



Planning Inspectorate
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Hearing Transcript

Project:	Meridian Solar Farm
Hearing:	Recording of Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH 1) - Part 3
Date:	9 September 2026

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1

00:02:31,260 --> 00:02:35,100

Good afternoon, everybody. It's now 2:00 PM and time to resume this issue

2

00:02:35,200 --> 00:02:38,920

specific hearing number one. Just before we commence with the agenda

3

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:41,660

items, I'm conscious that we've got quite a lot to get through.

4

00:02:42,680 --> 00:02:46,180

We're really grateful for the detailed answers that people are giving, but could I

5

00:02:46,200 --> 00:02:48,160

ask you to be as concise as possible

6

00:02:48,980 --> 00:02:52,360

in your answers? And if you think an answer warrants a longer

7

00:02:52,980 --> 00:02:56,100

answer, please just advise that you'll be putting it in writing.

8

00:02:57,140 --> 00:03:00,380

Obviously, I do want to get through as much as I can today, so I hope you

9

00:03:00,480 --> 00:03:04,100

can work with us on that. And with that, I'll hand over to Mrs.

10

00:03:04,160 --> 00:03:06,549

Murphy to finish agenda item number four.

11

00:03:07,960 --> 00:03:08,880

Thank you very much.

12

00:03:11,080 --> 00:03:11,440

So

13

00:03:12,380 --> 00:03:14,300

carrying on from earlier this morning,

14

00:03:15,440 --> 00:03:19,280

I would appreciate if the applicant would be able to bring up figure 2.7,

15

00:03:19,920 --> 00:03:23,600

which is grid connection route illustrative construction layout plan

16

00:03:23,700 --> 00:03:26,960

APP 079 on the screen.

17

00:03:41,420 --> 00:03:42,200

Thank you very much.

18

00:03:43,560 --> 00:03:47,400

So my question focuses just on terminology, on this

19

00:03:47,440 --> 00:03:50,760

plan and which I'll be really grateful for an explanation.

20

00:03:51,520 --> 00:03:53,360

So this plan,

21

00:03:55,740 --> 00:03:59,680

could you please explain what the purpose is or

22

00:03:59,760 --> 00:04:03,080

what the terminology of the third party

23

00:04:03,140 --> 00:04:07,000

centerline and the third party access, which is identified

24

00:04:07,040 --> 00:04:10,520

throughout this figure, and their relationship to the proposed works.

25

00:04:11,220 --> 00:04:14,760

So in particular, I'd like to understand how this affects individual

26

00:04:14,800 --> 00:04:18,481

properties such as Longfield Commercial on Broadgate, which is sheet

27

00:04:18,601 --> 00:04:18,940
four,

28

00:04:19,740 --> 00:04:23,480
the cottage, sheet seven, and also vegetation

29

00:04:23,519 --> 00:04:26,460
removal at Ostlers Cottage at sheet seven.

30

00:04:28,880 --> 00:04:31,360
Taylor Power for the applicant. I might actually ask Mr.

31

00:04:31,640 --> 00:04:34,320
Fowler to speak to this, if you don't mind

32

00:04:35,200 --> 00:04:35,560
coming up.

33

00:04:40,360 --> 00:04:41,820
Tom Fowler on behalf of the applicant.

34

00:04:42,080 --> 00:04:45,700
Yes, so the blue center lines essentially, which you can see on
screen, sort of

35

00:04:45,740 --> 00:04:47,740
like a sausage shape with a blue line through the middle.

36

00:04:48,380 --> 00:04:52,200
At the moment, they're indicative land take areas within the

37

00:04:52,240 --> 00:04:55,320
order limits that we've afforded at this stage of the DCO

38

00:04:55,380 --> 00:04:58,780
for mitigation works for the National Grid Electricity

39

00:04:59,100 --> 00:05:02,840
Distribution assets. So there's two approaches that we've

40

00:05:02,850 --> 00:05:06,760

taken to those, is we've designed in operational clearance to those

41

00:05:06,800 --> 00:05:10,680

assets. So we're in conversation with NGED at the moment on the

42

00:05:10,720 --> 00:05:14,680

best approach to mitigating or overcoming or navigating their assets during

43

00:05:14,700 --> 00:05:18,560

construction and operation. So we designed in clearances to

44

00:05:18,620 --> 00:05:22,080

oversell them. So we'll work with them as we are outside of this

45

00:05:22,660 --> 00:05:25,500

hearing on the most appropriate methodologies for that.

46

00:05:26,560 --> 00:05:29,810

We've also, like I said, created an allowance in the order limits for mitigation.

47

00:05:30,080 --> 00:05:32,700

So that would be potentially undergrounding those assets

48

00:05:33,500 --> 00:05:36,920

within those blue areas. So again, that's an area that we've afforded within the

49

00:05:36,960 --> 00:05:40,920

DCO order limits at this stage. We're still working with NGED to determine

50

00:05:40,930 --> 00:05:42,960

the most appropriate technique.

51

00:05:44,040 --> 00:05:46,860

As you've mentioned, some of those may be close to residential properties,

52

00:05:47,660 --> 00:05:49,640
and that's where the nature of the DNO asset is.

53
00:05:49,820 --> 00:05:53,360
So we would obviously work with NGED and the property owner at that point in time

54
00:05:53,400 --> 00:05:56,980
of detailed design to overcome any impacts on residential properties

55
00:05:57,500 --> 00:06:01,260
and subject to the detailed design that National Grid Electricity Distribution put

56
00:06:01,300 --> 00:06:04,840
forward at that stage Would dictate what vegetation impacts

57
00:06:04,940 --> 00:06:07,080
and potential disruption to any landowners

58
00:06:07,880 --> 00:06:10,640
would be. So at this stage, we don't have that information.

59
00:06:11,400 --> 00:06:15,300
The assumption is that we can operate above those assets, but we're working

60
00:06:15,380 --> 00:06:18,240
with NGET to determine the most appropriate management technique.

61
00:06:20,380 --> 00:06:21,920
And Taylor Power for the applicant.

62
00:06:21,940 --> 00:06:22,900
I would just note

63
00:06:24,340 --> 00:06:28,000
that the applicant is negotiating

64
00:06:28,020 --> 00:06:29,720
protective provisions with NGET,

65

00:06:30,700 --> 00:06:34,330

and those protective provisions would manage that future

66

00:06:34,360 --> 00:06:37,890

approvals process when it comes to the interaction with their assets.

67

00:06:38,360 --> 00:06:42,340

And that's routinely the approach that's taken on DCOs, that it's at the point

68

00:06:42,360 --> 00:06:46,040

of detailed design when we know exactly where we would like to put our

69

00:06:46,100 --> 00:06:48,380

pylons or what our conductor heights would be,

70

00:06:49,860 --> 00:06:53,000

that you would go through that process of detailed design.

71

00:06:53,360 --> 00:06:57,160

And ultimately those protective provisions would leave the final approval, not

72

00:06:57,220 --> 00:07:01,180

just consultation, with NGET to make sure that the

73

00:07:01,220 --> 00:07:04,960

interaction with their assets is appropriate, and that if we need to

74

00:07:04,980 --> 00:07:08,380

remove an underground part of their assets, they would have to approve

75

00:07:08,420 --> 00:07:12,360

that. So, it's largely going to be managed through that protective

76

00:07:12,400 --> 00:07:14,700

provisions negotiation, which is still ongoing.

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00:07:18,680 --> 00:07:22,400

Thank you. So can you just talk me through where it says-- So for

78

00:07:22,420 --> 00:07:23,460

example, looking at

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00:07:25,440 --> 00:07:28,880

Broadgate, Longfield Commercials, there's a third-party

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00:07:29,000 --> 00:07:32,460

access that goes right next to a residential property.

81

00:07:34,420 --> 00:07:37,960

Who's going to be using that? How frequently will it be used?

82

00:07:38,040 --> 00:07:40,260

What will it be used for?

83

00:07:41,500 --> 00:07:42,820

So Tom Fowler on behalf of the applicant.

84

00:07:43,160 --> 00:07:47,120

So at this stage of the project, and often at this

85

00:07:47,140 --> 00:07:50,250

stage of the project with the absence of wayleave information or existing access

86

00:07:50,300 --> 00:07:53,700

information for NGET, we identified the most

87

00:07:53,740 --> 00:07:57,620

appropriate way from getting from the nearest public highway access point

88

00:07:58,100 --> 00:08:01,720

into their assets using aerial imagery, author imagery, et cetera, and

89

00:08:01,960 --> 00:08:05,340

OS master mapping. So essentially it is a way from the public highway

90

00:08:05,420 --> 00:08:08,980

into that point of their asset, and we took into consideration field

91

00:08:09,020 --> 00:08:10,420

boundaries, culverts, et cetera.

92

00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:14,200

So that is an access that we've put into the DCO should

93

00:08:14,240 --> 00:08:17,980

NGET underground their assets and not be able to fall back onto their own

94

00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:21,900

wayleaves. So it's a means of access to their asset for them to

95

00:08:21,960 --> 00:08:24,149

undertake the works, should they have to undertake the works.

96

00:08:24,550 --> 00:08:28,540

So the frequency will obviously be subject to the designs that they come up with

97

00:08:28,560 --> 00:08:32,240

and their methodologies, but it would be an access that we've put in there for

98

00:08:32,360 --> 00:08:33,160

their construction.

99

00:08:34,140 --> 00:08:37,399

Ideally, if they do underground, they would use their own wayleaves.

100

00:08:37,480 --> 00:08:41,180

But as I said, historically across the industry, wayleaves that were agreed a long

101

00:08:41,260 --> 00:08:44,940

time ago might not be available. So it's more of a contingency that we've put in

102

00:08:44,960 --> 00:08:46,280
place within the DC0.

103

00:08:47,400 --> 00:08:50,700
And excuse my ignorance here. You keep saying NGET's assets.

104

00:08:50,980 --> 00:08:53,000
Do you mean these pylons?

