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Project 11-27-25 05:34 pm

Created on: 2025-11-27 17:33:47

Project Length: 01:26:37

Account Holder: [REDACTED]

File Name: GNRS_NOV27_OFH1_PT1.mp4

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:07:11 - 00:00:08:28

Good afternoon, everyone.

00:00:12:17 - 00:00:15:18

Before we start, can I check that? Everybody can hear me clearly.

00:00:17:06 - 00:00:22:21

And can I also confirm with the case team that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced?

00:00:27:18 - 00:00:49:23

So I'd like to welcome you all to this open floor hearing for the application for the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park project. My name is Doctor Andrea McGeehan. I am a chartered Town Planner, and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State to be lead member of the panel to examine this application. I am now going to ask my fellow panel member to introduce themselves.

00:00:50:10 - 00:01:02:10

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

00:01:03:07 - 00:01:15:08

So together with Doctor Brewer, we constitute the examining authority of this application. And we will be reporting to the Secretary of State with a recommendation as to whether or not the development consent Order should be made.

00:01:17:08 - 00:01:29:01

The case manager for the project is Tracy Williams. Please don't hesitate to contact Tracy or a member of the team if you need any help with today's event or the technology. The case team is sat over to the left.

00:01:33:01 - 00:01:50:27

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 is finished. And so, with this in mind, can you please ensure that you speak clearly, stating your name and who you're representing? When you speak,

00:01:52:26 - 00:02:27:24

I'll link to the Planning Inspectorate. Privacy notice was provided in our rule six letter. We assume that everybody here 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. And it's important for me to say to you now that as this event is recorded and published, it's important that you don't add information to the public recording that you would wish to be kept private or confidential. Your your address. For example, please speak to a member of the case team if you've got any questions about that.

00:02:30:16 - 00:02:37:13

And just a general note, we haven't been told about any fire alarms, so if the alarm does sound please, you want to use one of the fire exits.

00:02:39:28 - 00:03:25:21

So I'm now going to say a few words about the the purpose of this open floor hearing. Hopefully the notes on the agenda provide a clear explanation of its of the purpose of this event. Open floor hearings are your opportunity to raise anything directly with us that you consider to be important and relevant to our examination of this application? They're not about a particular topic or a particular location, but rather things that you want to talk about. That said, I should just say at this point that we have read all of the submissions that you've already made, and so any relevant representations you may have made to us, and we are aware of those, and therefore there's no need to to repeat to us something that you've already said in writing.

00:03:29:11 - 00:04:03:22

So in terms of the oral submissions that we will hear this afternoon, um, I have a list of 13 interested parties and three others who've registered an interest in speaking this afternoon and in interest in the interest of fairness to all of the parties presents, we have decided to apply a maximum of five minutes minute speaking time for those. For those submissions by individuals and a maximum of ten minutes speaking time for those representing several people.

00:04:03:24 - 00:04:07:00

So for example, households or organizations.

00:04:09:09 - 00:04:23:22

When you do speak, there's no need to repeat what's what has been said. Said by somebody else. Um, and given the relatively large number of people wanting to speak this afternoon, please consider whether one person could represent what a number of people want to say.

00:04:25:25 - 00:04:57:02

So we will hear from you in the order that you've registered to speak, which is and I'll just run, run through the list that I have in front of me. Um, that's Lynn Thompson, Barry Walton, Sally drew, Jonathan Drew, Anthony Northcote, Richard Allerton, Janet Carr, Judith Andrews, Amanda Bird, counselor James Gamble, Jan John Hitchcock. Elizabeth Hopkins. Carolyn Lloyd.

00:04:57:19 - 00:05:28:00

Lee Outram. And in addition, we've got three others who haven't registered as interested parties. That is Christine Rose, Jim Wishart and David Purvey. I'm aware that others have asked to speak, and I've got a note of that. Um, and I'd say at this point, we've obviously got a lot of people registered to speak this afternoon, and we will, um, a little bit later on review whether or not we can accommodate everyone else.

00:05:28:02 - 00:05:48:26

It may not be possible to accommodate everybody that wants to speak this afternoon. If that is the case. Then please be assured that we will, uh, we're we're happy to receive written representations and and also, if you wish that we hold another open floor hearing, we will do so. You can request that and we will hold another open floor hearing.

00:05:56:11 - 00:06:06:03

As the afternoon progresses. And once we've we've heard from everybody. The applicant will be given an opportunity to respond to any matters raised. Um.

00:06:08:05 - 00:06:21:24

And this could be orally this afternoon or, um, or the applicant may decide to respond in writing by deadline one, which is Wednesday, the 10th of December. At this point, can I check who will be speaking for the applicant this afternoon?

00:06:27:21 - 00:06:29:28

Not to worry. We can confirm that in due course.

00:06:33:16 - 00:07:03:18

So, turning to our speakers. When it is your turn to speak, please make your way to the desk in front of us and settle yourself before you start. Then introduce yourself and say, if you're representing, um, uh, yourself, or whether or whether you're representing a group or an organization. You'll note that there is a timer in front of you, which will count down the time that you have available. As I've said, five minutes for an individual or ten minutes if you're representing an organization.

00:07:04:12 - 00:07:37:01

If you are in danger of overrunning on time, we will let you know a minute before the end. And as I've said, this is this is important because obviously we're trying to accommodate a lot of people this afternoon. So it's important that we and we do stick to time. And lastly, before we start, um, we recognize that you may want to show your support for particular speakers, but we do ask that in order to be fair to all parties and to avoid distracting from the content, that you do not clap or cheer at any point.

00:07:37:12 - 00:07:38:08

Thank you.

00:07:40:00 - 00:07:45:13

So I'm going to hand over now to Mr. Hobbins to, to lead us through the event.

00:07:45:26 - 00:08:16:02

Thank you. Okay. Um, just to remind you as well, when you are speaking, there is obviously the countdown timer, and I will provide a one minute warning before the end of your time. And then if you do overrun, I will step in and interrupt you to, to bring that to a close. And that's, that's not to be, um, indifferent or impolite, but it is just to make sure that we allow everybody to have the chance to speak. So, yeah, please do bear that bit. Yeah. Thank you. So if we could, uh, first hear then please, from Lynn Thompson.

00:08:28:14 - 00:08:31:26

Okay. Um, and Barry Walton, then please.

00:08:40:03 - 00:08:44:09

Okay. Then I'll come to you. Okay. Come to you, Sally. Drew.

00:08:52:24 - 00:08:54:08

And Jonathan Drew.

00:09:11:20 - 00:09:33:27

I think just to check who is here, I think that's what we'll do. So we ensure that people are here then? Yeah. Um, so if you could raise your hand when you hear your name and that will know, then you're here, and then we can go that way. Thank you. So, um, I'll carry on. Anthony Northcote, thank you. Uh, Richard Allerton. Okay. Thank you. Uh, Janet Carr.

00:09:36:12 - 00:09:39:27

Judith Andrews, Amanda Byrd,

00:09:41:23 - 00:09:43:12

uh, councillor James gamble,

00:09:45:13 - 00:09:46:08

John Hiscock.

00:09:48:02 - 00:09:54:01

Elizabeth Hopkins. Carolyn Lloyd. And Lee Outram.

00:09:58:08 - 00:10:02:19

Okay, so we'll carry on then with Anthony Northcote, then, please.

