



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Lime Down Solar Project
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 5 (ISH5) - Part 2
Date:	15 September 2026

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:08:08 - 00:00:42:08

Okay. It's now ten past twelve and time to resume this issue specific hearing. So picking up at item 2.3.3 of the agenda, modeling results, can the applicant clarify for the modeling outputs that were provided at deadline three, can you clarify which model was used for those outputs? Was it just the pager power model? Because in your representations, it was stated that calculations will run with both pager power and the forged solar model.

00:00:43:12 - 00:00:44:18

Thank you, James Plum,

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on behalf of the applicant. So for the submissions at deadline three of the Glint and Glare modeling outputs, all of those charts have come from Pager Power's internal model. The reasoning for is this that this was the model that was used for all receptors, so we can submit data for all receptors in the same format. The Forge Solar model was additionally used for aviation receptors in order to be able to do the intensity calculations, which are done under the Sandia license. So that's why there are two, but these results are very comparable.

00:01:18:12 - 00:01:28:29

They the two modeling softwares operate in a very similar way and they produce results which are very visually and sort of data wise very similar.

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So could be it evidence that they are producing similar outputs at deadline seven?

00:01:36:23 - 00:02:06:23

Yes, James, on behalf the applicant. So the applicant is producing a document showing a comparison of these for selected receptors. The reasoning for this is although the data outputs are very similar, the way in which they are presented from the two softwares differs slightly. So for PagePal's internal model, we produced one chart, considers which all of the reflecting areas and collates essentially all reflections from all the areas into one chart.

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Whereas with the Forge Solar model, if you model three different reflecting areas, you will get three different charts. So to ease the comparison, we are going to look to pull out some of the receptors which have reflections from just one area so that comparison can be done more easily than having to look at four or five different forge charts per of page our charts. So that's going to be

00:02:29:12 - 00:02:54:23

the intent of the comparison. Okay. Thank you. Yes, that would be helpful to see. Before we move on to cultural heritage item three, are there any parties in the room that would like to make any other

comments that haven't already been made orally in writing on what's been discussed today under agenda item two? So if I Mr. Kiselke?

00:02:55:15 - 00:03:13:02

You, sir. I think Kiselke will stop lying down. I just I wanted to check if Mr Van Hookstraten has anything to say on the forge solar because as you'll have seen in our original Rep one-one hundred seventy eight submission, we did do

00:03:14:17 - 00:03:19:11

a Sparge Solar analysis and provided you with the underlying

00:03:21:04 - 00:03:25:22

documentation on that. I don't know if Mr Van Hoogstratten is there. If he's not, we can

00:03:26:14 - 00:03:27:00

Yeah

00:03:29:08 - 00:03:31:20

thanks very much. John Van Hoogstratten for us.

00:03:33:12 - 00:04:13:07

Concern with the Pager Power software more along the validation of that software. Very similar results really needs to be quantified a little bit better in terms of direct comparison and there needs to be a controlled like for like validation exercise undertaken to use an identical input parameters and I think whenever using software on datum particularly when you're looking at safety elements is there needs to be an independent validation against that.

00:04:13:17 - 00:04:27:20

There's nothing wrong with using your own software but if you not having it independently validated one could argue whether the results are skewed in favor of what you're trying to achieve in short.

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Understood, yes. Thank you. And that's why it'd be useful to see that side by side comparison, deadline seven.

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Thank you. And sorry, sir, Dennis, because I a stop line now. Just two very short final points. Obviously, you'll be aware, so we did produce figures. We got figures outputted by Fodgesola. So there is that distinction. It may be, but that lines will be what the applicant produced at deadline seven, we'll see and hopefully be able to respond by deadline eight. But obviously, you will have seen that. And the second point, as I emphasized before, obviously there's a distinct issue about the underlying calculations, which is separate to the point about sensitivity, severity, all that stuff we dealt with previously. So the points are separate and should be dealt with separately.

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Understood. Thank you. I can see a hand up from Anne Henshaw online.

00:05:20:22 - 00:05:22:03

Yes. Good morning, sir.

00:05:23:27 - 00:05:37:27

I'm afraid I'm going to take you back a little bit because I didn't quite see where my question comes in, it is to do with landscape and visual aspects, so I'm moving away from the recent discussions that you've been having.

