



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Rosefield Solar Farm
Hearing:	Issue specific hearing 1 (ISH1) - Day 1 - Part 1
Date:	20 May 2026

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

It is not a verbatim text of what was said at the above hearing. The content was produced using artificial intelligence voice to text software. It may, therefore, include errors and should be assumed to be unedited.

The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:06:15 - 00:00:40:06

Good morning everyone. It's now 930. And time for this hearing. To begin, I'd like to welcome you all to this issue specific hearing on environmental matters for the Rose Field Solar farm project. I just confirm that everyone can hear me clearly. Yes. Good. Can I also confirm with the case team that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced? Thank you. My name is Richard Morgan. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application.

00:00:40:12 - 00:00:44:15

I'm now going to ask the other panel member to introduce themselves.

00:00:45:02 - 00:00:49:09

Good morning. My name is Mark James. I have also been appointed to be a member of the panel.

00:00:49:28 - 00:01:22:07

Thank you. Together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. I'd also like to introduce the members of the Planning Inspector's case team who are Who's supporting us today? You've probably already spoken to them. We have Rebecca Luxton, who's the case manager, and Jessica Dunlop here in the venue, along with James Leadsom, who's dealing with the virtual online side of things. The case team will be able to answer any questions you may have about today's event and the process in general.

00:01:23:07 - 00:01:41:14

I'll now just quickly deal with some housekeeping matters for those attending in person. Can everyone please set all devices and phones to silent? The toilets are back out in the foyer and the direction you can actually enter the room, and there's no fire alarm planned for today.

00:01:43:08 - 00:01:48:20

And if there is an alarm, it's a real alarm. And please follow the fire exit signs.

00:01:56:08 - 00:02:28:18

So just a bit about the agenda and logistics. Uh, this meeting will follow the agenda published on the National Infrastructure Planning website on the 12th of May, 2026. Examination library Reference EV 7001. It would be helpful if you had a copy of this out in front of you. The applicant will also display the agenda on screen when not displaying other documents. The agenda is for guidance only and we may add other considerations or issues as we progress.

00:02:29:01 - 00:02:58:06

We'll conclude the hearing as soon as all the relevant contributions have been made and all questions are asked and responded to. If the discussions can't be concluded that it may be necessary for us to prioritize matters and defer other matters to further written questions. Likewise, if you cannot answer

the questions being asked or require time to get the information requested, and can you please indicate that you need to respond in writing.

00:02:59:28 - 00:03:31:22

Today's hearing has been undertaken in a hybrid way, meaning some of you are present with us at the hearing venue and some of you are joining us virtually using Microsoft Teams. We'll make sure that however you have decided to attend today, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate in proceedings. A recording of today's hearings will be made available on the Roseville Solar Farm section of the National Infrastructure Planning website, as soon as practicable after the hearing is finished.

00:03:32:07 - 00:03:50:16

With this in mind, please ensure that you speak clearly into a microphone stating your name and who you're representing each time before you speak. If you're not at a table with a microphone, there is a roving microphone. So please wait for one of these to be brought to you before you speak.

00:03:52:18 - 00:04:31:06

A link to the planning inspector's privacy notice was provided in the notification for this hearing. We assume that everyone here today has familiarized themselves with this document, which establishes how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in data protection laws. Please speak to the case team if you have any questions about this. Just a bit about the purpose of the hearing. This hearing is being held to address matters and questions identified by us through our reading of submissions to date, representations made at previous hearings and our observations at our site inspections.

00:04:32:23 - 00:05:05:24

As well as this, please be assured that the ESA will continue to consider written submissions, including those that subsequent deadlines, noting that there are also other matters not included in this agenda that are also relevant to our examination. Just because somebody is not considered at this hearing does not mean that it's not important to us. We have a series of questions to ask parties on each topic in the agenda. We'll also ask for contributions from interested parties where relevant. Please be patient as we ask our questions.

00:05:06:01 - 00:05:12:01

As as these are important for us to gain a full understanding of issues and the positions of the parties.

00:05:13:21 - 00:05:45:03

Please remember, these are formal proceedings and all parties should conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. Now moving on to introductions. To speed up proceedings. We don't intend to go through all the traditional introductions at this point. If everyone who wishes to speak at the hearing said, I'm just going to ask the applicant and key organizations around the table and online to briefly introduce themselves. We will allow other parties to introduce themselves when they wish to speak on a particular item.

00:05:45:21 - 00:05:50:11

So for the brief initial introductions, can we please start with the applicants, Miss Mr..

00:05:51:23 - 00:06:20:15

Thank you very much. And good morning, sir. My name is Amy Sterling. I'm a partner and solicitor at Pinsent Masons, and I will be representing the applicant in this morning's session. I am joined by a host of colleagues and consultants. Given the variety on the agenda, if it would assist, I can introduce the parties who are likely to speak to the first agenda item on need at the moment, and then we can repeat the instructions for the various different topics or yes.

00:06:20:17 - 00:06:21:25

Yes, that'd be helpful.

00:06:21:27 - 00:06:44:25

Excellent. Thank you. Okay. Well, I'm joined on my left by Mr. Simon Gillett, who's a director at Humber. And then also further working down the table by Mr. Pryce, who's a director at DWP Planning Consultants, and then also to Miss Price's left, miss Ruth Knight, who is a technical director at Eaves Line and also the Master of planning consultant for the project.

00:06:45:12 - 00:06:52:11

Okay. Thank you for that. Moving around the table, can I ask Clyde and Solar Action Group to introduce yourselves, please?

00:06:52:13 - 00:07:06:14

Good morning sir. I'm Helen Hamilton from March's planning and environment record, representing the Claydon Solar Action Group. Um, we have a couple of experts attending today, so I introduces at the relevant time.

00:07:06:16 - 00:07:09:04

Yes. If you could, at the appropriate time, that would be best. Thank you.

00:07:09:06 - 00:07:09:21

Thank you very.

00:07:09:23 - 00:07:17:03

Much. Thank you. And then moving on to the other party, uh, sitting at the table, Buckinghamshire Council, gratefully. If you could introduce yourselves, please.

00:07:17:05 - 00:07:44:17

Thank you sir. Um. Buckinghamshire council. Um, I am Daniel Gazelka, uh, counsel for the council, and I'm instructed by Buckinghamshire Legal Services. And with me is Alexandra Nardini, who is a associate town planner at Atkin Wireless. And we have various experts who have joined online who I'm content to introduce as. And when we go to the various items. I do have one small point about agenda, sir. If now will be a quick moment, that.

00:07:44:19 - 00:07:46:00

Will be the appropriate time. Yes.

00:07:46:02 - 00:08:12:12

Thank you sir. We have someone present to represent the RLIF as an expert, which is Vicki Keeble. She's indicated that she has availability difficulties this afternoon. So she is available this morning and all of Thursday. I've raised this with the main party set around the table. I don't know if there's any way of possibly slightly reordering things, such as to ensure that she spoke this morning, for example.

00:08:12:20 - 00:08:28:03

Okay. Well, I think that item would come under item general, item four. Um, we could swap the agenda item for agenda item three. Um, I don't know if any of the other parties would have any objection to that at all.

00:08:28:16 - 00:08:36:09

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant at Buckinghamshire Council, Shirley kindly shared their plans in advance of this hearing and we have no objection to that.

00:08:36:11 - 00:08:41:15

Okay. Thank you. Anyone online that has any problem with that change of order?

00:08:45:03 - 00:09:06:25

I don't see any hands up. Okay. So we'll amend the agenda so that agenda item four because it comes before agenda item three. Thank you. Okay. And just to conclude the introductions, if I can go online. I think we have representatives from Natural England. Would you like to introduce yourselves please.

00:09:08:03 - 00:09:18:12

Yes. Good morning sir. I'm Jonathan Shoveler from Natural England. Acting as a senior officer. I'm joined by my colleagues, Emily and Rebecca. I think it would be good if they introduce themselves now.

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

Yes, please.

00:09:23:13 - 00:09:27:29

Good morning. Sir. Rebecca Pearson, I'm a Natural England's major planning casework team.

00:09:28:12 - 00:09:29:06

Thank you.

00:09:30:00 - 00:09:34:18

Good morning. My name is Emily Aaron. I'm a senior mammal specialist for Natural England.

00:09:35:15 - 00:09:43:00

Okay. Thank you. I believe we have representatives from the Environment Agency online.

00:09:44:00 - 00:10:01:28

Good morning sir. Um, my name is Siobhan Martin. I'm a planning advisor at the Environment Agency and here with a number of colleagues today in relation to specialisms within our remit. Um,

would you like each of my colleagues to introduce themselves at this point in time, or would you like me to introduce them when they need to speak?

00:10:02:01 - 00:10:04:01

Are there quite a few colleagues that you've got?

00:10:04:03 - 00:10:06:13

Um, five colleagues in total?

00:10:06:21 - 00:10:14:13

Yes. I think we could leave that to the appropriate agenda item. Thank you. Okay. And finally, online, I think we've got National Grid.

00:10:16:16 - 00:10:18:11

They like to introduce themselves.

00:10:22:12 - 00:10:23:10

National grid.

00:10:24:09 - 00:10:36:29

I'll tell you what. If they're going to do that. Good morning. Hi, there. Juliette Clarke, Eversheds Sutherland, representing National Grid. Um, and we've got, uh, Gregory Heavens, the project development manager. Um. Oh, Henrietta. Oh, no.

00:10:37:09 - 00:10:46:03

Okay. Thank you. Thank you for that. So all of the other parties can introduce themselves at the appropriate time when they wish to speak on an agenda item.

00:10:52:00 - 00:11:01:08

Yes, this is not to introduce ourselves. It's just to ensure I'm clear as to how I should draw attention to us if we wish to see if it

00:11:03:06 - 00:11:21:10

is right. Sorry, is the microphone now on? Yes. Sorry, because I wasn't I wasn't sure how the microphone worked. So. So would you. Because I'm conscious that I believe this microphone is turned on and off over there. Is that correct? Is this microphone turned on and off over there, or is it or is it always on?

00:11:23:10 - 00:11:30:12

Exactly. So. So the support makers live when we need to speak, so to draw attention to our wish to speak. Sir.

00:11:30:14 - 00:11:36:09

Yes. On any agenda item you wish to raise a point. Yes. Um, then just raise your hand. Uh.

00:11:36:26 - 00:11:38:12

I might have to stand up because.

00:11:38:14 - 00:11:52:01

Yes, yes. So we can actually see you. We've also got members of the case team who will be scanning the room for that as well. Um, and we'll be looking online for hands up online as well. Okay. Thank you for those introductions.

00:11:58:12 - 00:12:32:01

Okay. Just some further points before we begin. Uh, we'll be seeking to have a mid-morning break at approximately 11:30 a.m. and aim to break for lunch at 1 p.m.. We do not intend that the hearing continues beyond approximately 5 p.m. today. And of course, the hearing, if necessary, continues tomorrow morning starting at 9:30 a.m.. For those joining virtually, please use the same link as you use today to access tomorrow's proceedings if required. In terms of any actions, we request that the applicant keep a list which we checked and agreed at the end of each day.

