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Dates, please.

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Thank you. So we will resume the the hearing. Um, just to note that Doctor Brewer has had to attend to a personal matter, so he'll be, um, he'll be joining us online. All right, so, um, we're going to move on to agenda item 3.4, which is cumulative environmental effects.

00:00:37:05 - 00:01:15:20

Um, as we've noted on the agenda, the purpose of this item is to gain an understanding of the approach and methodology used to assess cumulative environmental effects. So I'm going to start by asking the applicant to explain their methodology for the assessment of cumulative effects, and how that's informed the findings of the environmental statement. Um, and I've noted that with particular reference to three things, which is firstly the relationship between existing and planned developments, and secondly, the assessment of landscape effects, and thirdly, in relation to best and most versatile agricultural land.

00:01:15:27 - 00:01:20:28

So can I. Can I hand over the to the applicant to to give an overview. First of all please.

00:01:22:21 - 00:01:59:06

Paul Phillips for the applicant. Yes. Thank you madam. Um, I've got colleagues alongside me to talk about landscape and, uh, best and most versatile agricultural land that I can give an introduction to the, um, the methods used for for the assessment. So the approach to assessing cumulative effects is set out in Environmental Statement, chapter two. That's document Ape 045 and section 2.3.8, the planning Inspector. It's advice on cumulative effects assessment uh is quoted which summarises the requirements in relation to cumulative effects as follows.

00:01:59:15 - 00:02:34:29

And this is a quote schedule for paragraph five of the EIA regulations. 2017 requires the Environmental statement to include a description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from accumulation of effects with other existing and or approved projects, taking into account the existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected, or the use of natural resources. It goes on to say in this advice, other existing and or approved development is taken to include existing development and existing plans and projects that are reasonably foreseeable.

00:02:36:05 - 00:02:58:09

The guidance also notes that where other existing and or approved developments are expected to be completed before construction of the proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure project and the effects are fully determined, effects arising from them should be considered as part of the baseline, and may be considered as part of both the construction and operational Assessment that ends the quote.

00:03:00:00 - 00:03:07:07

The identification and assessment of cumulative effects in the environmental statement followed the pin's guidance. The Planning Inspectorate guidance

00:03:09:01 - 00:03:45:09

stages one, which is identifying the long list of potential cumulative developments, and two which is refining that into the short list I set out in section 2.3.8 of Environmental Statement, chapter two, with the results of those stages. The list and map of schemes, which is in figure 82.1.1 presented in Technical Appendix A 2.1, which is document Ape 191 stages, three information gathering and four assessment were carried out as part of each technical assessment and reported in the technical chapters of the Environmental Statement.

00:03:45:11 - 00:04:09:01

Chapter 7 to 18 Environmental Statement. Chapter 19 document AIP 062 presents an assessment of interrelationship effects that are not already considered as part of the technical chapters. Different environment excuse me. Different environmental topics may take different approaches to cumulative effects, depending on the policy or regulations that their topic needs to address.

00:04:11:00 - 00:04:43:16

Uh. That was all I was going to say in terms of an approach to the methods, but I would note that Newark and Sherwood District Council commented on the approach and on the list of schemes to be included that was set out in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, statutory consultation, and based on their advice, the list and approach was amended for the environmental statement. We know that the relevant representation from Newark and Sherwood District Council had no comment to make on environmental Statement chapters 219 and no other parties relevant.

00:04:43:18 - 00:04:48:29

Representative representation had specific comment on the selection of developments to be included in the cumulative assessment.

00:04:53:17 - 00:05:36:11

Hey, thank you for that. Um, so I think it has a point. The point has been made by a number of interested parties and more generally that there's there's obviously a strong historical relationship between the existing and former power stations along and the River Trent Valley, namely Thorpe, Heim, Arnhem, Cottam and West Burton. Um, and I think that in the applicant's assessment, it sets out that these form a, um, a 30 kilometre line of major grid connections that are the focus for a concentration and clustering of a large number of approved and proposed solar farm projects, best projects, together with other energy and infrastructure proposals.

00:05:36:21 - 00:05:51:18

So in that context, just a very simple question. Um, is the applicant confident that the approach to human assessment has taken into account existing developments and, um, existing plans and projects that are reasonably foreseeable.

00:05:54:17 - 00:05:57:01

Um, yes, we are confident of that.

00:05:58:10 - 00:05:58:27

Thank you.

00:06:00:05 - 00:06:31:27

I just wanted to point specifically to, um, uh, technical appendix A 2.1. That's, um, it's app 191 and and bigger a 2.1.1, um, which is the, the, the main, um, diagram demonstrating the range of cumulative projects in the area. There we go. That's very helpful. And it's a simple point in relation to the key, which I think it certainly caused me some confusion.

00:06:31:29 - 00:06:52:11

I know other interested parties, some confusion, the fact that it's project numbers, um, uh, or application numbers, scoping numbers, it's a little bit confusing. And could that be amended. So we've got names rather than numbers just to make it a little bit more, um, Navigable and understandable. Thank you. You're not doing that. So that would be really helpful. Thank you.

00:06:54:29 - 00:07:36:19

So I'm not going to ask whether, um, the parties in the room have got any particular questions about, um, the, the approach taken to cumulative assessments. We'll move on to, to landscape and BMV in a moment. But Mr. Thompson, you voted very patiently for your moment. What would you like to say? Um, so a hydrology report, um, examined the impact of the extensive array of panels up and around the maple back, um, area and the catchment area of the Clinton Beck, uh, watercourse which flows right through the middle of the proposed site.

00:07:37:17 - 00:08:12:12

Um, has this report as requested, um been extended downstream to assess the impact further downstream. Um, and if so, what was learned and what mitigations have been planned further downstream? I asked these questions in the context of the applicant's design, which will create a significant ring of panels around the area, the community in which I live.

00:08:12:21 - 00:08:47:23

And my concern is that future local applications, in addition, um, in the absence of what appears to be a wider strategy, will over time fill in the ring the the middle of the doughnut as we heard it referred to yesterday. Um, and in fact, applications have already been successful, significant applications despite the applicant's, um, Design being in the pipeline.

00:08:48:11 - 00:09:22:29

So I would respectfully suggest that without a wider strategic plan that looks at both the existing applications as well as the future, what would be allowed in the future? The cumulative impact of the development will be significant on communities, um, with respect to flooding in particular, since that's what I'm particularly concerned about.

00:09:23:18 - 00:09:54:07

And good. Thank you, Mr. Thompson. So you're obviously concerned about your your community, particularly around Maple Beck? No, I live in Staunton, which is actually very much in the middle of the the plan that creates the ring in the middle. Um, but the canton bank has its headwaters up around Maple Beck and Krang And flows down through the middle of the site. The continent itself has suffered severe flooding, um, in recent years and does flood regularly.

00:09:54:21 - 00:10:39:24

Uh, our concerns are that, um, whilst mitigations have been placed on the plans up and around Maple back because the the area around canton isn't necessarily on the applicant's plan. Um, that there has been no notice given to the impacts that may result around further downstream around Kanton and indeed Norell. Um, and I guess really it's looking at this application in the context of others that are already, um, agreed that contribute even further to filling in that that bit in the middle.

00:10:39:26 - 00:10:44:07

All right. Understood. Thank you. Thank you very much. So. Um, and.

00:10:44:09 - 00:11:06:05

This links to the short question I asked earlier on about, um, the applicant's approach to cumulative assessment in terms of what's what's what's in there. And I wonder if you're able to address, um, Mrs. Thompson's point about, um, future plans and whether or not the extent to which they can be factored into to the assessment that you've made.

00:11:13:17 - 00:11:54:00

On behalf of the applicant. Um, future development isn't factored into the cumulative assessment we establish. Um, developments that need to be included within the cumulative assessment based on the available information at the time of the application. Regarding the points that the lady made regarding flooding. The development includes several measures, such as including grassland underneath the panels to slow the flow of water, particularly around Maple Beck, and that's evidenced in the flood risk assessment through a modeling process that has occurred, which shows a marginal benefit, including grassland underneath the PV arrays compared to the baseline scenario in Maple Beck.

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The content is downstream of Maple Beck, and thus any improvements within Maple Beck cascade further downstream.

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And to Rachel, Mr. Thompson. We are very aware that that flooding in the effects of of of this development and other developments on the water environment, we're aware that that's a concern for local people, and it's something that we will come on to in future hearings. Um, and, and, and through future written representations. So it's that at that point will is will be looked up further in the examination. But just just for the clarification from, from the applicant. Obviously, um, as you've said, it's it's existing developments and those that could be reasonably foreseeable.

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So at what point what is the cutoff point in terms of your assessment and what has been considered.

00:12:43:24 - 00:13:05:09

For Phillips, the applicant. So there was a cutoff date. That's that's set out in section 2.3.8 of chapter two, the environmental statement which which states the date at which we, uh, fix the cumulative scenario for assessment purposes. I think it was the if sometime in April, I think it was the 4th of April, um, this year.

00:13:05:11 - 00:13:05:26

Yeah.

00:13:05:28 - 00:13:06:13

Okay.