00:05:40:07 - 00:06:51:02

CPRE question, which doesn't appear as far as we can see in many of the evidence given, is to do with the new plantations and the mitigation measures along roadsides and in other prominent areas. We would like to know how the newly planted trees and shrubs and hedging, taking into account recent second drought condition summers, are going to be kept watered and more importantly monitored for growth and for death rate, and how that is going to be reported to the local authority, to Wiltshire Council on a regular basis, because the recommendation, particularly given the present environmental conditions and climate change from the UK Forestry Commission is that this should be done not only every two years, but much longer than that, and we would suggest from CPRE's own evidence on new housing blocks

00:06:53:12 - 00:07:44:19

that this is not done and the death rate as you may yourselves be aware, outside of large development areas as a result of the two last summers has been in some cases eighty percent death rate. Our concern on this is because replacement planting and its questionable survival rate will give rise to very irregular landscape results, because there will be a different growth rate, so therefore it can't be assumed that after fifteen years there will be a buffer, or a landscaping mitigation which is being successfully achieved.

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There doesn't seem to be any comment on this, where water is going to be obtained from, how it's going to be distributed,

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and at what regularity, and I think this should be made extremely clear with a strong likelihood that we're going to see a consistency of drought summers, and the whole point about a mitigation strategy is if you have a complete output at the end and we question whether that will actually be realized. We would also like to draw attention to the fact that that would apply in certain circumstances to any kind of agri voltaic

00:08:34:12 - 00:09:09:18

possibilities that are going to be introduced underneath the panels due to drought conditions. How is the watering of the vegetation which is under the panels which might give rise to pasture for animals such as sheep, or even agriculture, bees, how is that going to be supplied and there should be definite indications about the constancy of that supply and it is not going to have an effect on any other water conservation issues.

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I

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think it's extremely important that this is understood because it's very easy to create mitigation strategies which don't deliver, and therefore the whole point of having a visual and landscape mitigation strategy is that you do succeed. And we can see no guarantee that that would be or even any proposals about how we should be implemented.

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Sorry to interrupt you. On Thursday, we do have an issue specific hearing on the management plans and control documents. And we are planning to

00:09:52:16 - 00:10:29:17

go the over issues that you have raised there around the planting management and replacement. This afternoon under soils and water, we will be looking at some of those impacts of the water runoff as well. And there's an ecology issue specific hearing next week as well. So I'll ask the applicant to respond briefly to you, but we will be covering those issues at other points over these two weeks.

00:10:29:19 - 00:10:30:09

Thank you.

00:10:33:17 - 00:10:43:20

I just check, is there anyone else in the room or online who would like to make any comments on the matters covered under Agenda Verism two today?

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I'm not seeing any hands. So if I could just turn to applicant for response on those matters.

00:10:52:07 - 00:11:27:12

Chris Townsend on behalf of the applicant. Obviously conscious as you raise the point, this is going to come up at subsequent hearings. But just to direct to the outline water resources strategy, APP290, which provides an early stage evaluation of quantities of waters required for the scheme during construction operation and where the applicants like to source these demands. The final watering regime frequency and method of delivery will be confirmed with a detailed LEMP.

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Obviously, at the moment we have got the outline LEMP that is in place that sets out the requirements for the initial establishment and ongoing management and maintenance of the mitigation planning.

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Thank you. So we'll now move on to agenda item three, cultural heritage, starting with designated heritage assets.

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That's clear, we just need to change the people at the table. Yes.

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If could

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just bear

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with us one moment. You.

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My first questions are actually for the council. So if I carry on anyway.

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Warch So Council, noting your responses to EXQ2,

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EXQ2 CH2.9, this is in relation to Rosborne Conservation Area. So the Watch Council's response that the concerns around the highway improvement works in relation to the conservation area have been addressed. I just want clarification whether the Council considered that there would be no harm to the conservation area or residual less than substantial harm?

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So just to confirm, so following the applicant's confirmation that there would be no substantive works to the access, the council agrees with the applicant that there would be no harm to Ruddboro Conservation Area.

00:12:57:01 - 00:13:11:23

Thank you. And similarly for Gretelton House, can you clarify whether the impact to the setting of the asset that is set out in your response to ASQ would again amount to no harm as assessed by the applicant or less than substantial?

