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00:00:06:21 - 00:00:27:16

Good afternoon everyone. It is now 2:00 and the time for this hearing to begin. So I'd like to welcome you all to this issue specific hearing on overarching and environmental matters. The Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park project. Can I check that everyone can hear me clearly?

00:00:30:16 - 00:00:35:18

Can I also check with the case team that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced?

00:00:38:22 - 00:00:49:20

So my name is Doctor Andrea McGeehan. I am a chartered Town planner, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application.

00:00:51:05 - 00:00:55:10

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

00:00:56:09 - 00:01:06:24

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

00:01:09:09 - 00:01:23:19

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

00:01:24:23 - 00:01:25:23

Thank you both.

00:01:27:27 - 00:01:55:11

So together, we constitute the examining authority for this application, just to deal with a couple of housekeeping matters before we start. So for those attending in person, please could you turn off your devices or set them to silent? Uh, toilets are at the back of the room and we aren't expecting any fire drills. So if the alarm sounds, then please use one of the fire exits.

00:01:57:08 - 00:02:10:01

So the meeting will follow the agenda that was published on the National Infrastructure Planning website on the 14th of November, 2025. It will be helpful if you had a copy of that in front of you.

00:02:12:04 - 00:02:19:10

The agenda is for guidance only and we may add other considerations or issues as we progress.

00:02:21:12 - 00:02:48:18

We will conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions have been made and all questions asked and responded to that said, if the discussions can't be concluded, then it may be necessary for us to prioritize some matters and if there are others to written questions. Likewise, if you can't answer a particular question that you're being asked or require time to get the information requested, then you can please can you please indicate that you need to respond in writing?

00:02:51:10 - 00:03:09:26

So today's hearing is being undertaken in a hybrid way. Meaning that some of you are present with us here at the hearing venue, and some of you are joining us virtually using Microsoft Teams. We'll make sure that, however you decided to join us today, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate in.

00:03:13:17 - 00:03:35:10

A recording of today's hearing will be made available on the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park section of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as practicable after the hearing has finished. So with that in mind, could you please ensure that you speak clearly into a microphone, stating your name and who you're representing each time you speak?

00:03:36:27 - 00:03:46:16

If you're not at a table with a microphone, then there is a roving microphone. So please wait for one of those to for for roving microphone to be brought to you before you speak.

00:03:50:18 - 00:04:12:05

A link to the Planning Inspectorate. Privacy policy 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 the data protection laws. Please speak to a member of the case team if you've got any questions about this.

00:04:15:22 - 00:04:46:01

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 please introduce yourself, stating your name and who you represent and which agenda item you wish to speak on? If you're not representing your organization, please confirm your name. Summarize your interest in the application and confirm the

agenda item upon which you wish to speak. And please, could you also indicate how you wish to be addressed? I am Mr.. Mrs.

00:04:46:03 - 00:04:54:09

Smith and so on. So starting with the applicant and then any of their advisors, please.

00:04:56:12 - 00:05:19:21

Thank you. Madam. Um, my name is Peter Nesbit. I'm a solicitor and partner at Eversheds Sutherland, and I'm here representing the applicant. Um, I might just take the opportunity to introduce some of the team members that are likely to contribute to the agenda today. Um, to my immediate right is Mr. Matthew Sharp. He's a senior director at quad.

00:05:21:20 - 00:05:32:19

To his right. Uh, is Elena so miss Elena Sarajevo? She is head of planning at the applicant.

00:05:35:03 - 00:05:40:27

Um, to her right is Mr. Paul Phillips. He's a director at Evans.

00:05:43:09 - 00:05:54:08

Speaking about EIA matters. And then finally on the end is Mr. Tony Kernan. And he's director at Kernan Countryside Associates. Thank you.

00:05:58:29 - 00:06:13:08

Thank you, Mr. Nesbitt. So then, moving on to the organizations and individuals who have given notice of their intention to speak. Um, starting with those in the room. And firstly, Newark and Sherwood District Council.

00:06:15:21 - 00:06:39:23

Good afternoon. Simon Betz, planner. Major projects representing Newark and Sherwood District Council. Mr. Betts is fine in terms of addressing me. To my left, I have my colleague Briony Norman, principal legal officer. Newark and Sherwood District Council. I also have two of the colleagues to my right. But I'll perhaps let them introduce themselves as and when they speak this afternoon. Thank you.

00:06:42:26 - 00:06:45:15

Then Nottinghamshire County Council, please.

00:06:46:06 - 00:06:56:23

Good afternoon, Mr. Will Lawrence, planning and infrastructure manager at Nottinghamshire County Council and the only member of the county council here today and may speak on any of the agenda items.

00:06:58:12 - 00:06:59:06

Thank you.

00:07:03:21 - 00:07:09:06

And then Mr. Northcote and Mr. Northcote. Sorry. Would you like to introduce yourself?

00:07:09:23 - 00:07:10:08

Yes.

00:07:10:10 - 00:07:26:24

Good afternoon madam. Yes. My name is Anthony Northcote. Happy to be addressed as Mr. Northcote. I'm a charter town planner appointed for JPEG, which is the joint parish's action group, and I intend to speak on matters at 3.1 to 3.4 inclusive. Madam.

00:07:27:15 - 00:07:33:11

Thank you. I then I have, um, Councillor James Gamble. Are you. Are you here?

00:07:38:24 - 00:07:42:21

Okay. Um. Jade Finchley, are you here?

00:07:46:17 - 00:07:49:09

Um, Barry Walton?

00:07:52:02 - 00:07:55:06

Nope. Um. Paul Williams.

00:07:57:27 - 00:08:06:03

Good afternoon. My name is Paul Williams, speaking on behalf of the Norrell Solar Farm Steering Group, and happy to be addressed as Mr..

00:08:07:07 - 00:08:09:27

And are there any particular agenda items you wish to speak on? Mr..

00:08:10:03 - 00:08:12:29

Yes. My apologies. 3.1 and 3.2.

00:08:17:07 - 00:08:18:02

Thank you.

00:08:20:00 - 00:08:21:26

Um, is Jim Wishart here?

00:08:26:03 - 00:08:35:15

Thank you. So anybody else in the room wishing to speak today that. Yes. From me. Yeah. Um, my name is Lynn Lynn Thompson.

00:08:35:18 - 00:08:47:25

I'm here as a resident of canton. Um, I'm here in that capacity. I'm not representing an organization. And I would like to speak under section 3.43.4.

00:08:47:27 - 00:08:51:00

Yes. And is it Mrs.. Miss? How would you prefer to be addressed?

00:08:51:02 - 00:08:52:19

I'm happy to be called Lynn.

00:08:52:26 - 00:08:53:13

Okay.

00:08:57:02 - 00:09:09:13

Thank you. Moving to those presents online, I think we have a representative of the Environment Agency online. Would you like to introduce yourselves, please?

00:09:12:19 - 00:09:28:18

Thank you. Madam. Um, Mr.. Uh, for the Environment Agency, I'll be speaking on item 3.3, and I also have my colleague on the line. Uh, that's Ruth Bolton on. Uh, she will be speaking on the same item as well.

00:09:28:22 - 00:09:33:16

Okay. Okay. So she there separately as I can see. Somebody else there.

00:09:34:13 - 00:09:41:19

Thanks, mom. Yes. Ruth Bolton, happy to be referred to as Mrs.. And maybe speaking on item 3.3. Thank you.

00:09:41:27 - 00:09:42:25

Thank you.

00:09:49:13 - 00:10:03:12

So just the two representatives from the Environment Agency, I think I have a third name, but so we've heard from the two of you. All right. Thank you. Is there anybody else online that wishes to speak this afternoon?

00:10:07:13 - 00:10:08:03

Okay.

00:10:09:27 - 00:10:10:23

Thank you.

00:10:12:24 - 00:10:49:18

So if anybody else does decide during the course of the afternoon that they wish to speak, um, uh, please let us know. And, um, again, when you do so, introduce yourself and let us know, um, what you should talk about. All right. So I'm going to move on to agenda item two, which is the purpose of this issue specific hearing. So the main purpose of this hearing is to undertake an examination of various

environmental impact matters arising from our consideration of the application and also the representations that have been made to date.

00:10:50:20 - 00:11:33:24

And this will be focused on gaining an overview of key elements of the application as a framework for more detailed consideration of matters as the examination progresses. And so, to be clear, we won't have time to address specific matters in great detail at this point. Um, and as I've already said, it may be necessary to prioritise some matters and defer others for later consideration. And on that point, it's important to note that we are at the start of the examination, um, uh, and that we will be exploring matters of detail of the application, both in written form and orally, at future hearings as the examination progresses, and also in writing.

00:11:35:08 - 00:11:49:10

Um, and on that point, we're aware that parties to the examination will be submitting their written material in the form of written representations and also local impact reports from the local authorities, which we will be considering in due course.

00:11:51:01 - 00:12:23:03

We'll be noting down any actions arising from the discussion this afternoon as we go along, and we will be summarising those. And when we conclude the meeting this afternoon and again tomorrow, in terms of how we will be managing proceedings and as set out in the agenda, we anticipate getting through items 3.1 and 3.2 today. Um, before moving on to items 3.3 and 3.4 tomorrow morning.

00:12:24:20 - 00:12:48:02

We expect that the discussion will go on until around 5:00 this afternoon. Um, but as we are intending to complete the discussion, um, on those first two items today, it may be necessary to overrun a little by up to say, an hour, but we'll see how things go. We will have a break of around 20 minutes at some point, depending on where we're up to with discussions.