00:13:06:15 - 00:13:30:28

Uh, and you can show a district council subsequently commented on, uh, the process and with, with some regard to the list. Um, so projects that that were, um, in planning, uh, had received consent. Um, at that point were, were included in the assessment and projects at an earlier stage where there was sufficient information for us to include them in the assessment, were included.

00:13:31:01 - 00:13:31:16

Okay.

00:13:34:07 - 00:13:42:04

All right. Thank you for that. Um, Uh, yes, I'll go to. You can show it first, then come to you, Mr. Northcott. After that. Yes. Mr. Betts, what would you like to say?

00:13:43:08 - 00:14:15:19

Simon Betts, you can show a district council just to pick up on a couple of points that have been made so far. Um, firstly, if I can just refer to our, um, general observations within our relevant reps, we did, although we didn't make specific comments on the chapters referred to that principally deal with cumulative effects. We did note, um, it was a key concern for the authority. We did refer to the fact that, um, the local impact reports and our onward representations during the examination would, would seek to pick up on this issue.

00:14:16:01 - 00:14:48:24

Um, I think it's in terms of other points that we've made, it's fair. The pre submission stage, we we did have discussions about a longer list. We then provided advice of um, I suppose a conservative approach of including basically all of the CIP projects in Nottinghamshire and actually thinking about, um, the sort of border with Lincolnshire to the east as well. So, um, in terms of the schemes that have been considered in the long list, um, I think there's agreement there.

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I think we just need to draw a distinction that, um, so far we've not scrutinised and commented upon it, but, um, how some schemes have been carried forward for assessment, i.e. some schemes have dropped away. We don't necessarily agree that those schemes should drop away, and I think they should be subject to further assessment. So, um, I guess in this particular part of this session, it's not necessarily conducive to to work through, for example, the technical appendix, which is 99 pages.

00:15:21:00 - 00:15:52:29

Uh, there's a lot of detail to look at there, but I think it's just important to be clear, um, that this is an issue that will continue to make representations on. There are schemes, particularly in respect of landscape BMV. They're they're the sort of, I suppose, key topic areas in terms of cumulative effects. And we'll go on to talk about those hopefully shortly. But there may be other topic areas that will want to scrutinize in terms of those other, um, discipline topics within the environmental statements where we may have comments as well.

00:15:53:01 - 00:16:34:09

So I think, um, we're we're going to be speaking up for the opportunity to scrutinize the information and make further comments. But I think it's just fair to say that at a high level, we've got two large exit projects within our district, both Great North Road and One Earth. So if you take the eastern portion of the district running north from Kelham upwards, and then look at the sort of separation, I know it's been sort of screened out from the applicant's point of view, but if you look at the separation, it's about four kilometres between the northern end of Great North Road and the sort of southern side of one Earth four kilometres separation, So I guess we're approaching this issue.

00:16:34:11 - 00:17:07:27

We have a quite a large concern in terms of the changing nature of land use across that portion of the district and how you move through the landscape as well. And maybe we'll go on to sort of talk about those issues shortly. But it's really if you follow the the previous plan that was up, if you follow that corridor, if you head north into Bassetlaw, if you had sort of east into West Windsor, you start to get a feel for the for the spread of these schemes and, and the changing nature of, you know, I suppose open rural areas suits are more, uh, more of a land use akin to infrastructure in simple terms.

00:17:07:29 - 00:17:11:09

So I think those picks pick up the main points I was going to make now.

00:17:11:11 - 00:17:19:11

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Betts. That's helpful. And obviously we'll look for your your further representations in due course. Um, Mr. Lawrence, you're poised. I can see.

00:17:20:16 - 00:17:21:01

You.

00:17:21:03 - 00:17:21:18

Doing.

00:17:21:20 - 00:18:04:03

Well. Lawrence. Nottinghamshire County Council didn't want to miss my opportunity there. Um, yeah. I just want to share from the county council's point of view that that what Mr. Betts has set out from the district point of view, is a is a common concern. Um, you know, I think the list of uh, projects in itself is fairly comprehensive. That stage one, stage two assessment, it's this issue of which of those are carrying forward to stage three and four. And where are we actually looking at the assessment of impacts, um, on things like, uh, landscape impact, for example, you discuss the wider impact on the Trent Valley, but it's not the case necessarily that all those those projects that are within that sort of 30 kilometre, you know, Trent Valley area are considered cumulatively.

00:18:04:05 - 00:18:35:11

And we've got a landscape, uh, consultant that will probably speak more on that sort of issue. But that's what we want to raise is which ones are actually being carried forward. And from the county council's point of view as the waste planning authority. We have a particular issue about the fact that there is no cumulative assessment of waste impact at all, and that that seems like an omission, particularly in the context of other applications at examination at the moment, which is one Earth where a detailed, uh, you know, cumulative waist impact assessment has been carried out. It's not exactly clear in that case why that's not the case here.

00:18:36:09 - 00:18:41:17

Thank you, Mr. Lawrence. I'll come to the applicant in a moment. I'm going to hear from Mr. Northcote. First, what would you like to say?

00:18:43:06 - 00:19:14:02

Thank you, madam. First of all, I'd like to say quite disappointed that the applicant claims that no other parties, uh, put forward any sites that should have been considered. And we plainly have. We've listed in our relevant representation our 101, 117 proposals. We consider that should have been assessed within the cumulative assessment. So the the applicant plainly has not read that, um, those details were in the consultation we put to them in their, um, previous consultation.

00:19:14:04 - 00:19:45:13

So they're not new to them. I think our overarching point, madam, is the applicant is focusing upon, um, cumulative impact required as part of the environmental statement. If you had no mention of the written ministerial statement that requires a policy derived assessment of cumulative impact and concentration of proposals, which is different, and we would argue that that second aspect of the written ministerial statement requires.

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That's certainly not being looked at. We would agree that far too many proposals have been scoped out. I think from our perspective, this is a fairly unique geographic basis. I refer to it as the doughnut and but because of that, it covers a sheer, uh, the sheer scale of the area it covers is huge. Yet the

traditional approach that the applicants have taken means that, for example, not everything that's in the centre of the doughnut has been considered as part of the cumulative assessment because the standard approach of certain distance from the order limits, then doesn't capture everything in the middle, but everything in the middle is, in effect, part of the scheme.

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The applicants themselves, in documents, have described the entire scale of the proposal as being covering some 18,000 hectares, which includes the whole of the centre of the doughnut. So we think.

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That.

00:20:47:24 - 00:21:22:21

The approach has not been sort of policy driven. It's not been irrespective of the written ministerial statement. And I do understand the difficulties in that you have to have a cut off point to move forward. Um, but we don't we don't operate in a world that stands still. You know that better. Better than I do. The number of proposals around. But I think what is important is some of those emerging proposals, like a grass thought back, are vitally important because it sits directly between this proposal and the one Earth scheme.

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So if it's not, if it's not properly considered, then how is a proper assessment being being made? Now I understand from producing documents you have to happen at one point, but the examination process is about keeping things up to date and matters can be considered and you need to make a decision based on the latest information. So the latest information would be that Thorbecke is now being actively proposed in the middle. And we've got the scheme at Barnby in the Willows.

00:21:56:01 - 00:22:22:28

You know, one of the first proposed to take advantage of the 100 mega megawatt planning route. So I'd appreciate from a technical perspective you have to have a cut off point. But in terms of certainly policy derived impact of consideration of effects, you can still have regard to those that are emerging but are as are sufficiently advanced to be taken into account. Thank you madam.

00:22:23:00 - 00:23:08:00

All right. Thank you, Mr. Northcote. Obviously, a number of points raised there. Um, just in terms of what's what's been referred to. Um, obviously we'll have some further input from the local local authorities about the way in which the the scoping of projects in and projects out has happened. And obviously the applicant can look at that in due course. Um, but perhaps a response, first of all, to the, um, the point that Mr. Northcote has made about, um, the, uh, the I suppose the way in which the this environment is evolving and the extent to which that can reasonably be considered as part of the cumulative cumulative assessment, does the applicant have any comments on on that please.

00:23:09:16 - 00:23:11:27

Or Phillips for the applicant? Um.

00:23:12:07 - 00:23:12:28

Yes.

00:23:13:00 - 00:23:15:29

Uh, obviously it's onerous.

00:23:16:01 - 00:23:18:27

To update the cumulative assessment Every.

00:23:18:29 - 00:23:19:14

Day.

00:23:19:16 - 00:23:20:01

Or.

00:23:20:03 - 00:23:20:23

Two frequently.

00:23:20:25 - 00:23:21:17

But it is.

00:23:21:19 - 00:23:22:04

Entirely.

00:23:22:06 - 00:23:23:18

Possible to do it at some point during.

00:23:23:20 - 00:23:25:04

The examination process.

00:23:25:06 - 00:23:53:18

So we're, um, keeping track of newly proposed developments. Um, to this point, we've not seen anything that would affect our assessment of the conclusion of significant environmental effects. Um, but if those new schemes were to be included and revised assessment, they would be taken into account. Um, so we'd be happy at some point later in the whatever's decided as an appropriate point. But later in the, uh, examination process to update the committee's assessment.