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Again the same answer, would be no harm but that's subject to agreement of appropriate socio economic safeguards to avoid indirect effects.

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Understood, thank you. And those safeguards,

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discussions ongoing with the applicants about?

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I understand that's the case and that the socioeconomics advisor to the council is able to discuss that next week at

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the hearing as well. That would be good, yes.

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So

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stop lying down. I'm aware it's your view that there would be significant adverse impacts in EIA terms on a number of assets. I'm just seeking confirmation whether the assets listed in the statement of common ground accurately reflects your position on the assets you believe would have would experience significant adverse effects, and that would be Bradfield Manor, Norton Manor, the Foss Way, archaeological asset D2401 and Pillow Mound, southwest of Surin Del Farm.

00:14:28:24 - 00:14:41:02

Thank you, sir. Danica, stop lying down. I'll bring in our experts here because I think that might have changed slightly as a result of the mitigation. But if I bring in Lucy Nicholson first on the built heritage and men, Tom Linington afterwards.

00:14:43:00 - 00:14:53:07

Hi, Lisa Nielsen for stop line. Those are cracks so I still find significant adverse impact to Bradford and to Norton.

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Well, and I guess I'll stop there then. While Miss Nicholson is on the screen, it may be worth just very quickly asking her to comment on the bits that we just heard, because I think we're in agreement on them as well from the council.

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Yes, thank you. Yeah, we're in agreement with the no harm to both those referred to just now by the Council.

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Thank you very much, Mr Nicholson. That's obviously subject to the point the Council raised about the indirect economic stuff, but that ultimately will be dealt with separately. So thank you very much, Mr Nicholson. And then Mr. Linington?

00:15:29:23 - 00:15:52:26

Yes, Mr. Linington, on behalf of Stop Linedown. So in regards to the Arcloch remains in association with Foss Way, we still maintain our position. In regards to the pillow mound following the clarification in the Dead Atlantic's response, we believe has that fallen away.

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Okay. And asset D2401?

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Sorry, one second.

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I believe that's in the locate near where the substation

00:16:05:00 - 00:16:15:01

and Bess area is. Dominic, stop the stop line, Dan. Think Miss Linton, that's one of the ones which results from SMS as a mitigation.

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Okay. Yeah, I think that also falls away. Thanks for clarification.

00:16:26:18 - 00:16:30:11

Okay. Thank you. That's helpful. Is there anything the applicant would like to say?

00:16:34:23 - 00:17:04:01

Alice James on behalf of the applicant. Only just to note that we've consulted with Stop Line Down in the statement of common ground regarding the areas of disagreement. And I think in our written reps, we've explained where our differences are. But as in terms of our consultation with Hooptown Council in Historic England, we understand we're in agreement in terms of our assessment of the assets listed by Stop Linedown.

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And is there ongoing discussions with Stop Linedown about Bradfield Manor, Norton Manor and the Foss Way? Or are we at a point of disagree but with clear positions set out?

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Alice James on behalf of the applicant. Obviously, we will be looking to continue dialogue and conversation with Stop Line Down to see whether there's means in which to resolve these points or further that dialogue. But I suspect it might be one of those things that we end up disagreeing on.

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Dani, because I've stopped my mind. I think that's probably an accurate way of describing it. So keep trying, but it may be one of those things where experts disagree.

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Okay. Thank you. In that case we can move on to archaeological mitigation and the geophysical surveys. So updated geophysical surveys for the cable corridor were submitted at deadline five, which is examination library reference Rep five one hundred and four. Apologies, I believe the examination library reference we included in the agenda was to an earlier version. And so I'd just like to hear from Wiltshire Council on whether there are any concerns arising from the updated surveys.

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I don't shadow be Wiltshire Council.

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Going to

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let Mr Adam respond primarily on these points.

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Neil Adam, Wiltshire Council. Yes, the updated Geophysical Survey for the cable route has been completed to our satisfaction. We have been in discussion with the applicant in regards to proposed mitigation for archaeological sites that have been identified. Some new sites have been identified, along with the identification of sites previously known to the Council. The outlined response to this mitigation I believe has been included in the overall archaeological mitigation strategy.

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Sorry, that's to say the outline archaeological mitigation strategy that preceded these surveys

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has been updated, yes.