00:12:50:10 - 00:12:56:23

So before we start on the substantive matters, is there any questions about proceedings this afternoon?

00:13:01:20 - 00:13:13:03

Okay. So moving on to agenda item three which is the matters for discussion. The first of those relates to site selection and design evolution.

00:13:14:26 - 00:13:59:01

So the agenda sets out that the main purpose of this item is to gain an overview of the application as a starting point for consideration of more detailed matters. In a moment, we'll be asking the applicant to give a ten minute presentation and giving an overview of the proposed development, including the approach that identifies identification of site requirements and site Selection and also the design of the application, and in terms of whether all the relevant legislation and policy has been complied with. And we we have also set out that this will be followed by more detailed discussion and questioning from us as the AXA in relation to a number of matters, and that we will then invite others to comment on the matters covered, um, after that.

00:14:00:09 - 00:14:06:17

So I'm going to start by handing over to the applicant to give their overview, please.

00:14:09:07 - 00:14:39:20

Thank you madam. Um, in a moment I will pass to Miss Sarajevo, to, um, to describe the development. Just briefly, before I do that, and just picking up the reference to, um, legislation and policy on the agenda. Um, I would just very quickly cover that off, um, the short statement. So the 2008 act has governed all application procedures and the applicants complied with such.

00:14:40:02 - 00:15:23:04

This broadly includes statutory consultation and notices and the form and content of the application. Confirmation of this is contained in the section 55 checklist and supporting compliance documents, as well as the section 37 application letter. Just for clarity, the project is an EIA project and engage the infrastructure planning. Environmental impact assessment regulations. The project was subject to scoping issued by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State, and that informed the preparation of an environmental Statement, which assesses any likely significant environmental effects from its construction, operation and decommissioning.

00:15:23:12 - 00:15:38:24

Other legislation has been complied with where applicable, such as the Conservation of Habitats and Species. Regulations, as amended, are not list these, but they are fully set out in the application documents. So at that point, I'll hand over to my colleague, Miss Sarajevo.

00:15:41:22 - 00:16:23:26

Thank you. This is Elena Sarajevo for the applicant. My presentation will focus on the overview of the development, as well as our approach to site selection and design evolution, with reference to the relevant planning policy. The development as seen on figure 5.1, which is the work series. References. Zero 33 is located to the northwest of Newark on Trent. It comprises um solar photovoltaic array together with ancillary infrastructure such as transformers, inverters, internal roads, access to the public highway, as well as fencing and other infrastructure.

00:16:24:11 - 00:17:10:12

Um, it also includes cables and substation areas. Us. Um. The development also includes a battery energy storage system as an associated development. Um, within the order limits. Uh, there are principally, uh, eight work areas through which I will go in a minute. But important to emphasize, the, um, there's also a large area of mitigation. Uh, as you can see on the plan. So, um, the total order limits, uh, is 1764 hectares, of which approximately 5550 hectares is, uh, mitigation, enhancement.

00:17:11:22 - 00:17:12:11

Um.

00:17:16:16 - 00:17:55:00

A grid connection for the project has been secured for 800MW of AC at state or National grid substation and energy station date is in is 2028. This is critical in the context of the Clean Power 2030 delivery, because the project can rapidly deliver 800MW to to to National Grid, and this is specifically

highlighted in the draft NPS, N1 and the N3 policies, specifically draft NPS n3 referencing solar being at the heart of Clean Power 30 development.

00:17:56:01 - 00:18:29:17

The detailed description of the development is contained in Environmental Statement, chapter five, app zero 48. Um, and just with reference to the works area plan, uh, work number one, which you can see in blue, in blue on the screen, this is the solar PV array, including all necessary infrastructure supporting the, uh, the PV array cables. Our work area two principally connecting various land parcels to each other.

00:18:29:22 - 00:19:01:27

Work number three is Mitigation and Enhancement Area in green. Works number four is all the intermediate substations. Work number five is the battery energy storage just to the south. And work number five B is the 400 kilovolt substation which is the main project substation. Work areas six and seven are two options for grid connection to National Grid, and work number eight is Access Works.

00:19:04:18 - 00:19:05:06

Um.

00:19:10:06 - 00:19:43:00

Since the development has secured grid connection for 800MW AC in order to optimise this grid connection and make the project, um, uh, as viable as possible. We have targeted a ratio of 1.4 for over sizing the AC capacity, which approximately results in a direct current DC capacity at 1120MW.

00:19:43:18 - 00:20:21:19

This is principally to account for any degradation of the panels, but also accounting for the latitude and region of where the development is located in the country. So this is supported by policy and PS n3 at paragraph 2.155. Um, I'm now going to turn to the site selection and design evolution. So to deliver, um, 1120MW, um, initially, um, we targeted as a one search for approximately 2000 hectares.

00:20:21:21 - 00:20:57:09

Years. And, uh, I set out in the policy many of the solar projects, uh, need to be located close to the to the grid connection. So essentially, this was the starting point, um, from where we started the land search, um, from the very beginning of the site search, um, policy, uh, entry, uh, has been used as a reference point, uh, specifically paragraphs 2.1. 1 to 2.148 have been guiding principles for site selection.

00:20:57:11 - 00:21:02:02

So those those have included.

00:21:02:09 - 00:21:02:26

Um.

00:21:04:14 - 00:21:06:08

Yeah, those have included

00:21:08:04 - 00:21:39:23

the grid connection and network connection, irradiance and topography, uh, access, uh, consideration of public rights of way, um, consideration of higher risks of flood zone, avoiding local, national and international ecological. Landscape and heritage designations. Avoiding higher grades of agricultural land. And minimizing effects on residential properties and settlements. Um and.

00:21:39:29 - 00:21:51:29

Also in the design evolution, we have um, we have referred to uh policy in one paragraph 4.7, which is setting out the principles of good design,

00:21:53:17 - 00:22:11:20

um, specifically to elements greens approach to site selection and design evolution. Uh, we carry this out in, uh, in six stages. These are all set out in chapter four alternatives. Um, which is app zero 47.

00:22:13:05 - 00:22:46:29

Um, it was so the iterative site selection and design On evolution were informed by the policy criteria, but also extensive consultation and working with statutory consultees as well as the public to arrive at the different design stages. So stage one included, um, devising the uh, the search area, uh, targeting one outside of the substation, but also looking for land free of environmental constraints and designations.

00:22:47:03 - 00:23:22:15

Stage two was based basically refining those search areas and targeting parcels of land, which were, um, three of those constraints and also, uh, working with various technical specialists to ensure, um, all the criteria were met. Uh, stage three was, uh, the land assembly where we worked with, um, again with the team assembling parcels of land for, Um, the solar arrays and the cable routes, making sure the development can connect.

00:23:22:21 - 00:23:57:26

Um, and this was also working with willing landowners and seeking voluntary agreements as well. Um, stage four was devising the order limits for, uh, the scoping. Um, this was then the basis for our non-statutory consultation with the public, but also we had input from technical consultees as well. Um, following which we developed the order limits for the preliminary environmental information report, which was um informed by the non-statutory consultation and input from consultees.

00:23:58:08 - 00:24:33:15

The or the peer or the limits included the preliminary work areas, preliminary master plan and um significant biodiversity um targets at the time we set as a design principle. And Essentially, that was when we changed the project name to Sovereign Biodiversity Park in recognition of those contributions. And finally, um, following the non-statutory consultation, we developed the final order limits and final design, which is in front of us.

00:24:33:17 - 00:25:13:24

And if we can maybe turn to the master plan, uh, this is essentially the, uh, the the master plan presented as part of the application, which shows all the working areas working together with the various levels of mitigation and enhancement. Um, and this is the Landscape ecological master plan,

which has been developed with um, the Landscape and Biodiversity Steering Group and informed by um partners such as the Royal Society for Protection of Birds, RSPB, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Trans Rivers Trust and the Sherwood Uh, Forest Trust.

00:25:15:01 - 00:25:55:21

Um, and in terms of, um, yeah, in terms of alternatives to the development, we have set out, um, the reasonable alternatives we have studied in chapter four as well. And in conclusion, I would say that we consider that we have complied with all the relevant policy in relation to site selection and good design, and the development contributes significantly to the Clean Power 2030 uh objectives by delivering 800MW by 2028, whilst minimising environmental effects and delivering significant biodiversity gains.

00:25:55:23 - 00:25:56:19

Thank you.

00:25:58:07 - 00:26:29:29

Thank you. Mr.. That was helpful. Um, so what I'd like to do now is move on to some specific areas of questions and discussion. And these are as indicated on the agenda. So starting with, um, generating capacity load factors including the approach to over planting. So just looking in the ES chapter for alternatives, um, which is app 047.

00:26:30:09 - 00:27:01:25

Um, at paragraph 38, it sets out that in order to deliver the 800MW AC referred to in the grid connection contract with National Grid electricity transmission, the development would need to provide an installed capacity of around 1120MW. So I understand, as you've said, that this includes a ratio of 1 to 4 for over planting. Um, and that it's been assumed that 4.5 hectares would be needed to generate one megawatt of solar electricity.

00:27:01:27 - 00:27:32:02

So this therefore suggests the, um, the 200 hectares, um, that you've also referred to in terms of being what's required overall and just wanting to understand the basis for those figures, please. That's the installed and DC figure and the over planting ratio and and the load factors that have been assumed. Can you just help us understand a little bit more about how you've derived those figures, please?

00:27:37:07 - 00:28:07:17

al-Ansari over for the applicant. Um, yeah. So the initial, uh, starting point is the 800MW AC grid connection contract that we have, uh, with National Grid. Um, and from there, our target ratio has been 1.4. Uh, can with reference to using the degradation rate of the panels, but also the latitude as to where the project is in the country.