105

00:08:54,140 --> 00:08:58,040
So all of the blue lines that we've shown are National Grid
Electricity

106

00:08:58,120 --> 00:09:01,860
distribution assets that are 33 kV

107

00:09:02,160 --> 00:09:06,020
and below, so typically 11 kV low voltage and 33

108

00:09:06,060 --> 00:09:06,380
kV.

109

00:09:07,360 --> 00:09:11,300
The only steel lattice 132 kV NGET asset is the ones that we

110

00:09:11,420 --> 00:09:14,240
are crossing via underground cable and cable seating and compounds.

111

00:09:15,900 --> 00:09:17,020
So Taylor Power for the applicant.

112

00:09:17,100 --> 00:09:18,700
I suppose just to clarify on that point,

113

00:09:19,700 --> 00:09:23,620
the intention is to oversell those assets, but what

114

00:09:23,680 --> 00:09:27,180
has been done is the opportunity to underground their

115

00:09:27,260 --> 00:09:31,080

assets has been identified in case at the point of detailed

116

00:09:31,100 --> 00:09:35,040

design it's considered more appropriate to bring those minor

117

00:09:35,100 --> 00:09:39,030

existing NGET assets underground, not

118

00:09:39,060 --> 00:09:41,300

underground our overhead line.

119

00:09:43,000 --> 00:09:45,939

So I'm really sorry to labor this point, but I really just want to be clear.

120

00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:49,460

So for example, on sheet four where there's a large blue line,

121

00:09:49,880 --> 00:09:53,840

you're saying that's the existing DNO asset, and that's an underground existing

122

00:09:53,920 --> 00:09:55,420

DNO asset, for example?

123

00:09:56,580 --> 00:09:59,460

So Tom Fowler on behalf of the applicant. That's an existing overhead line.

124

00:10:00,040 --> 00:10:03,649

So we've identified that line as potentially needing

125

00:10:03,680 --> 00:10:07,480

mitigation during construction and operation of our

126

00:10:07,560 --> 00:10:10,900

asset's lifespan. So it is already an existing overhead line.

127

00:10:11,820 --> 00:10:14,880

We're working with NGET, and we hope to be able to oversell these assets.

128

00:10:14,890 --> 00:10:18,180

So there's a space in the order limits to allow us to protect those assets with,

129

00:10:18,220 --> 00:10:20,900

say, scaffolding subject to the agreed approach.

130

00:10:21,600 --> 00:10:25,540

And that line is basically representing the center

131

00:10:25,580 --> 00:10:28,940

line of that existing overhead asset that may need to be

132

00:10:28,980 --> 00:10:30,440

undergrounded within the order limits.

133

00:10:31,020 --> 00:10:33,940

So they are existing overhead assets, those blue lines.

134

00:10:37,420 --> 00:10:37,800

Thank you.

135

00:10:39,340 --> 00:10:40,900

So moving on to my-

136

00:10:49,300 --> 00:10:50,800

Yes, of course.

137

00:10:52,060 --> 00:10:54,140

The same. This figure.

138

00:10:56,020 --> 00:10:57,110

Where is, um-

139

00:10:57,140 --> 00:10:57,840

Oh, sorry.

140

00:10:58,360 --> 00:10:59,400

Longfield.

141

00:10:59,520 --> 00:11:00,520

Sorry, would you be able to-

142

00:11:00,920 --> 00:11:01,380

We've got the-

143

00:11:01,960 --> 00:11:02,060

Oh.

144

00:11:02,070 --> 00:11:02,070

Thank you.

145

00:11:02,070 --> 00:11:05,450

Oh, hello there. It's Ian Pennington speaking, and it's

146

00:11:05,860 --> 00:11:07,540

Longfield Broadgate.

147

00:11:09,380 --> 00:11:12,020

So whereabouts actually is that on that map?

148

00:11:15,840 --> 00:11:18,940

Would the applicant care to explain or point out where that is?

149

00:11:19,960 --> 00:11:20,680

Yeah, you explain.

150

00:11:22,620 --> 00:11:26,400

Tom Fowler from the applicant. Is there a plan available that has the OS master

151

00:11:26,440 --> 00:11:28,620

mapping references on? Because there's two roads present.

152

00:11:35,660 --> 00:11:37,860

I think we can-- Yeah, maybe we need to take that away-

153

00:11:37,960 --> 00:11:38,030

Yeah

154

00:11:38,040 --> 00:11:38,600
... to check a

155
00:11:39,460 --> 00:11:41,120
mapping that includes the roads,

156
00:11:41,940 --> 00:11:44,079
because this one doesn't, and I can't see-

157
00:11:44,140 --> 00:11:46,660
I can point out where it is if that helps.

158
00:11:46,930 --> 00:11:47,120
Please.

159
00:11:47,190 --> 00:11:47,500
So,

160
00:11:48,880 --> 00:11:52,220
where you have... And obviously it's zoomed out, so I don't know if
there's any

161
00:11:52,280 --> 00:11:56,020
possibility of that. So you have these two yellow lines, these two

162
00:11:56,120 --> 00:11:59,980
very faint yellow lines. The northern smaller yellow line,

163
00:12:00,120 --> 00:12:00,380
that's

164
00:12:01,540 --> 00:12:02,120
Broadgate.

165
00:12:03,700 --> 00:12:04,460
All right.

166
00:12:05,340 --> 00:12:05,620
Yes.

167
00:12:05,790 --> 00:12:07,040

Yes. Does that answer the question?

168

00:12:09,188 --> 00:12:12,188

So haven't you got to go through that yard to get to that?

169

00:12:13,678 --> 00:12:17,218

That was the question I was asking, but if the applicant's able to confirm that

170

00:12:17,288 --> 00:12:18,088

again, yes.

171

00:12:18,968 --> 00:12:20,928

Yes. Tom Fowler on behalf of the applicant.

172

00:12:21,268 --> 00:12:25,208

Yes, so that is the direct access to that field that we could see from aerial

173

00:12:25,228 --> 00:12:28,628

imagery from the nearest public highway access point into that

174

00:12:29,328 --> 00:12:30,908

National Grid Electricity distribution asset.

175

00:12:32,408 --> 00:12:32,668

Yes.

176

00:12:33,568 --> 00:12:34,968

Could you introduce yourself?

177

00:12:35,348 --> 00:12:36,628

I'm Jenny Pennington.

178

00:12:38,008 --> 00:12:40,328

We do know a little bit about this area.

179

00:12:40,428 --> 00:12:41,347

In fact, the

180

00:12:43,028 --> 00:12:46,248

person whose property involved is very

181

00:12:46,388 --> 00:12:50,168

concerned. He was hoping to be here, but he can't be here himself,

182

00:12:50,728 --> 00:12:54,628

and he's very concerned because there is a pinch point there.

183

00:12:55,168 --> 00:12:56,988

National Grid know about it.

184

00:12:59,108 --> 00:13:02,748

Meridian know about it, but he doesn't seem to be

185

00:13:02,848 --> 00:13:06,568

getting answers from anybody. They're wanting to go through his

186

00:13:06,628 --> 00:13:10,348

haulage yard and very close to his bungalow, and

187

00:13:10,408 --> 00:13:14,188

really, he's quite a busy business person.

188

00:13:14,508 --> 00:13:18,288

He doesn't have time to deal with a lot of these things, but it's

189

00:13:18,948 --> 00:13:21,548

having great impacts on his health.

190

00:13:22,668 --> 00:13:26,648

And he's really seriously worried and concerned, and I'd

191

00:13:26,688 --> 00:13:30,448

like somebody from somewhere just to contact him

192

00:13:30,848 --> 00:13:33,608

and try and clarify

193

00:13:34,468 --> 00:13:36,348

what's happening with his property.

194

00:13:37,048 --> 00:13:40,928

Thanks, Ms. Pennington. Could I ask you, as the gentleman in question

195

00:13:40,988 --> 00:13:44,328

isn't here today, would he be able to put his concerns

196

00:13:44,968 --> 00:13:48,648

in writing? If he can't be here today, could he submit his

197

00:13:49,068 --> 00:13:51,548

concerns in writing into the examination?

198

00:13:51,868 --> 00:13:55,728

Yes. I'm not sure whether he has already

199

00:13:55,808 --> 00:13:56,087

or not.

200

00:13:56,108 --> 00:13:58,468

He has. Yeah. That's fine.

201

00:13:58,748 --> 00:13:58,808

Yes.

202

00:13:58,868 --> 00:14:00,028

If he wants to,

203

00:14:01,228 --> 00:14:05,168

at deadline one, raise any additional concerns that he

204

00:14:05,228 --> 00:14:09,008

may have missed in his first submission, that's fine, and I'll hand

205

00:14:09,028 --> 00:14:12,908

over to the applicant to comment on communication with the gentleman in

206

00:14:12,968 --> 00:14:13,908

question.

207

00:14:13,928 --> 00:14:14,087

Thank you.

208

00:14:14,128 --> 00:14:14,608

Thank you.

209

00:14:14,668 --> 00:14:18,337

If somebody can do something to help him, I'd really be really

210

00:14:18,468 --> 00:14:19,728

grateful. Thank you.

211

00:14:19,788 --> 00:14:20,948

I'll pass over to the applicant.

212

00:14:21,088 --> 00:14:21,228

Sure.

213

00:14:21,988 --> 00:14:25,268

Taylor Power for the applicant. Yeah, I can confirm that the applicant has been in

214

00:14:25,348 --> 00:14:28,238

contact with the individual in question and is working through those

215

00:14:28,308 --> 00:14:32,248

concerns. And sorry, if we don't mind just keeping that image up on screen

216

00:14:32,628 --> 00:14:35,668

just while we speak to this topic, I think it's helpful for everyone to have it

217

00:14:35,708 --> 00:14:35,948

there.

218

00:14:37,868 --> 00:14:41,248

I suppose just to clarify again, the intention of the applicant is,

219

00:14:42,188 --> 00:14:45,488

if at all possible, to avoid using that access at all.

220

00:14:45,848 --> 00:14:47,628

The intention is to oversail

221

00:14:48,568 --> 00:14:51,368

National Grid Electricity distribution, and I just want to clarify, it's

222

00:14:51,408 --> 00:14:55,108

distribution, not transmission that we're talking about in this context.

