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00:00:05:21 - 00:00:24:24

Good morning everyone. It's now 10:00 and it's time for this meeting to begin. So I'd like to welcome you all to this preliminary meeting for the development consent order application relating to the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park project. Can I confirm that everyone can hear me clearly?

00:00:26:11 - 00:00:55:29

Thank you. Can I also confirm with the case team that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced? Thank you. So I would like to introduce myself and the rest of the examining authority. My name is Doctor Andrea McGeehan. I'm a charter town planner and a planning inspector, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead panel member to examine this application. I'm going to ask the other panel members to introduce themselves now, please.

00:00:56:09 - 00:01:06:20

Good morning everyone. My name is Graham Robbins and I'm a chartered civil engineer and planning inspector. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a panel member on this examination.

00:01:09:23 - 00:01:26:04

Good morning everyone. My name is Doctor Philip Brewer. I'm a member of the Institute of Acoustics and the planning Inspector. I have also been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a panel member for this examination. Thank you.

00:01:27:20 - 00:01:36:11

Thank you. So together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. I'll just look at the before.

00:01:39:04 - 00:02:07:20

All for any queries about the examination. So just to deal with a few housekeeping matters for those of you who are attending in person. Um, can everyone please make sure that all devices and phones

are set to silence, please? Uh, toilets are at the back of the room, And we aren't expecting any fire drills today. So if the alarm sounds, please make your way out of the building using the fire exits.

00:02:10:22 - 00:02:15:06

So we aim to keep the proceedings this morning focused.

00:02:18:16 - 00:02:31:14

We issued annex B to our letter which invited you to this meeting. That is our rule six letter. That annex set out an introduction to the preliminary meeting process. So we we trust that you've had.

00:02:35:18 - 00:02:36:19

A summary now.

00:02:39:15 - 00:02:43:07

So just to give that summary you'll find information about this

00:02:45:02 - 00:02:59:18

national Infrastructure planning website. And we would strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with this website, because the examining authority will be using it to communicate with you and to provide access to documents throughout the examination.

00:03:03:00 - 00:03:24:25

Today's meeting is being undertaken in a hybrid way. That means that some of you are present with us in the hearing venue today, and some of us are sorry. Some of you are joining us virtually using Microsoft Teams. We will be aiming to make sure that however you join us today, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate

00:03:26:22 - 00:04:00:18

in. A recording of. Today's meeting will be available on the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park section of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as practicable after the meeting has finished. With that in mind, please make sure that you speak clearly into the microphone stating your name and who you're representing each time before you speak. If you're not at a table with a microphone at it, there is a roving microphone. So please wait for one of these to be brought to you before you speak.

00:04:05:01 - 00:04:28:21

A link to the Planning Inspectorate. Privacy notice was provided with our rule six letter. 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 the data protection laws. If you have any questions about this, please speak to our case manager, Tracey Williams.

00:04:32:20 - 00:04:48:07

The meeting this morning will follow the agenda set out in annex A of the rule six letter. It would be helpful if you had a copy of that in front of you. Although the applicant's team will also be displaying the agenda on screen as we go through the agenda items.

00:04:51:03 - 00:05:31:09

So I'm just going to briefly explain the purpose of this meeting. This preliminary meeting. So the purpose of this morning's meeting is to focus on the way in which this application is proposed, to be examined on that basis. On that basis, we will only be inviting discussion about the procedural aspects of this examination. This means that the purpose of the meeting is not to discuss the merits of the application, or any concerns you may have about the application points, about the merits of the application or concerns about it can only be considered once the examination begins, and that happens after the close of this preliminary meeting.

00:05:35:01 - 00:06:06:23

So I'm now going to ask those of you who are participating in today's meeting to introduce yourselves. When I state your organization's name, could you introduce yourself and stating your name and who you represent and on which agenda item you wish to speak? If you're not representing an organization, Station. Please confirm your name and summarize your interest in the application and confirm the agenda item on which you wish to speak. Please could you also state how you wish to be addressed i.e.