00:28:07:19 - 00:28:16:15

And for this area, this is a relatively standard market assumption of 1.4. Um.

00:28:26:15 - 00:28:48:03

Okay. Um, so that's it. Basically, in terms of, um, the assumptions, particularly around the land area required for one megawatts of solar electricity, it's based on the 800 megawatt starting point and the, um, uh, the, the over plan to the 1.4 ratio. Is that right?

00:28:48:06 - 00:29:24:26

Yes. That's correct. Because in order to make the 800MW viable, uh, we need more land for the 1120MW. So the starting assumption was, uh, was bigger than what we actually thought, what we needed. Because some land, as you will see throughout the design iteration, has um, has been removed due to the environmental constraints. Both the initial ones, but also those that, um, we were made aware of later on, for example, buried archaeology, uh, flood risk, etc..

00:29:25:02 - 00:29:38:25

So yeah, but the one assumption is very much consistent with what is also set out in policy N3 uh, which references uh 2 to 4 acres per megawatt.

00:29:39:21 - 00:29:40:15

Okay. Thank you.

00:29:40:19 - 00:29:44:29

So just just coming up the figures from a slightly different angle then, um,

00:29:46:27 - 00:30:10:18

planning statements, paragraph nine, that's app. Um, it's 317. Um, sets out that the proposed development would provide secure and clean energy for an equivalent level to meet the needs needs of approximately 400,000 homes. So I'd like to perhaps understand how that, um, how the installed capacity relates to that number of homes, please.

00:30:13:28 - 00:30:14:13

Yeah.

00:30:14:15 - 00:30:48:00

Thank you. I can find the calculation in a minute, but in broad terms, it takes the DC capacity multiplied by the specific yield of the project, which is calculated, uh, it's known as the, uh, the P50 yield, which then, uh, returns the, uh, the gigawatt hours per, per year. Uh, and this results in, in a figure that we divided by 2.7, uh, kilowatt hours per, um, kilowatt hours per home.

00:30:48:02 - 00:30:52:14

So, um, I can I can actually find it, uh, if.

00:30:53:04 - 00:31:07:12

I'm not sure that it's set down as, as clearly as that in the documentation anywhere. So if you could provide us with maybe a note of how those figures have been derived. And how about how they. How they have that that number of homes has been determined. And that would be helpful.

00:31:07:14 - 00:31:09:16

We can we can take it as an action.

00:31:13:17 - 00:31:14:02

Okay.

00:31:14:04 - 00:31:14:20

Thank you.

00:31:18:20 - 00:31:23:03

And then just a question around, um,

00:31:24:27 - 00:32:04:05

the fact that as the technology moves on, you've acknowledged, but you've acknowledged in, um, in chapter four alternatives, that's AP 047 at paragraph 82 that improvements in panel efficiency over the years and since the initial design was conceived in 2021, that's a factor that's enabled the applicant to consolidate the design and to reduce the land take for the solar PV, PV areas. And this is something that's also acknowledged and referred to by the applicant in their document, The Technical Guide for solar power generation, storage, maintenance and decommissioning.

00:32:04:07 - 00:32:28:08

That's APB 33 zero. So the question is around how the ongoing efficiency gains and how that could impact impact the assumption that approximately 4.5 acres would be needed to generate one megawatt of solar power? Has that been factored into, um, into the landscape that you're, you're requesting?

00:32:30:09 - 00:33:05:18

Um, so the one thing that we've put forward with the application is the optimal one take, and that takes into consideration the optimizations, uh, in the, in the recent years and the, the technology, uh, at the moment is a lot more efficient panels in terms of, uh, megawatt, um, megawatt hour output. So in terms of the one take. Yet what we've put forward is, is accurate with reference to the latest, um, design efficiencies.

00:33:06:08 - 00:33:06:27

Yeah.

00:33:07:15 - 00:33:20:06

I suppose the question is, is around as those efficiencies continue to be, um, realized, um, as, as technology improves, how can that be factored into how before us.

00:33:23:21 - 00:34:03:28

Peter Nesbitt for the applicant? Um, I think in terms of what you're really talking about is, um, technology advancement and technology choice. Um, and it may be it certainly has been possible throughout the course of, um, the pre-application, um, phase of this project to, to adapt to what is on the market and how that's shifted. Um, that said, it is important for applicants to be able to maintain, um, flexibility in terms of technology choice, what is the best, um, technology solution for a project isn't necessarily the highest.

00:34:04:00 - 00:34:36:25

What panel, for example? Um, it depends on a number of factors. So, um, the way in which this is this is managed within an application like this, uh, and is managed in this application is by um proposing parameters that are set, um, um, to, to accommodate that, that future technology choice. Um, and there may be, there may be aspects where it does become more efficient by the time the project is constructed, which of course is a relatively short period of time, bearing in mind.

00:34:36:27 - 00:35:05:09

Um, when the grid connection, um, is, um, is available. So this is, this is up to date in terms of the design at the moment. We wouldn't want to curtail commercial choice. Um, in terms of the panel selection, but what has been presented Entered within that 1.4 over planting ratio in the illustrative scheme. As an example of that encompasses that that technology choice at the moment.

00:35:07:01 - 00:35:11:05

Okay. Understood. Thank you. I think it's probably something we may return to. But that's that's helpful for now.

00:35:11:07 - 00:35:11:27

Thank you.

00:35:17:22 - 00:35:23:06

Any questions on this point from the host authorities or interested parties?

00:35:25:07 - 00:35:28:19

Yes, sir. Mr.. Mr. Betts, what would you like to say?

00:35:29:22 - 00:36:10:28

Simon Betts, new Consumer District Council, just to pick up on the conversation we were just having and perhaps to take it a stage further, we're talking about perhaps the shorter term period. And I suppose looking into the future of a operational period, that's 40 years. If we were ten, 15, 20 years down the line, is an ability Or is it a mechanism within the DCO to potentially scale back the scheme? Um, if those changes in technology can be realized, because I think that's related to some of the points in terms of environmental impacts, use of BMV, BMV, land, etc..

00:36:11:00 - 00:36:18:24

So I wonder whether there's, you know, some additional discussion that's needed there. It's just come to me.

00:36:18:26 - 00:36:24:18

Thank you. Thank you. And before I go, I go back to the applicant. Anybody else any points to make? Yes, Mr. Northcote.

00:36:25:24 - 00:36:59:21

Thank you madam. Uh, Anthony Northcote for jpeg. Um, we've set out our provisions on site selection in paragraphs 99 to 168 of our relevant representation, which is RR 101. Um, and electricity generation in paragraphs 40 to 53 of that document. Um, we've heard from the applicant that they are

wedded to 800MW being the grid capacity? There's been no consideration, and they've not said that they've in any way considered aggregating that across different projects.

00:37:00:04 - 00:37:31:23

Um, so a reasonable alternative of sub aggregation is not being considered. And that is specifically supposed to be considered. And I would also question, madam, some of the choices that have been made in the broad site selection by 15km from the grid connection. Many of the Lincolnshire schemes, including the West Burton scheme, which had you examined, are much further away from the connections than that. We've had other site selection factors and not going across the River Trent.

00:37:31:25 - 00:38:03:03

Well, that doesn't match up with any of the Lincolnshire schemes, which all have grid connections across the River Trent. So ultimately, madam, the fundamental point for us is the site selection has not actually been robust. It's not been proportionate for the scale of development its peers. When you look through the documentation that they're aiming to retrofit criteria for choices of land that's been available to them.

00:38:03:05 - 00:38:34:24

And, you know, I would make the point that they said in the preliminary environmental information report or we've taken into account, flood risk is a very significant factor. Well, if they had done, they wouldn't have then taken out a huge bite of the doughnut, as we call it in the south Musqueam North Musqueam area of land that was in flood zones, you know, which they didn't do until after that. Yet that was supposed to be in a criteria fundamental in their starting point.

00:38:35:00 - 00:38:55:20

So I think overall, it casts very serious doubt on whether their site selection methodology actually has followed the procedure that they're saying to you that it has. With respect, I think it's been led by land available to them, and then they've tried to fit criteria related to that. Thank you madam.

00:38:57:02 - 00:39:38:19

Thank you, Mr. Northcote. That the point about the consideration of alternatives. I will come on to a little a little bit later this afternoon, and I'm going to go back to the applicant and ask them to pick up the point that Mr. Betts has made around the sort of future proofing of the land take area. And then also if you have any general statements to make in response to the points that Mr. Northcote has made about site selection process, we're aware that we have submitted and some detailed comments on that and would obviously anticipate that the applicant would respond to the detail of that and when they do respond to written representations.

00:39:38:21 - 00:39:52:00

But if you have any general points to make about what Mr. Northcote was saying, noting that response will come in to the written rep, and also that we'll be picking up on some of the points of detail as we go on this afternoon. But if I can come to you on those two things, please.

00:39:53:17 - 00:40:24:03

Thank you madam. Peter Nesbitt for the applicant. Um, I think on the first point Mr. Betts raised, um, one thing I didn't say, um, in relation to the over planting was that obviously that over planting ratio is

indicative at the moment. Um, it's achievable, um, within the design parameters, but it's at the lower end of the scale in terms of potential over planting available.

00:40:24:17 - 00:40:55:00

Um, and which many schemes will, will take advantage of. It isn't something that we would seek to fix. Um, and that's importantly because the final electrical design of this scheme has not yet been completed, that will be done at a subsequent stage. Um, and that's a process of optimization. Um, and finding the right technology. Um, and finding the right balance to take full advantage of the grid connection.