00:10:12:06 - 00:10:53:14

Good afternoon. Examining authority. My name is Dante Northcote. I'm a charter town planner commissioned on behalf of J. Pag, which is an alliance of parish councils and parish meetings. As you know, we've come together to respond to this proposal. And also, as you know, we are participating in the issues, public hearings. So for this purpose, we just want to make some headline points. The sheer scale of the development and its cumulative impact with other proposals is clearly an issue of concern in many of the representations before, you would make the point that, notwithstanding the change in project title, the project is still in essence, just a solar farm.

00:10:54:25 - 00:11:25:01

The local area contains a large amount of existing national infrastructure, including state hot power station, many overhead lines, the A1, the A46 and the East Coast Main Line. It is also a focus for major industrial development, including the sugar factory, as well as the extensive sand and gravel extraction, as well as brick extraction. Brick clay extraction. The mineral activity contributes to national infrastructure through housing, construction and other projects.

00:11:26:02 - 00:11:57:04

All of these elements collectively already have a substantial land take, and additional land is proved or allocated for further mineral extraction. Compounding the land take we have in the area. The River Trent Valley has long been home to existing and former power station sites. Stanthorpe A was one of the first in the country. Stanthorpe C is now one of the latest. West Burton. Further to the north is also going to be home to nuclear small modular reactors.

00:11:57:24 - 00:12:32:12

So we would respectfully say that the area already plays more than its part in accommodating national infrastructure, including substantial energy generation. The legacy grid connections have become a focus for the concentration and clustering of a large number of approved and proposed solar farm projects, together with best projects and other energy and infrastructure proposals. We would ask you to very carefully consider the the impacts of concentration and clustering, as the written ministerial statement asks you to do so.

00:12:34:09 - 00:13:05:12

Solar farms by applicants are generally described as temporary land uses. However, we would respectfully say that an operational lifetime of 40 years is a generational lifetime. We'd also draw attention to the fact that, on average, the coal fired power stations in this section of the River Trent Valley were only operational average 40.5 years. So a power station wouldn't be described as a temporary land use. It would be permanent development in the.

00:13:05:14 - 00:13:35:21

In the same way, this solar farm and Bess should be considered in the context of the average lifespan of power generation as a permanent form of power generation, not a temporary land use scheme is predicated on a headline figure of producing electricity for 400,000 homes from 800MW. As we've set out in our evidence and you'll go into detail, no doubt that estimation seems to be significantly out of step with other projects.

00:13:36:07 - 00:14:03:00

The figures, for example, suggest that Great North Road is going to have the potential to power double the number of homes that the nearest other proposal on Earth is saying it's going to achieve with respect to the applicant, we consider they are completely overselling the benefits as acknowledged by the applicant yesterday. No weight can be attached to any of the N+ projects or the pre-existing flood alleviation,

00:14:04:17 - 00:14:39:12

but we would argue that overall, the scale of the project is disproportionate to the host communities, and the development is that now rather insufficiently described doughnut in shape. But it does extend across an area in excess of 18,000 hectares. But in another way, that's 181km². Whilst the order limits only comprises 1765 hectares, as we've talked about, you need to think about that bigger picture the way it's laid out in the context of Newark and Sherwood.

00:14:39:18 - 00:14:51:25

The project is within 22 parishes. You can. Sherwood only has 84 parishes. It's a very large. It's more than a quarter of the parishes in the entire district. It impacts upon.

00:14:54:16 - 00:15:25:25

The impacts is is particularly increased by the other proposals that are filling in the gaps within that donut circle. See shape how we want to describe it. We would also draw attention to the fact that, as an example, the scale of the proposal is 85% the size of the entire built up area of Newark, which includes Newark, Balderton, Fernwood, and all three major planned urban extensions.

00:15:26:04 - 00:15:59:22

So in the context locally, it is a huge proposal and it's slightly wider context. It is five times the size of East Midlands Airport. If we look very locally, the land proposed for solar farm is 31 times the size of Stanthorpe Power Station, which is a very large site in itself. So with respect, we would say the proposal is too big for a for the area which is already full of existing infrastructure and development. I thank you very much for your examining authority, for your time and attention this afternoon.

00:16:00:24 - 00:16:02:18

Thank you very much, Mr. Northcote.

00:16:11:26 - 00:16:15:00

Okay. Um, can we now come to Richard Allerton, please?

00:16:28:27 - 00:16:32:18

Just confirm, Mr. Allerton, you're speaking on behalf of yourself today, is that right?

00:16:32:21 - 00:16:51:14

No. Know and represent Luxton and more household concerns. Okay, so that's fine. So my name is Richard Allerton. I represent Laxton and Moorhouse Solar Concerns, who are a group of individuals within the locale who are affected by part of the proposed solar array.

00:16:53:19 - 00:17:29:09

There is much to be concerned from a strategic level, not least a lack of national strategy for wind and solar array location. This has resulted in a Wild West goldrush approach, as big businesses descend on areas and it is left to the locals to defend, rather than a national assessment of which areas and by what criteria solar might be acceptably deployed. Equally, the technology itself is unsuitable for renewable energy generation in the UK.

00:17:30:29 - 00:17:56:21

First tier. Research contends that the use of solar panels above the 45 degree latitude will not generate as much electricity in their lifetime as was used to build and deploy them. In short, if we wish to limit climate change, do not use solar panels above these latitudes.

00:17:58:06 - 00:18:01:11

We in North Nottingham are at 52 degrees.

00:18:04:21 - 00:18:37:17

And our solar park size is significant, causing different and common problems across a wide area and 2022 apparently parishes. And there is much I could discuss and argue, but we limit myself to the issues that are particular to Laxton and Moorhouse. I'd like to draw your attention to the flooding problems in this area, But I will also use this as an example of a more fundamental failure of this project proposal.

00:18:39:23 - 00:19:11:06

Paxton and Moorhouse is sensitive to flooding, as evidenced by my submissions to you to Element Screen and from the Parish Councils 2023 Flood Report. Incidentally, in medieval times, Moorhouse was actually known as Moorhouse in the bog. The digging of several drainage backs in the mid 1800s largely alleviated this problem, allowing the rich soil to be developed for agriculture.

00:19:16:06 - 00:19:54:11

Currently, the issues associated with local flooding are predominantly temporal, caused by the inability of the becks to drain the water away to the Trent fast enough. Inland drainage has responsibility for keeping the becks clear, but anything that prevents outflow from this area is critical. The area and housing within the villages remains sensitive to this problem, and this was raised with element screen, both in written submission and at public meetings at both Laxton and later at Moorhouse.

00:19:55:12 - 00:20:09:09

Unfortunately, the fields adjacent to the beck downstream of the villages are all earmarked for solar array panels. And I think on the maps that you present, they are fields in 1 to 7 that I refer.

00:20:11:23 - 00:20:45:21

Empirical research published in Hydrological Processes, which is an IR first quartile publication, has shown that solar panels runoff can be 11 times greater than the bare soil, much less the current wheat fields. This research was carried out in a subtropical climate. More equivalent to our own temperate climate than the research that is used by elements green to counter this, which is derived from arid US areas.

00:20:45:23 - 00:20:52:28

And from what I can see unquoted. So I have no idea of the quality of the research.

00:20:55:04 - 00:21:10:19

Meta analysis on this topic acknowledges this. Again, interestingly, elements green say that meta analysis on this topic counters this. Um, they give no reference for that. I do.

00:21:12:22 - 00:21:48:14

Thus, the concern is that at periods of heavy rain, the flow of water from more house area will be directly impeded by the increased rapidity of flow into the downstream beck from the solar panel fields, which will rapidly overcome the best capability and back up into the village. This was raised with elements green who disagreed with the contentions, but in their final submission, they have reduced the solar paneling directly adjacent to the Outflowing Beck and replaced it with riparian planting.