223

00:14:55,988 --> 00:14:57,758

Oversail those assets-

224

00:14:57,788 --> 00:14:57,838

Mm-hmm

225

00:14:59,208 --> 00:15:03,128

... in the final design, but it's essentially held there as

226

00:15:03,168 --> 00:15:07,088

a backup if National Grid Electricity distribution wanted

227

00:15:07,108 --> 00:15:10,168

its assets undergrounded. And also, if

228

00:15:10,308 --> 00:15:14,048

NGED wasn't able to use its own

229

00:15:14,108 --> 00:15:17,978

existing access powers in respect of those assets where they cross through that

230

00:15:18,008 --> 00:15:21,828

property. It's to ensure just that the applicant has those access

231

00:15:21,868 --> 00:15:25,848

powers if necessary. But given this is a

232

00:15:25,868 --> 00:15:29,228

point of concern, it might be something the applicant comes

233

00:15:29,288 --> 00:15:32,848

back on later in the examination process following those further

234

00:15:32,868 --> 00:15:34,288

discussions with the landowner,

235

00:15:35,208 --> 00:15:39,008

and also further discussions with NGED, in relation to the protective

236

00:15:39,068 --> 00:15:39,787

provisions.

237

00:15:44,168 --> 00:15:48,148

Thank you. Then before I move on to my next question, is there anybody else

238

00:15:48,188 --> 00:15:48,668

in the room

239

00:15:51,628 --> 00:15:53,308

or online? I can't tell.

240

00:15:55,377 --> 00:15:58,608

No. So I'll move on to my next question, which is the final question for item four.

241

00:15:59,728 --> 00:16:01,068

So the solar

242

00:16:03,088 --> 00:16:06,528

element of the proposed development is split across four separate parcels, which

243

00:16:06,568 --> 00:16:10,448

you described earlier. Could you please explain what consideration has been

244

00:16:10,508 --> 00:16:13,688

given to the phasing of the installation of the solar

245

00:16:13,768 --> 00:16:17,088

panels and then the associated construction activities?

246

00:16:17,548 --> 00:16:21,428

So in particular, this is in relation to minimizing construction impacts

247

00:16:21,488 --> 00:16:25,408

and disruption to communities, and also whether you've considered

248

00:16:25,418 --> 00:16:29,268

any alternative phasing approaches for construction as well.

249

00:16:31,268 --> 00:16:34,448

Taylor Power for the applicant. I might request that Mr.

250

00:16:34,608 --> 00:16:35,388

Chris Coates

251

00:16:36,328 --> 00:16:40,248

from Downing comes to speak to this in respect of construction at the

252

00:16:40,308 --> 00:16:41,928

solar development area.

253

00:17:05,508 --> 00:17:07,748

Hi there. Chris Coates for the applicant.

254

00:17:07,788 --> 00:17:10,469

Would you be able just to repeat the question again, please?

255

00:17:10,668 --> 00:17:14,588

Yes, of course. So it's just in regards to the solar element

256

00:17:14,648 --> 00:17:18,608

of the development, and because it's split into four separate parcels, could

257

00:17:18,768 --> 00:17:22,729

you explain how you've considered or what consideration was given

258

00:17:22,788 --> 00:17:26,558

to the phasing of the installation of the panels and associated

259

00:17:26,628 --> 00:17:30,348

construction activities? And this is in relation to how

260

00:17:30,988 --> 00:17:34,768

minimizing construction impacts and any disruption to communities,

261

00:17:35,268 --> 00:17:38,308

and whether any

262

00:17:38,368 --> 00:17:42,228

alternative phasing approaches were also considered and how the preferred

263

00:17:42,268 --> 00:17:44,468

approach was then selected.

264

00:17:44,528 --> 00:17:48,068

Yeah. So from the indicative construction program put

265

00:17:48,148 --> 00:17:48,608

forward

266

00:17:49,648 --> 00:17:53,348

in the ES, I think Volume Six, Chapter Two on the scheme, it

267

00:17:53,408 --> 00:17:56,808

shows that parcel A, B, C, and D are essentially

268

00:17:57,188 --> 00:18:00,718

installed concurrently. They're not essentially phased

269

00:18:00,848 --> 00:18:02,928

as complete, then B, then C, then D.

270

00:18:03,568 --> 00:18:04,218

They're installed

271

00:18:05,148 --> 00:18:06,388
simultaneously.

272

00:18:13,732 --> 00:18:14,752
So in that regard,

273

00:18:15,852 --> 00:18:19,712
when you say simultaneously, the construction

274

00:18:19,752 --> 00:18:23,272
traffic could turn up and go anywhere within those four parcels

275

00:18:23,812 --> 00:18:27,452
during the whole construction phase rather than being sited or

276

00:18:27,532 --> 00:18:27,892
moving,

277

00:18:28,972 --> 00:18:30,972
as you say, from one parcel to the next?

278

00:18:33,692 --> 00:18:36,852
Yeah. Sorry, just so I understand, is your question

279

00:18:37,872 --> 00:18:38,432
regarding...

280

00:18:39,392 --> 00:18:40,682
Sorry, what I'm trying to explain is that

281

00:18:41,792 --> 00:18:45,632
we're not essentially proposing to construct parcel A, then move on to

282

00:18:45,672 --> 00:18:46,212
parcel B.

283

00:18:48,472 --> 00:18:51,892
I think what we've assessed is that the best way forward is to

284

00:18:52,132 --> 00:18:56,052

install them all at the same time, working across the four

285

00:18:56,092 --> 00:18:56,992

development areas,

286

00:18:58,472 --> 00:19:00,712

due to the program that's been put out.

287

00:19:03,572 --> 00:19:05,532

Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant.

288

00:19:06,292 --> 00:19:08,132

If I may jump in here as well,

289

00:19:09,932 --> 00:19:13,632

just to say that plate 2.13 within

290

00:19:13,772 --> 00:19:14,812

ES chapter two,

291

00:19:16,052 --> 00:19:19,892

it represents the worst case scenario that provides the

292

00:19:19,952 --> 00:19:23,652

worst case traffic numbers for the purposes of the

293

00:19:23,752 --> 00:19:24,202

EIA.

294

00:19:28,332 --> 00:19:29,852

Yeah. So that

295

00:19:30,812 --> 00:19:34,372

basically presents the envelope for the EIA assessments, which

296

00:19:34,472 --> 00:19:34,972

consider

297

00:19:36,592 --> 00:19:39,292

all of the traffic occurring at the same time.

298

00:19:40,012 --> 00:19:43,692

Whilst the plate 2.13 shows that the solar development

299

00:19:43,792 --> 00:19:45,932

area and grid connection route

300

00:19:46,992 --> 00:19:48,532

construction can be phased

301

00:19:49,472 --> 00:19:53,072

for the purposes of the traffic assessment, again, the peak flows

302

00:19:53,132 --> 00:19:54,392

from each of those

303

00:19:56,312 --> 00:20:00,032

parts have been added to the same peak year in order to provide a worst case

304

00:20:00,092 --> 00:20:00,672

assessment.

305

00:20:02,492 --> 00:20:06,312

Can I just ask why that approach has been selected, why you didn't go

306

00:20:06,372 --> 00:20:06,562

with

307

00:20:07,492 --> 00:20:10,772

a phased approach of A, B, C, and D? Why

308

00:20:11,032 --> 00:20:11,752

concurrently?

309

00:20:13,932 --> 00:20:17,832

I think originally it was partly down to the indicative

310

00:20:18,372 --> 00:20:22,271

connection date provided, which was anticipated to be

311

00:20:22,692 --> 00:20:26,592

2033, and given the timescales to go through the

312

00:20:26,612 --> 00:20:27,702

DCO application,

313

00:20:28,832 --> 00:20:31,102

and the relevant pre-construction works,

314

00:20:32,512 --> 00:20:35,151

that is what allowed us to meet that connection date.

315

00:20:35,232 --> 00:20:37,202

Obviously, we know from discussions earlier,

316

00:20:38,992 --> 00:20:42,512

being now a gate one offer, there's no guarantee of when that connection date

317

00:20:43,192 --> 00:20:46,992

will be. Even if we become a gate two project in the next window, it could still be

318

00:20:47,672 --> 00:20:51,652

the side of 2035. So the reason for putting it like

319

00:20:51,752 --> 00:20:55,352

that was to allow us to meet the target energization date.

320

00:20:57,852 --> 00:21:00,132

And as you've already identified, that date

321

00:21:01,572 --> 00:21:02,232

may or may not

322

00:21:03,152 --> 00:21:03,632

happen.

323

00:21:04,732 --> 00:21:08,632

So given that was the initial reason for your

324

00:21:08,672 --> 00:21:11,092
construction approach, which it may not occur,

325

00:21:12,952 --> 00:21:16,032
I suppose the point I'm getting at, a concurrent construction

326

00:21:16,072 --> 00:21:18,652
program is quite disruptive

327

00:21:19,852 --> 00:21:21,032
to local communities.

328

00:21:21,972 --> 00:21:25,152
Is a phased approach less disruptive?

329

00:21:26,352 --> 00:21:29,972
I think, and Astrid can jump in to correct me if I'm wrong, but I

330

00:21:29,992 --> 00:21:33,012
think given that at the time of the

331

00:21:34,392 --> 00:21:37,792
submission that this largely represents a worst-case scenario, I
think it would be

332

00:21:38,072 --> 00:21:41,972
probably the best approach to come back in writing with further
detail to

333

00:21:42,012 --> 00:21:42,912
perhaps evidence

334

00:21:43,912 --> 00:21:46,632
if a phased approach would indeed lead to a lesser impact.

335

00:21:46,852 --> 00:21:50,512
That's fine, and I realize that is a quite specific technical

336

00:21:50,612 --> 00:21:53,592

question, but I think you can see the point that my colleague was—

337

00:21:53,692 --> 00:21:54,072

Absolutely

338

00:21:54,152 --> 00:21:54,932

... was making.

339

00:21:56,992 --> 00:22:00,632

Taylor Power for the applicant. If it would assist, we can

340

00:22:00,672 --> 00:22:03,512

present some further working in respect of this.