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Has been updated, okay.

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You're satisfied with?

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We're satisfied with the geophysical survey as it has been presented, yes.

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And

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then in terms of what that then means for the mitigation strategy?

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MR Well,

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main bone of contention we have with the applicant is that we feel there is a need for a detailed archaeological mitigation strategy to be submitted prior to submission, ideally.

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The problem with the outline strategy is that it's not detailed enough for our concerns. It essentially is a holding position until all the evaluation data has been collected from geophysics and trial trenching.

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So that's more or less a stepping stone to the detailed one that we would like to see presented.

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This would then lead to more detailed site specific written schemes of investigation for each asset which will require mitigation. And because the dams will also include not just mitigation for the field work, which is covered in the outline strategy, but also secure protection of areas to be preserved or scoped out of the solar farm and the cabled route.

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So what you're after is an overarching detailed mitigation strategy, which will then still require subsequent submission and approval. Okay. And is it your position that this needs to be in place prior to the decision on the development concerns?

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Yes, would be our position. And it's also the position of Historic England. I'm afraid they can't be here today. They have expressed to us that they are in agreement with our position.

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Is it a matter of the detail that is included within the mitigation strategy? So if the applicant were to be able to provide more detail in the outlined mitigation strategy as it is, could that go some way?

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If they could convert it into a DAMs from an outline, that would be brilliant.

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Yes. Okay. So I just want

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to ask the applicant then if they are clear in understanding what detailed information is being asked from the council.

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Phyllis James on behalf of the applicant. No, that's a good point. It might be useful for the council to specifically prescribe what detail they would like. However, I would also add to that, that in terms of the outline archaeological mitigation strategy that we provided, we do think that is proportionate and appropriate in lines of setting out an appropriate mitigation strategy for archaeological remains. So as such, we don't see the need for a detailed archaeological mitigation strategy.

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And I can go into my reasoning now, if that's useful, for why we think the document submitted is sufficient to do the job it is intended to do.

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Yes, that would be helpful if you use that at all.

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Alice Jameson, behalf of the applicant. So

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first point I would make is the document has been derived to essentially create the best or the optimal method for ensuring delivery of archeological mitigation works and securing the best outcome for archeological remains. The key points to make around that is we are dealing with a solar scheme. And so as noted in paragraph two point one zero zero of NPS EM3, below impacts of a solar is generally limited. And this is reiterated in section four of the recently published archaeology solar farms good practice guide, which we can submit into the examination of use.

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So noting that, and also noting that a detailed design for the scheme would happen post consent of the scheme, applying excessive detail or a high level of detail at this stage to the Arfacol mitigation strategy could actually be contrary to getting the best result, As in, we want to ensure that there's sufficient flexibility for us once we've got that detailed design and subsequent information to ensure we are ensuring that the best results for archaeological remains. It's also worth noting, as stated in paragraph 1.1.2 of the AMS, that's REP six thousand twelve.

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The AMS is providing essentially an overarching methodology for undertaking a program of archeological mitigation within the scheme. And then subsequent written schemes of WS, I'm sorry, subsequent schemes of written investigations, so WSIs, that provide detailed specific mitigation methods would be appended to that. So as such, we have the mechanism in place to have the overarching document that sets the, how mitigation will be placed and it's got the detail in that. And then site specific WSIs

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would be

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appended to it, at which point we can then apply the further detail that's potentially being requested. I would also kind of highlight that the, the process that we're following or the mechanisms we're putting in place to mitigate archaeological remains, these are fairly standard in terms of what's happening on other solar DCOs. So for example, if I can reference consented schemes such as the East Yorkshire Solar Park, Cotton, West Burton, Tilbridge, Gate Burton, etcetera, This is very much the mechanism that other solar DCOs have used.

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And in terms of, while I'll appreciate there are maybe nuances in terms of the differences in terms of archeological sites we found, in terms of the, how we'd apply and approach mitigation, We haven't found anything on this scheme, which would mean we'd need to make a, or undertake a distinctly different or a substantially different approach to mitigating archeology. So effectively, in summary, sorry, that was quite a long explanation, but we are very much of the opinion that the archaeological mitigation strategy that we have provided is actually, has been put together and will essentially secure the best outcome for archaeological remains without kind of needing to add in detail this at stage or in fact, subsequently once we have a detailed design.