00:12:32:16 - 00:12:58:05

It'd be helpful if any submissions resulting from an action point I submitted possible at deadline three, which is Wednesday 27th of May. However, we understand this is extremely tight and we'll agree timescales for any submissions in relation to each action point. Do we agree? Okay. Um, before we move on to the substance of the agenda. Does anyone have any further questions on the agenda or how this hearing will be conducted?

00:12:59:27 - 00:13:13:24

I can't see any hands in the room. I can't see any hands on line. Okay. We'll now move on to agenda item two, which is need site selection alternatives. I'll now hand over to my colleague, Mr. James.

00:13:15:25 - 00:13:52:17

Thank you, Doctor Morgan. So agenda item two need site selection and alternatives. And dealing with item A first, which relates to the output of the proposed developments and related land take. Um, first of all, a few points of clarification, if I may. Um, the applicant's response To our first written questions. And this is question Q 1.4.1. And that's lib reference rep 2-087 provides details of the amount of land required for each megawatts of output in direct current.

00:13:53:10 - 00:14:25:10

So I think it's 34 334.1MW in direct current, over 693 acres, which results in one megawatt requiring 2.07 acres. And just a query as to why the applicant has applied direct current rather than an alternating current in responding to this question, given the National Policy Statement and three paragraph 2.1.53 states that alternating currents should be used when determining capacity.

00:14:31:16 - 00:14:37:12

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, I will pass you to Mr. Gillette to be able to provide you with a response. Thank you.

00:14:40:00 - 00:14:48:12

Sir. So I'm good at for the applicant. Um, so, uh, in order to calculate the ratio of 2.07.

00:14:48:14 - 00:14:49:25

Acres per megawatt.

00:14:49:27 - 00:14:50:21

Um, as.

00:14:50:23 - 00:14:52:06

You just stated.

00:14:52:14 - 00:14:54:12

Um, the applicant.

00:14:54:14 - 00:14:54:29

Has.

00:14:55:01 - 00:15:28:03

Drawn on the examining authority's recommendation report for Mallard Pass solar farm. That's on 010127. Um, paragraph 3.2.102 and surrounding paragraphs, which uses a method consistent with previously made dose to calculate that ratio by using an installed DC figure and dividing that by land area, which excludes mitigation and enhancement areas.

00:15:28:13 - 00:15:29:02

Um.

00:15:31:07 - 00:15:47:05

That, uh, recommendation was also used as part of the East Yorkshire Solar Farm DCO, which is made DCO on 010143, and the applicant has followed that and that precedent said.

00:15:49:14 - 00:15:50:05

Um,

00:15:52:02 - 00:16:12:12

do you have any examples of any more recent projects where solar schemes have been made that have applied the approach you've taken? Just conscious that Marla Pass was examined prior to N3 being made where solar was a relevant consideration. So it was a different policy context at the time that was examined.

00:16:14:21 - 00:17:02:25

To get it for the applicant. Um, we can take that one away, sir, from the top of my head. The spring well, DCO, which was recently made followed a similar approach. Um, if I can add some context around two 1053 um, my reading of that paragraph is around the, um, the size of the, um, scheme in terms of its application in the DC to a DCO regime versus a TCA regime, which is related to, but, um, not identical to the guidance um, provided at um, paragraph two 1017 of M3, um, around the solar farm, requiring between 2 to 4 acres for each megawatt of output.

00:17:03:25 - 00:17:04:15

Okay. I think.

00:17:04:17 - 00:17:05:02

As an.

00:17:05:04 - 00:17:12:11

Action point, that would be helpful if you could perhaps, um, come back with some more recent examples of dsos that have applied the approach you've taken. Thank you.

00:17:19:19 - 00:17:48:22

Um, and then a related question, really, um, stemming from the applicant response to our first written question. Question 1.4.3, which confirms that the installed capacity of the proposed cell site, measured in alternating current from the combined capacity of installed inverted, would be greater than 50MW. It's just looking for clarification of what the installed capacity would be in alternating currents, as opposed to direct current.

00:17:51:20 - 00:18:00:10

I think there is a reference in the grid connection statement that refers to 335MW AC, but the response to our first questions did not make that point clear.

00:18:02:00 - 00:18:04:05

So I don't get it for the applicants. Um.

00:18:06:29 - 00:18:08:04

Sorry. Just one second, sir.

00:18:17:26 - 00:19:00:22

Thank you sir. Simon, get it for the applicants. Um, the applicant has provided an indicative design which the climate change chapter. And as you have just stated, includes 334 megawatt BC installation that relates to an assumption on the power output of each panel, a number of panels, and an A layout assumption on that, and at the detailed design stage, the applicant will refine that would refine that design, including all of the electrical, um, workings, which relates that DC um installed capacity, which is measurable.

00:19:00:24 - 00:19:34:02

And we can conceptualize that now to what the equivalent AC number would be. Um, what I can say, sir, is that the grid connection statement, um, does raise, um, the fact that the applicant has applied for a modification application to National Grid to reduce the connection capacity for the scheme from the current number of 500MW down to three three five megawatts, and that is an AC connection number.

00:19:34:04 - 00:19:40:12

So I don't have a direct answer for you now on the equivalent AC

00:19:42:00 - 00:19:54:05

capacity of the installed panels. Um, but hopefully what I've provided gives confidence that we are over the, um, uh, the AC limit. So thank.

00:19:54:07 - 00:20:03:27

You. Yeah. So if I understood correctly, the the ultimate AC capacity won't be known until the detailed design stage when the technology is confirmed. Is that correct?

00:20:04:08 - 00:20:05:05

That's correct, sir.

00:20:05:23 - 00:20:06:18

Thank you.

00:20:08:05 - 00:20:31:18

Um, moving on that in relation to over planting and again, a follow up from your response to our first written questions. Uh, Q 1.4.4, uh, suggests that with no changes to the indicative design, there would be no planting with a ratio of 0.997. That's correct based on the current assumptions in the application, is that correct.

00:20:32:27 - 00:20:39:28

For the applicants based on the the indicative design as presented for the application? That is correct, sir.

00:20:41:06 - 00:20:56:03

Um, but I also understand from your response to oh, planting may be incorporated at the detailed design stage again, once the technology is confirmed and there may be an increase in the efficiency of panels used in relation to current technology. Again, is that is that correct?

00:20:56:10 - 00:20:58:15

Simon. Good for the applicant. That is correct, sir.

00:21:00:19 - 00:21:01:16

Thank you.

00:21:03:12 - 00:21:38:22

Um, in terms of how quickly the efficiency of panels is evolving, um, it may be useful to the examining authority if they're looking to provide some estimates of the likelihood of the extent of where we're planting. Um, by the time detailed design is, is confirmed, if there's any projections or growth rates and efficiency, that would be a useful indicative measure as to how likely over planting is going to be and extent of it. Again, as an action point, if that could perhaps come back in writing on that, unless you can deal with it orally.

00:21:38:24 - 00:21:39:09

Now.

00:21:40:06 - 00:21:46:04

Sir Simon, get it for the applicants. If I could draw your attention to,

00:21:48:03 - 00:22:06:10

uh, it's a figure in the statement of need. I'm just trying to find, um, the correct number I'll come to. It shows that, um, an evolution of, um, panel efficiencies. Um, uh, figure 18. So which on page 132 of the statement of need and that's a P

00:22:08:02 - 00:22:09:22

036.

00:22:11:29 - 00:22:43:10

Um, and that shows, um, the evolution of panel efficiencies has been broadly linear, um, since the 1970s through to 2024. Um and um section 7.5 um of the Statements of Need. Um details the applicant's assumption that that efficiencies could be assumed to continue to increase broadly, linearly, linearly, um, over the development phase of the of the projects.

00:22:44:06 - 00:22:58:01

Thank you. That's that's helpful. I mean, on that basis, then would it be possible to perhaps provide some indicative calculations based on that linear increase in efficiency to account for the period of time between now and the detailed design stage?

00:22:58:26 - 00:23:30:04

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, yes. We're, um, happy to take us an action of applying that theory, I guess, to to the application and what efficiencies may be achievable by the point we move into construction around 2029 on current assumptions. Just to clarify, in terms of the timescales for the action point. So the first action point we have so far is to review recent DCO decisions and understand whether or not they've used the same assumptions when identifying essentially the efficiency of the land use.

00:23:30:06 - 00:23:48:06

That's when I would suggest we're happy to take for deadline three, because that can be progressed this week and perhaps incorporated into a speaking note. This action may take a little bit more thought, I suspect, and perhaps more consideration of the supply chain. So if your contents are, we would take that for deadline for.

00:23:48:13 - 00:23:49:11

That sounds reasonable.

00:23:49:13 - 00:23:50:04

Thank you.

00:23:52:16 - 00:23:53:11

Thank you.

00:24:00:16 - 00:24:32:21

Moving on then. But still. In relation to the planting, the Clayton Solar Action Group's response to our first written questions. Q 1.4.4 that's lib reference rep 2-102 suggest that without confirmation of details on the extent of planting, it's not possible to establish whether adverse impacts could be avoided by reducing the area of land required by required for infrastructure. Um, does the applicant have an initial response to that point, please?

00:24:33:14 - 00:25:02:24

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant. Ultimately, it's the applicant's responsibility to apply for a design that is able to deliver. The applicant's design is as applied for is based on the current market conditions, not future projections and hypothetical scenarios. So I think I'm confident that the applicant has taken a reasonable and proportionate approach by basing its design on the current, um, availability of solar panels and supply chain.

00:25:04:26 - 00:25:10:09

Thank you. With the action Group, I'd like to comment at this point, Miss Hamilton.

00:25:11:08 - 00:25:45:14

Uh, yes. Thank you. Helen Hamilton, on behalf of the Clayton Solar Action Group. Um, I think it's, uh, simply that there is no clarity about at all about how much, um, or the size, the scale or anything, any detail of the solar panels and whether or not some of the adverse impacts could have been addressed by using different panels, using different configurations, reducing over planting if there is to be over planting to address some of those impacts.

00:25:45:21 - 00:26:12:04

Um, and related to that in the applicant's response to written representation. So it's a suggestion that the best element of the scheme may be removed and replaced with solar panels. So that's obviously going to have an impact on capacity and potential of planting as well. And that again, maybe another opportunity to reduce adverse impacts.

00:26:15:00 - 00:26:16:18

The last comment, please.

00:26:16:20 - 00:26:47:08

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant. Just to reiterate, based on the current scheme design, there is no proposed over planting and the application has been prepared based on the current solar market. If there were able to be efficiencies in land use, which would result in over planting, which would ultimately result in more generation from the scheme to ensure it was making efficient use of land and maximising its good connection. That would ultimately be for the benefit of, um, decarbonising the grid.

00:26:47:15 - 00:27:19:21

I take exception to the fact that the applicant has the suggestion the applicant hasn't mitigated or made various commitments. There are multiple commitments made within the design principles, which are which are secured through the development consent order, and ultimately detailed design will be subject to the approval of Buckinghamshire Council in accordance with the relevant requirements and management plans. So I'm confident, As if, as I said in my previous submission, we have taken a

reasonable and proportionate approach based on what is known now in terms of the solar market and supply chain.

00:27:21:10 - 00:27:22:19

Thank you. Um,

00:27:24:13 - 00:27:35:05

in terms of the increase in, uh, or potential increase in the efficiency of panels, then there's no opportunity to perhaps reduce the amount of land that would be planted with solar panels because of that increase in efficiency.