00:40:55:12 - 00:41:27:15

Um, over plantings, part of that exercise. Um, and, um, as is the, as is the design of the ultimate battery energy storage system. Um, so, so on the point of, um, designing to reduce solar, that that would seem, um, counterproductive. Um, in terms of a design development that's being constructed, I don't think it'd be reasonable to be looking to, um, take out panels and replace them.

00:41:27:28 - 00:42:05:14

Um, with, with higher rated panels and redesign the scheme midway through its operational period. That clearly wouldn't be an economic way to proceed or appropriate. Um, what we have to do is design the schemes that it takes best advantage of the grid connection. Um, and that and that will be done through a choice of technology at the relevant time when the scheme is, is constructed. And as you pointed out, madam, that that may well change. Um, and that technology selection has to come later, but obviously has to fall within, um, the overall parameters that that we've set.

00:42:14:18 - 00:42:52:21

Um, I think there are a number of points in relation to, um, alternatives and site selection. Um, we skip through those relatively quickly, but but at a broad scale, um, there are some important considerations, um, that are applied in relation to the viability and cost of a, of a project. Clearly, the further away from the grid point that you reach, the more expensive the grid solution is, and that can affect overall project viability, as can options like, um, crossing the river trend.

00:42:53:00 - 00:43:23:14

Um, those matters are set out and considered um, within the alternatives um chapter. And so I'm not sure I wish to say anything more about those at a generic level other than they have been considered. They did lead to the design. Um, that's before you. Um, there was one final matter, I think, that was mentioned in relation to, um, I think it was being implied that there was a some sort of oversight in relation to placing solar in flood risk areas.

00:43:23:24 - 00:43:47:29

Um, my understanding is and this can be checked, but I, I understood that actually it was the flood risk maps themselves that had changed during the course of the development's design in the pre-application phase, and it was the applicant responding to that change to adapt the scheme to it. That led to the the changes that were alluded to. Hopefully that's helpful.

00:43:48:25 - 00:44:27:17

It is. Thank you. And I say I think we will be coming on to matters of more detail in relation to how the schemes evolved and the factors that have influenced that as we go through. And I want to move on to ask questions now about the, um, about design parameters. So the design approach document, which is app 3192322, sets out that the project specific design principles, um, have been based on the National Infrastructure Commission's overarching principles of climate, people, places and values.

00:44:27:19 - 00:45:10:15

It also refers to the good design criteria set out in the N1 and the the technology specific guidance provided in on three. That's the MPs for renewable energy. And obviously the scheme has inevitably evolved around the availability of land. And as we've heard, some parties to the examination have suggested that the site selection has been driven by landowners, and that's something that the applicant will respond to. And but but noting the the criteria on good design and on one, I'd like to be a little bit clearer about how the applicant has sought to embed good design and within the development of the application.

00:45:10:17 - 00:45:31:26

So for example, has a project board level design champion been appointed? Um, and or has a representative design panel. You've been used to maximise the value provided by infrastructure. Those are those sort of basic principles of good design which are um, are set out in N1. Can you help with that please?

00:45:44:07 - 00:46:17:18

For the applicant in terms of good design principles. The design process was iterative and responsive, considering one context sensitive receptors, environmental surveys and stakeholder feedback. The aim was to balance maximizing energy generation with minimizing and mitigating adverse effects and providing environmental enhancements. And this is in line with in NPS n one in terms of the key design principles that have been included in the project.

00:46:17:20 - 00:47:02:23

Um, these include, uh climate. So contributing to net zero, minimising emissions and adapting to climate change. People having open communication and consultation are seeking to Who work with voluntary agreements when taking land to develop and working. Essentially and continuously consulting the community, as we have done in the last 2 to 3 years in terms of places, the design and enhancement areas, as well as the the recreation routes we are providing, we believe they respond to these design principles.

00:47:02:28 - 00:47:36:25

And I'd also like to, um, emphasize the fact that, um, as well as the mitigation areas we have also we are also proposing 27 permissive routes as well. So that's to enhance the connections between existing rights of way, but also, uh, enable access to a new green space that was previously unavailable. And in terms of value, it's, um, measuring Ring performance and encouraging local engagement in terms of design champion.

00:47:37:01 - 00:48:12:02

We especially in the latest iteration, we have had a specific team working on the design masterplan. So if and yeah, that basically included the masterplan lead working with all other disciplines such as

flood risk, ecology and other disciplines that have that relate to spatial implications, to work together and find the optimal solutions and deliver the scheme in the best possible way.

00:48:12:04 - 00:48:38:20

Responding to local concerns but also working with um with other uh landlords designated. And one example is, um, the master plan around Maple back where um, we are close by to some ecological designations, but have looked at enhancing those and proposing, uh, enhancement areas. Um, so. Okay.

00:48:38:22 - 00:49:15:14

Thank you. And I think, um, obviously you've referred to the National Infrastructure Commission overarching principles, a plan that people, places and values, and they're very important. And I suppose what I'm trying to get at is the guidance is very clear in saying that those principles should guide the process right from the start. You can't can't really retrofit or design. It's got to be, um, a something that runs right the way through the process. And so it refers to having a design panel or a design champion, and I suppose what, but I haven't really got a sense of is how that process has been informed from day one.

00:49:16:07 - 00:49:28:29

Um, it's not clear from, from the design approach document that that's been the case. Um, I'm happy to receive more information on that and in written form. Um, I just I didn't I don't think.

00:49:29:04 - 00:49:29:22

We can take a.

00:49:29:24 - 00:49:38:10

Look. Okay. Thank you. So my next question, I suppose, tries to again, it's on a similar point. Really. Um,

00:49:40:04 - 00:50:10:26

uh, so there is a concept design parameters and principles document that's app 329. And that sets out the technical design parameters that have informed the design and and the environmental impact assessment. And we understand that that document would be secured through a requirement of the of the development consent order. So that document sets out parameters in terms of scale and maximum dimensions.

00:50:11:10 - 00:50:39:23

Um, and again what I'm trying to understand is how the principles of good design would continue to inform the decision making process post consent. So you'll have that document which sets out your kind of maximum parameters. But I'm not clear about how those those important design principles, people, climate, place and so on. They would continue to inform the decisions that are made, post consent about how those those parameters would apply. Um, can you help me with that, please?

00:50:48:21 - 00:50:49:06

Hello?

00:50:50:01 - 00:51:34:20

Matthew Sharp, uh, on behalf of the applicant, um, I suppose a sort of key point to flag here is the, um, the parameter based approach that's been adopted by the project, uh, defines those parameters. Um, the sort of the site selection criteria and the principles of good design set out in the design approach document explained the design process. I think the purpose of the concept, um, parameters and principles set out um, within that document are then intended to make sure that those, um, parameters that are important to deliver a thought through scheme are then followed through into the detailed design process.

00:51:34:22 - 00:52:02:06

And so in securing those principles set out within the design principle document, that's how we're sort of seeking to achieve, um, the sort of the good design policy, uh, objective. So in adhering to those principles, um, that's how we would embed good design within those, um, you know, later stages of design, which is secured by requirement six of schedule two of the DCO.

00:52:04:24 - 00:52:13:21

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Sharpe. I suppose what I'm after is a little bit more assurance that, um, when when it comes to the post consent process would be

00:52:15:12 - 00:52:38:22

able to go a little bit beyond the, um, the maximum parameters that are set out in that parameter and principles document as it did. The process will be a little bit more and informed by principles of good design than than that document document suggests. But again, I'm happy that you have a some more thoughts about that and set down a more considered response in writing, if that would be.

00:52:38:28 - 00:52:44:03

Yeah. No, I'll be happy to say that. Point away and we'll look at look at that document. Thank you.

00:52:49:22 - 00:52:52:00

So the last question I have in this section

00:52:53:27 - 00:53:29:09

relates to the fact that it's been acknowledged by a lot of interested parties that, um, the the layout of this development differs from some of the other large scale solar projects in the UK. Um, in that it's not one that uses, um, continuous fields. And this is set out in, in your, um, chapter four at paragraph 11, sorry, paragraph 100, you set out there that it's not a continuous area of fields, but it's a number of islands of land connected by fields, which will be used for underground cabling and biodiversity enhancements.

00:53:29:27 - 00:53:51:25

It sets out that that's a consequence of the consideration of a series of environmental factors, and therefore the selection of land that leads to lower overall environmental impacts than would be the case if all the solar areas were aggregated together. So you set that out clearly. Um, in, as I say, your paragraph 100 of chapter four, which is AIP 047.

00:53:53:25 - 00:54:17:25

And so, as I say, interested parties have raised concerns that this very much dispersed layout, um, and specifically the fact that the scheme would, in effect, arc around a number of settlements would have the effect of impacting on a wider number of communities than than would be the case with a more compact form. And I'd like to ask how the applicant would respond to to those concerns, please.

00:54:26:28 - 00:55:04:08

Sorry. Peter Nesbitt for the applicant. Um, I think as you, um, as you describe that and the way in which it is, um, set out in chapter four, the approach was very much to, um, rather than simply identify a piece of land that was an appropriate size that was close to the grid connection. Um, that could be found to be, um, that could be assessed and found to be acceptable. Instead, the applicant went about, um, looking for suitable land using the criteria that have been identified across a wider area.

00:55:04:26 - 00:55:14:25

Um, with a view to finding the best sites and the best locations from, um, an environmental perspective that also met the technical requirements of the scheme.