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Understood. Thank you. I

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get, so the torch council likes to respond to that. Get what it would be helpful for a discussion to take place between the council and the applicant about what detail is missing and whether if it's going to stay as it is with an outline archaeological mitigation strategy, what extra detail could go in there? And then also if this does if this is going to affect the draft development consent order wording as to how the mitigation strategy is consented, we will need final positions from each party by deadline seven.

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So with that in mind, is there anything that the council would like to come back to the applicants on that?

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Neil Adam, Wiltshire Council. Yes, I hear the response from the applicant and the outline mitigation strategy as it stands is good and acceptable. However, the way we approach the protection of archaeology in Wiltshire, and these things do vary county to county, and we do like to secure the detail of work to be carried out in mitigation prior to the submission of an application.

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It's a process we have always followed with other developments, be they major construction or even these solar farms. It's something we insist on smaller solar farm developments that come through planning by the local authority. And we don't see a reason to change that now. We'd rather have the details secured ahead of submission.

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So is it right to say that it's a case of your normal processes rather than specific

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concerns and impacts on receptors that you would want to see more detail provided for before that decision was made on the

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Yes, to be content that we have protected the archaeology of the county, be it through preservation record, we wish to see a detailed response.

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Adept Shallowby, Wiltshire Council. I think part of their concern is that the archaeology impacts should be addressed and the details secured before the final design and layout is done, because part of what Mr Adam is seeking is an understanding of the areas that will be scoped out or preserved from the solar farm that won't be developed, which can be determined now and from the cable route now that all the work in terms of the survey effort has been done.

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Those decisions can be made now and secured through the DCO. I think the council is in more of a challenging position if it's just discharging a requirement to insist on areas being scoped out if that hasn't all been settled through the DCO process itself. We also understand your point about the DCO wording. The council will put forward at the next deadline, if the examining authority doesn't accept this position, a suggestion for a requirement, because at the very least the Council considers that there shouldn't be a straight jump from this outline mitigation strategy, which is inadequate to written schemes of investigation.

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There needs to be more detailed first and before layout issues are determined more generally. So we'll put forward a suggested requirement at the next deadline.

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Neil Adam, Welsh Council. Yes, that is what we intend to do.

00:29:44:20 - 00:29:46:06

Thank you, that would be helpful.

00:29:47:24 - 00:29:54:08

Back to the applicant on the point that Ms Channaby made about areas that could be scoped out are known now.

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Alice James on behalf of the applicant. Yes. That's already, I would say in some ways where we have sites, so, you know, where we've had fields no longer have solar panels in, for example, so preservation in situ, I. E. No sort of development, the archeological mitigation strategy already includes that. I think along the cable route where there might be potential for micro sighting, I. E. Where we've identified archeological remains, but the route, depending on where it takes, where it's going to impact. Again, that would come down to detailed design, which we're unable to commit to at this moment.

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So again, I would suggest that what we've achieved at this point where we've kind of provided almost optioneering ensures depending that on what happens, we can apply adequate mitigation to the archeological remains. Obviously within that there is a mitigation hierarchy, but we also need to factor in kind of, you know, engineering needs and these type of things. And I would highlight that in terms of the archeological remains we have identified, all of which can be adequately mitigated either by mitigation by record, I.

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Excavation, or by preservation in situ, I. E. Through avoiding impact. The other thing just to add is, are very much continuing this conversation with both Wiltshire Council and Historic England.

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We've been taking feedback on board, hence the updates to the document and we'll welcome any further feedback. So if there are things we can add to the archaeological mitigation strategy, we will look into that and as appropriate update the document.

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Yes. And that would be helpful. And just to again stress timescale, would be good to have that all at deadline seven, for the which is second of October, I believe.

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For us to receive that information by critical really.

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Alice James McCarthy, applicant. Yes, we've certainly in terms of our discussions as well, had a meeting with Historic England last week where that was part of the discussion to say that at the next deadline are, as part of the application team, we're very much hoping to be submitting finalized documents. Very much noted the forthcoming deadlines. Neil

00:32:11:27 - 00:32:34:20

Adam, Wiltshire Council. Yeah, I have been in discussion yesterday with Historic England, and just to let the applicant know that there will be further detail to be discussed in terms of the OMS, and they are pressing very hard for Ora dams as well. I believe that they actually sent a written submission to you because they couldn't be here today for various reasons.