00:27:36:13 - 00:27:52:29

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, at this stage, that wouldn't, um, that would essentially just result in a direct reduction in the generating capacity of the scheme, which is not in furtherance of national policy and the critical national priority for renewable energy generation from the solar PV.

00:27:56:13 - 00:28:04:19

Thank you. Um, if there are no further questions on this point, I shall move on. Miss Hampson, did you have any further points to raise?

00:28:05:09 - 00:28:05:24

Thank you.

00:28:05:26 - 00:28:06:17

Sir. Okay,

00:28:08:15 - 00:28:12:09

Mr. Burton, I believe, at the back for the Preston Farms.

00:28:13:03 - 00:29:16:02

Correct, sir. Thank you very much. Might I just introduce myself now? Actually, sir, because I haven't we haven't done so quite before. So. James Burton of Council on behalf of Preston Farms and TCS Biosciences and I have with me and you might have seen them on the site visit yesterday. Mr.. James Preston, Mr. Gareth Williams um, this might be the wrong point to come in with this, but but and if it is, please shut me down, sir. But, um, whilst I am and we hear what Miss Stirling has said about designs and, um, what the market can provide in terms of panels, one of our considerable concerns as you, as you know, is that we have seen no explanation anywhere, um, for the change in the design from the original design, which so far as pertinent to us, had a very small, I say small, a much smaller parcel three to the to the present.

00:29:16:04 - 00:29:48:20

And if I could perhaps ask Rebecca, just just so we can all see this and understand what has happened, because I'm a bit concerned, um, that this this might have been missed. Um, could we look at app 89, please? And within app 89, um, go to the figures which start at page 27. So this is the um it's the wintering bird survey. Um, you'll also see similar figures in the bat survey.

00:29:48:22 - 00:29:50:14

But bear with me, sir.

00:29:50:26 - 00:30:05:25

Um, Mr. Burton, sorry. I think we could be straying into a later agenda item at this point. So this this items around the need site selection also insist. And at this point in time, we're talking about the yes, the extent of our planting in relation to the amount of solar panels.

00:30:05:27 - 00:30:38:24

That we are in beta. I'm. I'm conscious that the applicant is telling you and Mr. Morgan that its design has been driven by what the market can offer, and we've seen no explanation anywhere. And we'll come back to it when we get to reasonable alternatives. But there's been no explanation of the shift from the size that was clearly proposed in 2022 to the current size we have now. We can come back to it, but I want to make sure that the point is there and we'll get into it.

00:30:39:03 - 00:30:40:29

We'll come back to that shortly. Thank you.

00:30:47:20 - 00:30:48:09

Okay.

00:30:50:08 - 00:31:20:19

Moving on. Um, the the applicant, um, in its response to our questions, has referred to discussions with the developers of the East Clayton Battery Energy Storage System, or bays. I shall abbreviate from now on, um students by elements of the respective proposals that could be consolidated and potentially reduce land take. Is the applicant able, at this stage, to elaborate on the nature of these discussions, and what aspects of the respective developments might be consolidated and where?

00:31:37:19 - 00:31:44:16

Any standing on behalf of the applicant? Apologies, sir. It's quite a large table. Just give me 10s. Thanks.

00:31:58:29 - 00:32:23:14

Amy, standing on behalf of the applicant, apologies. And thank you for being with me. Um, the relevant aspect of this scheme is the ale access, which is work number two. B and that is one area we've identified as a potential coordination between both projects to reduce overall. And that is currently the only work which has been identified.

00:32:26:16 - 00:32:32:12

So that would be a shared access for abnormal individual loads potentially.

00:32:33:12 - 00:32:36:14

Amy Stirling on behalf of the applicant. Yes that's correct sir.

00:32:40:04 - 00:32:49:00

And would that have implications for the environmental statement that's been undertaken so far for this project? Would it be the same design effectively?

00:32:49:02 - 00:33:15:01

And Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, the design is currently proposed within the DCU application and identified as work number to be would not change, and the cumulative effects assessment with these cloud embeds has been carried out. So no, we don't expect that the sharing of that infrastructure would have any implications for the EIA. And we can confirm that in writing in our summary of oral submissions.

00:33:15:13 - 00:33:18:08

Yes, please. That would be that would be helpful. Thank you.

00:33:21:13 - 00:33:29:21

Okay. Before we move on then, do we have any further questions on the proposed outputs of the development and related land? Take.

00:33:32:26 - 00:33:34:06

See? No hands.

00:33:36:09 - 00:34:06:25

I should move on then to be on the grid connection. Um, the applicant response to our first written questions. This is a question 1-1-1. And that's lib reference rep 207 in relation to connection, states that the grid connection arrangements have been amended to more closely align with anticipated installed capacity of the proposed developments. And so the changes will not affect the installed capacity.

00:34:08:00 - 00:34:25:16

Can the applicant just clarify if the amendments referred to in that response are those already referenced in the grid connection statements regarding the reduction reduction in the capacity from 500MW to 335MW? Or is there a further amendment being suggested that in that response.

00:34:26:10 - 00:34:38:19

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, it's the same amendment, sir. The it's a mod mod app which has been submitted to reduce the AC connection capacity from 500 to 35MW.

00:34:38:28 - 00:35:08:12

Thank you. Um, and again, I follow up from the applicant's response to our written questions. This is question 1.1.3, uh, in which the applicant states that it's anticipated that the capacity of the revised offer, this is the grid connection offer Will be reduced to 335MW for solar as requested by the applicant, and that the import capacity will reduce to zero megawatts based on the gateway on offer for the best.

00:35:09:28 - 00:35:16:18

In this scenario, would the bears only store energy generated by the solar from the proposed development?

00:35:17:26 - 00:35:30:15

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant. I will pass you to Mr. Gillette, who can just walk us through, I think in more detail what the difference is between the gate to gate one offer and really what that means for the best at this point in time.

00:35:30:17 - 00:35:32:11

Thank you. Thank you. Yes.

00:35:34:04 - 00:35:50:28

Sir. Simon Gillette for the applicant. Um, if I can just spend a moment just setting out the relationship between the mod app and the ongoing gate one gate two notifications. Um, and I hope to shed some practical light on it. Um, uh,

00:35:52:16 - 00:35:56:12

but but it is complicated for for everyone. The, um.

00:35:58:08 - 00:36:29:25

The proposed development apparently has a grid connection offer, um, for 500MW of, um, transmission, entry and exit capacity. Um, effective October 2031. Um, for a combined solar and storage facility. So solar and and Bess, um, as you rightly say, the, um, the solar um element, um, has been proposed.

00:36:30:00 - 00:37:01:05

Sorry. It has been reprioritize as a gate to phase two development. Um, or rather, we have been notified that it will be prioritized as a gate to phase two development. Um, through an agreement to vary the connection contract. That agreement to vary has not yet been passed to the applicant through as part of the industry process. There are many other applicants and developers in a similar position.

00:37:01:14 - 00:37:17:02

Um, and similarly, the applicant has been informed that the um, the battery energy storage facility has been reprioritize as a gate one development. Now, um.

00:37:19:12 - 00:37:51:15

The rules are complex and I say that no, not in terms of it's complex. I understand, and I'll try and tell you about it. It's complex as in trying to understand it myself and for the rest of for the rest of industry. But the solar scheme alone has been re prioritized as a gate to facility. And for that reason, when the gate to agreement um arises, um, assuming consent for the scheme and construction, etc.

00:37:52:03 - 00:38:26:18

for connection agreement will only permit solar to be installed in that, in that um, against that connection agreement, which means that if the applicant um, if the the applicant proposed to put um Bess on, uh, that connection as um, what's called a zero megawatt, um, connection, I export only um, the applicant would need to take that element of the scheme through a further prioritization exercise with me.

00:38:26:20 - 00:38:54:24

So to get consent for the solar and and the best. So, um, sorry to get to get the best into that, um, into that connection agreement. So the simplest thing to do is set out the, um, the chronologies of, of how, um, the connection agreement will evolve. Um, And as currently um, informed by National Grid. Um,

00:38:56:22 - 00:39:33:15

our understanding is that when a gate to agreement to vary is issued to the applicant, that would reflect the mod app from 500MW down to three three five megawatts. It would apply only to the solar elements of the scheme and therefore would be only an export, um, connection. There's a small ancillary import connection for um, for house load, etc., which is not material in this, um, and therefore that the import portion of the connection, um, would be assigned to the gate.

00:39:33:17 - 00:39:45:22

One element of the of the agreement, which would then be, um, be related to, to that, to that best element. Um, I hope I've helped clarify.

00:39:46:24 - 00:40:06:25

Yeah. But I think it would be help if that could be set out clearly in in writing as an action point. Um, it certainly turns out the distinction between the fact that the difference between the the current grid connection offer and the, uh, requested that dropped from 500 to 235. It'd be easier if that distinction could be made clear in terms of how that relates to the the best as well.

00:40:08:00 - 00:40:38:09

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant for me are just as well in direct response to your question, then, based on everything Mr. Gillett has said, is that when the applicants get to offer, which is expected in the latter part of this year, is received, the best would not be able to import or export electricity, it would just not be subject to that offer. So there would not be a situation where it could hold energy from the solar PV and then export to the grid that would be subject to the later gate one offer that Mr.

00:40:38:11 - 00:40:41:16

Gillett has referred to. I just want to make sure that was absolutely clear.

00:40:42:07 - 00:40:51:20

Yeah, but it is the applicant's intention for the best to serve the role in terms of importing energy from the grid and exporting it back. Is that correct?

00:40:51:27 - 00:41:02:02

Stirling, on behalf of the applicant? Yes, that is correct. And that would be subject to a future offer. Currently get one moving to get to at some point in the future.

00:41:03:18 - 00:41:04:14

Thank you.

00:41:10:09 - 00:41:47:17

I'm just picking up on a response from the Clayton Solar Action Group in response to their first response to the applicants. The examining authority's first written questions. That's question 1.1.6, lab reference 2-102, where the action group suggested that if consents was granted through a development consent order, uh, for the bears, that the National Energy Assistance Operator may be obliged to provide a grid connection for the battery storage, even though it may not meet its strategic requirements.

00:41:48:16 - 00:41:51:21

Can applicant respond to that point? Please?

00:41:54:02 - 00:41:57:06

Sir, it's something good for the applicant. Um,

00:41:58:24 - 00:42:17:00

and also, if I may abbreviate the National energy System operator to to, Niso needs to run a re prioritization exercise. And they are working through the implementation of that re prioritization. Now with schemes that are um on on the list. Um, uh

00:42:18:27 - 00:42:59:07

Niso have stated that there will be a future um, and more than one future re prioritization, um, exercise, but they're not yet set to date. Um, for that exercise. Um, but it's the applicant's understanding that it would be at one of those future re prioritization exercises that the the the the best um, uh, would have the an opportunity to be prioritized and to, um, upgrade, for want of a better word, promote its gate one connection to a gate to connection.

00:42:59:10 - 00:43:31:24

Um, the applicant has already stated that it has issued a modification application to National Grid to reduce the um export capacity, um, of its current agreement to three, three, five megawatts. Um, and the import elements of that as well. Um, and my colleague, Mr. Sterling has just as previously confirmed that that the import export part of that, either three, three, five would be, um, um, part of the agreement to vary that gate one connection.