00:21:50:12 - 00:22:14:20

This is bewildering because this will potentially exacerbate the problem for the villages by impeding water flow away from the villages in periods of heavy rain, but this has not been considered by elements green in their flood assessment of the area, which simply assures that Elements Greens solar equipment will be protected by this change.

00:22:17:09 - 00:22:39:16

In fact, all of their flood assessments limit their scope to Two effects on the solar plant, giving no consideration to effects on local inhabitants or environment. Notably, this has resulted in the removal, presumably the removal, of a large number of panels in the Musqueam area.

00:22:41:26 - 00:23:18:21

Equally, it should be recognized that it takes approximately 400,000l of water to grow an acre of wheat. This equates to 75,000,000l of water to grow the wheat currently immediately around the downstream beck. The local land itself is spongiform, hence the term more house in the bog. It drains throughout the growing period and physically changes in shape. Recharging in the rainy months and providing a resilience to the flood risk.

00:23:19:12 - 00:23:33:21

Solar panels will not allow Propping or even natural evaporation under their shade, and thus the spongiform land will lose its ability to moderate rain flow in the Bec.

00:23:37:10 - 00:23:52:18

This is our consideration of flooding issues. What is clear is that the consideration done by elements green is just of the flooding issue. That is of a risk to their equipment.

00:23:54:05 - 00:24:28:29

Why do I say this? There are 22 documents in the some 300 submitted by Elements Green which deal with flood risk. What is immediately of concern is that there is no hierarchy to these documents. There is no safety case with supporting documentation, no compelling arguments that all hazards have

been identified and mitigated to the lowest practical level. Instead, there is simply some safety evidence.

00:24:29:21 - 00:25:04:28

And the evidence is weak. It is desktop. By their own admission, they haven't visited the areas and it's provided in the form of preliminary risk assessment. This is interesting actually. They should have first carried out preliminary hazard identification. And then they could assess the risk associated with each hazard identified. The inability to differentiate between hazard and risk is a significant concern.

00:25:09:02 - 00:25:16:28

From this they could have started to generate a preliminary safety case. But there is no evidence of this.

00:25:18:28 - 00:25:45:27

And if there were, it would not be complete as it would only consider the flood hazards. And in fact the flood hazards only to it's bounded to only their own equipment. And a preliminary safety case, even with supported FPS and prey, is carried out at the conceptual phase of a project's development.

00:25:46:04 - 00:25:48:21

Just to interrupt you there, Mister Allerton, you have one minute left. Thank you.

00:25:48:23 - 00:26:20:06

Well, I'd better rush then. The design, development, manufacture, operation and decommissioning aspects come after this, and all the assurance and evidence for these phases are missing. Even these preliminary investigations are limited to only elements Greens assets. There is simply no safety assurance that all hazards associated with this project have been identified and credibly reduced to as low as reasonably practical.

00:26:20:19 - 00:26:48:03

In essence, the effects of the project's implementation, even from a flooding aspect, are unknown. The flooding issues around Moorhouse and Laxton are but a single example of the failure to fully consider and mitigate the risk implications of the project, particularly to habitats, inhabitants and the environment. This lack of a risk based approach has prevented element stream.

00:26:48:11 - 00:26:49:28

Um. Thus your time there.

00:26:50:00 - 00:26:51:01

Is that my ten minutes?

00:26:51:03 - 00:26:55:23

Yes, that is your ten minutes. If I could just ask you to, uh. You can't close there. Thank you. Have you heard enough?

00:26:57:24 - 00:26:59:13

Thank you very much. Thank you.

00:27:06:22 - 00:27:10:05

Okay. Um, could we hear from Janet's car, please?

00:27:16:16 - 00:27:19:26

If you could just tell us who you're representing today.

00:27:20:08 - 00:27:57:18

Yes. Good afternoon. My name is Janet Carr, and I'm speaking both as an individual and as a member of the Ossington Social Concerns group. Um, speaking as an individual, I wish first to state the time firmly against the proposed Great North Road solar development for many reasons, not least of which is the cumulative impact that potentially one of the largest solar developments in the country will have over a huge swathe of extremely rural countryside. Others have covered and will cover many of the concerning aspects of the application I wish to bring to the inspector's attention.

00:27:57:27 - 00:28:33:08

The situation of tenant farmers affected by this potential development. Not enough weight has been given to this aspect. My family farmland in the parish of Ossington, which is a very traditional estate village, unlike any of the other 18 or so villages affected. Virtually all the land in the parish and most of the houses are tenanted, with the estate owner resident within the village. Whilst many residents disagree strongly with the application, they are unwilling to voice their opinions for fear of upsetting their tenancy arrangements.

00:28:34:07 - 00:29:15:14

Our farmland is held under a farm business tenancy or FBT. Previously it was a pre 1986 Inherited Agricultural Holdings Act tenancy, which may have attracted some compensation for the loss of land in such circumstances. Fpts do not have the same status and consequently there is no statutory right to compensation for loss of land and therefore income. There are other tenants losing a greater amount of land, but in our case the land to be taken for solar panels and a substation as well amounts to 34 acres, 13% of the current area of the farm.

00:29:15:17 - 00:29:52:24

It is grade three land officially classified as best and most versatile, which will be lost to food production for at least 40 years. Nationally, the Tenant Farmers Association has petitioned the government and the Prime Minister with regard to greater, excuse me, greater protection for tenant farmers in the face of solar developments. I am asking the inspectors, therefore, how would you feel to be told, with no warning, that you have to arbitrarily accept a 13% pay cut through no fault of your own? This coming on top of the potential disruption noise.

00:29:52:26 - 00:29:57:13

Damage to roads in the environment is a very hard pill to swallow.

00:29:59:09 - 00:30:31:29

Moving on, the other subject I wish to address on behalf of the group is the extremely detrimental effect on the village, the landscape and the wider The community. If the former airfield site of RAF Ossington is taken for solo development, this should not be allowed to happen. Ossington village was

radically changed during World War II, when it was decided to build an airfield covering a large part of the parish. Roads were closed and two farms in the village school were demolished to make way for the airfield.

00:30:32:09 - 00:31:09:00

It operated from 1942 to 1946, primarily as a training airfield for the RAF, and also a Royal Canadian Air Force bomber pilots and crew. After the war, the land was eventually mostly returned to agriculture, albeit with the concrete runways, buildings and associated structures still largely in place. Ossington is a small village of approximately 100 inhabitants, with only a former World War one military hut serving as a small village hall and no designated public spaces at all, i.e.

00:31:09:08 - 00:31:39:14

no play area, park, etc. over the years, due to the relaxed attitude of the estate, the former airfield has become an unofficial open space enjoyed by local residents for leisure and recreation, using the runways for access. Farming takes place across the airfield site, with the public respectfully accessing the area for dog walking, running, walking, birdwatching, painting, meditation, etc. the list goes on.

00:31:39:18 - 00:32:12:07

There has never been any formal recognition of all this activity, which is probably why Elements Green considered it to be merely a brownfield site. At the same time, the fact that there were and still are areas where nature has taken over, chiefly the former sites of buildings and other structures, has meant that wildlife has flourished. Raptors such as buzzard, red kite, kestrel and sparrowhawk all hunt for prey there and barn owls can be regularly seen quartering the extensive area and indeed they breed on the airfield.

00:32:12:17 - 00:32:43:17

In particular, ground nesting birds such as lapwing and skylark, both acknowledged officially at risk nationally, make the airfield their home and breed their deer. Fox, badger and hare are regularly seen and bats thrive in the adjacent woodland whilst foraging over the airfield and the nearby lake. In particular, the nationally extremely rare bobtail bat has been discovered as a result of surveys carried out on behalf of Elements Green, the airfield and adjoining landscape.

