy to keep both the developer and the examining authority updated on any responses that I received from John Healey or from Emily Thornberry, who chairs the Select committee. Thanks very much, chair.

00:17:32:19 - 00:17:46:21

Okay. Thanks very much for that, Mr. McManus. Um, so there's nobody else, um, who is on the list of speakers, and I have no, um, follow up questions for Mr. Mather. So I'll just check with Miss Milliken if she does.

00:17:50:07 - 00:17:52:06

Nothing for me at the moment. Thank you.

00:17:52:11 - 00:17:53:17

Okay. Thank you.

00:17:55:17 - 00:18:00:10

Um, can I just finally check one more time if there is anybody else who wishes to speak today?

00:18:04:02 - 00:18:19:14

I'm seeing no hands raised, so thank you very much. And I'll now move on to agenda item five. And I'll ask the applicant who wishes to comment on or respond to any or to the oral submission that's just been made. Made by Mr. McManus. Thank you.

00:18:20:12 - 00:19:09:16

Thank you sir. Uh, Tom McNamara, on behalf of the applicant, um, we we just like to thank Mr. McManus for his his comments. We've we've been taking a detailed note here, and, um, I would propose that we we will respond in writing in full at, um, at deadline six, as requested. But I can make, uh, 1 or 2 points, um, in response to some of the points raised. So Mr. McManus talked about, um, Carl Lane and, um, the applicant's position in relation to the use of car lane is that its use has been assessed by the applicant as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, and specifically in relating chapter 14 of the Environmental Statement.

00:19:09:18 - 00:19:48:00

The relevant library reference. There is RET 4-025, where we report that the impacts of the use of car lane would be negligible, and indeed, we have been in discussions with the Highway Authority about the use of all, uh, Highway Authority roads. And um, East Riding of Yorkshire Council have raised no objections to the use of car lane. Um, it's also right to acknowledge that we have a number of measures set out in the outline construction traffic management plan and the relevant library reference.

00:19:48:02 - 00:20:21:14

There is rep five, dash 071 and um in particular along Carr Lane. The applicant is seeking the ability to make provision for passing places. Um, and the, the, uh, the usefulness of these passing places is that it will allow traffic to travel in, in both directions. So one vehicle traveling in one direction can pull in, and that will allow another vehicle coming in the other direction to pass.

00:20:21:16 - 00:20:54:03

And so we say that those measures are in addition to others in the outline and construction management plan, which also includes provision for the banks, people and signage. We say that that will serve to reduce the impact, um, of of the use of car lane. And, and that is the basis on which we've



been able to conclude that there would be no impact on on line or a negligible impact. Um, as I say, we've made, uh, detailed notes in relation to the other points which missed.

00:20:54:05 - 00:21:37:17

Mr. McManus. Um, has has raised um, we will come back in writing in full on those points. Um, I have been reaching in the background for a examination library reference, um, in relation to the point that Mr. McManus raised around the use of escrow accounts, and I can refer the, um, examining authority to the applicant's response to written question 1.3.16 and that is contained in rep 2-038, where the applicant, um, provided information about the mechanics of the escrow account.

00:21:37:19 - 00:22:04:09

So, Mr. McManus, um, may want to refer to that. And we will we will flesh out the detail of that in our response as well. Um, at deadline six. Um, I think that's all I wanted to say immediately, sir. Um, for fear of not being able to do justice to to all the points that have been raised. And we will. We will come back, as I say, in full at deadline six. Thank you.

00:22:04:23 - 00:22:42:21

Okay. Thank you very much for that. Um, in that case, I shall move to close the hearing. Um, I'd just like to thank you all for your attendance and participation in this open floor hearing. Um, before I close the hearing, let me remind you that any posts of post hearing submissions, including written summaries, um, made orally, should be submitted by deadline six, which is 19th of December. Uh, we'd also like to remind you of the next stages of the process. And that is the holding, the compulsory acquisition hearing, which is the second one this afternoon at 12:30 p.m..

00:22:43:21 - 00:22:50:03

Uh, so the time is now 9:52 a.m., and this open floor hearing is now closed. Thank you very much.