341

00:22:03,592 --> 00:22:05,372

I think it also does involve,

342

00:22:06,732 --> 00:22:10,032

while there might be elements of the site that are appropriate to be phased, there

343

00:22:10,072 --> 00:22:13,212

might be other element, for example, solar panel installation.

344

00:22:13,232 --> 00:22:16,192

There might be other elements including substation construction or BESS

345

00:22:16,212 --> 00:22:20,032

construction that might need to happen concurrently, and I think probably

346

00:22:20,072 --> 00:22:23,822

that hasn't been expressed because we've taken that worst case assessment and

347

00:22:23,872 --> 00:22:27,672

the fastest construction period assessment within the

348

00:22:27,732 --> 00:22:28,172

ES.

349

00:22:29,692 --> 00:22:30,012

That

350

00:22:31,232 --> 00:22:35,052

hasn't been expressed within the documents, but if it would assist, we

351

00:22:35,112 --> 00:22:38,732

could express what the constraints would be, where some

352

00:22:38,772 --> 00:22:42,392

elements could be phased and others might need to continue concurrently regardless

353

00:22:42,432 --> 00:22:42,952

of phasing.

354

00:22:43,072 --> 00:22:46,312

I think that would be very useful. Thank you.

355

00:22:48,732 --> 00:22:50,992

So that brings to a conclusion item four.

356

00:22:51,192 --> 00:22:54,692

So before we finish that, is there anybody else in the room that wishes to raise

357

00:22:54,772 --> 00:22:56,132

anything on this item?

358

00:22:57,472 --> 00:22:58,952

No. Or online?

359

00:23:00,772 --> 00:23:00,952

No.

360

00:23:02,272 --> 00:23:05,752

So we'll move on to item five, and

361

00:23:05,812 --> 00:23:07,292

being conscious of

362

00:23:08,172 --> 00:23:12,152

how much we've got left to go through, I know in the agenda, we

363

00:23:12,772 --> 00:23:16,322

asked for an overview of alternative methods of design of panels and electricity

364

00:23:16,372 --> 00:23:18,412

transmission. Given there's been a bit of discussion on

365

00:23:19,352 --> 00:23:20,442

electricity transmission,

366

00:23:21,652 --> 00:23:25,272

I think I'll focus my question to the panels again.

367

00:23:26,832 --> 00:23:29,732

So could the applicant please provide an overview of their approach taken to

368

00:23:29,792 --> 00:23:33,432

selecting the proposed panel design and the factors that

369

00:23:33,512 --> 00:23:35,052

influence those decisions?

370

00:23:36,892 --> 00:23:40,452

Yes. Taylor Power for the applicant. Yes, I'll pass over to Ms.

371

00:23:40,592 --> 00:23:42,552

Tischler in respect of

372

00:23:43,372 --> 00:23:45,162

a brief summary on this, but then also Mr.

373

00:23:45,392 --> 00:23:48,232

Coates will be able to answer in respect of technical matters if there are

374

00:23:48,332 --> 00:23:49,272

follow-up questions.

375

00:23:53,932 --> 00:23:55,872

Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant.

376

00:23:58,892 --> 00:24:02,592

Paragraphs 352 to 355 of ES

377

00:24:02,632 --> 00:24:06,072

chapter three, Alternatives and Design Evolution, App

378

00:24:06,132 --> 00:24:06,932

254,

379

00:24:07,972 --> 00:24:11,482

set out the main reasons for the selection and an environmental

380

00:24:11,532 --> 00:24:15,032

comparison of the options for solar PV panel

381

00:24:15,132 --> 00:24:15,652

technology.

382

00:24:17,092 --> 00:24:20,552

In summary, the applicant considered fixed south-facing

383

00:24:20,592 --> 00:24:23,842

panels, east-west single axis tracker panels,

384

00:24:24,692 --> 00:24:26,132

and fixed east-west panels.

385

00:24:27,212 --> 00:24:31,192

Fixed south-facing panels were selected as the proposed option, as

386

00:24:31,232 --> 00:24:35,062

within the context of the site, they provide the most appropriate balance between

387

00:24:35,072 --> 00:24:38,432

energy efficiency, land use, and environmental effects.

388

00:24:39,452 --> 00:24:42,912

They maximize exposure to direct sunlight throughout the day,

389

00:24:43,452 --> 00:24:47,392

deliver a reliable and high energy yield without the additional

390

00:24:47,432 --> 00:24:50,232

cost and maintenance associated with tracker systems,

391

00:24:51,052 --> 00:24:54,502

and allow sufficient spacing to support biodiversity enhancement,

392

00:24:55,232 --> 00:24:58,512

which is a constraint associated with fixed east-west panels.

393

00:24:59,392 --> 00:25:03,062

The applicant notes that LCC, within their

394

00:25:03,072 --> 00:25:06,852

relevant representation, RR111, raised a

395

00:25:06,932 --> 00:25:10,512

query with regards to the consideration of vertical

396

00:25:10,652 --> 00:25:11,572

bifacial panels,

397

00:25:12,672 --> 00:25:15,912

which may enable the use of agrivoltaic

398

00:25:16,012 --> 00:25:19,732

systems. The applicant's response to their relevant

399

00:25:19,772 --> 00:25:22,532

representation, which will be submitted at deadline one,

400

00:25:23,572 --> 00:25:27,432

will provide a clarification to explain that vertical

401

00:25:27,512 --> 00:25:31,392
bifacial panels would not be considered suitable for the site, as

402
00:25:31,412 --> 00:25:34,952
they would require greater land take to achieve the same energy
yield,

403
00:25:36,432 --> 00:25:40,222
and potentially increasing environmental effects, development costs,
and

404
00:25:40,332 --> 00:25:42,071
interference with private land rights.

405
00:25:47,132 --> 00:25:50,352
Is there anything further from Mr. Coates? No.

406
00:25:51,292 --> 00:25:51,692
Thank you.

407
00:25:52,592 --> 00:25:56,172
Do Lincolnshire wish to come in on this point, as it was in your
relevant rep?

408
00:25:59,052 --> 00:26:02,472
So the point rightly raised by those

409
00:26:03,472 --> 00:26:07,452
opposite is that we had a concern as to why there was no
consideration given to

410
00:26:07,472 --> 00:26:08,432
these vertical bifacial

411
00:26:09,392 --> 00:26:12,242
solar panels. Now, noting that the applicant's indicated there's
going to be a

412
00:26:12,272 --> 00:26:14,232
clear response to that relevant rep.

413
00:26:14,272 --> 00:26:17,842

Until we've seen that, I guess there's not much more I can say rather than raising

414

00:26:17,872 --> 00:26:21,012

that we have that concern, and that's one of the items we're going to raise under

415

00:26:21,092 --> 00:26:24,851

item five. There are some others, but I'll just wait for the relevant time to raise

416

00:26:24,872 --> 00:26:25,432

those as well.

417

00:26:26,772 --> 00:26:27,951

Thank you. That's fine.

418

00:26:29,532 --> 00:26:31,192

Thank you very much. So,

419

00:26:32,232 --> 00:26:33,132

moving then through

420

00:26:34,152 --> 00:26:34,872

the questions.

421

00:26:36,612 --> 00:26:39,312

Sorry, I do want to go back to pylons now again,

422

00:26:40,132 --> 00:26:42,692

and it was to do with positioning of them within fields.

423

00:26:42,712 --> 00:26:45,002

And I did note in the design approach document, which is

424

00:26:45,072 --> 00:26:46,861

APP268,

425

00:26:47,752 --> 00:26:48,572

it states that there

426

00:26:49,572 --> 00:26:53,512
has been some flexibility for minor deviations in pylon

427
00:26:53,572 --> 00:26:54,032
siting.

428
00:26:54,992 --> 00:26:55,632
I was wondering if

429
00:26:56,972 --> 00:27:00,572
you could point to where on plans where any minor deviation and
movement of pylons

430
00:27:00,592 --> 00:27:01,472
has taken place,

431
00:27:02,632 --> 00:27:06,552
because I'm particularly interested in how pylons have been chosen
in relation

432
00:27:06,612 --> 00:27:10,252
to how they're sited in fields and field boundaries,

433
00:27:10,522 --> 00:27:10,792
and

434
00:27:11,632 --> 00:27:14,772
minimizing the impact on agricultural activities.

435
00:27:17,892 --> 00:27:21,421
Taylor Powell for the applicant. I think you might be referring to
the changes that

436
00:27:21,452 --> 00:27:25,232
were made subsequent to the statutory consultation, is that correct,
in terms of

437
00:27:25,292 --> 00:27:29,152
the indicative pylon locations at that consultation-

438
00:27:29,312 --> 00:27:29,492
If that's-

439

00:27:29,512 --> 00:27:32,972

Or that had been assumed for that consultation, and then how they'd shifted in

440

00:27:33,012 --> 00:27:33,861

response to-

441

00:27:34,392 --> 00:27:34,852

Yes.

442

00:27:34,912 --> 00:27:35,042

Um-

443

00:27:35,272 --> 00:27:36,312

Yes, to understand

444

00:27:37,352 --> 00:27:38,921

how they sit within-

445

00:27:39,012 --> 00:27:39,082

Yeah

446

00:27:39,082 --> 00:27:39,462

... the fields.

447

00:27:39,772 --> 00:27:43,692

Yes, of course. I might ask Mr. Fowler if he's happy to speak

448

00:27:43,712 --> 00:27:44,612

to this point again,

449

00:27:45,492 --> 00:27:47,592

in respect to the design work that LSTC

450

00:27:47,732 --> 00:27:49,572

undertook.

451

00:27:54,292 --> 00:27:55,942

Tom Fowler on behalf of the applicant.

452

00:27:56,312 --> 00:28:00,201

So, in terms of the specific locations, we need to bring up the documentation that

453

00:28:00,232 --> 00:28:02,852

refers to which pylons were moved during the consultation period, because I don't

454

00:28:02,892 --> 00:28:03,872

have that off the top of my head.