00:32:43:19 - 00:33:23:18

Obviously suit its very special requirements. In fact, most of the species mentioned will struggle to retain a foothold as the installation of solar panels will obliterate the precise environmental conditions that they need. The former airfield site is unique in the area because of its vast open vistas, peace and solitude. Lincoln Cathedral and poignantly, the newly constructed Bomber Memorial Memorial on Freedom's Wings near Norton. Disney can both be seen from the highest point of the airfield, which will be covered in solar panels and inaccessible to the general public if the scheme goes ahead in its current form.

00:33:25:08 - 00:33:55:08

A suggested public access way alongside the security fencing, surveillance cameras and solar panels will be no compensation whatsoever. Local residents and those in the know from further afield use this area as a valuable green lung. It helps people with both their physical and mental health and gives

a sense of freedom unavailable elsewhere. It is also very safe for dog walkers. So much will be lost here if the scheme goes ahead.

00:33:55:10 - 00:34:29:03

Farmland and with it a further decline in food security. Wildlife, including several nationally at risk species. Open access views, peace, tranquility and a sense of place. All this is irreplaceable. I make no apology for this being an emotional appeal rather than an academic one. This is how much of the public at large views the threats to the airfield from the scheme. Residents and users are passionate about this place. Please listen and take on board our very real concerns.

00:34:29:07 - 00:34:30:01

Thank you.

00:34:30:27 - 00:34:32:00

Thank you very much.

00:34:39:08 - 00:34:43:19

Could we hear from Judith Andrews, please? If you could state who you're presenting to.

00:34:49:13 - 00:34:50:07

Good afternoon.

00:34:50:15 - 00:35:20:17

I'm not representing any organization. Am I here as an individual? Representing my family? Um, I have two children at university. Husband at work and elderly parents who couldn't attend today. Um, I also think I would like to represent, as this is a 40 year project by future generations that would be coming to my farm in the future. Um, I'm an environmental studies graduate. I understand the issues of renewable energy. I understand climate change.

00:35:20:19 - 00:35:58:12

I know we need to change our energy infrastructure. This is a massive problem that we're facing. Um, this is the wrong solution. Uh, two wrongs do not make a right. Um, it's just. It's just absolutely the wrong thing that we should be. Shouldn't be taking this forward. I live in Berkeley. Um, I live in the center of the doughnut. Um, it's really very difficult not to have an emotional response to what is happening to our community. I am furious about the way that private enterprise is just going to be allowed to come and smother our landscape with their panels.

00:35:58:21 - 00:36:33:25

Um, it's horrific, the extent of this project absolutely horrific. And with all the others in the vicinity that were being imposed upon us. I can't walk my dog, I can't ride my bike, let alone drive my car in any direction without encountering either a project that's already built or a project that is in the pipeline and is coming. And I'm really fearful of this particular project with its just scattergun approach to the countryside. It's really quite obvious that design is just ripe for infill and acquisition, and there's really big bucks to be made here.

00:36:34:22 - 00:37:06:01

Um, as a member of the public, I've been to three consultation events, um, one online and two in person, which have all been designed to placate worried residents. I was implicated, um, there's been a huge emphasis on what we're going to get as a trade off the N+. They're going to fix our roads, we'll get new football pitches, there'll be flood alleviation. We'll get grants for our homes, for solar panels. I've been here for two days. I'm quite clear now. These are. These are hollow promises. These aren't in, you know, these.

00:37:06:24 - 00:37:25:27

These aren't coming to us. Um. Um. I feel we've been hoodwinked. Um, it's really no coincidence that the person who was on the front of the new advertiser, um, who happens to be a very keen cider brewer, happens to have a, um, orchard community orchard right outside his front door.

00:37:27:18 - 00:38:14:06

I feel really let down by this, um, blinkered government, um, policy. It's just created, as another gentleman said, a gold rush. We're being swamped by multiples of sites, and then this juggernaut of project has hit us. I'm really quite stunned by the rebranding of this as a biodiversity park. It's not. It's just daylight robbery. We're being robbed of our agricultural economy and they're robbing us of our traditional landscape. I'm astonished, really, by the discussions I've witnessed over the last couple of days the omissions, the inaccuracies, the contradictions, the poor interpretations are quite stunned by that, to be fair, and I'm really a shame that we can't get a more common sense solution to stop this.

00:38:14:09 - 00:38:55:26

It's really depressing that this is our legacy for future generations. How am I honestly going to tell my grandchildren 20 years that this is the best that we could do? I'm really proud of my community, and I'm really proud of the way that they've come together. And the parishes have worked together to try and and take this on this behemoth, and I'm well done to all those people that are trying their best. Thank you. And I really urge you to go back to the Secretary of State's and tell it to to bin this. Can I also request that if you are to have an open floor meeting, that you make this accessible to the public? Um, you know, I know someone who has had to take their final day off work this year to be able to attend today.

00:38:55:29 - 00:39:01:07

There's lots of working people who would like to have their chance to have their say. Thank you very much.

00:39:01:15 - 00:39:02:17

Thank you very much.

00:39:11:03 - 00:39:13:24

Okay. Can we hear from Amanda Bird, please?

00:39:24:21 - 00:39:27:21

And again, if you could just state who you're here to represent. Thank you.

00:39:28:01 - 00:39:34:21

Good afternoon. Um, sorry. I'm getting emotional already. I'm here to represent myself and again, my family.

00:39:34:23 - 00:39:35:23

That's fine, thank you.

00:39:37:18 - 00:40:10:06

What I'd like to do is question the number of homes that this solar park can supply. Cleve Hill in Kent, far sunnier area than here. Has 550,000 panels, yet only supplies 102,000 homes. And they were over the moon that one sunny day in November. They produced electricity for 20,000 homes. That's all. My fear is that the size of the boundary, the elements green has set.

00:40:11:09 - 00:40:17:25

They'll be coming back with an application for more grid space. That is my fear.

00:40:19:27 - 00:40:54:03

I'd also like to make a comment that was made at the end of the session, where climate change is the biggest risk to food security. As far as I can see, we're going round in circles here. We're covering agricultural land in solar panels, putting sheep underneath them and then importing over 3 million tonnes of animal feed. 90% or 90% of 3 million for animal feed from Brazil. Destroying rainforests, which is one of the biggest carbon captures that we have.

00:40:54:23 - 00:41:28:05

So I can't see how putting solar farms onto agricultural land is making any difference. Um, Cop 30 Wales is suffering from environmental pollution from soy that is being brought from Brazil, from feces and sheep food. It is degrading into the soils and seeping into waterways and rivers. And that was discussed on the first day of Cop 30.

00:41:29:13 - 00:42:16:11

Wales are now looking at growing their own food because they feel responsible for the deforestation of the rainforest. Can I also discuss planetary boundaries? These were established by Stockholm Resilience Centre 2009 and updated in 2015. Funnily enough known as the Doughnut Economy and the new UN 2015 World Conference to Sustainable Development in Climate Change, we passed these planetary boundaries on biodiversity land change by 60% through deforestation for food and second or sorry and climate change.

00:42:17:00 - 00:42:52:10

The UN Sustainable Development 2015 also set 17 goals. The first was to eradicate poverty. The second food security, the sixth water and the seventh modern energy. The more land we take out of the food cycle, the more issues we have is relying on countries that do not have the same stringent regulations as the UK does for food. We can see the effects of the rainforest and we do not have a part. We can see the effects of the rainforest and we shouldn't have a part in its destruction, which is what we are doing.