00:06:06:29 - 00:06:14:12

Mr., Mrs., miss, etc. so can I please start with the applicant and their advisors, please?

00:06:16:17 - 00:06:34:20

Uh good morning madam. Uh, my name is Peter Nesbitt. I'm a solicitor and partner at Eversheds Sutherland, uh, here today representing the applicant. Um, I have some colleagues with me this morning. I wasn't going to introduce them. I'll introduce them if it needs be.

00:06:34:22 - 00:06:35:07

Thank you.

00:06:35:09 - 00:06:38:03

Thank you. Uh, sorry. You can address me as Mr. Nesbitt.

00:06:38:15 - 00:06:39:23

Thank you, Mr. Nesbitt.

00:06:43:08 - 00:06:47:12

Okay. Moving on to Newark and Sherwood District Council.

00:06:49:00 - 00:06:51:06

Good morning. Simon Betts.

00:06:51:08 - 00:06:52:27

Planner. Major projects.

00:06:52:29 - 00:06:53:24

Representing.

00:06:53:26 - 00:07:10:29

Newark and Sherwood District Council. I also have to my left my colleague Briony Norman, principal legal officer. Newark and Sherwood District Council. To clarify, we're not intending to raise any specific points on any items, but here to respond to any questions posed by any of the parties. Thank you.

00:07:20:06 - 00:07:24:27

Right. Um, Nottinghamshire County Council.

00:07:26:17 - 00:07:40:01

Good morning, Mr. Will Lawrence planning an infrastructure manager at the county council. Um, like, likewise with the. You can share what? I haven't any specific points to raise, uh, on the agenda, but we'll respond to any questions if needs be.

00:07:40:03 - 00:07:41:24

All right. Thank you, Mr. Lawrence.

00:07:45:03 - 00:07:47:23

Do we have. Um. Councillor gamble?

00:07:53:14 - 00:07:57:00

Uh, I think we have Anthony Northcutt.

00:07:59:14 - 00:08:10:11

Yeah. Good. Good morning, madam. My name is Mr. Anthony Northcote. I'm a charter town planner, and I represent, uh, JPEG, which is the joint parish's action group. Thank you.

00:08:10:13 - 00:08:11:05

Thank you.

00:08:16:29 - 00:08:21:05

Hey, could I now ask if there's anybody else in the room who wishes to speak today?

00:08:25:24 - 00:08:36:09

Thank you. Um, so just moving on to any virtual attendees. Um, with us on Microsoft Teams and wish to speak. Could you please raise your hand?

00:08:42:07 - 00:09:06:03

Okay. Thank you. Um, so if anybody else decides that they wish to speak during the course of this morning's proceedings. Um, so, for example, if you want to make comments, on on on the basis of comments made by other parties. You may do so. Please indicate this by raising your hand either physically if you're in the room, or using the raised hand function in Microsoft Teams. If you're joining us on teams.

00:09:07:18 - 00:09:13:21

Are there any comments anybody wishes to make on the agenda? Item one before me before we move on?

00:09:15:28 - 00:09:23:18

Okay. Thank you. So I'm now going to hand over to Mr. Hobbins to address agenda item two in relation to the examination process.

00:09:26:06 - 00:10:02:17

Thank you, doctor McGinn. In order to streamline the running of this event in annex B of our rule six letter, we provided an introduction to the preliminary meeting and the examination process, explaining how it will be conducted and how you can participate through expediency. Or I'm assuming that everyone has read this, and therefore I don't propose to spend time reading it out now. It is important that you are clear in your understanding of the process. Therefore, if there is anything that you are unclear about or in which you would like clarity, then this is your opportunity to ask.

00:10:03:24 - 00:10:22:29

So on the basis of the information set out in NXP, are there any questions about the way in which we propose to examine this application? If you do have any specific points to make regarding the draft timetable, could I ask at these please. Raised in the agenda item on the agenda item four. So are there any questions?

00:10:28:06 - 00:10:37:11

Okay I don't see any questions. I don't see any virtual hands. So I'll now move on to agenda item three which is the initial assessment of principal issues.