00:32:38:25 - 00:32:43:07

Sorry, is that a submission that's in the examination library?

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I'm unaware, I simply am reading an email that was sent to me this morning, but I believe there is one on the way.

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The way? Okay. Adesh

00:32:53:03 - 00:33:20:29

Abbey, Vulture Counsel. Just one question. In terms of draft DCO and so on, the examining authority I think had an option to release a draft DCO with its own suggested amendments, potentially at the last deadline but didn't do so. We're just wondering, is there an intention for the XA to share at some point prior to the close of the examination a further draft DCO or just looking for final positions of the As you

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can see, Michelle, I shook my head. No, we felt that there were still some discussions going on on numerous of

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the

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requirements,

00:33:29:25 - 00:34:03:08

that it wasn't prudent for us to put out a schedule of changes. And given we've got a DCO hearing next week where we'll be airing a lot of this stuff, and this possibly will come up again, this same requirement, it just would have been a nonsense to have put out our position on the wording we would like to see when we still haven't resolved things between the parties. We will not be putting out a schedule of changes. It will simply be a recommended DCO to the Secretary of State, but we would really like to bottom out as much as we can on wording.

00:34:03:25 - 00:34:13:03

And if that is agreed wording, great. But if it isn't agreed wording, we are going to need precise wording from the parties about what they would like to see.

00:34:17:03 - 00:34:23:23

Thank you. And I'll just check if Stop Down have anything they wish to say on archaeological mitigation.

00:34:25:06 - 00:34:49:18

Thank you, sir. Danica Zalka for stoplighting down note, given some of the changes that we've have already been discussed. We had a very limited number, I think, of suggestions in our D5 submission, which have broadly fallen away. Obviously, we'll keep an eye on the ongoing discussions and the changes. And if there is a draft, it may be helpful if Mr. Ludington can be set into any if there is one before the next deadline, just being conscious of the time that is available.

00:34:50:02 - 00:35:04:20

And any discussions around wording to the draft development consent or the obviously if they can happen prior to the hearing next week and an update be provided in that hearing, that would be even more helpful.

00:35:08:23 - 00:35:26:07

That actually then, without Historic England here, that concludes the questions that I had in relation to cultural heritage. So I'd like to now just provide the opportunity for any interested parties to raise

00:35:28:04 - 00:35:39:09

any matters under this agenda item that they wish to. I'm not seeing any hands in the room or online. And I'll just with check Butch Council stop line down. No.

00:35:41:16 - 00:35:42:06

Okay.

00:35:44:08 - 00:35:51:28

In that case, I'll just check with my fellow panel members whether we move on to the next item or take a lunch break now.

00:35:57:23 - 00:36:14:21

Okay. So what we'll do is we will take an hour's lunch break now. It's quarter to one. We'll come back at quarter to two. And then when we come back, we'll be moving on to agenda item four, which is hydrology, flood risk and drainage.

00:36:15:08 - 00:36:48:06

Claire Pottsche Peppermann, just before we close, just wanted to check whether we could let our cultural heritage and glinting glare experts leave. I know there's obviously any other matters at the end of the agenda, so I didn't want them to leave the building if we needed to come back to them. But as far as I can understand it, there being no further comments in the room, it's okay for them to leave. People will be joining again virtually for the outline management plan discussions on Thursday, but it was just whether you're happy for them to

00:36:49:08 - 00:36:58:19

Yes, unless there's comments they wish to make now, then I'm not going to be returning landscape to visual clinical or cultural heritage today.

00:36:58:21 - 00:37:00:29

Okay, that's fine. We just got hijoned. Okay, you.

00:37:01:01 - 00:37:02:19

I just pass it over to Ms.

00:37:02:21 - 00:37:03:11

Yeah, before

00:37:03:13 - 00:37:12:17

we adjourn for lunch, just to make the parties aware, I won't be sitting at the table this afternoon. We're going to be dialling in virtually, so just so that you know when we come back. Thanks.

00:37:14:05 - 00:37:24:05

Okay. So it's just gone quarter to one. We will adjourn the hearing and we will resume at quarter to two. Thank you.