00:23:53:20 - 00:24:09:15

Can I ask that a discussion on what would be reasonable in that regard? Takes place with the local authorities, please. Um, and that be included in statements of common ground with them, just in terms of sort of managing those conversations and, um, into a reasonable position on that.

00:24:09:18 - 00:24:10:10

Yeah. No.

00:24:10:17 - 00:24:35:07

Yeah. Matthew Sharp, on behalf of the applicant, um, both these statements of common ground with NSCDC and the county cover cumulative. And so that's part of the active discussions that we're having. And so we're responding to the matters that were raised on those points as part of their relevant reps. Um, yeah. And so that will pick up, um, those points that will be provided at deadline one.

00:24:35:09 - 00:24:35:24

Okay.

00:24:35:26 - 00:24:50:01

Thank you. And as I say, in terms of providing that updated information at regular points through the examination, that would be that could be included there, that would be very helpful. And I'd like to ask you also about the the point that Mr. Northcote made about the area in the center of the

00:24:51:26 - 00:25:04:05

we're looking to a donut, but that's, that's seems to be a term that's understood. Has the whole of that area been considered in terms of cumulative developments that might might impact in that area.

00:25:05:08 - 00:25:31:12

Or perhaps for the applicant? Yes, absolutely. Um, it's it's along the same lines that Mr. Northcote outlined in terms of distances from, from the development. Those are zones of influence outside the zone of influence. There's no potential for influence. But but but absolutely. The, um, all areas, including areas within the C shape or whatever we call it, um, uh, have been considered in the same way as other areas.

00:25:31:25 - 00:25:45:18

Thank you. And then finally, I'd like to come back on the point that Mr. Lawrence made about, um, uh, cumulative waste matters and whether or not that's something the applicant has or is considering picking up, please.

00:25:46:20 - 00:26:19:12

Or Philip to the applicant. Um, yes. The short answer is that that, uh, as is set out in section 16.5, I think it is. Sorry, I don't have the specific reference of chapter 16 of the environmental statement to the section that considers, uh, waste. Um, the, the, the there is no predicted impact on landfill sites, uh, from the development and therefore there is no potential for cumulative impact of the development on landfill sites at the point of decommissioning.

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So it could possibly have been stated more clearly that that's why there is no explicit assessment of cumulative effects in that section. Um, wider discussion might then ensue on whether or not the assessment effects on landfill sites that that decommissioning is. That's that's maybe the real point here.

00:26:40:05 - 00:26:43:02

Sorry. In a second. Councillor Campbell. Mr.. Lawrence.

00:26:43:21 - 00:27:15:13

Well, Lawrence Nottinghamshire county council. Yeah I appreciate that. I think the issue is more about whether the assessment that there will be no detrimental impact on landfill sites is actually the correct assessment. I think we're diverting away potentially from your agenda item here. But just to explain our view on that. Um, you know, the assessment relies heavily on the fact that the technology to recycle will be available from decommissioning. You know, that's not a guarantee at this moment in time. And there's no, um, requirement necessarily on the applicant to do anything about that. And that's really where the issue is.

00:27:15:18 - 00:27:16:03

Um, okay.

00:27:16:05 - 00:27:21:13

So right. Amazon point now. Yeah. Okay. Um, Councilor Gamble, what did you want to say.

00:27:23:19 - 00:27:55:00

Thank you. Council councillor James Campbell for Sherwood Forest. Uh, a couple of points that I'd like to mention because of the scale of the end CIPs and the amount of solar farms that were submitted and permitted applications within Newark and Sherwood District Council. A bit surprised that cumulative effects haven't been looked at before. Uh, my concern is, is this when you decommission power stations so high demand and Stanthorpe, etc.,

00:27:55:19 - 00:28:35:08

uh, they provide huge revenue in terms of, uh, business rates. We're talking millions of pounds now. That is a loss to the economy for those district councils. My concern is district councils are now going to be chasing money through solar farms. And as the resident mentioned there with the donuts. I would like a safeguard in place because of the scale of this development and other developments, that if it does get permitted, that these other areas shall remain solar farm free, because my my concern is if if these do go ahead, it'll be easy to hook up more solar farms into them.

00:28:35:10 - 00:28:38:26

And it's a bit of a Trojan horse. Thank you.

00:28:39:19 - 00:29:02:01

I understand the point you're making, Councillor Gamble, and obviously we are here to examine this particular, um, application and to address the development potential that relates to this particular application. So there's a, there's a limit to, to which we can have an influence over a wider area. But I'm going to ask the applicant to, to see if they've got any other points that they would wish to make in response to your comments.

00:29:04:07 - 00:29:37:26

Uh, Paul Phillips, for the applicant, and just in general terms, um, the main constraint for solar development in the UK over the last 15 years has been the ability to connect to the grid, and the fact that there are solar farms in the area and, and now proposed, uh, reduces the availability to connect. So it's not a guarantee, but the fact that these schemes are here doesn't increase, as you suggest. The,

uh, the capability for further schemes to come along, it decreases the capability for them to come along.

00:29:40:20 - 00:29:46:00

Any further comments on the generality of the cumulative assessment before I move on to landscape effects.

00:29:47:04 - 00:29:47:21

Madam?

00:29:47:23 - 00:30:23:20

Um, Peter Nesbitt for the applicant, I just wanted to make one very small point in relation to Mr. Northcote submissions. You mentioned the ministerial statement. Um, obviously the cumulative assessment in the environmental statement, the main provisions that regulate that are the environmental impact Assessment regulations, in which it's in accordance with which is conducted. Um. There's also guidance that Pins offer in terms of how to conduct that process. That's the way it's been done. We're not aware that the ministerial guidance particularly adds any detail in terms of how you conduct that assessment or changes that fact.

00:30:23:22 - 00:30:33:10

So it was just to make that that clear. I think a policy based approach was mentioned, but it's slightly unclear how you would fit that with the legal regulations.

00:30:34:06 - 00:30:35:00

Thank you.

00:30:36:03 - 00:31:10:02

Okay. So I'm going to move on to, um, to talk about cumulative landscape effects. So we've we've got um, s chapter seven, um, which relates to the landscape and visual impact assessment. That's AP 050. This sets out that cumulative developments have been considered as part of assessment. And specifically at paragraph 77, it sets out that consented development form as part of the future baseline, and so is considered to form part of the baseline for that assessment.

00:31:10:04 - 00:31:41:15

So, um, that sentence suggests that there's an acceptance of large scale solar as part of the character of the landscape as it as it exists. And so I therefore like to be clear about the distinction between development that's considered as part of the landscape baseline and development that's considered as part of the cumulative landscape assessment. And please, I don't know whose best place to at the end of the table I'd like to introduce yourself.

00:31:41:18 - 00:31:46:04

Yeah. Mary Fisher for the applicant. Um, well, I undertook the LVI.

00:31:46:13 - 00:31:46:28

Okay.

00:31:47:00 - 00:31:49:13

Thank you. Are you able to help us with that point, please?

00:31:49:15 - 00:32:40:13

So, yeah, as you've identified paragraph 77, um, operational development is considered as part of the current baseline, and consented development is considered as part of the future baseline, i.e., something that will happen whether or not the development is consented. Sorry. Whether or not GnRH is consented, those will happen. There's, um. Sometimes it is necessary to consider, um, consented development as part of the cumulative assessment. For instance, if you're not certain that it will happen, um, or if there's a long gap of time between when the development you're considering might be built and this other consented development, if it's got a very long build out time, that isn't the case for any of the ones in this, um, that we're considering for this project.

00:32:40:15 - 00:32:56:28

They are all likely to be built and in relatively near future. Um, so in order to consider the likely significant effects we consider, it's likely that they're going to be built and they will be there during the early operational life of the proposal.

00:32:57:00 - 00:33:06:27

So on that basis, they've been considered as part of the baseline. So that that characterization of large scale solar within the landscape is part of the baseline. Is that right?

00:33:06:29 - 00:33:07:15

Um.

00:33:08:14 - 00:33:38:16

Yes and no. I mean, in order to reach that conclusion, I would have to have considered their effects on what they sort of mean. I'm just treating them as fact. They're there. Yeah. So when I'm considering the effects of the proposed development, um, you know, for instance, if I'm stood at a viewpoint, I'm going. Right. Um, I know that in future I will be able to see that solar farm that's that's consented over there, and then development will happen over here.

00:33:38:28 - 00:33:39:15

Yep.

00:33:39:17 - 00:33:49:05

And so I consider what that means in terms of effects. So it's more an acceptance that they're there rather than a judgment about whether they characterize the landscape.

00:33:49:07 - 00:33:50:17

Okay. You understand. Yes.

00:33:50:19 - 00:33:52:29

Thank you. Okay.

00:33:58:14 - 00:34:28:16

My next question is around how this development, alongside other consented Zelda developments, would be seen and experienced when you're traveling through the landscape. So it's specifically about the, um, the nature of sequential views, which is a term that's used quite often to, to describe, um, the experience of a, um, something that's experienced, that's, um, that's seen regularly.

00:34:28:18 - 00:34:48:00

So the way that sequential views can be frequent or they can be occasional, um, but I haven't seen anything in the assessment that sets out that, um, uh, that that kind of sequential visualization of existing and proposed developments has been looked at. Can you help me with that, please?