455

00:28:04,792 --> 00:28:08,462

But in terms of the design process, we seek to try and

456

00:28:08,472 --> 00:28:12,432

position pylons as close to field boundaries as possible to reduce any

457

00:28:13,132 --> 00:28:16,912

gap between field boundary and the pylon legs to basically sterilize land

458

00:28:17,012 --> 00:28:19,172

for farming so the machinery can go past.

459

00:28:19,692 --> 00:28:23,412

Or we'd seek to maintain a standoff of 30 meters or more where

460

00:28:23,472 --> 00:28:26,692

possible to allow for machinery to pass between the boundary and the pylon leg.

461

00:28:26,752 --> 00:28:30,552

So farming practices and the machinery used in that process

462

00:28:30,622 --> 00:28:34,472

does factor into the design. We also have to consider proximity to

463

00:28:34,532 --> 00:28:38,111

drains, existing underground utilities, roads, and various other

464

00:28:38,152 --> 00:28:40,202
constraints, protected species, et cetera.

465
00:28:40,722 --> 00:28:44,422
Therefore, it's not always possible to do that, but our best endeavors are

466
00:28:44,472 --> 00:28:47,612
always attempted to make that happen.

467
00:28:47,652 --> 00:28:50,952
So when we get landowner responses and feedback during the consultation period,

468
00:28:51,012 --> 00:28:52,972
we'd assess that and where we could move them.

469
00:28:53,012 --> 00:28:56,752
Of course, we achieve that whilst taking into consideration obviously span

470
00:28:56,832 --> 00:29:00,512
lengths, pylon heights, clearances, et cetera, because you can't just move

471
00:29:00,522 --> 00:29:04,012
pylons and then not assess the height in practice because pylons will then need to

472
00:29:04,032 --> 00:29:05,362
increase the ground clearance. So it's a

473
00:29:06,132 --> 00:29:09,152
multidisciplinary-led approach.

474
00:29:09,832 --> 00:29:13,172
But we did consider feedback, and there are some locations where we did relocate

475
00:29:13,252 --> 00:29:14,832
pylons based on landowner feedback.

476

00:29:22,912 --> 00:29:26,892
Is there scope to have a plan or a

477
00:29:26,932 --> 00:29:29,412
document submitted to show which ones in particular did

478
00:29:30,232 --> 00:29:30,712
move?

479
00:29:32,372 --> 00:29:34,552
Just to understand that point.

480
00:29:35,252 --> 00:29:36,472
Yes. Taylor Powell for the applicant.

481
00:29:36,532 --> 00:29:40,322
I'm just trying to come to terms with that myself, because I know I have

482
00:29:40,452 --> 00:29:44,312
seen documents on that, and I'm just confirming which element of the ES,

483
00:29:44,492 --> 00:29:48,332
or it might have been even in the consultation report that reflected those changes.

484
00:29:48,432 --> 00:29:52,272
So if you don't mind, perhaps if we came back to you after the break, and I just

485
00:29:53,732 --> 00:29:53,962
see if

486
00:29:54,852 --> 00:29:57,072
I can refer you to the correct document,

487
00:29:58,772 --> 00:30:00,212
or we could come back to you in writing.

488
00:30:01,812 --> 00:30:04,312
It might be that you might have to come back in writing, depending

on how we

489

00:30:04,332 --> 00:30:05,452
progress this afternoon.

490

00:30:05,692 --> 00:30:05,752
Yeah.

491

00:30:05,792 --> 00:30:06,432
But that's fine.

492

00:30:06,572 --> 00:30:06,902
Yeah. That's okay.

493

00:30:06,902 --> 00:30:09,752
It's just to, again, understand that context. Thank you.

494

00:30:11,912 --> 00:30:12,992
Great. Thank you very much.

495

00:30:13,892 --> 00:30:14,092
So,

496

00:30:15,792 --> 00:30:19,572
moving through, my next question is in relation to the substation

497

00:30:19,652 --> 00:30:20,632
and battery

498

00:30:21,700 --> 00:30:25,600
The BESS area. And we've noted that there are two fields to the

499

00:30:25,660 --> 00:30:29,280
south that have been left that are within the order limits.

500

00:30:30,040 --> 00:30:33,880
And I'm not wanting to stray into compulsory acquisition or
anything, but we just

501

00:30:33,920 --> 00:30:37,470
would like an explanation as to the purpose of those two fields and

why they're

502

00:30:37,500 --> 00:30:39,720
there.

503

00:30:40,180 --> 00:30:41,390
Yes, Taylor Power for the applicant.

504

00:30:41,500 --> 00:30:44,180
I think it might be Ms Tischler who could speak to this.

505

00:30:49,940 --> 00:30:53,080
Sure. Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant.

506

00:30:54,080 --> 00:30:57,940
I'm just thinking which might be the best plan to bring up to

507

00:30:58,000 --> 00:31:00,540
illustrate this point, but it might be the

508

00:31:01,580 --> 00:31:05,240
solar development area construction layout plan, which is

509

00:31:07,300 --> 00:31:08,880
ES Figure

510

00:31:14,760 --> 00:31:17,680
26, App 078.

511

00:31:20,720 --> 00:31:24,040
If, Mr. Davis, that could be shared on the screen.

512

00:31:38,000 --> 00:31:39,160
And then if we

513

00:31:40,980 --> 00:31:44,640
carry on with the sheets until we get to the 400 kV substation

514

00:31:45,000 --> 00:31:46,280
and BESS compound location.

515

00:31:50,620 --> 00:31:50,920

There we go.

516

00:31:51,760 --> 00:31:54,520

So I believe it's the two fields to the south of the...

517

00:31:55,340 --> 00:31:55,560

Yep.

518

00:31:58,500 --> 00:32:00,400

Within the illustrative plans,

519

00:32:01,360 --> 00:32:05,180

the illustrative plans currently show an access route leading up

520

00:32:05,260 --> 00:32:05,500

to

521

00:32:06,520 --> 00:32:09,620

the substation and BESS compound location, and also

522

00:32:10,680 --> 00:32:11,560

immediately to the

523

00:32:13,120 --> 00:32:16,960

south of the substation BESS compound, the field has

524

00:32:17,080 --> 00:32:19,960

been allocated for construction compounds.

525

00:32:21,400 --> 00:32:25,260

I would note that on the illustrative

526

00:32:25,300 --> 00:32:29,140

construction layout plan for the grid connection route, there is also a

527

00:32:29,180 --> 00:32:32,950

second compound shown in that field to the south of the substation as

528

00:32:32,980 --> 00:32:33,740

well,

529

00:32:34,580 --> 00:32:38,280

with the intention that one of the compounds is for the purposes of the

530

00:32:38,340 --> 00:32:42,160

substation BESS compound construction, and the other is an alternative

531

00:32:42,220 --> 00:32:45,420

location of a construction compound for the grid connection route.

532

00:32:47,600 --> 00:32:50,720

But that is the primary purpose of those two fields.

533

00:32:51,580 --> 00:32:52,980

So access and

534

00:32:54,400 --> 00:32:56,460

temporary construction working areas compounds.

535

00:32:58,640 --> 00:33:02,160

Confirming there are proposed to be two construction compounds

536

00:33:02,220 --> 00:33:05,840

in that field immediately to the south of the

537

00:33:05,900 --> 00:33:08,640

substation BESS area. Is that correct?

538

00:33:09,400 --> 00:33:13,040

Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant. Yes, that's correct.

539

00:33:13,580 --> 00:33:17,500

I think perhaps it might be useful to also open

540

00:33:17,580 --> 00:33:17,840

up

541

00:33:19,240 --> 00:33:21,080

ES Figure 27,

542

00:33:22,840 --> 00:33:24,060

App 079,

543

00:33:24,960 --> 00:33:26,060

just to illustrate that point.

544

00:33:30,460 --> 00:33:34,360

And if we go to the sheet where the grid connection leads up

545

00:33:34,400 --> 00:33:36,100

to the substation.

546

00:33:42,980 --> 00:33:46,920

So you can see that there's a second compound that's a little bit further to the

547

00:33:46,980 --> 00:33:47,300

south.

548

00:33:49,540 --> 00:33:50,060

Can I ask a

549

00:33:51,520 --> 00:33:52,600

rather silly question? Why

550

00:33:54,480 --> 00:33:56,460

is there no plan with both compounds being shown?

551

00:33:57,080 --> 00:34:00,720

Because it's quite misleading to have one plan with one compound and one plan with

552

00:34:00,820 --> 00:34:02,380

another compound.

553

00:34:03,260 --> 00:34:03,540

No?

554

00:34:04,480 --> 00:34:07,280

Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant.

555

00:34:08,640 --> 00:34:12,600

We can dig out if there's a plan which is showing two

556

00:34:12,660 --> 00:34:14,841

of the compounds at the same time as well.

557

00:34:15,861 --> 00:34:19,361

But I think part of it is just linked to how the figures were set

558

00:34:19,480 --> 00:34:23,140

out. One was to simply illustrate the

559

00:34:23,160 --> 00:34:26,301

construction requirements for the solar development area and inter-array

560

00:34:26,341 --> 00:34:30,261

connections, while the second set of plans was specifically to

561

00:34:30,460 --> 00:34:33,960

illustrate the construction requirements for the grid connection route, and that's

562

00:34:33,980 --> 00:34:37,341

why they're split in these two figures where it's come about.

563

00:34:39,400 --> 00:34:43,361

Thank you. So then to confirm, it's just for an access road, and it's for two

564

00:34:43,400 --> 00:34:47,330

compounds. So why have the order limits then gone all the way to the edge of

565

00:34:47,361 --> 00:34:47,900

the field,

566

00:34:49,821 --> 00:34:52,020

not just around the compound areas?

567

00:34:52,060 --> 00:34:55,980

And I appreciate they're indicative at this stage, but why not just

568

00:34:56,000 --> 00:34:59,440

around the compound? Why have you-- And also the field below that as well, if the

569

00:34:59,540 --> 00:35:02,660

access track is to the west.

570

00:35:05,520 --> 00:35:08,300

Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant.