00:43:31:26 - 00:44:03:14

So I think that the status would be that if the, um, if the best if the, the this scheme, um is consented, and a future submission to a future prioritisation round for the best occurs, then that would be at a 335MW um connection as per the modification application. So I don't think that representation is, is um, a realistic view of what may happen, sir.

00:44:04:24 - 00:44:15:07

So it's not fair to say then that if the scheme was granted consent, it wouldn't, uh, assist in the prioritization of the best incentive its offer. Is that is that correct?

00:44:23:05 - 00:44:59:15

Um, sir. Simon, for the applicant. Um, clearly, the, um, securing consent for the bears would support the bears in any future. Reprioritize prioritization. But I think what you may be referring to is some of the protected status of some schemes, not this scheme, but some other schemes in that prioritisation

queue which. So for Rose field for the proposed development. Um, the securing planning consent for the beds does not automatically update that gate one agreement to a gate to agreement for this scheme sir.

00:45:00:01 - 00:45:05:19

So there's no automatic upgrade, but it would be part of the context for any future decisions that are made on that.

00:45:06:06 - 00:45:06:25

That's correct.

00:45:06:27 - 00:45:11:16

Sir. Thank you. Um, with the action group like to comment at this stage.

00:45:13:12 - 00:46:10:14

Uh, thank you sir. Um, Helen Hamilton, on behalf of the Clayton Solar Action Group. Um, not really. I think, uh, I think the applicant has explained that the, the fact of a consent would, uh, enable or assist in any, um, request for prioritisation, prioritization. Um, and, um, and I'm sure the examining authorities seeing the appendix that we attached to our response to the questions, which was, um, a letter from the um, uh, energy minister and the director general for um, uh, for infrastructure off gen, uh, where they were, um, where they were noting the, the very large oversupply of this and the need to rein back, if at all possible, even this, that had been given a gape to offer.

00:46:10:16 - 00:46:43:27

So I think the, you know, I don't know whether or not, um, they will be able to do that, but I suspect that if, um, if you've got a scheme which is for better and solar, then it may, um, jump over other schemes which are for best only. I'm, you know, that's what I imagine may be the case. I'm not saying that for certain that it is. Um, but there's certainly a concern about the amount of breath that is already in the connection queue.

00:46:46:19 - 00:46:50:09

Thank you. Does the applicant have any further comment on that point?

00:46:50:16 - 00:47:20:18

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant. Um, yes. Our pastor, Mr. Gillett, to address the oversubscribed concern. I guess just on the final point to confirm there would be no sort of jumping the queue with solar and bears combined, because the solar bears would never be combined in the queue. The applicant is gate to phase two for solar. So the best, which is currently gate one, if it were seeking prioritisation for gate two, would be for best only and would therefore be considered in that context.

00:47:20:20 - 00:47:21:12

Thank you.

00:47:21:14 - 00:47:22:27

Thank you, Mr. Gillick.

00:47:23:20 - 00:48:07:09

Thank you sir. Simon, good luck for the applicant. Um, I just want to draw attention to, um, the December 2025 national Policy statements, which. Potentially relevant to this application in particular. On one which at paragraph 3.2.6 is very clear about the targets and numbers, um, presented in the government's Clean Power Action Plan, and indeed throughout the National Policy statement, that those numbers are not about stopping projects, they're about prioritising projects for 2030 while maintaining a robust pipeline beyond 2030.

00:48:07:11 - 00:48:17:07

And so the statement of need, um, section 3.9 provides further context on that. That's app 036. Um.

00:48:19:09 - 00:48:54:03

Planning for new energy infrastructure is is another kind of point that I need to raise here. So that was government's um, consultation, um, response to the new, um, uh, uh, national policy statements. Um, and, and that also confirms that, um, that the government's capacity ranges and these, those prioritization should not be seen as a constraint to the planning process. So and the reason for that is that, um, uh,

00:48:56:01 - 00:49:26:10

government strategic alignment criteria, i.e. the capacity ranges within Clean Power 2030. Um, government has retained an optionality within those. Those are not set in stone. It is government's current view. Um, it retains optionality, expecting those to be refined either up or down for different technologies. Um, depending on progress towards its aim to meet a clean power system targets of 2030. And further.

00:49:26:12 - 00:49:58:28

So just because the projects have been prioritized those in the queue does not mean that it will be delivered and it will become operational at the time stated, or at the capacity stated, or indeed at all. Um and missus um uh, consultation on next steps for connection reform in fact addresses this point in terms of attrition from the queue and how it should assess that in terms of strategic alignment in future re prioritization rounds.

00:49:59:00 - 00:50:18:28

So it's the applicant position just to close that. The current government policy position confirms that the need, which is established by the National Policy Statements for Renewable and Flexible energy infrastructure, continues to apply to any scheme or component of a scheme which currently has a gate one connection agreement.

00:50:20:23 - 00:50:29:13

Thank you, Mister gilets. Um, moving on then and Again. Sorry, Mr. Gazelka.

00:50:30:21 - 00:51:00:22

Thank you, sir. Daniel Gazelka for the council. I wondered if I could raise two queries arising out of the interaction between the applicant and cSAC. Please do. Thank you. Sir. Um, I wanted to raise first. Um, the question, um, possibly for the applicant to comment upon about compliance with para 4.1.12

of MPAC and one 2023, which is the requirement that the Secretary of State should be satisfied that an appropriate network connection arrangements are will be in place.

00:51:00:28 - 00:51:36:11

Um, given the currently, um, I don't know, tenuous, unfair, but unclear position on the gate one connection and whether you can be satisfied at this consenting stage when making a recommendation um, that that test is met. And clearly it is for gate two, phase two for the solar. Um, but whether gate one doesn't meet that test. Um, and then the second one, Um, possibly just as a note of caution, which again, the applicant may be able to respond to. Um. Reference was made to 3.2.6 of PSM one 2025.

00:51:36:17 - 00:52:07:17

Of course, what that section is referring to is the need for Nip development, and the Planning Act makes very clear that obviously BS and all types of energy storage except for um, gravity, um, water storage, I can't remember proper name for it isn't itself in CIP and obviously this is associated development. Um, so there's a query about whether it can be said that what is being said in 3.2.6 is really directed to this, rather than any CIP development.

00:52:07:21 - 00:52:11:17

Um, and so the applicant may be able to clarify that as well. Thank you sir.

00:52:11:23 - 00:52:16:23

Thank you, Mr. Gazelka. With the applicant, let's address those two points in turn, please.

00:52:18:03 - 00:52:55:17

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant taking their first point, I think it's important to note what paragraph 411, 12 states which is the Secretary of State should be satisfied that appropriate network connection arrangements are or will be in place. And I think the applicant has provided ample evidence at one. As it currently stands, the applicant has a good connection agreement for import and export capacity for the solar and the Bess, but that is subject to an industry wide review and that the applicant has, um, will have a gate to a face to offer for the solar currently.

00:52:55:19 - 00:53:32:19

Gate one, but ultimately able to participate, and therefore a realistic pathway of obtaining a gate to offer for the best. So, based on the current position and confident that the applicant is able to satisfy that part of NPS M1. I think it's also useful to note that in the most recent version of the NPS, M1, I don't have the particular paragraph reference before me, but we'll include it in a relevant submissions. Is that the Secretary of State does recognize that there must be a realistic prospect of good connection agreements coming forward, and that is, again, confident that it is demonstrated.

00:53:32:21 - 00:53:50:06

There is a realistic prospect of a gate to offer being obtained for the best. Ultimately, you're a bit of a chicken and egg scenario. Getting the planning consent demonstrates readiness and therefore increases the likelihood of participating and obtaining a gate to offer, as Mr. Gillette has already explained.

00:53:53:24 - 00:54:04:04

Just to follow that up. I mean, in terms of the realistic prospects of an offer being made for the bears, what's the basis of it being realistic? If you can elaborate on that, please.

00:54:05:08 - 00:54:33:15

Mr. On behalf of the applicant, I think it's fair to say that one, as I mentioned, the current applicant currently has a good connection for the best for import and export. It will then also have a phase one offer, which will enable it to participate in the phase two prioritization. You're essentially the policy trying to prove a negative. Certainly there is no evidence being presented that it is not a realistic prospect that the applicant will be able to participate and obtain a gate to offer.

00:54:34:12 - 00:54:35:03

Thank you.

00:54:36:11 - 00:54:56:02

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, in relation to the second point, I would have to read the paragraph that was referenced in the context of the surrounding text to provide a view as to whether or not it was referring specifically to in Sep, or could also apply in associated development. So if it's okay with you, I will respond to that in writing. It was quite a specific reference.

00:54:56:20 - 00:54:58:24

So that's an action point for deadline three.

00:54:58:26 - 00:55:00:12

Yes. That's no problem. Thanks.

00:55:00:14 - 00:55:05:13

Thank you, Mr. Gazelka. Any response back to that first point?

00:55:06:25 - 00:55:28:21

Danny Gazelka for the council. It's not what the applicant says. I mean, ultimately it's a matter for you whether you think that meets the requisite test and the position will be when this is consented, assuming the new grid offer offers. Given that the Bess has, um, gate one, um, you'll be able to read what Nissa says. Gate one means it may be that you accept that that meets the test.

00:55:31:04 - 00:55:31:28

Thank you.

00:55:32:13 - 00:55:50:19

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, if I may, sir, just also make an offer that, um, when coming back to you with a written summary of submissions, we can also review the recent Secretary of State decisions where DCO applications have been in similar circumstances. And certainly the Secretary of State has not identified that gate one offer as a barrier to consent.

00:55:50:28 - 00:55:56:15

Thank you that that will be a useful exercise. Thank you again. Is that a factual point for deadline three?

00:55:56:17 - 00:55:59:13

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant. Yes. For deadline three, sir.

00:55:59:16 - 00:56:00:10

Thank you.

00:56:08:04 - 00:56:09:07

Okay. Um.

00:56:12:07 - 00:56:49:24

A question around the capacity of the past. And again, this is following up from one of the action groups, uh, Comments. In response to our first written questions. Q 1.6.2 um, which states that the capacity of the U.S. is likely to be larger than the connection agreement, depending on the storage capacity defined in megawatt hours, which data was not disclosed, and that the applicant's response to the same question that inspires what appears to be a hypothetical megawatt hour scenario of scenarios with exact requirements depending on the markets at the time of the detailed design.

00:56:50:20 - 00:57:04:08

Um, can the applicant just comment on the position set out by the action group? Um, and also whether the capacity of the bears is likely to be larger than the connection agreement?

00:57:05:26 - 00:57:25:19

And following on from that, could market demands essentially require a capacity of the bears that is likely to be not, uh, subordinate to the principle development. So referring back to the guidance around associated development. Thank you sir. Multiple part question there. But sir if you could perhaps take those in sir. Thank you.

00:57:26:19 - 00:57:33:04

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant to Mr. Gill, who will provide more information on the capacity of the best.