00:34:50:22 - 00:35:22:05

Mary Fischer for the applicant. So sequential effects are generally only assessed in a kind of storytelling way, if you like, of. If you go along this route, you'll see this and that, and then the other, where there's a long distance route to be considered that people you would expect people to follow from start to finish. So, for instance, like the A1 or the East Coast Main Line in this route with this project, for other routes, people driving through rural areas, they could take any route from A to B.

00:35:22:14 - 00:35:58:09

So assessing that sequentially is impractical in terms of report writing, because there's a myriad of different directions that people should go in. Um, so yes, there will be repeated views, but um, in effectively that's tackled by assessing every single route, um, within the visual receptors analysis, but not saying. Right. So if you drive this route from, say, Taunton to Moorhouse, you'll see this and this and this. Because as I say, the impractical the impracticality of actually doing that and knowing what routes people will follow.

00:35:58:11 - 00:36:02:10

So it's something that would only be done for a longer distance route. Um.

00:36:02:23 - 00:36:03:08

Okay.

00:36:03:10 - 00:36:43:29

Well, I've, I'm aware that sequential impacts have been considered for other solar developments in the region. So, um, I suppose I'm what I'm trying to do is, is understand how the assessment has acknowledged that, that, um, with consented schemes and other schemes in the pipeline such as this, there's the potential that the landscape will be characterised by this kind of development to the extent that it will be experienced regularly by users, people passing through the landscape, whether it be on by vehicle, on foot, horseback, bicycle.

00:36:44:11 - 00:36:53:06

It's that regularity of experience that I wonder how that's been thought about taking into account assessed. Maybe you can help me with that.

00:36:54:18 - 00:36:57:04

Yes. Mary Fisher for the applicant. So.

00:36:59:05 - 00:37:29:29

The if when we're considering the effect on the visual receptors, particularly the local roads and the footpaths, you'll see that one of the assessment factors is the extent of effects, which in encompasses the regularity. So if you see it multiple times, slightly different degrees of visibility you know, so you can see it there very close open view. And then there's a glimpse view. Um, that's all encompassed in that consideration of the extent of the effects.

00:37:30:05 - 00:37:44:10

So and that builds into the magnitude judgment. So we did three factors. Firstly the scale. How big is this change to the view. Secondly the extent. So how frequently does it occur how it's how extensively does it occur.

00:37:46:00 - 00:37:54:11

Um and then the duration is obviously 40 years for operational lifetime. So those three judgments build into that consideration.

00:37:55:03 - 00:38:09:22

Okay. Thank you. Um, I'm going to see if others have questions relating or comments relating to, um, cumulative landscape effects. Yes. Do you want to introduce yourself and.

00:38:11:11 - 00:38:15:00

Morning. Uh, my name is Tara Boland. I'm a landscape.

00:38:15:02 - 00:38:15:27

Architect for Newark.

00:38:15:29 - 00:38:17:09

And Sherwood District Council.

00:38:17:17 - 00:38:25:05

Um, I just wanted to make a couple of points. I suppose in response to your questions about the sequential.

00:38:25:07 - 00:38:25:22

Routes.

00:38:25:24 - 00:38:58:25

This was one of the points that we were going to make and sort of stepping up to that high level impact, particularly on landscape character. We know from one Earth that this has been a point that's been raised there. And maybe, madam, you're making reference to Toll Bridge, where they had commentary to make about the sequential views and the, the, the, the impact sequentially. And I'll refer back to that in a minute. Um, what they say in a in the submissions, the technical memorandum submitted on the one Earth, I think is quite succinct.

00:38:58:27 - 00:39:32:00

So I'll just quote that as to give us a starting point. So within the applicant, self isolating landscape character areas and not fully considering sequential views of multiple schemes underplays the progressive landscape change occurring across the region and does not adequately capture how multiple schemes collectively influence the perceived character, openness and rural qualities of this landscape. So this if you look at the landscape character assessments for this area, they talk about the rural nature of this landscape.

00:39:32:02 - 00:40:10:29

They also talk about renewable energy and infrastructure being a pressure for change on this and that. We're likely to see that change and how we need to, um, react to that. And you can't, which is what has happened in the Elvia. And there's been picks up for yourself. Just look at the impacts on the landscape character area within which this application. Absolutely. Um, sits and reference to to the plan that you had up on the screen, which was really useful. A 2.1.1 shows really clearly that narrative, that passage and development of this of solar array and infrastructure across this landscape.

00:40:11:01 - 00:40:56:20

So we need to take a step back and have a look at how this fundamentally changes the landscape character of the Mid Nottinghamshire farmland in this instance, and then moving up on to the to the wider landscape. And we are in response to Mrs. Fisher's point, we are professional landscape architects with experience. And in this field we should be able, without having to look at every single route and direction that somebody might take be able to Narrate in an appropriate manner and judge those impacts on landscape character and on sequential views as you pass through this landscape.

00:40:56:22 - 00:41:30:02

And that simply hasn't been done in this, in this assessment. I also think in the actual Elvia itself, that the cumulative section is too light touch. It just refers to Kellum. They treat, um, Knapp, Thorpe and Kant and Musk as consented schemes, which they've set out as part of their future baseline. But they then don't deal with it really in a in a comprehensive and appropriate way in terms of the experiences of having quite a consolidation of solar array in, in that area.

00:41:30:04 - 00:41:54:26

And there's a, there's a prowl particularly that runs through the consented schemes and then goes on to run through this scheme. I know these are matters of detail, but just to sort of highlight that, I think there's more work to be done in the section itself. And then there is this piece of more strategic work to be done in the in the wider realm when considering the landscape character, particularly the impacts sequentially on landscape character.

00:41:56:12 - 00:42:19:06

Thank you very much for that comprehensive answer. I'll come to you in a moment, I think. Um, I'm very, very conscious of the fact that, um, you've done a lot more work on the landscape assessment and that that will be submitted, presumably as part of the the local impact report. Um, and, and obviously the applicant will have the response, the, the opportunity to respond in detail to that. Um, uh,

00:42:21:01 - 00:42:31:20

I'm just wondering whether any conversations have taken place between you and in terms of expressing the concerns that you have and discussions about how best to take them forward? Is that something that's started or.

00:42:33:09 - 00:43:08:08

Yeah, we've got a good open dialogue with the, um, and we've met with members of the landscape team before, and we've made comments on other elements. Um, So. But this, I think, is the next level of this sort of conversation about that bigger picture. And it, you know, we have to learn from what's come before us in terms of one Earth and in terms of, of, of tail bridge. I think, you know, at Tail Bridge, they make reference to, um, it really is the point that you, you made, you know, we consider the applicant's focus on specific viewpoints negates the sequential cumulative effect.

00:43:08:10 - 00:43:20:21

So these are really the next level considerations. Now that we we have a bigger picture of infrastructure and solar arrays that are coming forward in this district in the wider Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.

00:43:20:23 - 00:43:31:23

Okay. Thank you. And I would say at this point that obviously would encourage those conversations to continue. Um, in terms of who else wanted to to make points. Mr. Northcote, what did you want to say?

00:43:33:08 - 00:44:08:08

Thank you madam. Anthony Northcote for JPEG. It's on the same issue. We've we've raised concern that the general approach of identifying the zones of influence is really not allowed. The encircling effect and the clustering to be properly considered as part of this. And we've made the point in our relevant representation on this whole sort of point about the regularity of experience. What you're calling the sequential views, madam, because where we are, there are very limited, um, crossings across the River Trent.

00:44:08:10 - 00:44:46:15

So there are some settlements where people will never be able to leave their village, and particularly places like Aaron McCallum, without going through the development. You know, you just can't go anywhere without going through the development. And the problem with the zones of influence, um, it's not taken into account of those settlements that are completely encircled in the middle of what I call the donuts C shape, how we want to describe it, um, that are outside of the zone of influence. But again, they cannot leave their village and go anywhere without daily going through this development and the cluster of other development.

00:44:46:17 - 00:45:10:15

So I think the, the difficulty that we have is the traditional approach of identifying landscape impacts here just doesn't seem to be quite right on the basis of the particular nature of this type of scheme, which is very unusual in its layout and therefore needs a slightly more unusual approach to this matter. Thank you madam.

00:45:10:20 - 00:45:13:23

Thank you, Mr. Northcote. Yes, councillor gamble, what did you want to say?

00:45:15:20 - 00:45:46:15

Uh, James Gamble, County councillor for Sherwood Forest. One point I would like to, to make and often it's overlooked on I think sometimes landscape character assessments we've had where um we've had a look in and you can see the vista change because suddenly we're having these what I call solar blankets that are unflinching and they're just staring at you now. Newark and Sherwood landscape. It's not just arable land. It's seasonality, their seasons.

00:45:46:17 - 00:46:21:28

I live in it. Uh, you can you can literally smell the seasonal change with with the harvesting of the crops. We're losing the seasonality, which is a big fundamental part of a landscape character. Um, so where these solar farms are going. Um, the loss of that farmland, the, the, the arable management. So you'll have winter stubbles. Suddenly they'll be lost. And that will impact on biodiversity as well. And residents within all these communities, you can literally smell when the onions and the carrots are being harvested that will be lost.