00:55:17:15 - 00:55:58:04

That approach has led to the formation of the project as you as you see it today. Um, it cannot be denied that, that, um, some of the elements of the scheme in its footprint is closer to, um, certain communities than were it to be located in a single location, close to one community. Um, but that doesn't really mean to say that either approach is is better or worse. Um, rather, the approach that's been taken is to find the right sites, um, to look at them in terms of the criteria that were identified and let that lead the design process rather than, um, a single block of land.

00:55:58:06 - 00:56:32:01

There may be, um, further matters that we could go into in terms of, um, the scale of project and locating that in a single location. Um, and the nature of impacts that might then arise from, from that, if that, if that were done. Um, but but, you know, just to be clear that the approach has been designed, led, rather than simply looking at a single block of land and judging it by how many communities you're close to. That doesn't necessarily tell you what the impacts of the development are. Um, the exercises is more nuanced than that.

00:56:35:04 - 00:56:35:22

Okay.

00:56:36:10 - 00:56:37:10

Mr. Nesbitt.

00:56:39:24 - 00:56:47:03

Um, I'm going to ask the host authorities and interested parties if they have any questions in relation to, um.

00:56:49:06 - 00:56:51:07

Design parameters. Yes, Mr. Northcote.

00:56:52:18 - 00:57:33:21

Thank you, Madam Anthony Northcote for JPEG. Um, you talked about the the sheer scale of the area covered. I would remind everybody that's 181, 181km². That's the applicant's own figures of the total land that the proposal extends across. That is very large. I would also reiterate the point. We're talking about a doughnut, and that what the applicant is not reminding you, of course, is that gaps within that doughnut are filled by other permitted solar schemes places other permitted best schemes.

00:57:34:12 - 00:58:07:13

So it isn't a doughnut with gaps in between. It's a donut in which there are other schemes that are proposed that fill some of those gaps. So I wouldn't want you, which I'm sure you won't to lose sight of the overall cumulative impact of all those projects together. And I've been in meetings where, you know, the applicant has said, well, yes, we've picked the best land and said land that some of these other schemes are promoting is not the best land.

00:58:07:15 - 00:58:43:04

Well, they've still got a planning commission. They're still going to be built. And I think what remains a bit unclear. Um, to me, and I think to other people, madam, is what is the actual rationale as to why land is being discounted? We get lots of information in the in the design approach document about we've taken into this account and that account. And but when I've tried to find explanation as to why land is being discounted, the only place I ever found that was within the preliminary Environmental Information report, and it was very generic.

00:58:43:06 - 00:59:18:13

It said things like to minimise visibility from settlements. Um, you know, taken away. And that resulted the mission of north facing slopes, you know, to the south of Nestle etc.. Um, but there doesn't seem to be a consistent consideration of aspects like visibility settlements, because if you think about areas like Stanthorpe and Arem, it's plainly been no consideration of that. So I think it would be very helpful, um, to the examining authority to understand the rationale of why land has been discounted as much has been chosen.

00:59:18:15 - 00:59:19:17

Adam. Thank you.

00:59:20:05 - 00:59:44:03

Thank you, Mr. Northcote. Um, I think the points you've made about cumulative effects are obviously something that we will come on to, um, later on in the agenda for this issue specific hearing. Um, the more general points about, um, about the approach to site selection, I think we will be looking at some of the detail of those points as we go through specific topics. Um, and in terms of the specific impacts. Um, so I'd

00:59:45:27 - 00:59:51:10

probably like leave that there unless the applicant would like to respond specifically to the points that you've made.

00:59:53:16 - 01:00:14:05

Um, Peter Nesbitt for the applicant. Um, I'll say very little on this for the reasons that you've, um, just outlined, madam, in relation to needing to consider these on a topic specific basis. Um, and dealing with the specifics of any particular site or selection. Um, I think the only thing I would say is that

01:00:15:27 - 01:00:46:05

this isn't an exercise of the applicant justifying every single piece of land that they didn't use. That that would be a fairly torturous exercise, and I'm not sure particularly helpful. And it isn't the basis in which the application is made. The application is put forward as um, being on a suitable site, having followed a sensible and logical approach that is supported by policy. Um, and then requesting that that be assessed um against its impacts and benefits.

01:00:46:17 - 01:01:03:23

That is all laid out. Um, in terms of an approach, um, I think generically talking about, um, having to justify other sites, not on a specific basis, perhaps isn't the most productive way of of, um, discussing that point.

01:01:04:09 - 01:01:22:26

Thank you, Mr. Nesbitt. As I say, I think this isn't the end of the story in terms of understanding why we have the the application before us in the form that it is. Um, I'm going to hand over now to Mr. Hobbins, who's going to take on take take us through the consideration of alternatives.

01:01:23:15 - 01:02:01:05

Thank you. So I will ask some questions about the consideration of alternatives and chapter four of the environmental statements. So chapter four of the environmental statement sets out the alternatives to the proposed development. Summarizing different scenarios including doing nothing. Alternative locations alternative technologies and the substantially smaller solar park. Specifically, brief comment is made at paragraph 33 about the fact that the smaller solar park would not be financially viable, noting that the land take of this solar scheme is particularly large in comparison with others.

01:02:01:08 - 01:02:06:12

But just like to ask the applicant if you could provide further explanation of that points, please.

01:02:12:11 - 01:02:46:12

Peter Nesbitt for the applicant. I think the first thing to say, um, about scale and the potential for a smaller site is that there is a clear, um, policy initiative to, um, take best advantage of the grid connections available on the system. Um, they're in short supply. Um, they need to be optimized as far as possible when they're granted.

01:02:46:28 - 01:03:18:11

Um, that was the conversation we had around over planting, um, and finding the most efficient way of taking advantage of that 800 megawatt connection. Um, in that Context. Um. Looking at smaller sites is, is is really running counter to government policy in terms of maximizing that grid connection and maximizing generation. Um, it would not meet those requirements and it would not be an effective use of the grid connection.

01:03:18:24 - 01:03:51:11

Um, and in terms of having, um, identified a larger site and one that meets the the grid connection requirements and ideally allows us to exceed that throughout the planting and shows the efficiency. Um, we we would say that that's an appropriate response to policy. Um, and it is still for the applicant, obviously, to demonstrate that the impacts of that larger site, um, can be, can be acceptable by reference to national policy statements and the tests that you find in there.

01:03:51:13 - 01:04:00:00

So we're not resigning from that. That's, that's for us to demonstrate. But um, but it isn't, um, our objective to find a smaller site.

01:04:02:18 - 01:04:24:01

Thank you. And noting also that there are a number of parcels of land for the proposed development are intended for the biodiversity enhancements. Um, you know, with a development potentially with perhaps scaled back enhancements or, um, you know, perhaps would that be a viable alternative or something that you would have considered?

01:04:30:13 - 01:05:03:21

So in relation to, um, biodiversity enhancements, this was something that, um, the applicant wanted to maximise in the project. It sees it as an important benefit of the project. Um, and one which justifies, um, the inclusion within the order limits. Um, so the concept of providing a lower amount of benefits. Um, that wasn't the way around.

01:05:03:23 - 01:05:27:06

The applicant looked at it looked to maximize benefits. It looked to maximize, um, through through the lens of the, um, biodiversity enhancements that that were going to be available as a distinct benefit of the project. Um, and yes, that to some degree, um, it increases its footprint but increases its footprint in a way that contributes significantly. Um, as a benefit.

01:05:29:03 - 01:05:41:23

Thank you. And similarly, obviously there's an area set aside for the, the base. Um, so it will it be potentially viable a project? Would there be a viability for a project without a base, or is it?

01:05:45:10 - 01:06:17:01

Um, I'm not sure I can immediately answer that question. I might need to take an instruction on, uh, viability with or without best, um, the approach that has been taken by the applicant is that, um, again, national policy, um, recognises the benefits of storage, electricity storage co-located um with um renewable energy projects, particularly renewable energy projects like solar um, where there is intermittent generation.

01:06:17:14 - 01:06:52:23

Um, and we have to manage the ongoing, um, needs of the grid. And so, um, in terms of considering a project with or without the Bess, I can't speak to viability as such, but it's an opportunity that that the applicant considered was, um, again, an important way of maximising, um, the, the grid connection, um, and utilising that to its best effect. Um, and that the benefits of that as, as I say, are outlined in national policy.

01:06:54:01 - 01:07:21:07

Okay. That's great. Thank you. Um, and you also noted in chapter four, it's a new nuclear power station would not be a viable alternative in terms of technology within the local area. Uh, that being due to the long time frame required for potentially for such a project. I just wondered, um, you know, given the sort of prevalence and development of small modular reactors, would that would that spill be, um, you know, sort of a position position that.

01:07:24:00 - 01:07:40:00

Um, sir Peter Nesbitt for the applicant, I think I'm probably in danger of, um, commenting on something of which I know very little. So either I don't know if anybody in my team might be able to help me with that point. Or we can certainly respond in, in writing if, uh, if that would help.

01:07:40:06 - 01:07:42:25

It's fine to respond in writing. I think that's fine. Okay.

01:07:46:25 - 01:07:52:04

So I'll just ask if there are any comments from any parties in the room. So the local authorities. Yes.

01:07:56:00 - 01:08:04:08

Simon Betts, on behalf of Newark and Sherwood District Council. Um, just on the issue of alternatives, we've heard about, uh.

01:08:04:10 - 01:08:04:25

National.

01:08:04:27 - 01:08:44:02

Policy, I suppose from the starting point of regulation as well, the regulations, there's an obligation to consider alternatives. So I do make these comments within that context. And I do recognise that regulations do, uh, refer to terminology that's reasonable and main options. I think our consideration of the submission, um, particularly chapter four of the s, there's a focus on the constraints, there's a focus on the approach, but the spatial presentation of genuine alternatives I don't think.