571

00:35:09,600 --> 00:35:13,560

I believe the entirety of the fields have been included for flexibility, and I

572

00:35:13,580 --> 00:35:17,420

also wanted to apologize. I also wanted to say

573

00:35:17,540 --> 00:35:21,300

cabling as well. So connection for cabling into the substation and BESS

574

00:35:21,340 --> 00:35:22,940

compound from the

575

00:35:24,760 --> 00:35:25,920

areas to the south.

576

00:35:26,940 --> 00:35:28,240

If I might jump in.

577

00:35:29,200 --> 00:35:30,940

In addition, Taylor Power for the applicant.

578

00:35:31,520 --> 00:35:35,400

I also understand it reflects engagement with landowners in terms of

579

00:35:35,440 --> 00:35:38,850
not wanting to be left with parts of fields in this section and

580
00:35:38,900 --> 00:35:42,800
preferring that the scheme took the entirety of the

581
00:35:42,840 --> 00:35:43,780
field so that they're not

582
00:35:44,920 --> 00:35:46,460
kind of left with a small amount of land.

583
00:35:46,520 --> 00:35:50,500
So I think it reflected that landowner discussion as to why that
wider area

584
00:35:50,560 --> 00:35:52,640
was shown within the order limits.

585
00:35:53,400 --> 00:35:57,100
Thank you. As Mrs Murphy said, I don't want to turn this into a CA
hearing

586
00:35:57,160 --> 00:35:58,620
because that's for another day.

587
00:35:59,520 --> 00:36:02,980
But in your answer, could you

588
00:36:03,020 --> 00:36:06,980
cross-reference to how that would meet the necessary tests

589
00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:08,330
in terms of CA, please?

590
00:36:09,720 --> 00:36:11,980
Because it is obviously something we need to look at.

591
00:36:13,040 --> 00:36:13,260
Yes-

592

00:36:13,440 --> 00:36:13,450
Thank you

593
00:36:13,450 --> 00:36:14,220
... we can do that.

594
00:36:19,080 --> 00:36:20,160
Thank you. And

595
00:36:21,060 --> 00:36:24,820
just before I move on to my final question in this section then, I
just want to

596
00:36:24,860 --> 00:36:28,160
check if there's any further, anyone has any questions in the room

597
00:36:30,684 --> 00:36:31,444
Or online?

598
00:36:32,524 --> 00:36:32,744
No.

599
00:36:33,584 --> 00:36:34,884
So my final question I'll try and

600
00:36:36,024 --> 00:36:39,364
round into one. And again, it's back to

601
00:36:40,324 --> 00:36:41,544
pylons again. Sorry.

602
00:36:42,454 --> 00:36:46,104
And it's to do with, I appreciate under the design approach document

603
00:36:46,644 --> 00:36:50,164
that it says there's been flexibility to allow for oversailing of

604
00:36:50,204 --> 00:36:52,724
existing third-party assets,

605
00:36:52,804 --> 00:36:56,064

and there's the undergrounding

606

00:36:56,164 --> 00:36:59,744
of the proposed route under the 132-kilovolt

607

00:36:59,804 --> 00:37:00,544
existing line.

608

00:37:03,044 --> 00:37:06,714
I'd just like to understand why, and I know there was a

609

00:37:06,744 --> 00:37:10,694
reference earlier made to the technicalities around the need to
underground at

610

00:37:10,724 --> 00:37:13,504
that section. I'd just like to understand a bit more as to why the

611

00:37:13,664 --> 00:37:17,044
132 couldn't have been undergrounded instead.

612

00:37:19,544 --> 00:37:21,174
Yep. Tom Fowler on behalf of the applicant.

613

00:37:21,644 --> 00:37:25,304
So we decided to go with the undergrounding of our asset over the

614

00:37:25,644 --> 00:37:29,244
NGD 132 kV asset because that is already an existing constructed

615

00:37:29,304 --> 00:37:32,864
asset. It's being maintained and operated. It's already there.

616

00:37:32,904 --> 00:37:36,444
So in order to get that undergrounded, we would have to go through
extensive

617

00:37:36,464 --> 00:37:40,404
discussions with NGD. They would have to modify their pylons to
change them

618

00:37:40,424 --> 00:37:43,924

out for suspension or angled pylons, likely for pylons that then

619

00:37:43,964 --> 00:37:46,764

transition from overhead to underground cable, and they would then have to

620

00:37:46,804 --> 00:37:50,584

underground their assets. In order to do that, they would probably need outages on

621

00:37:50,624 --> 00:37:54,134

their network to turn off certain circuits during the sequencing,

622

00:37:54,564 --> 00:37:58,404

likely need temporary diversions, and it would cost considerably more to do all of

623

00:37:58,424 --> 00:38:01,764

that in the grand scheme of things than it would be to underground our asset.

624

00:38:01,824 --> 00:38:05,024

So we decided that in terms of land impacts

625

00:38:05,604 --> 00:38:09,484

across the area and from a program perspective,

626

00:38:09,624 --> 00:38:13,504

it would be more effective to underground our asset, hence we didn't pursue

627

00:38:13,524 --> 00:38:14,004

that with NGD.

628

00:38:15,184 --> 00:38:19,104

Thank you. And then I know that there's been discussion with regards

629

00:38:19,184 --> 00:38:19,484

to

630

00:38:20,824 --> 00:38:24,744

the space to the north near work 14, where at the moment you

631

00:38:24,784 --> 00:38:26,324

don't know if you're going to go east or west.

632

00:38:26,624 --> 00:38:30,324

But there are other existing pylons in that

633

00:38:30,344 --> 00:38:33,984

northern section. Why, therefore, is there not a preference

634

00:38:34,024 --> 00:38:37,804

again to underground there rather than

635

00:38:37,864 --> 00:38:39,684

overground, given that you have,

636

00:38:40,543 --> 00:38:44,374

to my perception, a very similar situation going at

637

00:38:44,424 --> 00:38:44,804

that point?

638

00:38:49,184 --> 00:38:50,273

Taylor Power for the applicant.

639

00:38:51,264 --> 00:38:54,833

I'm sure Mr. Fowler has this. I understand that those existing pylons,

640

00:38:55,324 --> 00:38:59,304

the intention is for those to be decommissioned or

641

00:38:59,364 --> 00:39:02,984

moved as part of the National Grid Western Marsh to East Leicestershire

642

00:39:03,004 --> 00:39:06,964

project. And so by the point of time

643

00:39:07,064 --> 00:39:10,564

that we would be constructing our scheme in that area, those

644

00:39:10,604 --> 00:39:14,484

pylons may or may not remain. If they did remain, then we would

645

00:39:14,544 --> 00:39:18,324

have to underground our pylons or find another design

646

00:39:18,404 --> 00:39:21,464

solution in terms of the design through there.

647

00:39:21,484 --> 00:39:25,224

But if they have been decommissioned at that point, then there might be a

648

00:39:25,264 --> 00:39:26,724

way that the projects can

649

00:39:27,444 --> 00:39:30,784

design and construct their new

650

00:39:30,824 --> 00:39:34,404

pylons through this area based on collaboration between National Grid

651

00:39:34,484 --> 00:39:38,064

Electricity Transmission and Meridian Solar, to

652

00:39:38,124 --> 00:39:40,764

ensure that essentially nobody has to

653

00:39:42,184 --> 00:39:46,024

be forced into an awkward design solution because all of this construction is

654

00:39:46,064 --> 00:39:49,744

happening around the same amount of time. Is there anything else you'd add?

655

00:39:50,144 --> 00:39:50,363

Okay.

656

00:39:52,324 --> 00:39:53,264

Thank you very much for that.

657

00:39:54,784 --> 00:39:54,844

So

658

00:39:57,264 --> 00:39:58,644

Mr. Pennington.

659

00:39:59,844 --> 00:40:00,744

Just wait for-

660

00:40:01,364 --> 00:40:01,504

Oh.

661

00:40:01,544 --> 00:40:01,684

Yeah.

662

00:40:02,404 --> 00:40:06,144

Ian Pennington. We're from Spalding Marsh or near

663

00:40:06,184 --> 00:40:08,504

Weston Marsh, and it says that

664

00:40:09,884 --> 00:40:13,404

National Grid, I believe they're only going to remove three of those

665

00:40:13,464 --> 00:40:17,284

lines of pylons on that line that goes to

666

00:40:17,304 --> 00:40:21,204

Spalding Substation. So where this line's

667

00:40:21,264 --> 00:40:25,004

looking to go, it looks as though they will still be in

668

00:40:25,044 --> 00:40:27,784

place, by what I can make out at the moment.

669

00:40:28,553 --> 00:40:32,444

But I'm sure it would be beneficial if that would go underground on

670

00:40:32,484 --> 00:40:33,924
that section, bearing

671

00:40:35,504 --> 00:40:39,244
with the amount of pylons and lines that we're getting in the area,
and

672

00:40:39,324 --> 00:40:43,164
also with the swans. In February last year, there were

673

00:40:43,224 --> 00:40:46,963
three swans that hit electric line in the

674

00:40:47,004 --> 00:40:50,884
fog one morning, and we're going to get undated with them

675

00:40:51,023 --> 00:40:54,724
pylons in that area. So anything underground would be

676

00:40:54,744 --> 00:40:56,504
beneficial for them especially.

677

00:40:57,844 --> 00:40:58,964
Thank you very much for that.

678

00:40:59,044 --> 00:40:59,543
Thank you.

679

00:41:01,714 --> 00:41:03,224
Thank you. Mr. Semakula.

680

00:41:05,344 --> 00:41:07,564
Joel Semakula on behalf of LCC.

681

00:41:08,444 --> 00:41:11,144
Madam, I said that we had some other concerns.

682

00:41:11,174 --> 00:41:13,473
So we already spoke about the agrivoltaics

683

00:41:14,744 --> 00:41:17,264

point, but there are four more, if I could say, headline points that I just wanted

684

00:41:17,304 --> 00:41:19,144

to bring to attention,

685

00:41:20,004 --> 00:41:21,504

noting that we'll be expanding on these in

686

00:41:22,744 --> 00:41:26,584

writing. I guess the secondary was flood risk and site selection, but I think

687

00:41:26,624 --> 00:41:29,984

we ultimately dealt with that under item

688

00:41:30,384 --> 00:41:34,204

seven. The third is this ALC and

689

00:41:34,244 --> 00:41:38,124

BMV land point that we really want to stress at the outset here.