00:46:22:00 - 00:46:26:04

So I'd like that to be taken account of as well. Thank you.

00:46:27:10 - 00:46:37:01

Thank you, Councillor Gamble. Before I go back to the applicant. Does anybody else want to make any points on cumulative landscape assessment? Yes, sir. Um, we have a roving mic. please.

00:46:43:22 - 00:47:27:21

The reference John Norton. The reference that was made to that thought prompted this comment. Um, I don't know whether or not it's relevant to make at this point, but I give you an observation from the field. The same tractor driver that warned me long before we ever heard of Elements Green, that visits to ponds in the area were revealing that there would be some development to take place soon. Tells me that since the removal of the southeast quadrant planning, he has, as a landowner in Bethel, received a succession of inquiries from all over the country for purchase of his land.

00:47:28:27 - 00:47:57:06

My biggest concern about cumulative impact is, frankly, at the parochial level With the increase, as I understand it to be the case from the upper limit of 50MW capacity that defined whether or not something moved into the strategic consideration as opposed to the local authority. My understanding is I'll stand corrected that that's raised in the proposals, if not the present reality. Frankly,

00:47:58:21 - 00:48:17:10

the cumulative impact could take place at field level out, totally destroying the character of the area. And I don't know how relevant it is for the application to be looking at local infill as a threat to the environment. I'll leave it at that. I'm raising the issue.

00:48:17:24 - 00:48:23:18

Thank you. Thank you for that. Um, sorry. Another gentleman on the the front row.

00:48:30:15 - 00:49:04:02

Thank you. Madam. Uh, John Hobson normal solar farm group. I just want to, um, give you. Um, a residence experience of what the impact will be on me day to day and supporting what Mr. Northcott said. I live in Norwell. We've got very few facilities. Just a pub, really. So if I want to go north to the doctors, I'll go through the development. If I want to go west to Ollerton, uh, to the gym, uh, to Tesco's.

00:49:04:04 - 00:49:24:06

I'll go through a development if I want to go south. The subtle, uh, the facilities and subtle. I'll go through the development. And if I want to go east to Newark because I go through canton, I go that way, I'll go through the development. So I'll experience the development every single day. Thank you.

00:49:24:20 - 00:49:26:19

Thank you very much. Thank you for your point.

00:49:28:18 - 00:49:34:26

A couple more hands up and I will. I will We'll hear from you before going back to the applicant list.

00:49:34:28 - 00:50:09:15

Hopkins, Carlton on Trent Parish Council. Um, just following Mrs. Fisher's comment, she said that, um, there'd be other alternatives. Carlton on Trent will be surrounded. We have panels to the north, panels to the west, panels to the south. Unless I learn to swim the Trent, I will not be able to get out of Carlton. Um, personally, I I'm I'm actually, uh, born and raised at Morehouse to get to Morehouse and Laxton.

00:50:09:17 - 00:50:40:14

I will have to go through the panels. Blackstone is unique. It is the only place in Europe that has the three field farming system. And people travel to our part of the country, to the country, Nottinghamshire, to experience and to view that area. They will not be able to visit that historical landscape without going through panels, and it contradicts the very purpose of their journey.

00:50:40:16 - 00:50:56:26

And they are in the middle of the doughnut. I very much doubt that you'd get panels on like stone open fields, which is why we have a doughnut. Um, and it's just worth bearing in mind that it's part of the assets of this community.

00:50:57:08 - 00:51:40:04

Thank you. All right. Thank you. Okay, so we've heard a range of comments there, um, expressing concerns about landscape impacts associated with the development itself as well as cumulative landscape effects. Um, and I'm conscious that this is this isn't the the only discussion that we will have around landscape effects. We will we will come onto onto this in more detail later on. Obviously aware that, um, Newark and Sherwood will be submitting detailed comments. So, Um, and, and I've asked for conversations to take place, um, in relation to the assessment that's been undertaken and whether or not that needs to be, um, uh, taken further to reflect the concerns that have been expressed.

00:51:40:06 - 00:51:48:20

But I'll come back to the applicant now and see if there's any, um, any responses to any specific points that have been made, noting that this is the start of the conversation.

00:51:50:22 - 00:51:59:11

Thank you. Uh, Mary Fisher for the applicant. So, um, a few I think I've got notes of everything that was said. There was quite a lot.

00:51:59:13 - 00:52:05:28

As I said, I'm not trying to cover everything because I'm aware that we'll come back to this book. If you've got any reflections, that would be helpful.

00:52:06:00 - 00:52:27:12

Okay. So in relation to the comments from NSCDC, I it's the first we've heard of these. They haven't been conveyed to us before. Um, however um I note the reference to Tilbrook. We'll take a look at that. Um, but just in terms of the comments made. Um,

00:52:29:10 - 00:52:50:18

part of the uh section that was read out. Referred to the use of specific viewpoints. And just to be clear, our assessment has not taken that kind of approach. So I talked about the visual receptor groups and the extent of effects. And perhaps one of the team could put, um, figure 7.6 up on the screen.

00:52:54:05 - 00:52:56:20

I don't have the app reference to hand.

00:53:08:21 - 00:53:50:18

Um, so these these are, um, diagrams showing the extent of effects that I was referring to recently in relation to visual effects. So we've discussed how the sequential approach is dealt with in terms of visual effects. We have these diagrams showing them, and the reporting reflects these diagrams. It's absolutely taken account of we haven't only assessed individual viewpoints. Every route is covered. Um, and from that for instance, if you wanted to, you could work out exactly what the effects are on any given journey because they're all drawn, um, in terms of character.

00:53:51:29 - 00:54:24:22

Um, again, it's a holistic assessment for but for each character type. But, um, Bolan specifically referred to the Mid Nottinghamshire farmlands and suggested that they had not effects on them hadn't been assessed, but they have um. What we haven't done is the, the wider character, and that's partly because we focus on the effects of this development. As you, madam, referred to earlier, the assessment we're providing is about the effects of this development.

00:54:24:24 - 00:54:57:25

It's not the function of assessment to explain general change, because that isn't the decision to be made. The decision to be made is about this development and what what it will change. Um, the matter of dealing with wider landscape change. There's no upper limit on change set by policy. Um, and so it's a question of understanding whether this change is okay, the change that this development will make, the fact that there is wider change is acknowledged.

00:54:57:27 - 00:55:13:27

But in the end, um, the it's not the function of cumulative assessment to identify that totality. It's to assess the effects of this project in the context of reasonably foreseeable other changes. Right. Um.

00:55:16:04 - 00:55:55:28

And there was also a reference, for instance, to a public right of way that runs through consenting and existing development. That's a good scenario of how this plays out. So if one is walking that footpath route, um, and I know which one was being referred to, you're already walking through a solar farm at the northern end as you leave Netherthorpe, and if you continued along in a particular direction, you may end up walking through the proposed development itself later on. It's not the function of a cumulative assessment to add those two effects up, it's just to identify if you have already walked through so far to the north.

00:55:56:00 - 00:56:32:19

What then is the effect of the proposed development? And that's what the cumulative assessment does. Um. Moving on to other comments. There was reference to encircling and it hasn't been taken account of. I think we just need to be clear that that's not a cumulative impact. The fact that the development itself, its a particular shape. Those are all the effects of the development. Not a cumulative effect. The fact that you may be able to see the development in multiple directions, or you may pass through it along journeys, has been taken account of.

00:56:33:18 - 00:56:36:13

Um, and then.

00:56:39:27 - 00:56:54:21

I think that was probably all the points I wanted to. Okay. That's right. Oh, yeah. Just one point of correction. The historic fields at Laxton are not in the middle. Um, they're to the northwest of the development. About two kilometers.

00:56:54:28 - 00:57:25:00

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Bishop. And just to reiterate the point that I made earlier, um, I'm aware that Newark and Sherwood have got some some detailed comments, and it would be helpful if discussions could take place around the concerns that have been raised. And perhaps if we could ask for a specific section of the statement of common ground between Newark and Sherwood and the applicant to include landscape and visual effects. I think that would help um, to, to to take this particular point forward.

00:57:26:09 - 00:57:33:04

Okay. Um, before we move on, are there any final points on landscape? Cumulative landscape effects?

00:57:36:05 - 00:57:40:13

Okay. Anything online? I don't think I've not seen any hands raised. No.

00:57:42:18 - 00:57:47:06

Okay. So I'm going to hand over to Mr. Hobbins to look at BMV.

00:57:47:08 - 00:57:47:25

Agricultural.

00:57:47:27 - 00:57:48:13

Land.

00:57:48:19 - 00:58:19:13

Thank you very much. Um, so I'm just going to turn to the issue of the best and most versatile agricultural land and the context of cumulative effects. I'll refer to that as BMV land or brevity. Um, just going to ask a couple of questions of the applicant. First, uh, for a bit of clarity on the assessment of that. So I'm referring here to chapter 17 of the Environmental Environmental Statement, which is, uh, reference AWP 060. Um, it would be helpful if you could display that, please.