01:08:44:08 - 01:09:23:01

Is that clear. So some of the figures related to s chapter four, it includes things like the heat maps, shows, preferred areas, and I'm sure the applicant will come back and remind me of what I've just said in terms of main alternatives. And we're not here to examine a different scheme, but I think some of the some of the concern that's perhaps reflected locally is to just, you know, that point of transparency and understanding in visual terms, those areas of land that may have been considered and ruled out for other reasons, which then explains your story to get to the points of the scheme that's, you know, in front of us for examination.

01:09:23:03 - 01:09:42:13

So, um, I think the the clarity of how they are spatially presented, those, those alternatives is not clear. And that's possibly where some of the questioning is coming from. And that's certainly, um, our view when we consider this point as well. Thank you. Thank you. Does the applicant have any comments? Thank you.

01:09:44:07 - 01:09:47:22

Peter Nesbitt, for the, uh, for the applicant. Um.

01:09:50:02 - 01:10:25:19

In terms of how that's presented. Um, it is, I think it is. It is a difficult thing to convey. Um, it's a complex exercise in terms of, um, applying all of the different factors. Um, that is done through site selection. Heat mapping is one way to do it. Um, it's quite difficult to show, um, extensively across an area which sites are rejected for what reasons? And do that in a way that's not visually, um, overly complicated and difficult to interpret.

01:10:25:21 - 01:10:43:09

So the approach that's taken seeks to identify the key issues, um, seeks to identify those those broad constraints and how they're applied and in what order. Um, and that that would seem to us to be the most sensible and logical way of presenting it.

01:10:45:13 - 01:10:48:11

Thank you. Yes, Mr. Northcote, sir.

01:10:49:17 - 01:11:23:08

Thank you, Sir Anthony Northcote for jade bag. I'm just taking your question on the battery storage. Further, sir, I think one other element that's changed during the lifetime of this project is that element screen, of course, have bought the existing permitted, um, best scheme at Stanthorpe, which is currently under construction. It's my understanding that EDF has signed a long term arrangement with Elements Green to operate that best, which is I expected not to be operational till 2027.

01:11:23:12 - 01:11:51:26

That's based on EDF at press release, and we also have the SSH state up vest permitted just over the road. So I think the issue that is not clear and perhaps needs to be explored as part of these viability arguments here is whether now the elements green if bought are best that already exists at stays up. What impact does that have on them needing? What would be a third best scheme? Thank you sir.

01:11:53:19 - 01:11:56:04

Thank you. If the applicant can come back, please. Thank you.

01:12:12:23 - 01:12:42:28

Uh, Peter Nesbitt for the applicant. Sorry. Um, try not to get too close, but I also want people to be able to hear, so apologies if it's coming through too strongly. Um, I'm not going to comment on the, um, commercial arrangements that were mentioned there. Um, I don't have instructions on that. But, um, in terms of best sites, I already mentioned that national policy seeks to highlight the benefits of battery energy storage schemes.

01:12:43:22 - 01:13:17:27

There are a range of different functions of battery energy storage schemes, um, in relation to how they interact with the grid. So the project mentioned um will have a particular function. The battery energy

storage system presented here is predominantly to take power from the, um, solar panels and store it, um, at times of over provision of electricity on the grid and release it at times when it's most needed.

01:13:17:29 - 01:13:59:00

That that's it's, um, simple function. Um, of course there's there's lots of complexities that sit behind that in terms of, um, the full utilization of batteries on the grid and a range of tasks that they perform over different periods. Um, so all of that goes into, um, the design of a battery and whether it's, um, suitable, any particular location. As I say, it's related to the project with which it connects and sits as well. Um, so yeah, I mean, from our perspective, government policy would advise that all opportunities to develop projects that, um, assist balance the grid should be should be taken.

01:14:00:14 - 01:14:10:17

Thank you. Um, with those considerations that you were alluding to there, do you think you'd be able to perhaps summarize some of those, uh, and provide that in the post hearing submission just to we have.

01:14:12:04 - 01:14:22:29

Uh, Peter Nesbitt for the applicant? Um, sorry. Could you just clarify what information you would like in that submission? Do you mean in terms of how the battery would operate or.

01:14:23:10 - 01:14:32:10

Yes. And sort of the reasoning for it. Um, and, you know, the best scheme and you know, what sort of benefits or advantages it would include?

01:14:33:29 - 01:14:38:17

Peter Nesbitt for the applicant. Yes, sir. That's fine. We can cover that in the in the next. Thank you.

01:14:39:01 - 01:14:42:11

Are there any other parties who would like to comment? Yes.

01:14:43:28 - 01:15:17:17

Paul Williams, Norell Solar farm steering group. Um, I was going to speak earlier on actually about load factor generating capacity, but we've moved on from that. So just on the one subject of the well, the project without a bias. Um, there is a report that will be coming to you next week. Um, analyzing that situation from ourselves when we two other rather lengthy reports. So that scenario has been examined. Such subjects don't play out well to all examination.

01:15:17:23 - 01:15:39:07

So from the group's point of view, we're going to submit virtually all our evidence and written evidence. Um, there are lots and lots of figures involved. So, um, we could bore with the tiers here. So but certainly in terms of generating capacity load factors which haven't really been discussed today and we've moved on from them. We'll be getting stuff on that as well.

01:15:40:24 - 01:15:44:10

Okay. Thank you. Um, yes, Mr. Gates.

01:15:45:24 - 01:15:46:09

Um.

01:15:46:18 - 01:16:03:13

Anthony, I'll skip from JPEG. Just one issue I've forgot to mention, sir. The reason the existing permitted best scheme that's currently under construction is important for you to consider is because it is within the ordered limits, although it is not part of this scheme.

01:16:05:14 - 01:16:09:20

Thank you. If I could just ask the applicant if you'd like to come back on those two points. Thank you.

01:16:14:10 - 01:16:21:14

Um, I'll deal with those in in reverse, if that's okay. Um, sorry. Peter Nesbitt for the applicant.

01:16:23:03 - 01:16:57:21

So in terms of the order limits overlapping, um, with the town and country planning consented. Best scheme. Um. That's because it's intended that one of the grid connection options, um, should utilize, um, infrastructure that would be associated with that battery storage. So there's a essentially a station that sits next to it that can be efficiently used, um, to connect to the state or grid.

01:16:57:24 - 01:17:28:26

Now, obviously, that would have the advantages of not having to recreate that facility somewhere else. Um, and there's an efficiency there's a cost advantage, but there's also, um, it's less impact in terms of using an existing site so that with a preference, um, I shouldn't say the preference. That would be one of the options. Um, and is clearly somewhat advantageous. Um, the extent to which that's possible will will depend upon timings.

01:17:28:28 - 01:18:00:27

Um, that project being fully built out and it being available. So there's another option, which is to go directly into the state or grid point via a different route. So both are presented. Um, the reason the order limits wrap around that whole site is because there is some degree of flexibility in how it was constructed and, um, a desire to ensure that any necessary works to enable us to connect could be accommodated within the order limits.

01:18:00:29 - 01:18:20:11

So that's why they are the way they look there. But essentially it amounts to, um, an opportunity to re, um, to use that, um, that facility for connection. Um, on the first point, I'm, I'm not sure I've fully noted the question being asked, so perhaps that could be repeated.

01:18:31:24 - 01:18:44:08

Yeah, I think that first point was regarding the submissions that were going to come from your farm steering group. So unless there are any sort of further points you'd like to add there. Um, yeah, I think we can move on them.

01:18:45:19 - 01:18:51:21

Uh, Peter Nesbit for the applicant, I think we'd, um, to see what they say and respond in writing, if that's okay.

01:18:51:27 - 01:18:55:14

Thank you. Um, are there any further comments on this before I move on?

01:18:58:17 - 01:19:27:21

Okay. Thank you. So I'm now going to consider or ask some questions about best and most versatile agricultural land and see with regards to site selection. So in chapter four, um, again you describe how best and most versatile land which I'll abbreviate to BMV, which included as a criterion as part of the preliminary constraints identified for the site's search area. So that was at stage two in the process.

01:19:29:06 - 01:19:50:27

However, for stages three and four, where you scope the order limits for the proposed developments. Avoidance of BMV land doesn't appear to be described in detail here. I would just like to know if avoidance of BMV land, obviously in particular grade two agricultural land was included within this process. So specifically that stage three and four are part. Thank you.

01:19:58:04 - 01:20:37:09

Thank you sir. For the applicant. Yes. Best and most versatile land has been one of the key site selection criteria at the outset. Um, in the soils chapter of the environmental Statement, we present the indicative, uh, best and most versatile uh, one plan, as well as the agricultural land classification plans as well, which show the outline grading. So we've sited the site as much as possible on lower grades of BMV as visible on the on the screen.

01:20:37:28 - 01:20:54:09

Uh, and this is with reference to the indicative gradings as well. Uh, this was a consistent approach, uh, throughout the project. And again, with reference to other technical factors as well. Um, so yes, it has been considered.

01:20:54:27 - 01:20:56:22

And yeah.

01:20:58:09 - 01:20:59:12

I can tell you. Yeah.

01:20:59:16 - 01:21:02:05

Yeah. So Tony Kernan from Kernan Countryside.

01:21:02:07 - 01:21:02:22

Consultants.

01:21:02:24 - 01:21:03:19

For the applicant.

01:21:03:21 - 01:21:07:10

So, um, as the applicant just described, um.