00:10:40:04 - 00:10:53:27

So the initial assessment of principal issues which I will abbreviate to IRP just for brevity, set out in annexed of the rule six letter. So could I just ask the applicant please to display and XC on the screen? Thank you.

00:11:12:04 - 00:11:37:22

Okay. Um, the list is not intended to be exhaustive. All set in stone for the duration of the examination. It does not prevent us from amending the list by removing or adding to the principal issues for consideration, consideration at a later stage in the process. We will take into account all the issues and evidence brought before us, and the initial assessment of principal issues will not constrain the examination of other important and relevant matters that may emerge.

00:11:39:12 - 00:11:58:12

That said, the IAP list is not routinely updated as it is only an initial assessment. The examining authority will examine all issues based throughout that throughout the examination, and we will have regard to all important and relevant matters during the examination when we write our recommendation report to the Secretary of State.

00:12:01:04 - 00:12:38:22

I will take the opportunity to say also that the examining Authority has noted that a number of relevant representations have been made in relation to flooding and localized flooding. Although these issues are not on the agenda for issue specific hearing one this afternoon and tomorrow morning, they are something that we will very much be examining, and there will be an opportunity for interested parties to provide all submissions on the matter during tomorrow afternoon's open floor hearing will, of course, also be able to provide written submissions during the examination and there will be other opportunities for really specific hearings in the timetable we provide on the issue.

00:12:41:15 - 00:12:51:17

So I'm now going to ask anybody if they would like to speak on this matter or have any comments or questions, please. Okay. Um, Mr. Northcote.

00:12:53:12 - 00:13:24:20

Thank you, sir. As we've set out in our submission, which is, uh, reference PDA hyphen 009. Um, we think that having regards to paragraph 2.1. 17 of NPS m3, which is the NPS for renewable energy infrastructure, and that specifically refers to scale needing to be an issue, a main issue in relation to solar um, and to impacts, particularly in rural areas.

00:13:24:27 - 00:13:51:20

Um, given that we consider that the omission of scale as a topic of itself is a main issue in, in itself. Um, is a deficiency. And therefore we do ask that you consider that separately as a separate matter. Yes, it comes into all other matters, but given the advice in NPS, and three, we consider it should be considered as a matter of its own as a principal issue, sir.

00:13:53:23 - 00:14:27:24

Okay. Thank you for your comment, Mr. Northcott. Um, and yeah, we can say that, um, although scale isn't an issue that is explicitly mentioned or as a standalone issue in the IEP, it is something that we would consider as part of the consideration of, um, you know, the landscape of those developments and whether that's necessary, proportionate. Um, yeah. As well as obviously the implications in terms of the need case and site selection process. So it's always I hope that can provide a bit of reassurance and do something that would be considered. And we obviously take into consideration your comments there to say thank you.

00:14:30:18 - 00:14:36:24

Is there anybody else who would like to make any comments or questions on this? Thank you. Yes.

00:14:41:11 - 00:14:47:02

I'm sorry. Could you wait till the microphone is with you? Otherwise we won't we won't be recording what you're saying. Thank you.

00:14:51:22 - 00:15:12:26

Good morning. John Hiscock, local resident. Um, following on from the gentleman who raised an issue, um, missing from annex C, um, I'd like a specific issue to be raised, and that is of cost benefit analysis with regard to this particular project. Thank you.

00:15:14:05 - 00:15:44:17

Okay. Thank you. Um, regarding costs, I think our position that we would be that, um, costs and cost analyses would fall outside of the scope of an examination in this, this type, because it would generally be an a matter for the applicant. And the examining authority would have to assess an application against the planning policy and legislation, which generally wouldn't consider that as an issue. That said, we would consider the viability of the funding of the proposed development as part of the consideration of compulsory acquisition.

00:15:45:03 - 00:15:54:13

Needing to be satisfied that there would be the necessary funding in place to acquire the land rights sought. So that would be on the opposition on that. Thank you.