690

00:41:39,744 --> 00:41:43,204

In our view, there really is a lack of clarity in this application around the

691

00:41:43,244 --> 00:41:47,084

policy requirement to preferentially site such developments

692

00:41:47,164 --> 00:41:50,384

on brownfield, contaminated, or industrial land,

693

00:41:52,604 --> 00:41:56,364

and where agricultural land must be used to direct that development to lower grade

694

00:41:56,424 --> 00:41:59,664

land. And that's a point that's been made a number of times, but just on behalf of

695

00:41:59,704 --> 00:42:01,064

LCC, I just want to

696

00:42:02,164 --> 00:42:05,364

stress that again. So when we say

697

00:42:06,704 --> 00:42:10,214

we just need to see much better justification as to why this approach has been

698

00:42:10,284 --> 00:42:12,984

taken to BMV land, and we'll make that point

699

00:42:14,464 --> 00:42:14,864

in our

700

00:42:15,664 --> 00:42:18,284

deadline one response. The

701

00:42:18,804 --> 00:42:22,794

fourth point then I want

702

00:42:22,824 --> 00:42:24,904

to talk about is smaller land parcels.

703

00:42:26,844 --> 00:42:30,744

It seems to us that what the applicant's done here is preferentially consider only

704

00:42:30,784 --> 00:42:34,644

land parcels above a certain size and largely on grounds of commercial

705

00:42:34,724 --> 00:42:35,504

feasibility.

706

00:42:36,464 --> 00:42:40,144

Now, the effect of this is that it immediately narrows site

707

00:42:40,244 --> 00:42:43,614

options and overrides other factors we say that could have resulted

708

00:42:44,424 --> 00:42:46,824

in a more sustainable policy compliant scheme.

709

00:42:49,004 --> 00:42:52,164

We'll provide examples of other solar projects in Lincolnshire which have

710

00:42:52,184 --> 00:42:56,044

successfully combined smaller non-contiguous sites, and we think that should have

711

00:42:56,064 --> 00:42:58,464

been considered here, particularly when considering alternatives.

712

00:42:59,284 --> 00:43:00,844

And the point to end on really is,

713

00:43:02,204 --> 00:43:03,044

when we're thinking about

714

00:43:05,684 --> 00:43:09,424

land use here, what we would have expected to see is some kind of

715

00:43:09,464 --> 00:43:13,204

strategic land use decision framework showing evidence of a

716

00:43:13,244 --> 00:43:13,924

robust

717

00:43:15,184 --> 00:43:17,404

preliminary and overarching approach to

718

00:43:18,384 --> 00:43:21,434

land use selection here. And we think one that fully encompasses the assessment of

719

00:43:21,464 --> 00:43:25,084

a number of the points raised here, namely these environmental constraints, BMV

720

00:43:25,144 --> 00:43:27,744
land, and elements around flood risk.

721
00:43:28,264 --> 00:43:31,484
And on our view on the evidence before this examination,

722
00:43:32,464 --> 00:43:34,984
I think we say what really drove this area of search,

723
00:43:35,984 --> 00:43:39,854
it seems to be more related to land availability and landowner willingness,

724
00:43:41,124 --> 00:43:44,544
than by proximity to the grid connection point or environmental

725
00:43:44,564 --> 00:43:48,554
constraints. And so we've requested clarity from

726
00:43:48,584 --> 00:43:52,544
the applicant on a number of points, including initial siting zones, the

727
00:43:52,584 --> 00:43:54,074
timing of some of these discussions with

728
00:43:54,884 --> 00:43:56,684
NGET, Engie, and NESO,

729
00:43:57,724 --> 00:44:01,214
and the date and sequencing of some of those decisions in

730
00:44:01,244 --> 00:44:04,854
the site selection process. And we really would welcome that clarity

731
00:44:05,284 --> 00:44:08,064
so that we can ensure that the approach to alternatives here has been appropriate,

732
00:44:08,104 --> 00:44:09,584
particularly from a policy perspective.

733

00:44:21,204 --> 00:44:21,964

Thank you very much.

734

00:44:23,444 --> 00:44:26,824

Would the applicant wish to respond to the points just made?

735

00:44:27,644 --> 00:44:29,464

Yes. Taylor Powell for the applicant.

736

00:44:29,624 --> 00:44:32,384

I won't respond in detail to all of those points.

737

00:44:32,504 --> 00:44:36,124

I'm also aware there's somewhat of overlap with the

738

00:44:36,524 --> 00:44:40,384

promises we've already made earlier in the hearing to prepare a summary of

739

00:44:40,444 --> 00:44:44,284

that original solar development area site selection and the factors that went into

740

00:44:44,324 --> 00:44:47,364

it. So I think it's probably best that we address that in

741

00:44:47,384 --> 00:44:51,304

writing, with the appropriate detail and with reference to

742

00:44:51,344 --> 00:44:54,424

the relevant-- To make it clear that we've addressed each of those points from

743

00:44:54,464 --> 00:44:54,944

Lincolnshire.

744

00:44:56,824 --> 00:44:57,444

Thank you very much.

745

00:44:58,284 --> 00:44:58,564

Okay.

746

00:44:59,384 --> 00:45:01,754

Is there anybody else in the room that wishes to raise a point on

747

00:45:03,204 --> 00:45:03,964

item five?

748

00:45:05,704 --> 00:45:06,764

And anybody online?

749

00:45:08,664 --> 00:45:08,824

No.

750

00:45:09,744 --> 00:45:13,084

So we'll move on to item six.

751

00:45:15,724 --> 00:45:17,144

Sorry, just have to scroll.

752

00:45:19,664 --> 00:45:23,653

So item six is the interrelationship with other projects,

753

00:45:23,764 --> 00:45:26,424

and we've heard quite a bit about this already this morning.

754

00:45:27,284 --> 00:45:29,184

So in particular we wanted to

755

00:45:31,044 --> 00:45:31,464

ask

756

00:45:32,644 --> 00:45:36,464

Mr. Bassford from

757

00:45:36,784 --> 00:45:40,484

National Grid, if he's still online, whether he has any

758

00:45:40,604 --> 00:45:44,284

further comments he wishes to make or raise with regards to

759

00:45:44,344 --> 00:45:44,664
this

760
00:45:45,584 --> 00:45:48,624
particular agenda item, because we did say that we would come back
to some of the

761
00:45:48,664 --> 00:45:50,564
points you were making earlier.

762
00:45:51,704 --> 00:45:52,204
Thank you, madam.

763
00:45:53,604 --> 00:45:57,234
There is a lot which we should aim to cover in writing, I

764
00:45:57,264 --> 00:46:01,004
think, so that you have clarity as to the

765
00:46:01,024 --> 00:46:04,824
position of the company. There are a

766
00:46:04,844 --> 00:46:08,444
number of points that I can just quickly cover now.

767
00:46:08,524 --> 00:46:12,124
First of all, National Grid says that the grid connection

768
00:46:12,284 --> 00:46:12,924
is

769
00:46:13,724 --> 00:46:14,764
entirely presumptive,

770
00:46:16,144 --> 00:46:18,484
and you should not authorize this grid connection.

771
00:46:18,784 --> 00:46:22,524
It may impede delivery of

772
00:46:22,644 --> 00:46:26,384

the nationally significant Grimsby to Walpole project, which

773

00:46:26,444 --> 00:46:29,824

has a wider importance in terms of delivery,

774

00:46:30,424 --> 00:46:30,864

and

775

00:46:31,884 --> 00:46:35,664

National Grid will be bringing forward the application for that project in

776

00:46:35,724 --> 00:46:39,404

2027. This project would potentially

777

00:46:39,444 --> 00:46:43,424

impede that, and that ought to be a matter that is considered by you and the

778

00:46:43,464 --> 00:46:45,524

Secretary of State to be important and relevant.

779

00:46:47,784 --> 00:46:51,224

It is important to realize

780

00:46:51,564 --> 00:46:55,544

that the applicant in these proceedings is

781

00:46:55,624 --> 00:46:57,563

a volunteer and not a cons...

782

00:46:58,664 --> 00:47:02,484

They had no obligation to make an application for development

783

00:47:02,564 --> 00:47:05,644

consent at this stage. And

784

00:47:06,364 --> 00:47:10,164

when Moss Power says on behalf of the applicant that they're placed in a

785

00:47:10,223 --> 00:47:14,174

difficult situation, that is a difficult situation that has

786

00:47:14,184 --> 00:47:17,844

been entirely resolved not making an application for a

787

00:47:17,884 --> 00:47:20,364

DCO. They were not compelled to do so.

788

00:47:21,044 --> 00:47:24,964

And so the fact that they haven't got a grid connection, they are

789

00:47:25,004 --> 00:47:28,184

not able to negotiate an interface with National Grid

790

00:47:28,824 --> 00:47:32,284

is a matter entirely of their own

791

00:47:32,344 --> 00:47:32,904

making.

792

00:47:34,604 --> 00:47:38,524

As to the grid connection, I have pointed out already that the

793

00:47:39,404 --> 00:47:42,724

Gate One offer such as it is at this stage, and it is a matter

794

00:47:43,264 --> 00:47:46,924

where I think the applicant can confirm the status of that.

795

00:47:47,004 --> 00:47:50,944

My understanding is that effectively the Gate One offer

796

00:47:51,064 --> 00:47:53,784

has no presumptive connection point.

797

00:47:53,864 --> 00:47:57,784

It has no guarantee. But the critical point

798

00:47:57,804 --> 00:48:01,684

from your point of view is that you can't assume that the grid

connection would

799

00:48:01,724 --> 00:48:05,374

go in any one direction or another from the location of the solar

800

00:48:05,444 --> 00:48:09,284

farm, and therefore you should not authorize a thing

801

00:48:09,324 --> 00:48:11,124

at that level of uncertainty.

802

00:48:13,224 --> 00:48:15,304

There are ways of resolving this sort of thing.