00:42:52:17 - 00:43:24:20

We have problems with water, and lithium takes 500,000 gallons of water per ton. Now, without lithium, solar doesn't work. We need battery storage and may also say that we don't have British standards on best sites at the moment. And of course, that I went on discussing, Grenfell said best sites will. Next will be the next Grenfell Tower catastrophe because we don't have rules in place. Now I live on Moorhouse Road, approximately two metres from the roadside.

00:43:24:22 - 00:43:39:24

I have no foundations and built on clay. I had a conversation with the gentleman at phase two who advised me my house would be safe from any structural damage, because the vibrations had nowhere to go. Three builders later and that's incorrect.

00:43:39:26 - 00:43:42:17

My house is one minute. I have one minute left.

00:43:43:24 - 00:43:53:09

My house will become a multiple. So I request that homes within a certain meter ridge from the roadside

00:43:55:08 - 00:44:04:17

can have a structural survey that is paid for by N+, and any out-of-pocket expenses comes from this community fund.

00:44:06:13 - 00:44:13:21

I'm not happy with phase two. It seems that either the person was either not knowledgeable, not expertise, or was hiding the truth.

00:44:18:01 - 00:44:19:11

That's all. Thank you.

00:44:19:13 - 00:44:20:25

Okay. Thank you very much.

00:44:28:15 - 00:44:32:02

Okay. Could we hear from Councillor James Gamble, please?

00:44:44:05 - 00:45:20:04

Good afternoon, Planning Inspectorate. It's James Gamble, county councillor for Sherwood Forest. I was here this morning. I'm here to represent my constituents of Sherwood Forest residents, including King Willow Rutherford, Edwin Stow, Kings Clipstone and neighbouring villages as well. I don't want to repeat what other residents have mentioned and they're going to mention later on today. They're presenting beautifully, and nor do I really want to go over what was mentioned this morning, but so it's not going to be a ten minute presentation.

00:45:20:06 - 00:45:52:24

I just want to want to focus on three points that I, that I want to focus on. So today it it was obvious during the presentation that I'm afraid what elements green have presented. A lot of it is inaccurate. So

we were looking at soils this morning and particularly BMV best and most versatile of land. And in this Newark and Sherwood landscape, there's a huge amount of BMV, but elements green of miscalculated the BMV.

00:45:52:27 - 00:46:10:02

This was obvious this morning on accumulative impacts. I've got a figure of 200 hectares. I've probably misheard. It's probably a lot more than that, but 200 hectares in effect is 280 football pitches. How can Elements Green who've had months to do this,

00:46:11:21 - 00:46:45:09

not be accurate to such a scale? So BMV is huge. Another thing that um, elements green hadn't looked looked upon is uh, the effects to the local economy. So we talked about the sugar factory in Newark. Uh, sugar beet is a prime crop in this area. It's not one. It's not one of crops. There's plenty of crops, but sugar beet is a big provider to the local economy. So when we take out the BMV, the, uh, inaccurate recording of BMV by element screen.

00:46:45:11 - 00:47:15:15

In fact, we're going to be affecting the economy. So landowners rely on the sugar factory, and the sugar factory relies on landowners. They get over one over 1.5 tons of sugar beets every year. Annually. They collect it from providers, a 600 odd providers, and majority of those within 28 miles radius of a sugar factory. So again, I'd like elements green to do a proper, um, impacts on the local economy.

00:47:15:17 - 00:47:50:10

Another thing that came out this morning as well was on biodiversity. Those of you don't know, I'm a county councillor with an MSC in Biodiversity Conservation. Uh, we're dealing with what's known as a Rochdale envelope. A Rochdale envelope is quite typical of n cips national strategic infrastructure projects. They're very grey. They're very woolly. Um, so in effect, tracks fences, solar arrays. It could all be changed later on and this will have significant impacts on biodiversity.

00:47:50:12 - 00:48:22:18

So when they're calculating biodiversity net gain in doing ecological reports, again it's inaccurate. What I was particularly disappointed with this morning was that there's a number of providers who are meant to be partnering with Elements Green on the biodiversity park. Obviously, the biodiversity park was renamed later on after the initial first submission, to make it more marketable and palatable to residents and the wider public. So I was very concerned that the Wildlife Trust weren't here, and Shield Forest Trust, who is supposed to be partnering.

00:48:22:20 - 00:48:55:20

And it also came apparently quite apparent this morning that a lot of things are still in draft. One of those was the grazing proposals. We don't know what stocking rates are going to be for sheep. Is it going to be sheep wrecks? Are we not going to have any wildflowers under these solar farms, or is it going to be a huge significance of nitrates that are put into the soil with a huge amount of sheep. So in effect, there's lots and lots of different unknowns and different changes. And this is a problem as well when we decommission all the local power stations. So we know all the ones, there's West Burton that's being decommissioned.

00:48:55:22 - 00:49:29:24

We've had the local ones as well. They are big, significant contributors to the local economy with business rates. So what we found now is Newark and Sherwood District Council have permitted a number of solar farms over the last few years because, in my opinion, they're trying to chase that loss income from business rates from these, um, power stations that are being decommissioned. My concern is we get this 7000 acre application permitted. There's going to be more on the way, and there's going to be a lot more cumulative impacts for our villages that I represent, and that's about it.

00:49:29:26 - 00:49:30:23

Thank you very much.

00:49:32:00 - 00:49:33:15

Thank you very much, Councillor Gamble.

00:49:45:15 - 00:49:52:01

Okay. Could we hear from Janet, please? Oh, yes. Okay. Thank you. If you could just state who you're representing to. Thank you.

00:49:54:03 - 00:49:59:13

Good afternoon. Janet Hiscock, local resident representing myself.

00:50:01:07 - 00:50:51:03

This is a build on my previous submission regarding cost, benefits and in particular benefits it based on comments by the applicant at the end of yesterday. Yesterday's session, if approved, this project will have a significant and undeniable detrimental effect on the local countryside and community. For all the issues listed in annex C and discussed today, which I totally support. There has been an accepted and unquestioned mantra within the UK and elsewhere that renewables will provide clean and cheaper electricity In the NRJ Solar and Diversity website, it declares on its home page that it would support UK energy security and contribute to tackling the cost of living crisis through the reduction of household energy bills.

00:50:51:05 - 00:51:29:10

In addition, a key benefit is listed as helping reduce household bills and provide energy security with home grown solar power. However, the applicant stated yesterday that helping to reduce household bills is not in scope within the development section of the website. There are three other key benefits listed. They include contributing to national and local climate targets by generating clean and reliable electricity. This is in scope and was discussed extensively yesterday with regards to emissions, with reference to App 058.

00:51:29:12 - 00:51:45:28

The applicant indicated that there were emission savings whilst the Rural Norell Solar Farm Steering Group indicated that the project will be responsible for significantly more CO2 emissions than it will save. Another benefit is the increasing

00:51:47:15 - 00:52:19:22

biodiversity and protecting wildlife with additional plantings and protected areas. This is in scope and there has been much discussion on this topic today. May I reference Professor Dieter Helm of Oxford University who took place, who took part in a House of Lords discussion on the cost of renewables, and he states, if we cared about the environment, then we wouldn't be building a solar park. We'd been ensuring long term energy strategy for consistent power. Finally, there is the energy plus community benefit.