00:15:57:09 - 00:16:34:07

Apologies. I know this isn't the the forum for more detailed discussion, and I have put in a submission with regard to this application. And it's not regarding funding, it's the cost benefit in regards to this particular project versus the detrimental effect on the countryside of this of this area. Um, I have put more in the submission and now is obviously not the time because you're going to be looking at it further, but I just want that to be sort of out there, as the other gentleman has, has, has said, which I believe is missing from an NXT.

00:16:34:09 - 00:16:34:28

Thank you.

00:16:35:00 - 00:16:44:19

Okay. Yeah. Thank you for that. We know that. We'll take that into consideration. And obviously any submissions that you provide throughout the examination will obviously be consideration given consideration. So Considerations. Thank you.

00:16:47:21 - 00:16:58:15

Are there any further questions or comments from anybody in the room online? Okay. I don't see any hands. In that case, I would just ask the applicant if you do have any comments regarding the IRP.

00:17:00:04 - 00:17:00:24

No, sir.

00:17:01:12 - 00:17:10:21

Okay. Thank you. In that case, I will now hand over to Doctor Brewer for agenda item four, which is the draft examination timetable. Thank you.

00:17:12:20 - 00:17:49:21

Thank you, Mr. Hobbins. Um, as before, could we, um, move on to, um, uh, nxt of the rule six letter and have that? Yeah. Great. So. And hopefully other people also got a copy, um, with them. So this is, um, item four and to, um, uh, consider, uh, our comments on the draft on the draft examination timetable. So to begin with, I'll go through the comments relevant to this agenda item that we received.

00:17:51:22 - 00:18:02:07

By procedural deadline. A which was the 18th of November, uh, along with, um, our responses to those, uh, comments.

00:18:03:27 - 00:18:34:16

I think you've already heard from the Joint Parishes Action Group. Um, but they submitted a, um, comments on this PDA 009 and I'll start with the section from that, which was the paragraphs 11 to 15. Um, so this um, if I try to summarize it, um, question the justification for the five month examination period. And in doing so, it drew a comparison with other applications.

00:18:35:01 - 00:18:57:28

And they also asked whether the applicant has availed itself of the fast track procedure and observed that Christmas, Easter and February. Half term holiday periods all fall within the period of the examination. JPEG has made a relatively detailed submissions, and so I will respond in some detail if you'll just bear with me if that's okay.

00:18:59:18 - 00:19:17:12

Firstly, I will point out that the applicant is not available itself for the fast track procedure, and it was our decision as the examining authority to set out a timetable that signals our intention to complete the examination in five months, starting from the day after this meeting has been completed.

00:19:19:13 - 00:19:59:18

With regard to comparison with other applications that that JPEG um referred to the number of representations, the volume, the volume of application documents, additional submissions, and the amount of land and the geographical area involved. These factors do not necessarily create a more complex or difficult to examine application. In any case, this is offset to some degree by the experience gained on solar projects, particularly by the statutory consultees, for example local authorities, Environment Agency and the like.

00:20:00:11 - 00:20:34:07

If I move on to a bit more detail on this, it's also worth noting that Cottam, West Burton and Gates Burton, cited by JPEG were examined under section 106 of the Planning Act 2008, and this position changed from the 17th of January, 2024, when the current overarching Energy Policy Policy Statement M one came into force. This means that since then, solar farms obviously above the relevant threshold, including One Earth and Tilbury, as mentioned in their submissions, have been examined under section 104.

00:20:35:15 - 00:20:51:26

I know this may seem rather dry, um, but this has provided greater clarity for SSAs and along with the experience the SSAs have gained in examining under section 104, this has led to more efficient examinations.

00:20:53:25 - 00:21:26:17

Last but not last, but by no means least. You see before you a panel of three, um, rather than 2 or 1 examining inspectors who are well used to dealing with examinations that extend through holiday periods. Having said all this. So that's my sort of detailed response. Having said all this, if we need if

we need to, we are able to revert to the statutory period. And we'll make that clear for a procedural, procedural decision at the appropriate time.