00:58:19:15 - 00:58:39:18

Um, I'm not going to come to table 17.21, which is on page 67. Um, and my question is really just related to how, um, the cumulative total of BMV land affected was calculated. So I'll just wait for that to appear. And then we can we can look at that.

00:58:48:20 - 00:59:23:02

Thank you very much. Um, so I, I would just obviously, um, in the conclusions, um, it states that you essentially there wouldn't be significant effects because the cumulative effect of the proposed development, uh, totals around 2000 hectares of BMV land. And then that's compared in the context of, I think it's 3,700,000 hectares of BMV land in England. So could I ask how I found it? And it might. It might just be me. But I found it difficult to find where that 2000 hectares figure came from.

00:59:23:04 - 00:59:34:11

The, um, the ALC areas itemized in the table there. So I sort of tried to, to find that figure from the total of those, and I wasn't quite sure. So would you be able to just, um, explain that perhaps.

00:59:36:23 - 00:59:37:18

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

00:59:37:20 - 00:59:40:26

Tony. Tony Kernan for the applicant.

00:59:41:02 - 00:59:41:17

Um.

00:59:42:27 - 00:59:44:09

Hopefully correctly.

00:59:44:12 - 00:59:45:09

Um, and.

00:59:45:11 - 00:59:46:07

Hopefully.

00:59:46:14 - 00:59:46:29

My.

00:59:47:01 - 01:00:27:08

Maths was right. So the projects which are set out in table, table 17.21, um, were um, nationally significant infrastructure projects. And on the right hand column it's listed the grades one two and sub grade three A for each of those schemes. And I will come back because there is one that I've got wrong. But in terms of the question, which was how did I get to those totals? Um, it should be that I've added up grades one, two and three A for each scheme and then summed those at the end.

01:00:27:10 - 01:00:50:11

So if we'd added up the taking West Burton, the 17 hectares of grade one, nine and a half of grade 272, grade three A and then I've added that done the same process for each of the ones listed in that table. And that then came to the 2350 hectares.

01:00:50:17 - 01:00:51:20

Okay. Thank you sir.

01:00:52:07 - 01:01:29:23

If I may just say what the the error is. And actually, um, when we do the cumulative assessment, we will need to update this table as well. And the error I've got, I noted when I was looking at it the other day that um beacon Fen just said greater than 50MW. And when I was looking at the plans, I thought I was much bigger than 45 hectares. It's not that tidal is the figure I've taken from that. I apologized profusely, I think I took the figure from there is table on cable route, not scheme.

01:01:29:25 - 01:01:47:24

So, um, there's an extra 211 hectares of best, the most versatile over that total, um, within that scheme that I've not included. But I should have done. I've just I apologize, I've just taken the wrong figure out of there is.

01:01:48:08 - 01:01:58:14

Okay. And within that 211 hectares, um, would you know off off the offhand the agricultural land classifications or is that grade two land or grade three?

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

And that's, that was

01:02:01:25 - 01:02:10:07

I've got it written down. So that's the best and most versatile. That's not the total scheme. So that is just of the just great. Mostly I think it was two and three.

01:02:10:09 - 01:02:14:19

And that would include two. One, two and three. Okay.

01:02:14:26 - 01:02:21:06

That 211 hectares is only one, two and three. A that's not including anything else. No. That the um,

01:02:22:28 - 01:02:36:27

that proportion is uh, overall I think I personally I think it was 68% overall, but that is just the best and most versatile. The scheme's bigger than that. Okay.

01:02:37:09 - 01:02:42:13

Um, yeah. We can obviously ensure that then that error is, um, is corrected. And the.

01:02:42:15 - 01:02:43:00

Another.

01:02:43:02 - 01:02:43:17

One.

01:02:43:19 - 01:03:16:15

I've had a long chat with Mr. Phillips to see how I could possibly have missed it, and apparently because it's too close, we had two different data sets for cumulative and for agriculture. We were looking much further afield than we were for other topics, and I've included steeple in this list, which wasn't shown on the plans. And I haven't included one Earth. So which is obviously the closest. So, um, if you're looking through that table, what Earth needs adding to that.

01:03:16:27 - 01:03:36:25

And the result of that would mean that using the same calculation, I think the total then that will be talked about in the paragraph would be 3222 hectares of best and most first time instead of the 2350 which it's talking about at the moment.

01:03:36:27 - 01:03:46:09

Okay. And would your, um, with your conclusion still remain? Um, would you still would you draw any different conclusions with that updated figure? Um.

01:03:47:13 - 01:04:19:21

Yes. So in terms of deciding how to assess cumulative effects on agricultural land, and particularly on best and most fertile, it's quite a tricky one to decide how to do it, because it's easy enough to do as we've done here and just add up what land is being used. Um, it's not being lost. So I'll come onto that in a moment. But food production in this country is really a national issue, not a local issue.

01:04:19:23 - 01:04:58:26

So decisions on land use, use of best and most versatile land use for solar and and everything else are really strategic government decisions. Rather, I think it's not easy to assess them on a sort of localized basis. So we know from things like the written ministerial statements, the solar roadmap, what the the national policy statements are saying about where they want to get to with solar production in this country, and they know what the land quantities are, they know what the qualities are, and the green light is there to press on as fast as possible.

01:04:58:28 - 01:05:58:10

So I think that effectively the cumulative assessment is something which government is taking. Um, in terms of how we've looked at it on a more local basis, in terms of explanation here. Um, as I say in the context that, um, you're not going to the local field to buy a packet of wheat or anything. You know, food production is very much a national basis now. But in terms of how we've looked at it here, sir, in terms of the quantities of land being used for solar in combination with cheap, but being used so that 3200 hectares um, against the the national figure which you just mentioned, they're the 3700 hectares and which is about 42% of that.

01:05:58:12 - 01:06:24:27

There's more than that aggregate of best and most versatile in the country, but that's taking 42% of the utilized agricultural area. So that's not all our land, but that's what's actually currently being farmed. Um, it's obviously a very small proportion of that. Um, also within the um, within the environmental statement. So you've got in table 17.14, which I think, um,

01:06:26:22 - 01:07:00:10

800. And anyway, it's table 17.14. Um, I've set out there same estimate for the percentages of best and most versatile land that you're likely to find in Nottingham and, um, and in Newark and Sherwood. We went through that yesterday. So they're both running at about 50%. You can show it very slightly less so in terms of actual quantities and in terms of the fact that this is sort of, um, half and half.

01:07:00:18 - 01:07:06:17

Best and most personal. I don't think there's any significance in terms of the quantity of land being used.

01:07:08:24 - 01:07:45:29

Because the land's not being lost, then the consideration more terms. And I think the relevance of it is more down to the land use consideration. And that's particularly food. But remembering that a lot of agricultural land is not used for growing food directly, as a lot goes for animal feed, there's a lot of biomass production, there's a lot of other non-agricultural, um, industrial uses from products. But in terms of those figures, we know so that the the utilised agricultural area is somewhere between sort of 8.7 and the latest, this year's figures say 8.8 million hectares.

01:07:46:18 - 01:08:20:21

Um, just in context, I set out in the is the proportion that's arable in this area is quite high. Um nationally 56% of of that 8.7, 8.8 million is arable land. And that's if you just took that off 8.8 million. That's 4.9 million hectares. Some of that is grass lay. The latest statistics that have come out show there's actually 4.03 million hectares of arable land for cropping.

01:08:20:23 - 01:08:59:16

So excluding your short term grassland and and then the assessment looks at where we're at in terms of food security. And that's referenced in in the yes on paragraph 195. There's no statement from government about food security. Um, an interesting stat. And I'll put this out because they just come out. So I'll put this in the in the note following this meeting. But in paragraph 189, I talked about 305,000 hectares of arable land, which was in Diversity, and that was correct at the time we sent.

01:08:59:19 - 01:09:37:09

We submitted the statement. The figure that came out at the end of September. So the 1st of June 2025 figure that's gone up to 444,000 hectares of arable land, which is in biodiversity rather than in food production. And just in context, earlier we were talking about that, um, that figure of whether it's 4.9 or just over 4 million of arable, we're talking somewhere between 9 and 11% of arable land is currently in biodiversity uses rather than food production.

01:09:37:11 - 01:10:02:04

So in terms of assessing this cumulative effect of land, I don't think there's a significant impact on the land and we're not losing it. If it's all going to concrete, that might be a different consideration. But it's not. It's just the latter. It goes to a land use consideration and it's you know, in terms of what solar even achieving the government's own end point is tiny compared to what else is happening.

01:10:02:06 - 01:10:17:28

Okay. Thank. Yeah. Thank you very much for those, um, explanations. Um, and I just note that obviously we'd like to see the updated, um, assessments, uh, in the, in the environmental statement, if you can, you know, revise the figures that you were, um, alluding to earlier on there. Um, I think it's.

01:10:18:00 - 01:10:39:08

Just I can just clarify. So in terms of those figures, we'll do a note. Obviously, a note comes through after today's meeting, so shall I. I'll just give those updated figures in that summary of what I've said. But is the suggestion in terms of doing an updated cumulative table? Is that one more appropriate to wait towards the end of the.

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At.

01:10:40:09 - 01:10:42:28

The end of the whole process, an update.