00:52:19:26 - 00:52:46:27

I acknowledge again the care and good intent associated with N+ community benefits. But yesterday, the applicant stated that the Energy Community Benefit Fund would not be formally attached to the application. Whilst I understand why should planning be approved, and potentially there is no official or legal obligation for the applicant to carry out the Ng plus benefits. Given that scale of the project

00:52:48:25 - 00:53:33:17

and the huge amount of documentation, it must be the likely expectation of the applicant that the website is a principal go to in terms of information to the public. The narrative very much includes cost reduction for consumers with equal weight in terms of font size and visual prominence given to all four key benefits, and yet helping to reduce household bills, i.e. the cost to the consumer is, as the applicant stated yesterday. Out of scope, with no further caveats or supporting information for the consumer to understand why I'm raising the question of cost now, since there is growing consensus, particularly in recent months, that green energy requires massive subsidies and that the cost of renewables has been underestimated.

00:53:33:20 - 00:54:05:19

And and to support this, the Energy Department website has recently changed the official slogan on its website to a pledge to protect bill payer, bill payers and the commitment to reduce household energy bills by 300. By the end of the decade, has now been removed from its flagship policy. Again, the Climate Change Committee, in its seventh carbon budget, indicated there will likely be no net zero savings until the seventh carbon budget period in 2038 to 2042.

00:54:06:01 - 00:54:07:02

The number.

00:54:07:04 - 00:54:07:29

One minute remaining.

00:54:08:07 - 00:54:26:15

In July 2025 has stated there is considerable uncertainty around the economic and fiscal cost associated with the climate change migration. Migration. Finally, the House of Lords on the 8th of November, 2024 raised the topic of renewable energy costs,

00:54:28:03 - 00:55:01:18

with household bills due to climb to more than £1,815 in April 2026, from the current level of 1755 and recognition. The energy requirements for the UK will double by 2050. And given the significant impact to the environment, the community now had asked the examining Authority to undertake the appropriate and very rigorous scrutiny of the applicant's statements and claims to ensure those

benefits, and in particular, costs, are clear and transparent to consumers and business within the Newark and Sherwood area.

00:55:01:20 - 00:55:02:16

Thank you.

00:55:03:11 - 00:55:04:14

Thank you very much.

00:55:17:10 - 00:55:23:11

We now hear from Elizabeth Hopkins, please. If you could state who you're representing. Thank you.

00:55:29:20 - 00:55:31:25

Hello. My name is Liz Hopkins.

00:55:31:27 - 00:55:33:15

I'm chairman of Carleton.

00:55:33:17 - 00:55:34:08

On Trent Parish.

00:55:34:10 - 00:55:34:25

Council.

00:55:34:27 - 00:55:36:21

I'm here to speak on their behalf.

00:55:37:03 - 00:55:37:24

Thank you.

00:55:42:21 - 00:55:45:21

Carlton on Trent. We are next to the Trent.

00:55:45:23 - 00:55:48:02

And we flood. We usually get.

00:55:48:04 - 00:55:48:27

Fluvial.

00:55:48:29 - 00:55:50:16

Water, but in.

00:55:50:18 - 00:56:14:26

The case of Babette and Hank, for the first time, we had pluvial. And it was bad. We had over a third of the village properties were impacted upon. We had 20 properties that were flooded, and others

experienced damp related issues in subsequent months. All of the businesses were affected, either directly or indirectly, by loss of income.

00:56:16:08 - 00:56:18:12

The speed that the water came.

00:56:18:14 - 00:56:51:12

Gave no warning. Residents lost valuable property assets. Um, if the water isn't absorbed into the ground before it gets to us. The tributaries and rivers are full. Then it's going to cause more flooding. And that's what happened. As well as having the pluvial water in the fluvial, we are also the penultimate village on the pump line system before it goes to Cromwell. So we get it from nine other villages, including the large conurbation of Sutton on Trent.

00:56:51:19 - 00:57:26:08

The speed the water leaves, the hills and the fields is intrinsically linked with how rapidly the Trent fulfils. The government advocates that you want permeable services on developments such as block paving panels are not permeable. The idea that the water is going to run off those panels into the row underneath is a fallacy. The rain shadow is real. The rain runs off the panels and creates rivulets, and they increase the the rate that the water runs off the fields.

00:57:27:10 - 00:57:57:27

I've annotated this with images to help you show those examples where the soil is heavy and compact. That speed of flow is going to be greater. We are heavy clay, so we've already got one issue to deal with. The water does not run off the panels evenly along the bottom. It descends to the lowest corner and creates a drip line. The drip line causes compaction in the heavy clay.

00:57:58:10 - 00:58:29:03

So now we have heavy and we have compacted soil which is going to speed up the flow. The panels that the applicant is planning to put along Ossington Road are going to go east to west or west to east. The topography means that the runoff will travel down the panels and into a stream, passing behind Castlehill Cottages. This section of the stream. There is a piece that's missed off their maps, but we hope to show you that during one of your visits.

00:58:29:08 - 00:59:03:28

Um, and this watercourse also goes under the railway, which we understood struggle during the bet, but we haven't been able to locate a response from any of the railway networks to see how this might affect them, as well as those fields with panels. We're looking at fields lining the Carlton Norrell Road. It's known as Carlton Road. I've got the numbers here if you want them. Uh, those panels drain down into two watercourses, which subsequently come into the village.

00:59:04:01 - 00:59:39:19

They go under the railway and under the A1. But in the case of Babette, they couldn't cope. And they flooded onto the A1, which caused financial complications and impact to the whole of the country. Those two fields DB SDB zero four, eight and 49 are known locally as low moor because they are low and they're moors and they flood. They are often in water and when the those watercourses can't cope, the flood water goes over the road and into the fields on the other side.

00:59:41:21 - 01:00:03:07

And yesterday we were told that the panels were that feels that were out, um, that were prone to flooding. Were selected strategically. They went through the process and anything that was flooded would not be part of the process. Those fields are in the process and they flood.

01:00:06:01 - 01:00:08:14

I seem to have got a page mixed up.

01:00:16:27 - 01:00:48:10

During the construction of the panels we are going to experience the soil getting compacted again because of the heavy equipment. We're talking about sheep being used for grazing livestock compact ground as well. All of these are going to impact on the flow of the water off. We have included in our submission for the 10th of December a flood risk assessment to an appeal for the solar farm at Glebe Farm, Taunton. I've got the reference if you need it.

01:00:48:12 - 01:01:19:10

The planning inspector, Jessica Graham, noted the and acknowledged the contribution that the information regarding rain shadow, the downward slope, the drip line the river gets and she concluded that she found this argument persuasive. The impact of flooding isn't just on the locals, it's nationally. It affected costs of National Insurance. It in fact, it affects the emergency service.

01:01:19:12 - 01:01:49:13

All of that equals to a knock on effect to the rest of us. I'd also like to mention the discussion the topic of best and most versatile land. We have got the land in our area has been graded as three. If you look at the map we heard yesterday about the complications of level grade three, all of our land has been used for production of crops and sheep in between crop growth.

01:01:49:20 - 01:02:26:26

For as long as living memory and beyond. Production at the moment is three and a half ton an acre, which is normal. We've actually known that they've got produced over four foot on an acre. I'm talking wheat here rather than barley. That would indicate that this land is good. Yesterday we were told that because the land on the other side of the Trent is Paul, that these feels are going to be poor. And yet Cromwell, which is 572m away, is grade two.

01:02:26:28 - 01:02:46:14

It's more likely on the balance of probability that that is a continuation, and that these fields that could produce in up to and over 40 and an acre are actually good and not poor, as the applicant would have implied yesterday. Um.