00:57:34:21 - 00:57:50:25

Sir Simon Grant for the applicant. Very happy to help answer those. Um, a bit of a quid pro quo. If we could go through them step by step. If you could, if you could, um, start with the first one first, and then we'll thank you, sir. Yes, please. Um, so

00:57:52:10 - 00:58:29:02

capacity of the best can be measured in two ways. And the first is the power, um, rating of the best, which is the instantaneous power that could be imported or exported from the base at any point in time. And that's measured in megawatts. Um, and the other, um, uh, energy related capacity measurement for the Bess is the storage capacity of the vessel, which is how much energy which is measured in megawatt hours and can be stored within that facility. The Statements of Need explains that the grid connection agreements.

00:58:29:11 - 00:59:04:20

Um, let's assume that we roll the clock forward. It's three, three, five megawatts. For the purposes of this, um, would be an important input into the power capacity rating of the best. Um, if I can provide an example, sir, putting a 400 megawatt power capacity Bess on a 300 megawatt connection means there's 100MW that can't be used. So that just does not kind of make make rational sense in terms of delivering a scheme which is more powerful or has the capability of breaking its connection agreement.

00:59:05:07 - 00:59:47:00

Um, that relates to the power capacity. And therefore, I think there's a strong case to say that the that the, um, the best the power capacity of the best would be, um, uh, 335MW. Um, allowance for some small electrical losses, etc. in terms of the megawatt hours, energy storage capacity of the best, um, best designs are evolving and technologies and advancing as they do the energy storage or the energy density, um, capacity of best storage containers is increasing.

00:59:47:02 - 01:00:31:01

So historically, a standard container may contain one megawatt hour of energy storage, but now a similar sized as in the physical size, length, breadth, width, height, um container may be able to store more than one megawatt hour of energy um from a consensus perspective, the design commitments document that's rep to zero ten um, sets out parameters around the footprint of the best compound, um, and the envelope around that compound, um, within which the energy storage facility would be located.

01:00:32:13 - 01:01:05:06

Um, also the outline battery safety management plan that's rep 2073 explains that, um, appropriate guidance, which is in place at the time of detailed design around best safety would be, um, would be complied with. And that has potential to change the internal layouts, um, characteristics of the best compound such that that may also impact, um, the number of containers and the spacing between containers, um, within that compound.

01:01:05:16 - 01:01:35:25

As such, it is the physical parameters of the compound which define, um, uh, which define the effects of the best. And that's what has been assessed against. But the megawatt hour, um, capability of the energy storage facility within that may change. And therefore that has not been specified within the, within the application. Um, does that satisfy your first question, sir?

01:01:38:08 - 01:01:41:23

Yes it does. Thank you. If you could move on to the following points. Thank you.

01:01:42:24 - 01:01:52:14

And the following points, sir, I think I believe we're around, um, associated development and the proportionality elements, um, of that, um, and and subordinate.

01:01:53:01 - 01:01:55:23

Yes. I'm keen to get to the bottom of that, please.

01:01:56:05 - 01:02:30:01

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, the applicant has provided its view on, um, the how, why the best meets the relevant associated development Pest at appendix one of its first written question response, which is reply to 087. In that appendix, the applicant addresses each of the relevant tests within the guidance or direct relationship, subordinate and not only a source of additional revenue and the proportionality in nature in scale.

01:02:30:03 - 01:03:13:11

So I don't propose to sort of just read out that appendix, but in terms of the particular point that you raised, in terms of whether the base is subordinate to the solar PV, the applicant's position is that it is, as Mr. Gillette is summarized, the applicant's position is that the base is proportionate to the nature and scale of the solar PV. The primary aim of this application is to generate low carbon energy that is, a function of the solar rather than the best. The best nevertheless is able to provide useful grid grid balancing services and to support the generation of electricity from the solar PV, but would not in itself be a generating asset which would contribute to the renewable

01:03:14:29 - 01:03:30:00

energy commitments that the UK government has. In addition, the base would operate in a subordinate fashion to the main solar site, in that the output from the solar site would dictate how the best was used at any given time, whether or not it was.

01:03:32:11 - 01:03:53:02

Holding power from the solar site or storing it and releasing it to the grid at a future point in time when demand allowed. The same is not true. The best would never dictate how the solar was generating, so the applicant's position is that the best clearly functionally operates in a subordinate way to the solar.

01:03:54:06 - 01:04:02:15

So the primary function of the best would be to store surplus energy from the solar development. That would be its priority at all times.

01:04:03:08 - 01:04:43:03

Amy Stirling on behalf of the applicant. The priority priorities of the bears would be driven by the demands of the national Grid system, which cannot be forecast in advance because the point is that it would never control the generation output from the solar, but the solar generating output would dictate in certain scenarios how the best is utilised. So, for example, Mr. Gillet has provided what I found to be useful example in preparing for this session. So if you know at a time when the grid needed energy, the sun was shining and the base had available charge, the main solar site would generate and discharge to fulfil the grid connection agreement.

01:04:43:05 - 01:05:03:13

Not the best. The bears would be held in reserve because it is functionally makes more sense for the solar to to discharge its power rather than the base, which is capable of obviously storing being its primary function. Therefore, the base would never control the solar, but the solar could control how the base operates.

01:05:04:24 - 01:05:12:18

Thank you. That's. That's helpful. Um, did the action point the action group have any points to raise in response, please?

01:05:13:12 - 01:05:53:18

Uh, yes. Thank you sir. Helen Hamilton, on behalf of the Canadian Dollar Action Group. Um, I might have misunderstood something, but the idea that the base is held in reserve. Um, it doesn't appear to me. Doesn't agree with my understanding of the best, which, um, will, um, make make some of its income or a proportion and maybe the greatest proportion of its income from arbitrage by downloading energy from the grid when, um, energy demand is low and returning it to the grid when the demand is higher and the costs are higher.

01:05:53:20 - 01:06:13:22

And it's that arbitrage that has driven a lot of interest in this that has not not been associated with with solar schemes. So there is a there is a motivation on its own to have this, um, because it, because it is a, you know, an income generator.

01:06:16:09 - 01:06:16:27

Miss Stirling.

01:06:16:29 - 01:06:29:17

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, just to clarify, at no point did I say the bears would be held in reserve. But I'll pass to Mr. Gillett, who can explain in more detail how the bears would would operate.

01:06:29:23 - 01:06:30:12

Thank you.

01:06:31:05 - 01:07:06:20

Sir Simon Gillett, for the applicant and the way the electricity market, um, until about ten years ago has worked, is that we want a cup of tea, we turn on the kettle and the power flows to us. National grid in their control room, realise that demand is increasing, and they flip a switch that turns on a coal plant or a gas plant or a pumped storage plant. But the way that the grid is working is fundamentally different now because we can't rely on coal because it emits carbon, and that's bad for the environment and and is causing global warming.

01:07:06:22 - 01:07:39:23

And we also are trying to reduce the amount of gas on our grid, not only for the carbon emissions that it generates, but also the exposure that using gas for our electricity, um, provides to us in terms of international volatile energy prices, weaponization of energy, etc.. So we don't have those coal on balls that easily turn on and off and gas and, and conventional power stations anymore. So what we need to do is we need to manage supply with demand.

01:07:40:08 - 01:08:09:27

The wind blows and at other times it doesn't blow. The sun shines and other times it doesn't shine. Yes, at night. And energy storage is an essential way of of matching supply with demand by taking very low cost, low carbon and secure energy supplies when they are generated and dispatching them

when we want our cup of tea, when we want to watch the cup final, when we want to turn on our lights, etc..

01:08:12:06 - 01:08:53:22

The mechanism that incentivizes a Besse to ensure that there is energy and other flexible assets. Pumped storage assets have been operating for years, but the mechanism by which those assets are incentivized to make sure that when we turn our kettle on, we get a cup of tea is market price. So market price is higher at times when energy is needed, and it is lower at times when energy is in abundance. And market price can indeed and has gone negative in the UK, which means that customers are incentivized to use energy at times when it is abundant, and therefore the primary purpose of the best is not to make money out of arbitrage.

01:08:53:24 - 01:09:28:24

The primary purpose of the bass is to support the solar farm in increasing the utilization of its grid connection, and in supporting that solar farm, and ensuring that the energy that it generates can be best used. So that to push the point, we get a cup of tea when we want a cup of tea, not only when the sun is shining. And I just think it's important to, to kind of to set that out. It's not a, it's not a sort of a nice vanilla on the cake, um, kind of commercial or purely commercial.

01:09:28:26 - 01:09:47:17

Um, uh, um, investment. Um, there is a real physical need for flexible assets as set out in government policy and in the Clean Power Action Plan for flexible assets to support renewable assets to a clean power system by and beyond 2030.

01:09:50:09 - 01:09:51:19

Thank you, Mr. Gilets.

01:09:53:29 - 01:09:58:08

If there's no further comment from that group, I shall move on. Miss Hamilton.

01:09:58:10 - 01:10:30:16

Uh, thank you, sir. Um, Helen Hamilton, on behalf of the Clayton Solar Action Group. Um, I think that the point that we were asking about really was whether or not the best is subordinate to the scheme. Um, I just really like to sort of go back to the letter from the energy minister and Ofgem, which points out that we have a very large oversupply of best in the queue. So it's not a question of whether or not we still need that function in the system.

01:10:30:18 - 01:10:32:29

There is plenty of it there in reserve.

01:10:35:16 - 01:10:36:06

Stirling.

01:10:36:08 - 01:11:08:20

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant and with respect, I think that's conflating two different issues. Mr. gilet has already addressed you, sir, on the suggestion that there is an oversupply of bass. Mr.

Goulet can repeat those submissions, although they will obviously be available in our written summary of hearing, as I understand the point that's being made. The suggestion is that because the base, if it gets it, has a gate to offer, will have an import facility.

01:11:08:22 - 01:11:38:25

That in itself means it's not subordinate, and the applicant would reject that submission for the reasons it has set out. The operation of the base will be subordinate to the insert, which is the Solaire, and the very fact that it is able to provide wider and wider system benefits by having an import connection to import electricity when demand is low, and to supply it when demand is high, does not, in our submission, affect the nature of it as a subordinate to the solar.

01:11:41:03 - 01:11:45:04

Thank you. We're hand at the back of Mr. Jordan.

01:11:47:20 - 01:11:49:12

If you could have a microphone, please.

01:11:56:11 - 01:11:57:23

I just switched on.

01:11:57:27 - 01:11:58:25

Um, doctor Chris.

01:11:58:27 - 01:12:29:21

Jordan, I'm a resident of East Claydon and a member of East Claydon Parish Council. Um, I the applicant has said, understandably, that, um, technological developments mean that it's not always easy to predict how many solar panels are going to be, and they've made the same argument for the the best, but I think it'd be very helpful. Um, at least to me, if they could clarify the sort of order of magnitude of the scale of the best, the storage capacity.

01:12:30:07 - 01:13:06:10

And they've made the argument that this is really principally there to store energy developed from the solar panels. But we have approved on, uh, on appeal, this doTERRA 500 megawatt, that's 3.5GW hour storage capacity base right next to the National Grid substation. Um, which is there solely for commercial arbitrage, which kind of counters the the applicant's argument that, um, this is not really a suitable, uh, approach.