01:21:08:13 - 01:21:44:07

We have some difficulty with published maps and maybe I could sort of start with the executive summary, which is that the, um, the published information makes it very difficult to identify land quality, and particularly BMV and the sub grades. So the maps are very difficult. And the only way to identify what the land quality is properly is then to do an agricultural land classification, which is physically intrusive. By that stage, you've got to get landowner consent because you're walking across their land, taking augers and so on, soil samples with spades on a 100 meter grid.

01:21:44:23 - 01:22:15:11

And it's slow and expensive. I mean, I think in this case, there's over 200 man days been put in already into surveying it. And, and then sort of in again in the executive summary point. Then in balance, we just need to think what are the the implications. The land quality isn't affected on the whole by the installation of solar panels. So whatever the grade is, it's not going to be harmed. Um, there are obviously micro siting elements within that, which I'll come on to.

01:22:15:13 - 01:22:38:08

But in terms of the sort of harm the installation of panels is widely accepted as not changing the land quality. So then it returning to a land use consideration. And there isn't a policy for producing food. So in terms of the importance of best and most versatile and where it fits into the design, we just need to sort of bear in mind those elements of it. Um,

01:22:40:02 - 01:23:16:16

so looking at the the information that's available, the map that's on the um, on the screen at the moment is the provisional map and the land classification system was done in the 1970s, and they produced these maps. They then realised that over half the country was grade three. They they developed a subdivision of three A, three B and three C. And then in 1988 they revamped the land classification methodology quite significantly. But they've never changed the maps. So these maps go right back to to precede two changes to the methodology.

01:23:16:18 - 01:23:21:19

So they do need to be treated with great deal of caution. Unfortunately they were all we've got.

01:23:23:05 - 01:23:54:28

despite big health warnings in Natural England's guidance that you shouldn't use these for site specific purposes, they have now digitised them so you can now zoom straight down to individual fields. And that means that's why it's easy to draw red lines around maps such as one you see there. But what you can see from that is that most of the site is on the grade three, which certainly this side of the Trent is the lowest of the grades that's on there. The other plan that then came up a moment ago is a sort of pink and purple one.

01:23:55:00 - 01:24:32:26

Now that's something which Natural England produced got raging quickly eight years ago now in 2017, and they've endeavoured to give an estimate of percentages of best and most versatile nationally. They estimate that 42% of agricultural land is best and most versatile. And when you take

out places like the Pennines and the Lake District and lots of areas of poor quality, you get to the eastern side of the country and the proportion is likely to be higher than that. So these maps are showing that certainly on the western side of the Trent, the lowest is somewhere between 20 and 60% best and most versatile.

01:24:32:28 - 01:25:06:19

And that's the color that most of the site is located on the purple color. There's a little bit on the western edge and a little bit on the eastern edge, which is shown as likely to be 60% or more. That's the most versatile. So mostly the schemes on the lowest that you can tell from that available information. The next stage then is when they start negotiating with landowners and trying to put together parcels. Um, and at that point you can get permission to go on to the land.

01:25:06:21 - 01:25:39:06

And really, it's only at that stage which is quite a long way down site selection before you start to get information back as to what the actual grading is. If there was a way to get to that stage earlier, we wouldn't have these conversations. But there isn't. You just end up having to go in and do agricultural land classifications at that stage. And they surveyed a lot, a lot of land. About just 2850 hectares got surveyed. And which you'll have seen from the Agricultural Land Classification report.

01:25:39:09 - 01:25:40:01

That's

01:25:41:28 - 01:26:17:18

a I can give you the app number and it's in there with the full set of maps. Um, interestingly, what that did identify is that the, um, the area, particularly over on the eastern side where it was expected to be, um, grade two and the highest percentage was actually where a lot of the poorer quality land was. So it just illustrates the difficulties we have. Designing schemes according to the base information. So there was quite a lot of land then. And by that stage then when um, effectively deciding where the panel should go.

01:26:18:04 - 01:26:50:05

There are several meetings about different areas. Best and most versatile I was consulted on several times was one of the considerations. In this case, there's quite a lot of land on that eastern side, which, as was discussed earlier, had actually come out because principally because of Environment Agency reasons to do with flooding, I understand. So it would have been good to put them there from an agricultural point of view. But you have to balance that with all the other different considerations.

01:26:50:16 - 01:27:21:15

So that's that's looked at it sort of the design stage there is then and possibly a question comes from Natural England's response where they've given it an amber at the moment. They've asked us for a bit more explanation about the micro siting as they call it. So that's more to do with where there's any kind of, um, component of the scheme that might physically affect the soil and therefore the land.

01:27:21:17 - 01:27:51:19

So that's substations, temporary ones. That's, um, where you're placing some of the fixed equipment, where the roads and the tracks go and to what extent land quality has been a consideration in all of

those. It has what we've, um, said we'd do for Natural England is go through each of those and just say wire substations. So a wire construction compound, for example, is here rather than on the other side of the road where it's three bricks.

01:27:51:21 - 01:28:29:09

It might be because that's got better access. So there's some other reasons. So we said we would list those. They also asked about woodland planting, which we um, have obviously balanced land use and other ecological and other factors that and screening, which are why woodland plantings have been placed in, And woodland planting doesn't feature very much in my chapter 17, because I've never really been concerned about planting of trees on better quality land, in that you can get tree planting grants, um, quite available without having to do land classification, for example.

01:28:29:11 - 01:29:07:21

So, you know, just putting the trees in the ground. So it's never really treated it as a loss of the resource. But Natural England have asked the question, so we're going to go back and explain I think there's about 20 hectares. And I've got the exact figure, uh, 22.4 hectares of better quality land has got trees proposed so that information will come forward at the next stage. Um, so so we'll work that through in that microsite. But that's once you know what the land quality is, which obviously quite a way into the overall site selection process before you get that information back.

01:29:08:18 - 01:29:25:11

Okay. Thank you for those explanations. Um, and so just to clarify that information about the micro siting process. Um, and then there's certainly the concerns of Natural England in regards to the potential sterilization from Woodland Park. So that's something that we will be likely to see the next deadline.

01:29:26:08 - 01:30:06:10

Yes, sir. We had sorry Tony Kernan for the applicant. We had a team's call with them about a week ago and and said how would it be useful? Would it be useful just to say this component. That's the quality. That's why it's positioned. So I think we're just going to do a, a fairly succinct document that just does run through all of those. Okay. And just the final point on most of those elements, they are of course reversible anyway. So um, even if, um, there might have been it's gone on to better quality land or elements like the tracks etc.

01:30:06:26 - 01:30:28:08

then provided you follow the good principles set out in something like the Soil Management plan? Those are capable of being restored back to the same grade at the end anyway. So it's a it's a use of land for a period rather than a loss of land. Even on those elements there's any there's only one element of really fixed equipment which is permanent.

01:30:29:08 - 01:30:36:21

Okay. Thank you for that. Um, I'd just like to ask obviously others in the room if there are any comments. So, yes, I've come to you, Mr. Betts. Thank you.

01:30:39:23 - 01:31:10:07

Simon Betts, you can show a district council. Um, just to begin with, if I may, um, set our comments within the context of national policy. Just a couple of references. Firstly, overarching national policy statement, 1 in 1 paragraph, 5.1.12, and then also, um, national policy statements for renewable energy infrastructure. And Three paragraph 2.1.29.

01:31:10:09 - 01:31:42:14

So the summary context for parties that aren't aware is that that sets out a preference for using poorer quality agricultural land. So I think our position on this is is probably already relatively clear. I think since statutory consultation stage, we have expressed concern on the loss of BMV land and consistently have done since that points. I think it's worth just putting some of the figures in context as well.

01:31:42:16 - 01:32:13:18

So we've got a total of 62% of BMV land. Um, and of that 62%, 8% is grade two BMV. Um, so I think as we've already set out in all relevant reps, the council will take the view that, um, grade two should be avoided. And to only grade three A or three B or lower should be considered on the basis that you know there's a potential loss to long term food production value here.

01:32:14:04 - 01:32:52:27

Um, I think just to expand on that a little bit more, I think from our analysis of the submission documents, there's no real detailed analysis on BMV alternatives within chapter four of the ES. And I think if we it was interesting just looking at the the first plan that was displayed, the first figure that was that was put up, unless I'm sort of misunderstanding the layers of that, that clearly shows that within the entirety of the the interior of the scheme, you have, you have grade three, um, whereas we've got 8% grade two.

01:32:52:29 - 01:33:25:07

So I think that plan seems to demonstrate there's large potential other areas that are present in and around the scheme or the order limits that potentially could have utilised um, grade three rather than grade two. So I think, yes, to summarise, it is a very strong concern. We set it out already in writing, but are probably important to, uh, reinforce that point here as well and just talk about the policy context as well as some of those specific figures. So people are aware, because those figures haven't been talked about so far.

01:33:25:09 - 01:33:38:05

And that 60, 62% overall is is a is a high proportion figure in our in our view. And it is an area of concern. Excuse me. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Um, but the applicant like to respond.

01:33:40:27 - 01:33:57:19

Thanks to Tony Kernan from Kernan Consultants on behalf of the applicant. Um, I think just just two points, sir. Um, the as set out in chapter 17, based on the provisional maps, with all the caveats. Um.

01:33:58:13 - 01:34:06:04

In our, in our view, and it is an area of concern. Excuse me. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Um, but the applicant like to respond.