01:02:49:00 - 01:03:17:18

I was going to comment on the quality of the land after 40 years. I'm not convinced that it will be as good as as good as it is currently. I know when I take my took a shed up, the land underneath was awful. Um, there is some information we are going to submit from the National Institute of Agricultural Botany that they have key messages, including that the

01:03:19:15 - 01:04:01:05

the soil plant material provides nutrients and minerals and it's essential to that is weathering. If you're covering huge amounts of land with panels, they're not getting the weathering. And as I've said, I've got images that will help demonstrate that there's bare soil underneath and the plant growth is poor and it's compacted by sheet which holds the water. All of this prevents growth. The lack of weathering, compounded with that means that this soil growth, the soil quality after 40 years, is not going to be the same as at this.

01:04:02:10 - 01:04:37:21

We hope it would be nice, given that the applicant has got projects that are of a substantial age. We were told they had projects of 20 years ago. Possibly they could do soil analysis. I'm working on the assumption that didn't before. They put the panels on, and they give us an example of what it was and what it is now. Maybe as a way of alleviating that concern. Uh, decommissioning. I'm also hoping that they have set up something so that should they go bust, the panels will be decommissioned.

01:04:37:23 - 01:04:44:02

And I'd like some assurance that the removal of the posts and.

01:04:44:04 - 01:04:44:19

With.

01:04:44:25 - 01:04:52:00

The removal of the post will be at the piles that they stand. The panels on will be taken out as well.

01:04:53:22 - 01:05:25:29

Uh, I have got information on biodiversity. We're not quite sure we agree with their, uh, studies. Uh, one of our locals who isn't able to complete that section currently has evidence, photographic evidence, which, again, will show you hopefully on a visit where there was tawny owl chicks and a whole ray of wildlife that would indicate from their studies that they don't exist. Um, we also are concerned about visual impact, but I'm conscious of 19 seconds to go.

01:05:26:15 - 01:05:28:24

Thank you very much for listening to us.

01:05:29:11 - 01:05:31:11

Okay. Thank you very much for submissions.

01:05:42:19 - 01:05:48:00

If we could now hear from Carolyn Lloyd, please. And if you could state who you're representing to. Thank you.

01:06:04:24 - 01:06:11:27

Good afternoon. I'm speaking for myself and also eat cream parish council.

01:06:13:12 - 01:06:44:04

We object to the size, location and cumulative impact of the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park and the industrial feel it will give to our predominantly rural landscape for generations to come. It is disingenuous and disrespectful for anyone who objects to the proposed solar farm to be called NIMBYs. We are not. We are communities that care about our environment.

01:06:45:01 - 01:07:18:22

In each, we have accepted planning decisions for the building of houses within and immediately outside the village. The installation of both a solar and wind farm to the west, and the expansion of the National Grid training site in the village. However, the Great North Road solar Park is Disproportionate and out of scale to the size of our village and the area as a whole. We feel we have not been listened to.

01:07:19:16 - 01:07:53:20

Elements. Green have had years to prepare for their application by employing teams of consultants with seemingly unlimited resources. However, their roadshows were delivered by people who are helicoptered in appear to have little knowledge of the area, which was evident when they kept referring to our village as industrial. If they had read the relevant national character area for our village, they would have known that it wasn't.

01:07:53:22 - 01:08:28:27

It is predominantly rural, sparsely settled, with small, compact villages and dispersed farms linked by quiet lanes, with agriculture as a dominant land use, certainly not industrial. The soils around us are inherently fertile, and visual development and auditory intrusion is relatively low. All the fields, all the soils in the fields proposed to be paneled in Ukraine are classified.

01:08:28:29 - 01:09:01:01

Grade two very good quality agricultural land. These soils must be respected and protected as we have a limited supply of them. The plans for each ring do not respect the area's topography and historical landscape. We are members of the public who have had no experience then CIPs, and the complications of navigating our way through the process has been challenging.

01:09:01:25 - 01:09:26:09

During consultation, we were told that we should be delighted to be a host community. We are not. Being a host community means the destruction of what we hold dear. Our wildlife, landscape and heritage and the opportunity to enjoy our area for what it is a jewel in Nottinghamshire's Crown.

01:09:27:24 - 01:09:59:10

Councils, farmers, landowners and shareholders may benefit financially from the installation of the Great North Road Solar Park. But what will the project cost us? This area is already referred to as Megawatt Alley. What about the wellbeing and mental health of our communities? My mental health has certainly been compromised and negatively affected by the solar application.

01:10:00:05 - 01:10:39:08

Personally, when I turn off the A66 towards Ukraine. I breathe a huge sigh of relief and enjoy the next four or so miles back into the village, as depending on the time of day, I am guaranteed to see something special, whether it is barn owls or bats hunting along the species rich and historic

hedgerows. Recorded in John Sanderson's Nottinghamshire map of 1836. Badgers, kestrels, buzzards or deer using their usual crossing point just past the tennis club.

01:10:40:16 - 01:11:20:19

Making space for nature and independent review of England's wildlife sites and Ecological networks, was written by Professor Sir John Laughton in 2010. Put simply, it recommended the creation of sustainable, sustainable ecological networks resilient for both wildlife and people. All these networks and wildlife corridors that we have been working hard to develop since 2010 work for wildlife, when at least 9% of the land in this area is covered in solar development.

01:11:21:01 - 01:12:04:24

Who has done the research? Are we ignoring the fundamental truth that removing vast tracts of agricultural land is bad for wildlife, food, local communities and above all, national security? I have had years of experience of environmental schemes. People and organizations set off with good intentions, but if there is little monitoring, advice, guidance, a change of staff or priorities, the results can be very disappointing. Pointing, particularly if the sites haven't been chosen well in the first place.

01:12:05:11 - 01:12:35:29

For example, trying to establish and keep species rich mixes on previously cropped arable land classified as grade two with inherently high levels of nutrients is very difficult, costly and likely to fail. Schemes such as these are whitewashing for the environment. I wonder how many of the lauded habitats will remain in 40 years, or who will be alive to care.

01:12:37:15 - 01:13:07:29

Millions of people have a passion for wildlife, as shown by membership of organisations like the RSPB and, locally, the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. However, important rural areas are more than wildlife. They are about vibrant communities which have been shaped and enhanced by history. The medieval strip system of farming with unenclosed fields was practiced in ring up until World War Two.

01:13:08:24 - 01:13:42:05

A network of footpaths was established to allow farmers and villagers to access and farm strips in the unenclosed fields. This network of footpaths has fundamentally remained intact until now, and is the same for all of other villages in the area. Blackstone being a prime example where the medieval system of strip farming is still practised. Removing these historic routes is easy and can be done.

01:13:42:07 - 01:14:27:21

Can be done with a stroke of pen or now by the click of a mouse. What is it right to do so. I had the privilege to meet and be guided by the late Norman Lewis, Louis MBA, who for 20 years was the principal conservation officer at the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. During one of his many visits to Ukraine and Maple Meadows, SC, Norman told me how the ditches adjacent to the triple sec and along the Newark Road had been dug by prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 1800s.

01:14:28:10 - 01:15:09:03

This is our history, which is likely to be destroyed by the construction of the many passing places proposed due to the narrowness of the Newark Road. I was told by a landowner who is likely to

benefit from the solar farm development, that they are doing it for their children's inheritance. But what about the inheritance of our children and grandchildren, should we be leaving them a countryside covered in solar panels that will be obsolete in a few years? That is not the legacy I want to be remembered for.

01:15:10:03 - 01:15:10:29

Thank you.

01:15:11:18 - 01:15:13:11

Thank you very much for your submission.

01:15:24:29 - 01:15:31:23

Okay. Could we hear from Lee, please? If you could state who you're representing to. Please. Thank you.