01:10:43:02 - 01:10:44:05

Like that in the notes and then.

01:10:44:07 - 01:10:45:11

Yeah, okay. Thank you sir.

01:10:47:15 - 01:11:22:01

And I'll just come back to you on a point that you made there about obviously You were looking at the, um, the cumulative effects with regards to obviously the wider, um, the UK contacts in England of BMV land that's undertaken. Um, and then you said that you sort of locally it's a relatively um, the impacts of you still consider that relatively limited given that the land isn't out of land isn't permanently, um, changed. But I, I'd like to ask another challenge, perhaps that, um, yeah, the land is still out of use for that period of time.

01:11:22:03 - 01:11:36:09

And would there be wider, you know, wider impacts or effects, perhaps, in terms of that land being out of use and the change in, in use and on the economy, for example, in the local area and, um, you know, farming and things like that, and farming businesses.

01:11:38:19 - 01:11:40:27

Tony Kernan for the applicant, sir.

01:11:42:27 - 01:12:35:11

But in terms of agricultural, um, food production, there's obviously a change not all of this land is being used for cereals and break crops. There's also livestock and other uses within there, but that's the majority use at the moment. And in terms of the implications of that for food security, I've just run through those and I don't think there's any significant impact on you. There's lots of other things that are taking, um, much bigger figures in terms of food production and in respect of the, um, economy, the land and the intention, um, is that there will still be sheep grazing and therefore there will still be agricultural activity and agricultural work involved

01:12:36:28 - 01:12:39:19

in terms of assessing, um, the

01:12:41:09 - 01:13:12:22

implications. I think what you were asking sort of the upstream. Downstream. What about seeds providers? Um, Fertilizer providers, machinery merchants, etc.. Um, I think it's very it's very difficult to try and put any kind of figure on it. And, and I think my expectation is that there will be some implications for those that deal with arable cropping particularly, but there will therefore be benefits for those that deal with livestock.

01:13:12:24 - 01:13:48:18

So veterinary feed, etc. there will be other sectors of that rural economy who will benefit because there'll be more activity connected to that. So I think in that respect it shouldn't have an overall economic impact. And I say so in terms of the, um, just the figures. Again, another figure that's that's just come out, I mean, in terms of um, cropped arable. So that's, that's land that would have had a lot more machinery use and now has a very light machinery use.

01:13:48:20 - 01:14:27:23

There will have been some seed provided because they've gone to bumble mixes, as they call them, and other such things under the environmental things. But in in Nottinghamshire in 2024, there was 17,500 hectares of arable land that wasn't producing. So there are these changes in terms of land use and intensity of land use, which are impacting on the agri supply sector and things like Ukraine and fertiliser prices and all these things have had much bigger impacts than you'll ever see from something like the particular impacts of this particular scheme or all of the others in combination.

01:14:27:25 - 01:14:37:04

That's. Yeah. Okay. That's that's clear. Thank you. Um, I would like now to just invite, um, comments from anybody in the room, obviously. Yes. Um, come to Newark and Sherwood versus.

01:14:40:24 - 01:15:16:10

Simon Betts Newark and Sherwood district council. Um, I just wanted to make 1 or 2 points. I may then pass over to Mr. Franklin if he's got anything to add. He may or may not. I have not spoken to him on the One Earth project that we've also been involved in, which is obviously a little bit more developed and deeper into the examination. This is a discussion and debate that was had. Um, the points that we that we were trying to make whilst understanding the national context is that the way the assessment is being presented and particularly the cumulative assessment is, is it's a top down approach.

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So what we've advocated and argued for is, is the sort of bottom up approach. So actually thinking about what the implications are the district level upwards. So the one Earth scheme in particular involved um, um three different district councils as well as two county councils. So there's a need to try and provide clarity on, um, how that issue might impact those individual authorities. So you can still get the same position, but you build those calculations up from the bottom upwards.

01:15:49:05 - 01:16:27:19

And if you if you do that, it then becomes clear. For for the local authorities concerns what that means in terms of localised impacts with within that within that context, I think there's a and we can we can make a sort of reference, a clear reference to this within our, um, written summary of verbal submissions over the course of today, what we had following issues specific hearing two on the One Earth project is a is a breakdown that the applicant provided which showed um, those district level figures.

01:16:27:21 - 01:17:05:06

So it looked at and you can chew it. It looked at West Lindsey also looked at Bassetlaw. Um, what that then showed was that considering, um, just the CIPs alone, not factoring in other developments that might be consented locally. Um, you can show it had twice the amount of BMV, uh, land loss in comparison to West Lindsey and Bassetlaw. So I hear what the applicant is saying about, you know. I mean, it's relevant in terms of national policy as well and, and recent decisions, but I think it's important to get sort of real clarity and understanding.

01:17:05:08 - 01:17:48:09

I'm glad we picked up today about the fact that that the One Earth project wasn't even included in the cumulative assessment, but I think from the discussion and there's updates needed to figures, we're not quite getting there in terms of clarity of understanding. And I think if we flipped it on its head and we built up, perhaps the applicant could go away and look at the information that was provided by the applicant on the One Earth project. I'm sure they'll want to corroborate, um, the information that was presented there. But I think for us as a local authority that that sort of those figures make for stark reading in terms of, you know, what those what those impacts are the local level and we are a local authority ultimately.

01:17:48:11 - 01:18:19:00

So I think we need to get to the heart of a really clear understanding, um, on this issue. And I don't think we're we're quite we're quite there yet. Um, and I suppose we would probably layer this up on top of the conversation we had yesterday in terms of the applicant's, um, broad assessment of, you

know, the 50% of B&B land in the district, the fact that we were going higher. Um, I don't want to sort of be too much into yesterday's discussion, but we're going up to a 62% figure.

01:18:19:02 - 01:18:45:06

We've got an 8% figure of grade two. There's there's doubts about whether the land could have been included. I think when you then look at the the cumulative figures based on data that's been provided on another CIP project, it makes for sort of more alarming reading from our perspective. So I just wanted to try and put those points across. I say, I don't know whether it's probably won't say I don't think or not, but, uh, that's what I was going to say. Thank you, thank you.

01:18:46:25 - 01:18:48:06

Please go ahead, Mr. Franklin. Thank you.

01:18:48:23 - 01:19:21:07

Thank you, sir. Sam Franklin, on behalf of Newark and Sherwood, I just had a couple of points to sort of add to that. Um, the my quick calculations which which may need to be double checked, but is an 872 hectare increase in cumulative amount of best and most versatile listening to Mr. Kiernan, uh, which is a 37% increase. So it is significant the changes, the error and the addition of, uh, one Earth.

01:19:21:09 - 01:20:04:07

So that's that's one point I just wanted to make quickly to set the second point, uh, Mr. Kiernan mentions that there's quite a lot of land in biodiversity schemes, but most of those schemes are short term and can be taken out of biodiversity Diversity schemes in order to return to food production. They are often only last for three, five, seven years. Whereas we're talking about a 40 year time frame for the solar farm. Um, so they can almost be seen as a rotational option for farmers who choose to rest their land, use it for weed control measures, and as an opportunity to reassess their finances.

01:20:06:01 - 01:20:44:28

The third point I wanted to make was about, um, the idea that the land is somehow going to be retained in agricultural production through sheep grazing. And you'll recall this morning, sir, that, um, uh, the appellant applicant set out some detail about the conservation grazing strategy, and in particular, I made notes. Uh, this is going to be low stocking rate sheep grazing with rotational grazing to create a mosaic of conservation level grassland.

01:20:45:00 - 01:21:03:06

So this is not agricultural production or grazing from an agricultural perspective. So in terms of retention of the land for, for what you might call agricultural purposes, it's going to be very low level sheep grazing. That was that was all I wanted to say. Thank you.

01:21:03:08 - 01:21:14:16

Okay. Thank you very much. Yeah. And thank you for those points. And obviously we'll await your submissions and your impact on those. So thank you. Um, I'll come to Mr. Northcote and then I'll come to the applicant if they'd like to reply. So it's Northcote.

01:21:16:00 - 01:21:46:19

Thank you, Sir Anthony Northcote for JPEG and it's similar issues I want to raise you can Sherwood. Um I'm grateful to the the applicants admitted to their error of omitting one earth from table 17.21. Um, but there seems to be a wider omission in that table. And that is the other consented schemes that are not the end CYP schemes, but are the other permitted schemes that have planning permission and or are proposed. We've considered them in everything else.

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So why in the aspect of loss of best and most versatile land, have we only decided to look at the SIP schemes and not the full cumulative effect? So I think that's a wider omission that the applicant needs to address. I'd also like to pick up the issue about the way the assessments done. It seems a little disingenuous to say, well, we're looking at these projects and then we're assessing it against the total amount of best and most versatile land in England.

01:22:18:18 - 01:22:54:02

Well, they've not counted every scheme that's being proposed in England to make that assessment. So I think the correct geographic area that this assessment needs to be made at, I would agree with you, would consider that it should be at a district level. This is a massive project together with others in the district. It will have a huge localized impact on the loss of best and most versatile land, and I think that's that approach series. In the spirit of the written ministerial statement on the clustering element and its assessment of the best and most versatile land.