00:21:29:24 - 00:21:53:20

The other items that JPEG mentioned in paragraphs five on using the reserve time for this meeting, and paragraphs 16 to 18. And for further insight, inspections under I would deal with under agenda item five on procedural decisions. We are, however, having said all this, grateful for the error that JPEG has pointed out in

00:21:55:13 - 00:22:10:12

um, and confirmed that the week reserved for any accompanied site inspections in the draft timetable is week commencing 2nd of February 2026 and not week commencing 2nd February 2025.

00:22:12:07 - 00:22:15:26

Um, I'll stop there and, um.

00:22:17:27 - 00:22:19:14

Basically, um,

00:22:21:12 - 00:22:27:05

I'll just perhaps give people a chance to make any comments on what they've heard so far and that before I move on.

00:22:30:00 - 00:22:32:14

Yes, Mister. Mister. North coast, isn't it? Yes.

00:22:33:29 - 00:23:13:11

Thank you, Sir Anthony Northcote from JPEG. Um, In what you said. You appear to be suggesting that because it's a panel of three, that means you can do things quicker than the panel of two. And I hope that's you, miss speaking, because every member of the panel has to look at every single document that's submitted. It isn't a case of sharing it out between the panel, and there are a very significant number of documents for this application. Each of those documents in itself are longer and more complicated by the sheer size of the project.

00:23:13:15 - 00:23:54:00

If you look at maps, for example, there's usually 30 or 40 maps in a document, not just 5 or 6. And so we are gravely concerned that you are intending to deal with the process in only five months. I am aware that the Planning Inspectorate is trying, despite the legal definition of six months, to encourage examining authorities to only take five months. And however, that means you're ending up with a timetable that has elements that don't fit logically together with the greater respect we've got issues and issue.

00:23:54:02 - 00:24:25:24

Hearing one this afternoon and tomorrow morning. Um, but that's ahead of the deadline. Deadline? One that you've set for people to actually submit representations, which is not until the 10th of

December. So the haste to try and complete the process seems to be resulting in a, in a, in a in a overall process that's not particularly logical with the greatest of respect. And we have a mr..

00:24:26:03 - 00:24:58:21

I, I hear your comments obviously. I mean you make some some interesting points. We will we will take that away. Okay. We set out our position on this. Um, and you set out your position on this. I'd like to give other people a chance to, um, um, comment on the other aspects, but I'll move on to the other. Um, I think I said at the start, I'll cover off, if we may, the other submissions we received, I proceed with a, um, and then and then we'll see what we get to it. Yeah, but thank you for your thank you for your comments on that.

00:24:59:01 - 00:25:06:01

Um, so moving on to so if I got another hand on this on this point.

00:25:12:28 - 00:25:46:09

Hi, my name is Liz Hopkins. I'm calling on Trent Parish Council. Um, while I appreciate you have experience and you're drawing on your experience from, uh, other projects, we haven't. We are laypeople and we are trying to trawl through the information that's been given. From element Screen, we're talking to the councils. We're trying to read back on other projects, and we are drawing on those experiences.

00:25:47:00 - 00:26:17:28

But we are not professionals, and we are looking to the professionals to try and help us through this, but at the same time, to be able to put down the the information to steer you to where our concerns are. So that and to element screen to say these are our concerns, eliminate these problems please. We need time and you're not giving it us. And we're trying to do the best project for everybody I think.

00:26:18:16 - 00:26:19:09

Thank you.

00:26:20:02 - 00:26:57:18

Okay. Thank you for that. I mean, perhaps I'll just I will just repeat what I said towards end of my, um, uh, words where I did say that we we do have we are able to revert to the statutory period if, If we need to. If we feel that will be beneficial to the examination at the appropriate time, at the appropriate point. Um, so I'm just repeating myself there essentially, but just just so we're clear on that. Um, if I may move on to, um, the other submissions that we did receive on the timetable by the, um, procedural deadline.

00:26:57:24 - 00:26:58:14

Um,

00:27:00:00 - 00:27:32:28

just briefly, um, the Environment Agency has asked the deadline to be pushed back to 23rd of January, because we are scheduled to publish our first written questions on 19th December. So concerns over staff availability over the Christmas break period. And the applicant has said that it considers it would

benefit the A and be fairer for all of the parties involved in the examination. To move the deadline to from 16th January to 21st of January 2026.