01:13:06:23 - 01:13:50:02

So, I mean, if the, if the applicant's proposal for the Bess is, let's say, a two hour discharge period, that would be 670 megawatt hours storage capacity. If it was a seven hour one, that's over two gigawatt hours storage capacity. So I think it'd be very helpful to know, um, the scale that they're looking at. And also this has other implications, for example, on the greenhouse gas emissions of the system. We know that if you're using it for commercial arbitrage, there's something like a 15% loss in energy between import and export from to the battery system, and that's a huge loss of energy.

01:13:50:10 - 01:14:19:28

I mean, the proposal would be something like 420MW a day, lost megawatt hours a day, lost just through heat. And if we're going to have the similar thing from the the best associated with US development, that would be a very significant loss of energy totalling in the area. So I think it'd be helpful if we could get some order of magnitude statement from the applicant, if that's possible. Thank you sir.

01:14:21:02 - 01:14:33:18

Thank you. Doctor Jordan, um, is the applicant able to provide an initial response now this may this may warrant a written response as an action. But if you're able to to respond now, please, as best you can.

01:14:33:20 - 01:15:07:09

Yes, sir. Absolutely. Simon, get it for the applicant so I can respond. Um, so the, um, the current indicative design, um, uh, for the best is for around 1000 megawatt hours, which is approximately three hours of storage at the 335 megawatt level. That's the kind of scale, um, that, that that was being asked for. Um, I just think it's all if I may, sir, just a comment on the on the efficiency of the two beds.

01:15:07:11 - 01:15:53:06

If I made one on the efficiency of the of the best, um, the best, all batteries, um, or. Sorry, I should say, no. Batteries are 100% efficient. In fact, no mechanical things are 100% efficient. Um, a round trip efficiency of approximately 85 to 88% is a current good estimate for, um, lithium ion batteries. Um, I just think it might be useful to, um, to contrast that against, um, the efficiency of a cost of a combined cycle gas turbine, which burns one megawatt hour of gas and releases something like 48 to 49% of that as electricity and 50 to 51% of that as he's.

01:15:53:08 - 01:16:23:24

So, um, these things can be looked at in different ways, but but, um, there is no, um, that I'm aware of, 100% sufficient, um, mechanical or electrical system. And, and if I may say, just to provide a little bit of context on the, on the stutterer best not specifically about the stutterer best, but about standalone best. Those bests are providing the same. Um, uh, supply demand, um, balancing functions through the medium of price.

01:16:23:26 - 01:16:30:11

Um, as I explained earlier, around matching supply, matching supply with demand and keeping the system wholesome.

01:16:33:05 - 01:16:39:01

Thank you, Mister Jordan, do you have any further response back to that point? Thank you.

01:16:45:09 - 01:16:47:00

Moving on then. Um,

01:16:48:27 - 01:17:23:24

and again, another follow up point from the action group's response to our first written questions. This is question 1.6.2, which highlighted the National Policy Statement and three paragraph 2.1.71, which states that the applicant should set out a range of options based on different panel numbers, types,

layouts with and without storage. Um, it's not clear from the planning statement or other documents in the examination library if this information has been provided.

01:17:23:26 - 01:17:31:21

Can the applicant just clarify whether or not he thinks it has to provide that and where, and if not, why it hasn't so far.

01:17:59:02 - 01:18:34:04

Amy Stirling on behalf of the applicant. Um, the this particular paragraph that you reference, I think needs to be read in the context of the surrounding paragraphs, as all policy does. It is under the relevant heading flexibility and project details in the paragraph that comes before that. It recognizes that not all aspects of the proposal may be settled in precise detail at the point of application, including such things as type, number, dimension of panels, and therefore, the applicant should set out a range of options based on different panel numbers, etc.

01:18:34:06 - 01:19:16:25

the applicant has adopted that approach to its maximum design scenario, which it has secured via the relevant design commitments secured by DCO requirement. The applicant has also set out in its Alternatives Considered chapter. I can get the reference in a moment. The sort of design evolution as to how we've got to where we've got to with our maximum design scenario. Um, the applicant has also set out very clearly on it in its works plans. The maximum extent of work, number one being the solar, which is very clearly overlaid with the, um, the works number for the battery energy storage, which demonstrates the spatial extent of the potential solar within the maximum design scenario, i.e.

01:19:16:28 - 01:19:40:04

with and without the best. So the applicant considers it has appropriately managed the flexibility and project details which this paragraph is set in that context of. I'm not aware of any other specific sort of information that the panel would be looking for in relation to that paragraph, but if there is anything you would like to see, of course we can consider it further.

01:19:41:03 - 01:19:49:28

So in terms of the the options with and without battery storage, the applicant's position is that that sets out through the design evolution of the project.

01:19:51:19 - 01:20:17:12

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, yes, we have a design approach document which sets out the design evolution of the scheme. And that was last updated at deadline one. So it's rep 1018, which explains as to the design evolution and how we've got to the maximum design parameters for which consent is sought. I will have to just I would have to check whether that specifically has a section on them. Without this.

01:20:18:00 - 01:20:33:15

I was going to say I'm not quite sure whether or not that ever includes or exclude an option for the bears to be taken out, and from memory they always appear to include the bears. So I'm not quite sure where the option without bears has been has been set out.

01:20:33:23 - 01:21:04:12

In the setting on behalf of the applicant. I suspect that's a function of the worst case scenario approach to assessment, and the high topic is likely to assume that the best is present as part of its worst case scenario for things like landscape and visual impact rather than solar PV, which would be sort of lower in the in the landscape. But if perhaps if that's something we could take away. So and if it's not there, we could um, I suggest at deadline three we confirm what is there and signpost accordingly.

01:21:04:14 - 01:21:12:26

And then if it's if there's anything we feel that would be more helpful to address your submission as to the with and without this scenario. That's information we could provide for deadline for.

01:21:13:10 - 01:21:16:06

Yes please. That would be thanks. That would be fine. Thank you.

01:21:17:26 - 01:21:21:14

Uh, does the action group have any comments on that point?

01:21:21:16 - 01:21:22:10

No thank you sir.

01:21:25:22 - 01:21:26:18

Thank you.

01:21:31:14 - 01:21:40:14

In terms of the design evolution. Mr. Burton, I don't know whether this would be the appropriate point to introduce the item you brought in earlier, please.

01:21:41:27 - 01:22:09:06

Thank you very much, sir. I'm very grateful. I'm not standing, I should say, James Burton, on behalf of Preston Farms and TCS. I'm not standing out of force of habit. It's only because I'm conscious that Mr. Morgan can't actually see me unless I stand up. So that's why I'm standing up? Yes. Could we please have up Rebecca app 89 and, um, it's page. I think it's page 27 there. That illustrates the point.

01:22:18:15 - 01:22:50:20

Now you you'll be wondering, sirs, why it is I have had to go to the wintering bird survey to show you this figure? Um, because, try as we might, we cannot find it anywhere in the design evolution document to which Mr. Stirling just referred. Nor to the reasonable alternatives document, nor indeed to anywhere else in the ES.

01:22:50:23 - 01:23:32:00

Can we find any explanation of why it is the applicant has moved from so far as relevant to my clients, but of course it applies more widely this first proposal, and says you will see of relevance to my client parcel three, which is in the northeast of your screen, comprises understand two fields. And as we set out in our written representation at paragraph 76 when we were first approached about this scheme in 2022.

01:23:32:12 - 01:24:02:22

The two fields, which are E10 and E11, were the only two fields that were being proposed. Um, you will not find. You will not find a trace of this, so far as we can see in the environmental statement. And I should put a marker down now. Amongst many deficiencies in the ES. We say this is a very serious deficiency given the requirement to explain the alternatives considered.

01:24:02:24 - 01:24:14:16

And clearly this was an alternative. And that's why the applicant conducted its surveys by reference to that size. Parcel three.

01:24:16:01 - 01:24:50:00

It is a broad and general question for the applicant through you, if I may. Where can we find the change from a parcel three that, although already problematic for my clients, did not come down and take the heart out of our holding to the present arrangement that you have before you, sirs. Which of course, as you know, does take the heart out of our holding and also insert access via the Granbury Road into our holding. We cannot find that explained anywhere, and it won't surprise you to know.

01:24:50:02 - 01:25:13:28

Of course, we, as you know, we say this goes not only to the adequacy of the ES, but also indeed to whether the compulsory purchase test is met and whether para 4.2.5 of M1 satisfied. So may I rest there? Unless you would like to hear from Mr. Preston. Indeed, about what happened regarding these those initial discussions.

01:25:16:18 - 01:25:20:26

Mister Preston, is there anything you could add briefly, please, at this point that would be helpful.

01:25:21:22 - 01:25:23:11

Thank you. Sorry.

01:25:23:13 - 01:25:55:27

James Preston, Preston farms. Um, nothing really more to add. We will submit a more detailed timeline. Um, at deadline three. So the February 2022 is when we first provided access for the surveys aligned with parcel three. And we did also then have a walk around the area and confirm our issues. Um, with the Claydon estate, just regarding those two fields and the knock on effects, it would happen.

01:25:55:29 - 01:25:59:13

I think that was in March 2022. Thank you.

01:26:00:21 - 01:26:19:16

Thank you, Mister Preston. Um, if the applicant could just respond to those points, please, without getting too far into some of the specifics around the operation, that will come on to in a later agenda item, but that evolution from the parcel three that we see on screen to what is currently proposed, please. Thank you.

01:26:20:00 - 01:26:58:02

Thank you sir. Sarah Price for the applicant. The drawing that you can see on the screen there, and obviously has been pointed out, is the extent of the wintering bird survey from 2022. The design evolution is set out in the design approach document and which is reference rep 1018, and which shows the initial stage one design at this electronic page 43 of that document.

01:26:58:07 - 01:27:32:09

And it is quite normal for applicants looking to develop solar farms and indeed Nsic scale solar farms, to conduct early surveys and to consider a range of alternative options when considering what land might be brought forward for solar development. And this plan is showing effectively a early survey that was carried out to inform that initial design, which then the applicant put forward for its stage one consultation.

01:27:32:11 - 01:28:13:28

As explained throughout the consultation report as well. And the scheme, which is set out at the sort of early stage one design and is explained in further detail in terms of scheme evolution in the site selection report, which can be found at appendix one of the planning statement, which is Reference Web Rep 1016 and sets out that early scheme evolution and how the applicant considered a range of factors, including planning and environmental factors, to come to that initial scheme design.

01:28:14:00 - 01:28:43:18

And so I think the key difference here is effectively a plan which identifies early survey requirements, which informed then that first scheme design that. Then the applicant adjusted further with inputs from consultation and as it learned more from environmental information, including the winter and bird surveys, which this plan shows the initial area that that was carried out for. So I hope that answers the question.

01:28:44:09 - 01:28:52:14

Thank you. So the the plan on screen was never a proposed boundary for the old limits. It was a survey area.

01:28:52:16 - 01:28:53:21

That's correct sir.

01:28:54:00 - 01:29:09:14

And the design evolution and the options that have been considered during the process are set out in the site selection report and the Design approach document, and there are no other options that have been considered at any point during the process of the scheme being pulled together.

01:29:09:22 - 01:29:10:27

That's that's correct, sir.

01:29:11:16 - 01:29:12:12

Thank you.

01:29:14:14 - 01:29:19:29

Mr. Burton, Do you have any comments to what you've just heard? Please.