01:22:55:02 - 01:23:31:24

The final point I'd like to make is this land is going to be out of agricultural production for a generation, but we don't know because to the best of my knowledge, I don't think we've ever. We have yet a solar scheme that's been in place for 40 years throughout its life. We don't know what the land will be like after 40 years of being left in that process. So I think the assumption that the land quality will not be affected or can immediate return to agriculture at the end is something that is untested and unknown at this point in time, and the generational loss of farmers.

01:23:31:29 - 01:23:38:08

Where are those farmers going to come from in 40 years time to suddenly pick farming back up? Thank you.

01:23:38:10 - 01:23:43:26

Thank you. Um, I will come to, uh, Councilor Gamble, and then I'll come to the applicant. Councilor gamble.

01:23:45:02 - 01:24:15:15

Thank you. Uh, James Gamble, county councillor for Sherwood Forest. Uh. Really disappointed. I may have got the figure wrong here. I thought it was 200 hectares that weren't included within the calculation. Um, element screen. You've had plenty of time to get accurate data for this, so the cumulative effects are inaccurate. It's disappointing if you add that along with the Rochdale envelope. Uh, we've touched upon the the arable nature of the land. And you mentioned sheep. You mentioned food.

01:24:15:26 - 01:24:46:29

Um, one of the biggest crop types in this area is sugar beets. It sugar beets grown everywhere around here. And there's one one big reason for that. There's a huge sugar factory in Newark. And the way that white sugar beet is grown here is because, um, the majority of the producers are within 28 miles of the sugar beet factory and the they they need one point over about 1.5 million tons of sugar beet for that factory.

01:24:47:01 - 01:25:04:26

And as I understand it, I might be wrong, but there could be 600 providers of this sugar beet. So by removing this arable land, you're affecting the economy because a lot of those farmers and landowners rely on that sugar factory and in-kind for sugar factory relies on those landowners. Okay. Thank you.

01:25:05:22 - 01:25:22:18

Yeah. Thank you. And thank you for your your comments there. Um, if I could ask the applicant to respond, perhaps on some of the more detailed aspects of, you know, um, calculation of some of the land types, if those you could provide that obviously in writing the submission. But on the on the wider points, do you have any any comments that you'd like to make in response?

01:25:25:02 - 01:26:01:15

To the applicant? Yes. I responded at one point that was made, um, the following the Planning Inspectorate guidance on the assessment of cumulative impacts, uh, the zone of influence of the development on best and most versatile land would would lead to a zone of influence being the order limits only. That was our initial approach to the assessment of cumulative impacts that we set out in the preliminary environmental Information Report. Um, it was at the request of Newark and Sherwood District Council that we included, uh, nationally significant infrastructure, um, project solar schemes.

01:26:02:12 - 01:26:15:24

Um, at a wider area. Uh, and that's, that's why that's been included. But the inclusion of that is a divergence from the Planning Inspectorate cumulative impact assessment methodology.

01:26:16:21 - 01:26:25:12

Okay. Thank you. Are there any further comments in the room? I can't see any hands up online either. So In that case, I know.

01:26:25:23 - 01:26:31:26

And so do you want me to just run through all those to invite me to respond to those various comments? Okay.

01:26:31:28 - 01:26:34:18

Very quickly. Are you talking about the.

01:26:34:20 - 01:26:35:26

Procedure, I think.

01:26:35:28 - 01:26:41:00

Yeah. My apologies. I didn't see you. So yeah, just keep it relatively.

01:26:42:04 - 01:27:16:23

Very quick, sir. Um, Tony Kernan, on behalf of the applicant. Um, firstly, sir, I think in terms of what Mr. Betts was talking about in terms of local impact, I'll maybe have a chat with him. So I'm not quite sure from that what it was that we haven't considered. But I think we do need to be careful when we start looking at things like percentages of BMV within a district, because there won't be hardly anyone in the district that has a clue. It's not a figure that's really looked at. And if you took an extreme, say, a county that had 20 hectares of best and most fertile only and that was used, you'd say that's a 100% loss.

01:27:16:25 - 01:27:47:23

You know, that sounds terrible, but actually it's a small amount. So I think we do need to be careful on Statistics. And in terms of the, the issue about, um, biodiversity and, um, the short term nature of biodiversity schemes versus the long term solar, we do always need to remember why we're here when the government's solar roadmap nicely says that the biggest risk to food security and the natural environment is the climate and nature crisis.

01:27:47:25 - 01:28:23:22

That's why it's important the UK takes a leadership role and working with partners around the world in accelerating to net zero. So they see the climate crisis as the biggest threat. And that's what solar panels are aiming to look at. So that's one of the reasons they're pushing for it. Um, on the grazing question, it's more it is agriculture. Um, the, the latest um or last year they started it. The June statistics show percentages and areas of land that are on farms that are now solar panels that are grazed, and it's 53%.

01:28:23:24 - 01:28:57:18

Some of the early schemes are very low, so I'm not surprised that it's quite low proportion, but it is proper grazing. It is still farming. Um, and on what the land will be like after 40 years, there's no reason and I've not seen any research. I've seen research that looked at it, but no research that's concluded that there's going to be an adverse impact on the land quality, because there shouldn't be, because once you put the panel legs in, you're not touching it. We do know, and it's set out in the environmental statement that there are benefits for soils.

01:28:57:24 - 01:29:34:04

That's why we used to rest soils and have layers and things. It's going to be they're going to benefit. Um, and I don't see there's any reason to think that land quality is going to be, um, deteriorated. And then lastly, on the sugar beet, I'll look into it. But I don't remember. The sugar beet wasn't one of the biggest crops in this area in terms of the farms that were affected. Um, but I mean, I do know the sugar beet around here. I grew up by big sugar beet factory. So the next one up. So it is something that we are aware of. But I don't see there's a significant impact from this scheme in terms of the continuation of of the sugar plant.

01:29:34:23 - 01:30:01:19

Thank you. Yeah. Perhaps on the on the sugar beet plant, if that's something you could perhaps clarify or provide a note or a brief summary note, but you know, comment on in your your post hearing

submissions. That would be helpful. Okay. Thank you. Um, if I don't see any further comment, um, any other people in the room would like to speak on this, so I will, um. No comment. No hands on line. So thank you for your, uh, contributions on this. And I will now hand back to you, doctor McGill. Thank you.

01:30:03:16 - 01:30:37:24

Thank you. Um, and in terms of where we're up to on the agenda, uh, we don't have any in relation to 3.5. We don't have any additional points of consideration or clarification. So I will move on to a review of the issues and actions arising. Now obviously we did. We did summarize the actions relating to, uh, yesterday afternoon's discussions at this issue specific hearing. So I'm just going to quickly run through the actions that relate to this morning's discussions.

01:30:38:19 - 01:31:20:00

Uh, so the first of those relates to an update on the sheep grazing regime. If that could be provided, please. As well as management of the community orchard, there was also to be an update on the land plans and the plans, um, in relation to the the baseline mapping and the issue we identified there with relation in relation to, um, uh, the key color and whether or not the clarification could be provided. And there was also reference to a parcel of land already being allocated for flood compensation and respect to an existing planning approval and a suggestion that that would conflict with the proposed development.

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So we'd like an update on that. Um.

01:31:26:29 - 01:31:43:11

We also referred to, um, clarification of what constitutes biodiversity enhancement and whether or not that's, um, consistent with the guidance for landscape and visual impact assessment. Uh, we talked about, um,

01:31:45:10 - 01:31:50:16

an update on the BNG assessment to provide further clarification.

01:31:52:07 - 01:31:53:00

Um,

01:31:54:27 - 01:32:23:18

we also talked about further discussions taking place with the local authorities regarding cumulative impact assessment in terms of firstly, the, um, the the project that sorry, the projects which should be included in the cumulative impact assessment um uh with uh also reference to updates to the iOS cumulative assessments before the end of the examination, where appropriate. In relation to that list of projects,

01:32:25:09 - 01:32:40:29

we talked about how discussions taking place on landscape and visual assessments, including cumulative effects between Newark and Sherwood and the applicant, and the fact that this should be included in a specific section of the Statement of Common Ground with the Council

01:32:42:27 - 01:33:16:17

in relation to BMV. We talked about updating the figures in relation to the cumulative, the cumulative figures on being related to BMV land. And finally, there was reference to a note on sugar beet as part of that last conversation. Okay. So that's a quick run through of the actions. Um, we don't have any other business at this point, so we want to draw the meeting to a close. Um, and we'd like to thank you all, obviously, for contributing to this meeting, and I hope you found it helpful.

01:33:16:19 - 01:33:48:17

Um, just a reminder that both notes and digital recording of proceedings today will be made available as soon as practicable on the project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website. And I also remind you that we are expecting post hearing submissions, including written summaries of your oral submissions or representations made yesterday and today. And that's by deadline one that is Wednesday the 10th of December. As you're aware, this afternoon we'll be holding an open floor hearing.

01:33:48:19 - 01:34:03:15

And I'm aware that a number of you have registered to speak. So it just remains for me now to close this issue. Specific hearing one for the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park. Thank you very much, everyone.