00:27:33:00 - 00:27:57:28

86. The match against much the same reasons now respond to both of these. We would like our first round of written questions to be as focused as possible. And to this end, it would be most helpful if good progress could be made between the applicant and the various interested parties, in particular the statutory consultees by deadline one which is 10th of December.

00:28:02:09 - 00:28:20:06

You should all be aware and make note that. Make serious note of the fact that late submissions will only be accepted in exceptional, exceptional circumstances and at our discretion, and any submissions received after the close of the examination cannot be accepted by us

00:28:22:03 - 00:28:25:14

now. At this point, then I'm happy to.

00:28:28:26 - 00:28:41:06

Hear any further comments on the timetable Table that are different, or in addition to the points that have already been made and responded to by us.

00:28:47:16 - 00:28:48:06

Yes.

00:28:50:17 - 00:29:20:09

Song and Betts representing Newark and Sherwood District Council. So we didn't make a specific submission on this item, but as a general principle, we would support the applicant's position and the Environment Agency's position in terms of allowing more time, um, over the festive period and to allow greater progression, a little bit more time for some of those discussions with the applicant on statement of common ground issues. So that's the only point I'd add. Thank you.

00:29:21:26 - 00:29:22:29

Thank you. Thank you for that.

00:29:25:22 - 00:29:56:16

Okay. All right. So, um, you've heard our responses to what we have received to submissions received a perceived deadline. We have received comments from Mr. Richard Gill who understand can't be with us today and his comments will be considered along with these further ones and comments we've heard today. And we will issue a final version of the timetable in April, later in our eight letter, as soon as practicable, practicable after the close of this preliminary meeting.

00:30:01:06 - 00:30:03:01

So I'll now move on to.

00:30:05:02 - 00:30:14:13

Agenda item five. And if we could then move on to annex F in the level six letter.

00:30:23:12 - 00:31:06:14

So before this was issued, we had already made the procedural decision to accept the additional submissions from the applicant in response, the Planning Inspectorate. Section 51 advice and this is covered under item five in annex anyway. So in this annex, items 1 to 3 sets out further procedural decisions in relation to. And if I just go through this fairly, fairly quickly hopefully, um, request for the applicant to provide the under under one request for the applicant to provide updates for a range of documents during examination, which I spent there, well familiar with requests for the applicant to work with a range of organisations to produce statements of common ground.

00:31:06:16 - 00:31:37:14

Also to be updated regularly during examination, which we've touched upon already. A request to all parties to consider and suggest locations for accompanied site inspections are part of the examination, and to make such suggestions by procedural deadline. A which was, as I'm sure you aware, the 18th of November. We have received some specific requests at this deadline and also note that a number of interested parties requested site inspections as part of their relevant representations, and elsewhere in submissions made to us.

00:31:40:02 - 00:32:16:20

Having on this item request that the applicant prepares a draft itinerary is in the timetable for deadline one. Please note that in general terms, I think it's perhaps just worth describing this a bit bit more detail here. Um, in general terms, the company site inspections are not necessary if the location or matter can be viewed from public land or on an unaccompanied basis. We will also consider if it would be appropriate to make arrangements for access only to be provided to specific sites, meaning that they could still be inspected on an unaccompanied basis.

00:32:16:26 - 00:32:47:12

I'm blaming that point a little bit, because I think I think sometimes people, um, uh, are not always clear what what the purpose of an inspection is and how and how it can be carried out. So on under. For as we remind the two interested parties that written representations are due by deadline. One 10th of December, with the applicant responses due by deadline to the 16th of January.

00:32:48:17 - 00:33:00:24

We've also made procedural decisions to hold an issue specific hearing this afternoon, which you're aware of and in tomorrow and into tomorrow morning and and on and the first open floor hearing tomorrow afternoon.