01:29:20:11 - 01:30:05:25

Uh, James Burton, sir, on behalf of Preston Farms and TCS Biosciences. I'm afraid, sir, we find that extremely difficult to accept. Um, for a start, we can all see the nature of that plan. And, um, we know from our written rep, as I say, we can set out further detail, but we know from our written rep that when we were first approached about this scheme, we were told and as our written rep says, in terms we were told that the take proposed so far as relevant to us in parcel three was E10 and E11, and the applicant team have clearly been involved.

01:30:07:01 - 01:30:45:11

I used the team in a general sense, but they've clearly been involved in this project back to when we were first approached. It is, I'm afraid, not credible to suggest that people were producing plans like that. Simply not credible. Without that being an alternative amongst the reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant. So sorry to be so stark about it, but, um, we are not accepting that that is simply prepared for some vague survey exercise that in fact was a reasonable alternative.

01:30:46:28 - 01:31:21:21

I Sterling thank you, Amy. Staying on behalf of the applicant, um, I would say a survey location does not a scheme make. It was never proposed to be a scheme as Miss Price has quite clearly set out if it would exist the examining authority, we could include the non-statutory consultation plans on screen, which clearly delineate what was proposed at that point within the scheme boundary, which is a much more extensive and parcel city than is currently being shown in the screen. That then flowed through to scoping Preliminary Environmental Information Report and ultimately to the DCO application.

01:31:21:23 - 01:31:55:05

That's before you, but all of that is quite clearly set out in the design approach document. And of course, you have the scoping opinion, the scoping report, the preliminary environmental information and the consultation report which summarizes the feedback and the materials consult is on all before examination. It's plainly before you that the red line boundary, which is the subject to this DCO application, was extensively consulted on and an appropriate manner through the pre-application consultation and the alternative reasonable alternatives have been considered and reported on.

01:31:56:26 - 01:32:06:15

I don't think it's necessary to share the plan on the screen that's that's available. I can refer back to that, um, as can other parties if necessary. Miss Hamilton, you have your hand up.

01:32:06:29 - 01:32:36:04

Thank you. Um, Helen Hamilton, on behalf of the Clayton Solar Action Group two points. One is that this is described in the document as a site location plan. And secondly, it seems rather odd to have carried out your site investigations on the basis of disregarding a very large and from an ecological point of view, significant area of of the proposed development

01:32:38:02 - 01:32:38:24

in Stirling.

01:32:40:18 - 01:32:41:21

Miss Stirling, please go ahead.

01:32:41:24 - 01:33:18:25

Apologies, Amy Stirling on behalf of the applicant. It's perhaps unfortunate labelling. I don't think that changes the the substance of the submissions that we've made. So I think also as Miss Bray said, this was one of the tools that were being used as as the land was being assembled to be included within the Red line boundary. It was one element which informed site selection, and it's not unusual for that to be the case for surveys to take place when land is still being assembled, and the relevant red line boundary being identified for the purposes of of consultation.

01:33:19:11 - 01:33:25:25

Thank you sir. The legend I think refers to site boundaries. Survey site boundary would perhaps be a more accurate description.

01:33:27:15 - 01:33:29:27

Thank you, Mr. Burton.

01:33:31:00 - 01:34:03:00

Thank you sir. James Burton, on behalf of Preston Farms and TCS Bio Sciences, sir, it's not unfortunate labelling. It's intentional labelling. And respectfully, the applicant is not starting the chronology at the right place. The, um, AI regulations and policy, they they don't say that the applicant can, as it were, start its clock when it chooses. The relevant starting point here, so far as we are concerned is 2022.

01:34:03:03 - 01:34:22:01

It is not 2023. And the applicant need to cast its net back beyond 2023 and explain this alternative, rather than starting when it has in its documents respectfully.

01:34:26:24 - 01:35:17:11

Cut back on that. Excuse me, Sarah Price for the applicant. I'm in response to Mr. Burton's point, and I would draw attention to the fact that the regulations require reasonable alternatives to be set out, but also having regard to policy in NPS and one. Excuse me. So I'm just nursing a sore throat still, so apologies. Um, which is paragraph 4.3.22 of NPS and one which requires the consideration of alternatives to be carried out in a proportionate manner, and that only alternatives that can meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered, and that's objectives in terms of megawatt capacity and the scheme that the applicant was seeking to bring forward.

01:35:17:17 - 01:36:07:20

As Miss Stirling points out, it's normal for these early surveys to be carried out. And one of the things that the applicant was considering at that stage was the area of suitable land that needed to be assembled to maximise the grid capacity, as well as those important planning and environmental considerations as well. And taking into account further information such as this, and it's reasonable to um, then, uh, bring in further land if required to, to maximise that output, we would say if um, the case being put forward is that, that this is an alternative, which the applicant's view is that it isn't anyway.

01:36:07:22 - 01:36:11:15

It wouldn't be a reasonable alternative that Mets those policy tests.

01:36:12:19 - 01:36:28:26

Thank you, Miss Brice. Mr. Burton, do you have any further comments on the test? That's whether or not a reasonable alternative, um, has been considered or not, rather than than all alternatives. Please, if you could address that point.

01:36:29:14 - 01:37:13:19

Thank you. Sir. James Burton, on behalf of Preston Farms and TCS Biosciences. Well, sir, clearly the legislation requires the setting out of reasonable alternatives, and it doesn't require the setting out of all alternatives, of course, but that cannot be used by applicants as a screen behind which to hide reasonable alternatives. And the evidence before you, albeit as presented in the yes, is scanty and sends us on a curious hunt through the ES, almost leading us to imagine we might have hallucinated the earlier discussions we had regarding this scheme.

01:37:13:21 - 01:37:51:07

But the evidence before you that we have been able to find, as I say, buried in these surveys, is a site layout plan that someone obviously thought worked as a site layout. Otherwise it wouldn't have been so described and we wouldn't have been told that the parcel three would be the size it was. So I'm afraid without more. I say you have the breadcrumb trail and the inference should be this was a reasonable alternative, but we haven't been told or explained why the applicant departed from it.

01:37:51:09 - 01:38:08:16

Now, sir, I'm going to save just to put a marker down. I will obviously save our points and evidence about what happened Subsequently and why we feel we weren't listened to. When we come to points later, probably tomorrow. Concerning my client specifically. Thank you sir.

01:38:10:22 - 01:38:16:05

Thank you. Unless the applicant has any further points in response, I shall. I shall move on.

01:38:16:16 - 01:38:37:18

Anything on behalf of the applicant? Um, no. Sorry. I feel we'd be just repeating the submissions. So we've already made this as a survey plan, not a site plan, albeit unfortunately labelled. It was not a reasonable alternative being considered by the applicant, and the alternatives that have been considered by the applicant are plainly before the examination in the documents which have already been referenced.

01:38:38:15 - 01:38:41:03

Thank you. I'm sorry, miss, Miss Hampton.

01:38:42:12 - 01:38:49:22

Thank you. Sir. Um, can I pass you over to our ecologist Dominic Woodfield on behalf of the Claydon Solar Action Group, please.

01:38:50:11 - 01:38:50:29

How you doing?

01:38:51:26 - 01:38:52:11

Yes.

01:38:52:13 - 01:38:54:15

Dominic Woodfield, Claydon solar action group.

01:38:54:17 - 01:39:38:00

Um, I hope this will help. Says, um, I have empirical experience of the early phases of solar farm processes, and we've heard about land assembly and we've heard about the initial considerations. And I must admit, I agree with Mr. Burton. It stretches incredulity to sort of suggest that the surveyors would have been sent out to survey a random piece of land. This would have been this area would have been defined on the basis of decisions about capacity, about the amount of area that was needed in order to achieve the viability, objectives and other objectives, so that all points to this being an early phase alternative, whether it was reasonable or not.

01:39:38:02 - 01:39:46:25

I leave, I leave to others. But but I do take issue with the suggestion that this was just sort of some random area of search.

01:39:51:04 - 01:40:20:05

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, I don't think the applicant suggested it was a random area of search. It was a point in time. In assembling the land which formed the the endpoint of the order limits that were ultimately subject to consultation, it was an area which had been identified at that point in time and therefore was surveyed. But that does not mean that additional land was not then subsequently identified and included within a scheme proposal, which was ultimately consulted on.

01:40:21:01 - 01:40:21:26

Thank you.

01:40:25:09 - 01:41:01:27

Okay, moving on then, to the location of the battery energy storage system. Um, at deadline two, the applicant submitted a copy of its letter to Buckinghamshire Council, which summarized the process over which the location of the best was determined and the various factors that informed that process. Um, first of all, can the applicant perhaps just provide any further information in support of that Particular statement that concludes that fields E10 and E11 are unsuitable.

01:41:02:09 - 01:41:26:00

For example, can it quantify its position that locating the best within fields E10 and 11 has the potential to cause significant adverse noise effects at Sine Hill Farm during the operational phase? So there are lots of statements within the letter that, um, aren't always substantiated or backed up by the the evidence that perhaps before the examination library already.

01:41:30:13 - 01:41:58:23

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant, I could pass you to Miss Knight to talk through the design and master planning development of the scheme in terms of the specific comparison of noise levels. That's a level of detail that is not currently in order. So we'd have to take that one away and respond in writing. But perhaps if we have passed to Miss Knight and she can walk you through why those fields were discounted as unsuitable if there are any specific points of details in terms of noise modelling, etc., we can follow up in writing.

01:41:59:09 - 01:42:19:23

That'll be helpful. I guess where I'm coming from is that the letter is quite a useful overview of the position, but it will. It would be helpful if it was backed up by further evidence and signposting towards the examination library, and figures that support the conclusions that are made in it. I think that's that's the bottom line. But if you could perhaps just provide a brief overview now that'd be that'd be grateful. Thank you.

01:42:22:17 - 01:42:37:27

Um, Ruth Knight, on behalf of the applicant. Um, so we have provided slightly more detail in our written response to Buckinghamshire Council's local impact report, um, which is.

01:42:40:05 - 01:43:08:19

Uh examination library reference rep 2-085. Um, where we've tried to expand slightly on some of those points that were raised in the original letter to Buckinghamshire Council to provide that that further level of detail. Um, so I can talk through some of those, uh, further detail points that we have, um, set out. Um.

01:43:10:21 - 01:43:12:07

So, um.

01:43:17:08 - 01:43:55:17

Um, I set out in the design approach document, which I'll refer to as the dad. Um, and is examination library reference ret 1-018. Um, and yes, volume one, chapter four Reasonable Alternatives considered, which is reference app dash 047. Um, the Rose field substation is um proposed in parcel three. Um, this location, um, was refined during design stages two and three to respond to further engagement with National Grid on the replacement.

01:43:55:19 - 01:44:17:19

Proposed replacement National grid. East Claydon substation. Um and then the impacts uh inputs from the landscape and visual assessments and noise modeling. Um and reduce the possible maximum possible length. Um, um of the connection to um East Claydon substation.

01:44:20:18 - 01:44:51:00

The extent of the um substation, as shown on sheet seven of the illustrative layout plans and sections, which is um reference rep 1-007. Um is subject to further discussion with National grid is based on a current working layout for the substation. Um, and indicates that the substation would require um, most of fields E11 and E20.

01:44:51:05 - 01:45:00:24

So that's reducing the area of parcel three that is available um for um potential best locations.