01:15:41:05 - 01:16:19:20

Hi. Good afternoon. I represent Edmonton parish meeting, but in particular, I represent those of us that have outlying homes bordering Weston. There are five homes on Hagelin, which is a small community off Moorhouse Road, along with our closest neighbors at Partridge Farm, which is directly off Morehouse Road. Unfortunately, they're the ones that will suffer most from this development in terms of traffic and access amendments that were made late within the scheme. As a small community, we were initially content to make our own personal representation for mitigation with the applicant, which seemed to go reasonably well.

01:16:20:09 - 01:16:55:13

However, over the years since we were made aware of the development, after countless personal discussions with the applicant and promises of little to no impact on our environment, things changed for our small outlying community in the final stages of consultation. We initially struggled to understand the traffic and access requirements from the myriads of documents that were put forward by the applicant for phase two peer consultation, some of which were contradictory or ambiguous. But we held on to the face to face meetings that we'd had with the applicant that we wouldn't have any traffic disrupting our way of life.

01:16:57:15 - 01:17:32:00

A few months later, we were faced with another stage of targeted consultation on access changes which contain very little detail, no facts, no figures, no justification, just a few paragraphs of text and some pretty pictures. This stage of consultation redirected the majority of traffic for the northern quadrant of the development our homes of Moorhouse Lane and Hagley, but particularly Partridge Farm. It's hard to imagine a home more impacted than this from a traffic perspective.

01:17:32:15 - 01:17:50:14

At a distance of only around two metres from the single track Moorhouse Road. The residents now face a 1,133% increase in HGV traffic, rumbling past it day upon day, with other site traffic every few moments.

01:17:55:17 - 01:18:32:02

Consultations meant to be a two way street, but it seems that the applicants have forgotten this and it really is a shame. We're particularly disappointed with the you in turn on traffic and access from the earlier stages. Now, we don't begrudge our fellow parishes apologies, our fellow parishes respite from the traffic either. In our representation, we suggested alternative measures which could be put in place to get the best resolution for Morehouse, Western Washington and Edmonton because we stand by our fellow parishes.

01:18:35:03 - 01:19:06:20

When we did finally receive return comments back and decipher them following NCP acceptance and publication of a very different scheme to what we'd been looking at over the past few years. We noted that most of the return comments seem to have been answered Retrospectively reflecting on how the development is presented today, rather than how it had been at the time of consultation, and quite a few of our suggestions pertaining to alternate access had simply been rejected out of hand for both stages of consultation, with no clear justification.

01:19:09:14 - 01:19:46:15

We now ask, how can the roads that have been introduced to meet this new access regime be categorised as high sensitivity, where previously there were no high sensitivity roads at all on the scheme? How is it right that up that this updated access strategy results in the use of arguably more dangerous roads than would been used before? We would ask the Planning Inspectorate to carefully review the merits of the access roads that have been chosen. We do not consider that the mitigation is appropriate for the users of the road cyclists, equestrians and walkers.

01:19:46:28 - 01:20:19:19

Not to mention the users of motorized vehicles will be impacted by the construction traffic. But not only that, the mitigation suggested so far will add chaos. A quarter of a mile of road separates us from the order from the order limits, and we will have imposed numerous passing places in eight sets of what we understand as laymen will be traffic lights just to get us on our way for a quarter of a mile. Traffic and access are now our largest concerns within the parish.

01:20:21:04 - 01:20:53:20

We have other concerns. Um, several of these have been raised already, um, over the past two days, um, both by the inspectors and by other representation, in particular by JPG and other fellow parishes. So I'm just going to briefly summarize these ones. Uh, one that hasn't been raised is screening. We've got ongoing concerns within the parish that the applicant needs to effectively screen the closest arrears, as promised.

01:20:53:29 - 01:21:14:17

So far, we can't see the additional screening on the maps we have today. The indicative maps suggest only diverse and not only diverse grass and not the bolstered planting within the existing foliage as previously agreed. We ask that the premises relating to the screening mitigation are given adequate scrutiny by the inspectorate.

01:21:16:02 - 01:21:17:14

Cumulative effect.

01:21:20:25 - 01:21:57:16

Why is this game so diversely spread out? There are other schemes of similar energy claims across Lincolnshire and in the north of our district. They're all reasonably compact developments. And while I do not wish those developments on their respective villages either, those developments do not impact around 20 parishes. The cumulative impact of this single development in the middle of Newark and Sherwood district is enormous. Many of the parishes, including ours, have consented or in service, renewable or low carbon energy generation already within our borders.

01:21:58:10 - 01:22:06:09

We ask that you continue to look at this development against the cumulative effects of what's already installed and what's proposed

01:22:07:26 - 01:22:38:17

energy claims. The applicants claim that this scheme will generate 800MW, enough energy to power 400,000 homes. But this seems at odds with one Earth solar farm, which is 740MW. But that applicant only claims 200,000 homes, half the number of homes for just a 16 megawatt difference. These claims matter to what end up in our media, the watch people's perspectives. These claims seem outlandish.

01:22:39:00 - 01:23:09:01

We look forward to the explanation on how these claims are generated. And finally in Edmonton, we're still here. We're still open to discussion. But this is element's green element. Greens proposal into our environment. You can improve the situation that we found ourselves in and the disappointment we've had throughout the consultation process. And we look forward to ongoing discussion, particularly in terms of mitigation for traffic and access for our portion of the development. That's it.

01:23:09:03 - 01:23:10:14

Thank you very much for your time.

01:23:11:02 - 01:23:12:19

Thank you very much. Thanks.

01:23:23:21 - 01:23:29:16

Okay. Can we hear from Christine Rose, please? And if you could state who you're representing. Thank you.

01:23:37:16 - 01:23:38:08

Afternoon.

01:23:38:10 - 01:24:13:27

I'm here as a resident of Carleton on Trent. Thank you. Um, I am a very strong believer in climate change, and, um, have an electric car. I'm against flying and try to be careful with resources. And, uh, I was a local district councillor for over 20 years. And while on the housing board, we introduced solar panels. And I led a campaign for a cycle track along the A1. But this also means that I use the local countryside as an amenity for walking and cycling, as do many others as represented today.

01:24:13:29 - 01:24:28:03

So if we're going to save the world, we should stay local and we will have nowhere local to go. Um, this application is only here because we have an established link to the grid.

01:24:28:05 - 01:24:35:27

I'm just going to interrupt you then. Um, could I just ask you to bring the microphone slightly closer to yourself from that? Yeah. Thank you very much. Thank you.

01:24:35:29 - 01:25:10:01

Um, this application is only here because we have an established link to the grid, and it is a place where it is cheap to join into that. Um, if you chose the best places for solar panels, it would be on industrial roofs and sites, over car parks, and on poor farmland away from settlements. It is for economic gain, not for sound environmental reasons, that we have this application before us.

01:25:10:04 - 01:25:42:20

It is just too much and will be too dominating in this landscape. A less intrusive and extensive development with more community gain, balancing the amenity needs of residents and the country's need for clean power could be different. Don't look at the maps or the views in the glossy brochures. Go into the countryside and really imagine what our area will look like when so much is covered by panels.

01:25:43:15 - 01:25:44:12

Thank you.

01:25:45:28 - 01:25:47:01

Thank you very much.

01:25:55:28 - 01:25:58:22

Do we have a Jim Wishart, please?

01:26:03:08 - 01:26:05:19

And do we have David over?

01:26:09:01 - 01:26:21:21

No. Okay. Well, in that case, I'm going to suggest that we take a break. We'll take 20 minutes and a journalist meeting over this open floor hearing and come back at a 4:45. Thank you.