00:33:02:29 - 00:33:16:17

Um, so hopefully what I've said about site inspections and reserve timing for this meeting, um, respond to the other points made by JPEG in their in their procedural deadline, a submission.

00:33:18:15 - 00:33:25:17

Are there any further comments before we move on on on these matters? Mr.. Mr.. Yes.

00:33:26:15 - 00:34:05:19

Thank you, sir. Anthony Northcote from JPEG. Um, the deadline for, um, submitting suggestions for site inspections just seems unduly early. Um, given that you were intending not to actually undertake site inspections for another three month period. Um, I would make the point that for parish councils, who we represent, it is very difficult. They are volunteers. And the sheer geographic area that this covers, they're trying to, you know, collectively identify where views are best looked from.

00:34:05:21 - 00:34:35:29

And, you know, we would support the basic concept that a site inspection should be unaccompanied. Um, unless it is in somebody's private land. We have no problem with that, sir, at all. And we are mindful that you've already done a set of site inspections which an examining authority would traditionally do before you start the process. I just think that, you know. Deadline. Deadline one would be a far more logical time for it to have come in. Really.

00:34:36:08 - 00:34:44:19

Because then people can do it alongside their written representations. Rather than having to separate it out. It just seemed a slightly illogical to us.

00:34:44:21 - 00:35:01:24

So thank you. Thank you. Mr.. I think I think that repeats what you've you put in your in your written submissions. Doesn't it really? Um, if there's nothing else, I think at this point I can, um, hand back to doctor McGee and to take us from here. Thank you.

00:35:02:06 - 00:35:13:15

Thank you, Doctor Brewer. So we're now on agenda item six. Any other matters? And we're moving towards the close of this preliminary meeting.

00:35:15:13 - 00:35:22:27

Just ask at this point. Are there any other points that anybody would wish to make? Yes, Mr. Northcote.

00:35:24:20 - 00:35:56:05

Thank you. Thank you. Madam, we have set out some points on this in, um, in our evidence document, which is PDA hyphen 009. Um, our concern is about the adequacy of consultation. Um, this is will not be a surprise to the applicant because we made this in our presentation to them on the statutory consultation. Um, going back to the original section 51 advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate.

00:35:56:14 - 00:36:33:18

It was made very clear that the applicant needed to be clear what is within the development consent order and what is not within the development consent order. In terms of other aspects, namely Ng plus aspects like e.g. Academy and so on. Now, throughout the consultation process, if you look at the various consultation documents in the examination library, and you'll see that in all of the consultation material, there has been no distinction.

00:36:33:27 - 00:37:09:11

And all the consultation materials referred to projects in N+. There have been boards, consultation boards and N+ detailing projects which are not before you. They are not part of this development consent order scheme. On that basis, you know, we consider that the whole process of consultation had been deliberately misleading. It has tried to identify benefits which are not before you. They're not before us to discuss them, and it fails to adhere to the section 51 advice.

00:37:09:19 - 00:37:40:09

Now, the process does not allow for parish councils to do an adequacy of consultation response. We're not within the definition of local council within the legislation. This is therefore the first opportunity. We can raise this issue with you and which I appreciate is a nightmare because the application has been accepted and this is a matter of acceptance. But the legislation doesn't allow us to raise this matter with you before today.

00:37:40:25 - 00:38:19:05

And so we're all in a bit of a cleft stick, to be quite honest, because you now have to decide, are you going to start the examination at the end of this meeting or not? And I'm not an expert on the legal procedure that relates to this. I'll be quite honest. And, um, what we're raising will be uncomfortable to everybody. It's uncomfortable to us. It's uncomfortable to you. It's uncomfortable to the applicant. We accept this fact. But it is very clear that in our view, section 51 advice originally was very clear on this matter and that has not been adhered to.

00:38:20:17 - 00:38:34:07

The applicant has continued to publish documents under the banners of the scheme on things like natural flood management, which are proposals that are not even part of this scheme at all.

00:38:34:11 - 00:38:49:04

Yeah, I understand the point you making, Mr. Northcott. You've made this point in your procedural deadline response. Before I respond directly, I'm going to ask the applicant to give their views. Mr. Nesbitt, have you any comments on which Mr. Northcote has made, please?