01:34:08:27 - 01:34:17:20

Thanks to Tony Kernan, consultants, on behalf of the applicant. Um, I think just two points, sir. Um, the

01:34:19:06 - 01:34:52:03

as set out in the the estimate is that if natural England's 42% is correct, and we take that crudely that 40% of grade three is the best and most first time, as in grade three, a, then statistically half of of the district is best and most versatile. And it doesn't come, unfortunately, in lumps and blocks. So it's a complete mish mash, as you will see from the grading across the site. You get these, um, intermixed, um, land grades across all sorts of areas.

01:34:52:07 - 01:35:30:05

Um, and then on the question about the remaining areas that are in there, which are grade two. Setting aside my strong view that it because we're not changing the land because we don't call it in. We don't have a land or food production policy that shouldn't matter anyway. But those areas that are grade two, I think, if we superimpose them, are probably in the areas that were shown as grade three anyway. So I take the point they're making. There's a big lump in the middle, but if you went and surveyed all of that and spent a thousand man days covering it, you're still going to find the same sort of mix.

01:35:30:07 - 01:36:10:27

So what you end up having to do is kind of mix, mix and match with the areas. And rather than ending up with a sort of zebra pattern or something else, what's been determined here is that there are some patches of grade two, but they are parts of bigger fields. And it would be, I think, from a farming point of view, as well as from a scheme design point of view, illogical to leave areas of grade two within panel areas or on the edges of panel areas, on the assumption that the farmers might go back and farm those fields afterwards because they wouldn't be big square or rectangular fields, which is what they're after.

01:36:10:29 - 01:36:15:09

And having talked to all the farmers across the area, it's um,

01:36:16:24 - 01:36:47:07

within the area that's now, um, remaining within the order limits. It's mostly arable crops and mostly cereals and break crops, and there isn't really much yield difference or any other farming practical differences between those grades. Areas of grade two and three, eh, within those particular fields. So it is a balance, but I don't think that it's going to impact in terms of, um, agricultural land availability or food production in any significant way.

01:36:47:09 - 01:36:59:18

So that's why those areas remain in their sounds a lot at 8%. It's actually quite a few small areas, um, within or relatively small areas within other farmed fields.

01:37:00:27 - 01:37:03:25

Thank you. Are there any further comments? Yes, Mr. Northcote.

01:37:05:17 - 01:37:07:19

Thank you sir. Anthony. Healthcare for JPEG.

01:37:09:05 - 01:37:42:20

I had many of the same points that Newark and Sherwood raised, so I won't I won't repeat them. Um, I'd just sort of add to them really. I'd also say you need to take into account the written ministerial statement, which says, in addition to the two national policy statements, you should be avoiding the site selection. Best and most versatile land, and the figures that Mr. Betts referred to. I'll draw your attention. So they are in table 17.5 of the environmental statement, which is app hyphen 060.

01:37:43:12 - 01:38:13:29

And then if you also look at figure 17.1 in um, the agricultural land classifications that seem document ape hyphen And 79. And there you'll see that it's 149 hectares. 8.5% is grade two, 944 hectares, 53.5% is grade three A. And if you look at the detail in figure 17.1, you'll see a lot of the grade two in certain areas is where solar is proposed.

01:38:14:04 - 01:38:15:06

I'll leave it there, sir.

01:38:17:09 - 01:38:19:10

Thank you. Um, yes.

01:38:23:18 - 01:39:05:07

Thank you sir. Sorry, I haven't previously been introduced. My name is Sam Franklin. I'm the soils and agricultural adviser for Newark and Sherwood. Um, I've listened to Mr. Collins detailed explanation. Um, and Mr. Northcote pointed you to the tables. I don't feel that the applicant has done a very good job in their site selection. Given that Mr. Kernan admits that the district is 50% BMV, they've managed to find 62% BMV for the whole of this site, which suggests that they haven't really done a very good job in trying to minimize identifying the poorer land, which is what is set out.

01:39:05:12 - 01:39:09:28

Well, Mr. Bett set out and also in the written ministerial statement. Thank you.

01:39:10:27 - 01:39:14:13

Thank you. If I could ask the applicant to respond to those points, please.

01:39:17:17 - 01:39:52:00

For the applicant, just on the last point raised, it's important to acknowledge that agricultural land classification is one of the many site selection criteria as set out in the policy. And whilst we've tried to avoid BMV as much as possible, there have been other factors at play as well, such as the technical considerations, for example, access, but also flood risk. And if you refer to the latest design iteration in in the figures of chapter four of the environmental statement.

01:39:52:11 - 01:40:24:00

Um, you will see that some of the. Three b agricultural land had to be removed due to flooding considerations as well. And this was based on the latest Environment Agency data. So we've been able

to achieve no aboveground infrastructure in flood zones two and three. Uh, but removing some of the lower grade agricultural ones. So it's been a balancing act of finding the optimal site, uh, given the technical and environmental constraints.

01:40:24:14 - 01:40:25:08

Thank you.

01:40:26:26 - 01:40:30:06

Thank you. Are there any further questions? Yeah. Sorry. If I.

01:40:30:08 - 01:40:32:00

Could just. Sir. Um.

01:40:34:17 - 01:41:06:14

You just have to be a bit realistic as well about how easy it is to find the best and most versatile. So we're looking at those percentages 62%, um, 50%, etc.. Um, table .14 in the. Yes. Sets out the based on the provisional maps. Sets out the estimate of um that Natural England have from those provisional maps of agricultural land in grades two and three, and you'd have to look at all the three and the two to work it out.

01:41:06:16 - 01:41:45:15

Well, that's 58,000 hectares. And if you're progressing about 25 points a day in the field and the same again to work it out. So daily progress rate of 12.5 hectares per man day for ALC. I've just worked out that's over 4600 man days to survey it. So yes, there will be poorer quality land and there is more poorer quality land within the district and I don't dispute that at all. The problem is finding it having to do massive amount of work, and what you will end up then is not a big block of poor quality land you're going to find on.

01:41:45:17 - 01:42:19:28

Certainly all the information and evidence suggests on this side of the Trent that you get this kind of interspersed pattern that you'll see across the appeal across the application site. So it's on the other side of the Trent. We know from some of the, um, of the solar farms that have gone through. I've been involved in some land quality work has been done there. A lot of those have got much bigger proportions of poorer quality land. But as you saw on the pink map earlier, there's a big swathe on that side that was predicted to be less than 20%.

01:42:20:00 - 01:42:56:14

And surveys have been finding that this side of the Trent. And it depends on where you said yes. So the one that's just out on the screen, you'll see on that that eastern edge that was predicted. And a lot of surveys out there have found lower proportions. When your point of connection is this side of the the Trent, you've got these this 20 to 60% or greater than and all the surveys and looking at the other end surveys going up this side of the Trent, they're all finding a completely intermixed pattern of best and most versatile and patches of poorer quality.

01:42:56:16 - 01:43:02:27

So you'd have to be piecing them together at the end, rather than being able to go and find a site that's poorer quality.

01:43:04:02 - 01:43:29:07

Thank you. And I'll just come to Mr. Williams. Do you have your hand raised? Sorry. Thank you very much. Paul Williams, solar farm steering group. I've just got a question for the applicant. If you tell us if you have this information to hand, how many fields and what acreage have been tested, ALK tested that don't appear in the order limits as they stand at the moment? Thank you.

01:43:30:09 - 01:44:01:24

Yes, sir, I can. It's the agricultural land classification that covered that covered all of the area is document 288, AP 288. And there's a set of plans two, eight, nine that relate to it. And the full area surveyed was 2869 hectares. That did include 14 hectares of non-agricultural. That was just within that survey area. So it's 2850 basically is the hectares that was looked at.

01:44:05:20 - 01:44:14:19

Thank you. Um, so given the time, um, okay, I'll take one last comment there and then I think we'll, we'll break. So I'll just take one last. Yes.

01:44:19:06 - 01:44:23:04

Um, Jeffrey White as a roving microphone is just behind you there.

01:44:25:08 - 01:44:58:06

Thank you. I'll make just a simple layman's point, if I may, at the end of that, that there's been much talk by the applicant of the land not being affected. That's great at the end of the 40 year period, but many people in the villages and fields around here feel very strongly that for a period of 40 years. The land will very much be affected during that time and will not be farmed at all in most cases, and this is a farming community largely full of fields. As you can probably see. So that will change the whole outlook of our communities.

01:44:58:08 - 01:45:10:06

Over many years, perhaps many people's lifetimes. Um, clearly that's not terribly important for the application, but it is for people in the villages. Thank you.

01:45:10:08 - 01:45:16:15

Thank you. Thank you. If I could ask you just to introduce yourselves as well, when you when you do speak. Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

01:45:18:09 - 01:45:22:18

Thank you very much. Cheers. Thank you. Okay. If I ask the applicant to respond there, please.

01:45:25:06 - 01:45:56:12

Um, everyone's looking at me, sir. So it's Tony Kernan from the Countryside Consultants. Um, I think I understand what the gentleman is saying. There's a distinction between whether the land quality will be affected. Definitely. The land use in terms of ability to arable farm is affected. It's the underlying

soil quality that isn't so in terms of best and most versatile or poorer quality agricultural land as a resource.

01:45:56:14 - 01:46:16:05

The panels should be able to go in and come out, and we will still have the best and most versatile land or poorer quality land at the end. But for the operational period, definitely the land uses, um, you can't do arable, for example. Sheep farming is possible under the panels, but arable is not, and I agree.

01:46:18:01 - 01:46:34:13

Thank you. Okay, um, so given the time, I'm going to draw this particular aspect of the agenda to a close. And so thank you for your contributions. I'm going to suggest now that we take a break for 20 minutes and we come back at five passport and I'll adjourn this meeting. So thank you.