01:45:02:11 - 01:45:04:19

And um.

01:45:06:24 - 01:45:10:22

In addition, the location of the best within fields

01:45:12:07 - 01:45:43:06

E10 and E11, specifically um, has the potential to cause significant adverse effects on Syon Hill Farm. Um, and as we've mentioned, um, we can provide some further detail on that in our written submissions. Um, following this hearing. Um, but this would be a function of the reduced separation distance to sign Hill Farm. Um, including fields used by livestock relative to the current location.

01:45:43:22 - 01:46:12:28

Um, the resultant increase in noise emitting infrastructure within parcel three that would result in higher noise levels at Sand Hill Farm and the entire project. Cumulative effects with other developments in the vicinity of parcel three, including the National Grid, East Claydon Substation extension and the East Clayton Bess. So those are all factors that have been taken into consideration in that point. On the noise impacts.

01:46:14:28 - 01:46:47:15

Um. In addition, um, within parcels ten um fields ten and 11, we have the existing overhead lines and pylons. Um, those are shown on the Ordnance Survey mapping, which is um, at ES volume three, figure 1.2 order limits um at um reference at 061 um and is also on the location or delimits and coordinates plans at referenced as 004.

01:46:48:21 - 01:47:27:18

There is some uncertainty on where those overhead lines will end up being located. Um, following the um proposed National National Grid East Claydon substation. Um and any have provided um information in their zoning authorities request for information at library reference as 037 um, which indicates that they would require an easement of 30m either side of any tower, um, within those fields.

01:47:27:20 - 01:48:02:13

So either if they're retained on their current location or if they are moved within those fields, they would require, um, 30m around those towers that we would not be able to, um, develop within. Um, and they would also require easements under their overhead lines. Um, this gives rise to a 60 meter easement in diameter from Energex assets, which would significantly reduce the available land within fields E10 and E11.

01:48:04:07 - 01:48:18:04

Um, um, we also have um, within those fields, um areas of um flood risk. Um, uh, and annex one um

01:48:20:00 - 01:48:52:28

of the appendix five um, sequential and exceptions test the planning statement, which is um reference ret 1-016 um, demonstrates the extent of those flood risk areas within um parcels fields E10 and 11.

And again, this would, combined with the um, easements for the overhead lines, significantly reduce the the area within those fields.

01:48:53:20 - 01:48:54:08

Um.

01:48:56:22 - 01:48:57:08

I think that's.

01:48:57:10 - 01:48:57:25

The.

01:48:57:27 - 01:49:01:10

The key considerations for those particular fields.

01:49:01:29 - 01:49:25:06

Thank you. As I say, I think it's helpful if perhaps there's an extra point the the points picked up as you just described and then the the letter responding back to the council perhaps could just be fleshed out a little with some of the more supporting details. I think that'd be a useful document to refer back to if that could be actioned for. I suspect deadlines for me might be a vicious, but, um, if you could make that be much appreciated.

01:49:25:11 - 01:49:42:18

In selling on behalf of the applicant suggests much of the information is already before the examining the, um, authority, but I think it is a case of pulling it together and presenting it, perhaps in a more digestible format, perhaps some more level of specificity around noise in particular. So deadline three should be achievable.

01:49:42:20 - 01:49:58:07

Wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Kazuhiko. Um, I don't know whether the council had a chance to review the applicant's response to its local impact reports. Um, in full yet? But do you have any comments on that and what you've just heard as well, please, in relation to the location of the bus?

01:49:58:09 - 01:50:02:24

Yes. Thank you, Sir Daniel Gazelka for the council. Um.

01:50:04:25 - 01:50:37:02

Ultimately, our position somewhat aligns with the questions that you were asking, sir, which is we've been told a number of things, but without the relevant actual substantiating information that shows what we are being told. Um, in particular, we now have a 335 megawatt, I think, C3 with just a thousand, um, one gigawatt hour battery. And we are told that essentially there's not enough space there around the relevant, um, constraints.

01:50:37:11 - 01:51:08:17

but looking at the mapping that is provided in the mapping that was provided for the PV was proposed. And in the letter um, there is area available which we say could still be used and could be

used to mitigate the effects that we see arising out of placing the best instead in the D parcels. Um, and so really, sir, I think the position for us is we would like to see that information which actually makes good the points that the applicant is making.

01:51:08:26 - 01:51:42:16

Um, and if that information is provided, and this may therefore say, sir, that um, actually it may be the response to what the applicant is going to produce a deadline free or possibly later on if, if, if that is going to be too soon. Um, it might be our response to that, but is more important than any response that we give currently. Um, because ultimately, if the applicant clearly shows us that there are significant noise effects that the space simply is not big enough for the actual size of best now proposed.

01:51:42:18 - 01:52:13:29

Then the council can go away, act reasonably and consider that. Um, but we need that evidence. And so that's our position currently. And we certainly understand that given the adverse effects we identify in relation to the current location of the Bess, that we aren't satisfied that, um, the letter, our response, the response to our response gets us there. Um, yet um, and we do see it as a matter of avoidance of effects, which we see goes to the very heart of a test for CMP infrastructure.

01:52:14:01 - 01:52:52:10

So para 4.2.15, the MPs and the like. And so we think it should be provided in some detail, um, rather than a high level statement of, you know, there will be an effect. Um, and just on obviously we've got the points about areas for the wires be easements and we also have the points about flood zoning notwithstanding the infrastructure already proposed there just on noise. Obviously, part of the applicant's case on the noise location for the current bass is that the noise is manageable in that location, and you'll be aware that we've raised concerns about the public rights of way around the area in Hawkshaw Farm and the like.

01:52:52:15 - 01:53:10:23

Um, so it does seem to be some level of incongruity in saying that noise is manageable in one location, but not in another. Now, it may be that the responses will involve cumulative effect, but we've not seen that. And so I would invite, as you've indicated, sir, but some level of detail is given to the letter that we've been provided.

01:53:12:11 - 01:53:27:23

Thank you. Mr.. If the applicant's um notes at deadline three could address those points raised by Mr. Gazelka as well, please. That would be helpful. Um, Mr. Burton with Preston Farms like to come in on this point.

01:53:27:25 - 01:54:18:12

Thank you sir. Yes, please I would. James Burton, on behalf of Preston Farms and TCS Biosciences. Sir, we do feel that this is another example of us either not being listened to or not understood by the applicant. Um, you will of course appreciate that where the Bess is presently proposed places it right in the, as it were, prevailing wind line of travel for noise and any other disturbance in terms of our livestock, and we have made clear attempting to make make clear many times to the applicant that if

there if there is to be a Bess, then it should be around in the very top, in the northeast, in the in those eastern fields.

01:54:18:14 - 01:54:51:09

Um, we don't feel we've had any satisfactory answer or consideration or assessment of the impact on our livestock in terms of noise, of course, just generic things. And we do point out that in app 047 and you will see it at page nine of that document where the applicant explains who it is. And it might be worth Rebecca, just getting the page up, if we could at 47, page nine please.

01:54:51:20 - 01:55:06:09

Um, where the applicant explains who who it is specifically, it merits listing in terms of consultation. Sorry. At 47. Page nine please.

01:55:16:29 - 01:55:21:01

Are you selling on behalf of the 4.7.3?

01:55:21:17 - 01:55:46:09

Um. And you, you will see says that we we are we are not listed there, nor indeed are Claridge's. Um, and we really can't understand how if someone was designing this solar farm looking to minimise the impacts on our livestock, they would put something like the best in the prevailing wind of our livestock. Thank you sir.

01:55:48:07 - 01:55:49:17

Thank you, Mr. Stirling.

01:55:50:06 - 01:56:28:21

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant and I have many comments, but I will seek to keep them succinct given where we are in the agenda. The applicant has taken the action to provide further information on why it considers fields A10 and A11 are unsuitable for the best, and will do that for deadline three. I think it is important to note that it is an oversimplification. I would suggest to look at a plan and say there looks like there is enough space, which seems to be the suggestion of of the council. If the council does assert, following its review of the additional evidence, that we will put forward at deadline three, that the site does remain a suitable alternative.

01:56:29:02 - 01:57:10:16

I would suggest that in accordance with the NPS. Ian one 2025. It's then for the Council to put forward evidence as to why they consider it is suitable, including from an environmental perspective, noting specifically that the paragraph refers to when an alternative is put forward by a third party. The Secretary of State may place, must place, may place onus on the person proposing the alternative to provide the evidence for its suitability. It is not appropriate for third parties to turn up and say it is suitable, and not be required to evidence that position, so the applicant has taken the primary responsibility for demonstrating why it is not suitable at deadline three.

01:57:10:18 - 01:57:42:23

But I would suggest that in any response, alleging that it is suitable, that that must also be supported by evidence in response to the most recent comments. On behalf of TCS Biosciences. I would

suggest, you know, paragraph 4.7.3 is a non-exclusive and non-exhaustive list. It says, including, I do not think there is any suggestion that the applicant has not consulted extensively with TCS Biosciences in the pre-application phase and indeed that has already been referenced.

01:57:42:27 - 01:57:46:25

Um, when we were talking about the site survey report. Thank you.

01:57:47:11 - 01:58:01:14

Thank you, Miss Stirling. Both points noted. Um, Mr. Gazelka, I guess the point around supporting evidence for proposing alternatives. Would that be something you may consider following a review of the deadline three statement from the applicant.

01:58:01:16 - 01:58:33:10

Thank you, Sir Daniel, for the council. Um, we will consider that. I mean, what the paragraph that Miss Stirling is referring to is really aimed at is people plucking completely new random examples out of the ether is what I would primarily suggest. What this is about is something that was in the applicants site assessment process and there was assessment conducted as part of that. We're not drawing this from nothing, which you will have seen in other cases where people propose completely new proposals.

01:58:33:12 - 01:59:04:01

And so I would submit that when not in the category with that paragraph, is really aimed at. In addition, what is being put to us is that very discrete, specific environmental effects of a reason that you can't put this there or indeed affect, um, just size? Um, it's quite clever. The applicant either can or cannot provide the evidence which supports of conclusion whether it can go there. Um, and so we will consider it. We will consider whether that evidence is required in reply. We may need more time for that depending on what that is.

01:59:04:07 - 01:59:13:15

Um, but the applicant should be able to evidence this completely, um, to demonstrate that its position on placing the best in the location that it has.

01:59:15:11 - 01:59:19:24

Thank you. Mr.. Mr.. Do you have any further response to that point?

01:59:19:26 - 01:59:42:20

Amy Stirling, on behalf of the applicant? No, I think the point remains that the applicant has and will put forward evidence as to why it considers those fields remain unsuitable for Bess. I think it is, you know, a point of procedural fairness that if the council then disagree and say no, we consider that it is suitable for best, that they should be required to evidence that in the face of the evidence that the applicant has and will continue to submit.

01:59:44:00 - 01:59:48:18

Thank you. Just conscious of the time. Um,

01:59:50:11 - 02:00:04:00

and I have reached end of my questions on this agenda item. Unless anybody has any further points to raise on agenda item two. I propose we have a coffee break for around 15 minutes. If I see no hands with any further points.

02:00:05:22 - 02:00:11:29

I cannot. Um, so I'll adjourn now and reconvene at 1145. Thank you.