00:38:51:13 - 00:39:26:16

Thank you, Madam Peter Nesbitt for the applicant. Um, only that, um, to the extent that ng plus measures are mentioned and consulted upon alongside the proposals, um, it has been abundantly clear that they are community benefits. Um, and they've been badged as such at any moment that they've been raised. Um, the, the elements of the scheme form part of the DCO are set out clearly in various places.

00:39:26:29 - 00:39:47:20

In the DCO application, the Great North Road website itself contains in its FAQ section a clear guidance as to what constitute community benefits. Um, and then there's a direction to a separate community benefits website that explains further. There are.

00:39:48:00 - 00:40:06:16

I leave that aspect of it. For now, I think we are going to come on to some of this in issue specific hearing one. But in terms of the wider point about, um, uh, Mr. Northcote questions around whether or not the acceptance criteria have been met in this case. Do you have any observations on that?

00:40:06:29 - 00:40:45:16

Well, I'll simply say that that they have been met. We've had adequacy of consultation responses and the application has been accepted. Um, the consultation exercise was conducted in accordance with the statutory requirements and guidance. To the extent that Ng plus is an issue, we can explain in issue specific hearing one which elements fall within which, if that requires further explanation. But in terms of compliance with the requirements for statutory consultation, the applicant is of the view that it is fully complied with those requirements.

00:40:47:04 - 00:41:12:04

Thank you, Mr. Nesbitt. And our position as an examining authority is that. Is it? Um, the application has been accepted and we are starting the examination process. And the point about the clarity around what what, um, what constitutes the application? We will be, as I've said, addressing, um, during issue specific hearing one at this afternoon. Um.

00:41:15:04 - 00:41:19:05

And at this point that, that, that is our that is, that is opposition.

00:41:23:08 - 00:41:26:27

Yes, sir. Would you make wait until a microphone is with you, please?

00:41:30:03 - 00:42:01:23

Thank you madam. Garry Hobbs, parish councillor, North Musqueam and local resident. Um, just to to back. Back up. When Mr. Northcote said that as a member of parish and the village, there was significant confusion within parishes as to what was included within the scheme and what wasn't. Um, I've got quite a lot of time. I'm retired. I'm a professional person and I was confused as to exactly. If this went ahead, we would get X or we wouldn't get X or whatever.

00:42:01:25 - 00:42:23:16

And if, you know, if I'm representative, uh, many other people in the parish would have no idea of what they were getting and what they weren't getting. There was significant confusion. And as Mr. Northcote says, that is in a number of submissions that you would have read. But it was the first time we've had an opportunity to mention it. Um, you know, and the application has been accepted already.

00:42:23:29 - 00:42:44:29

Understood. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Hobbs. Um, understood what's been said. And we will be, um, making sure that we clarify those points as we progress through. So before I move to close, are there any other final points anybody would wish to make in the room or online?

00:42:48:26 - 00:42:50:04

Yes. Mr. Northcote.

00:42:50:28 - 00:43:05:22

Anthony Northcote from JPEG. Hey, can I just ask that in issue specific hearing one. Uh, can we have a specific item as to clarify precisely what is in the scheme and what is not in the scheme? Yes, please. Yes.

00:43:05:24 - 00:43:08:04

It's there. Yes, yes. Thank you, Mr. Northcote.

00:43:10:09 - 00:43:58:15

So it remains for me to thank you all for your contributions this morning. Um, where relevant, we will be considering their implications for the examination. And quite specifically, we will be issuing a rule eight letter which will finalize the examination timetable as soon as possible after this week's hearings. Can I remind you that both notes and the digital recording of the proceedings today will be available as soon as practicable on the project page of the National Infrastructure website? Can I also remind you that we have an issue specific hearing, issue specific hearing one, um, taking place here this afternoon at 2:00.

00:43:59:22 - 00:44:10:09

So the time is now at 1044. And this preliminary meeting for the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park is now closed. Thank you.