803

00:48:18,604 --> 00:48:22,584

Bouncing National Grid or attempting to

804

00:48:22,764 --> 00:48:23,224

force

805

00:48:24,364 --> 00:48:28,164

a connection into a substation where bays may not be available,

806

00:48:28,234 --> 00:48:31,984

where there is no allocation made is not appropriate, not unless they have

807

00:48:32,024 --> 00:48:35,984

certainty, which they do not. The correct approach would

808

00:48:36,044 --> 00:48:39,804

be to appeal the grant only of a Gate

809

00:48:39,904 --> 00:48:43,404

One offer as opposed to a Gate Two offer to

810

00:48:43,484 --> 00:48:47,464

NESO, and it is NESO who should resolve that on behalf

811

00:48:47,524 --> 00:48:51,324

of the applicant. They can make a subsequent application, or they

can

812

00:48:51,364 --> 00:48:55,304

appeal, and that is the appropriate forum for resolving this

813

00:48:55,364 --> 00:48:59,144

before taking any of the steps which are interfering with National

814

00:48:59,244 --> 00:49:02,984

Grid and its undertaking. I've mentioned also the physical

815

00:49:03,044 --> 00:49:03,894

interfaces.

816

00:49:05,114 --> 00:49:08,604

There are concerns about the alignment.

817

00:49:09,644 --> 00:49:10,204

It would,

818

00:49:11,044 --> 00:49:13,544

as I say, impede National Grid's own project.

819

00:49:14,064 --> 00:49:17,644

To the extent that there was paralleling, this would potentially

820

00:49:19,024 --> 00:49:22,824

interfere with the National Grid infrastructure.

821

00:49:23,704 --> 00:49:25,034

Those interfaces

822

00:49:25,896 --> 00:49:29,496

Should be resolved by not consenting the connection because it is

823

00:49:29,576 --> 00:49:33,376

in the wrong place, even if it is to

824

00:49:33,516 --> 00:49:35,976

an identified location, which it is not.

825

00:49:36,896 --> 00:49:40,716

So Madam, in terms of interfaces with National Grid, in terms

826

00:49:40,736 --> 00:49:44,536

of the coordination with other projects, at this stage,

827

00:49:44,756 --> 00:49:48,256

the appropriate point is not to authorize the grid connection, as

828

00:49:48,656 --> 00:49:52,536

its destination, its route, its approach

829

00:49:53,116 --> 00:49:56,916

are uncertain, and it is premature

830

00:49:56,996 --> 00:49:57,995

to authorize it.

831

00:50:01,816 --> 00:50:02,656

Thank you very much.

832

00:50:04,636 --> 00:50:08,426

I will pass over to the applicant to respond to that, and also if there's

833

00:50:08,476 --> 00:50:10,866

any other update you wanted to give with regards to

834

00:50:11,896 --> 00:50:13,396

the interrelationship with projects.

835

00:50:15,136 --> 00:50:16,616

Taylor Powell for the applicant.

836

00:50:17,896 --> 00:50:21,816

I will start things off, but I will also refer to my

837

00:50:22,136 --> 00:50:25,866

colleague, Michelle Burns, who can provide more of a response on

838

00:50:25,976 --> 00:50:26,296
this.

839

00:50:27,796 --> 00:50:31,716

In short, as you've heard at various points of the course of

840

00:50:31,776 --> 00:50:35,696

the hearing today, this is a point of disagreement between National Grid

841

00:50:36,176 --> 00:50:37,096

and the applicant.

842

00:50:38,456 --> 00:50:39,496

I would caution

843

00:50:41,136 --> 00:50:44,246

the examining authority in the sense that

844

00:50:45,196 --> 00:50:48,556

we disagree with some of the statements that have been made today by National Grid

845

00:50:49,036 --> 00:50:52,276

as to what the correct or incorrect approach is.

846

00:50:52,356 --> 00:50:52,776

Because,

847

00:50:53,616 --> 00:50:57,426

from the applicant's read of national policy and government policy at

848

00:50:57,456 --> 00:50:58,056

this time,

849

00:50:58,976 --> 00:50:59,276

while it

850

00:51:00,136 --> 00:51:03,856

might be NESO's position, or it might be National Grid's

851

00:51:03,896 --> 00:51:07,786

position as companies to engage in this manner with

852

00:51:09,016 --> 00:51:12,906

future grid connections, it's not

853

00:51:12,936 --> 00:51:16,696

necessarily the reflection of government policy or the national policy statements

854

00:51:16,716 --> 00:51:20,236

which apply to the assessment of this as a nationally

855

00:51:20,316 --> 00:51:22,016

significant infrastructure project.

856

00:51:22,416 --> 00:51:26,336

So the applicant has been seeking to comply with that national policy

857

00:51:26,416 --> 00:51:28,106

in the development of its design,

858

00:51:28,976 --> 00:51:32,876

and considers that there are various other examples

859

00:51:32,936 --> 00:51:36,516

of other Gate One projects that have still proceeded to DC0

860

00:51:36,576 --> 00:51:40,416

examination, or have proceeded where there isn't yet a

861

00:51:40,476 --> 00:51:42,936

final grid connection confirmed,

862

00:51:43,796 --> 00:51:45,676

or grid connection location confirmed.

863

00:51:48,036 --> 00:51:51,106

I think that's probably what I'll start to start this off, and then I'll pass on to

864

00:51:51,296 --> 00:51:53,916

Ms. Burns to essentially set out the

865

00:51:54,476 --> 00:51:57,356

interactions with Grimsby to Walpole and with Wimill,

866

00:51:58,196 --> 00:52:02,136

and the engagement which has happened between the applicant and National Grid

867

00:52:02,216 --> 00:52:03,776

Electricity Transmission to date.

868

00:52:04,216 --> 00:52:08,016

And then I can always come back in in respect of the negotiations that are ongoing

869

00:52:08,056 --> 00:52:11,936

between NGET and the application in respect to protective provisions,

870

00:52:12,456 --> 00:52:14,776

which the applicant believes in part can resolve this.

871

00:52:18,536 --> 00:52:20,416

Thank you. Ms. Burns for the applicant.

872

00:52:21,296 --> 00:52:25,036

If I could ask for the interrelationships with other

873

00:52:25,096 --> 00:52:29,076

INSIPS report to be displayed on screen, which is application

874

00:52:29,136 --> 00:52:30,796

document 265.

875

00:52:33,416 --> 00:52:37,226

And I'll just request that we go to a figure, I think it is Figure 2.1.

876

00:52:38,616 --> 00:52:39,516
So let's give that a moment.

877
00:52:40,766 --> 00:52:44,146
I think it might just be helpful if we've got a visual shown on screen, so you can

878
00:52:44,196 --> 00:52:48,006
actually see the overlap between the Grimsby to Walpole and the Meridian Solar

879
00:52:48,036 --> 00:52:49,656
Farm project as we speak.

880
00:52:58,956 --> 00:53:02,586
Sorry, that's not it. It's the Interrelationships Document 265,

881
00:53:03,736 --> 00:53:06,596
and if you just scroll down, there should be a...

882
00:53:14,216 --> 00:53:18,156
Yeah, sorry. Figure 2.2, which is on page 13 of

883
00:53:18,176 --> 00:53:18,776
the PDF.

884
00:53:19,156 --> 00:53:22,096
I think you might have the Heritage Statement of Harm document open-

885
00:53:22,126 --> 00:53:22,126
Oh

886
00:53:22,126 --> 00:53:22,616
... not the...

887
00:53:25,176 --> 00:53:25,896
Mr. Davies.

888
00:53:27,616 --> 00:53:28,216
Let me check.

889

00:53:34,106 --> 00:53:36,196
Apologies. Document 267.

890
00:53:45,876 --> 00:53:54,576
Brilliant.

891
00:53:54,596 --> 00:53:57,896
So I just thought it'd be helpful to have this up as we're
discussing the overlap.

892
00:53:57,956 --> 00:54:01,286
Obviously, we've just touched on quite a bit of this already this
morning and this

893
00:54:01,356 --> 00:54:05,165
afternoon, so I won't reiterate all the points that have been
raised.

894
00:54:05,876 --> 00:54:08,966
But obviously, one of the principal areas of discussion between the
applicant and

895
00:54:09,036 --> 00:54:13,016
NGET is the management of the overlap between the projects, where
both

896
00:54:13,056 --> 00:54:15,936
route into the location near Western Marsh.

897
00:54:16,876 --> 00:54:20,076
What you'll see on screen is the purple, in the purple

898
00:54:20,136 --> 00:54:22,096
color, this is the draft order limits,

899
00:54:23,296 --> 00:54:26,696
which are the Grimsby to Walpole order limits as part of its most
recent

900
00:54:26,736 --> 00:54:29,686
consultation, which was mid last year,

901

00:54:31,916 --> 00:54:35,896
and its targeted consultation, which it ran in November 2025,

902

00:54:35,936 --> 00:54:39,406
which set out a broader siting area at Western Marsh.

903

00:54:40,016 --> 00:54:43,076
One thing I did want to note was that the applicant did have a grid connection

904

00:54:43,116 --> 00:54:46,686
agreement up into the, towards the end of last year, and that is what a lot of

905

00:54:46,736 --> 00:54:49,816
the design was based upon. It wasn't based upon the fact there was

906

00:54:49,956 --> 00:54:53,716
never a potential grid connection offer.

907

00:54:54,076 --> 00:54:56,906
And we've just worked on the basis that we would potentially, in the future,

908

00:54:57,516 --> 00:55:01,236
continue to route into Western Marsh on the basis that no further information is

909

00:55:01,276 --> 00:55:03,956
available from NESO or National Grid.

910

00:55:10,376 --> 00:55:13,156
And just to note as well

911

00:55:14,276 --> 00:55:18,156
that separately to Grimsby to Walpole, an TCPA application has been submitted

912

00:55:18,196 --> 00:55:21,956
by NGET to South Holland District Council for the Western Marsh A

913

00:55:22,016 --> 00:55:24,256

substation, which is the substation to the north.

914

00:55:25,476 --> 00:55:29,276

The one that is encircled by the Meridian Solar Farm application is Western Marsh

915

00:55:29,356 --> 00:55:29,616

B.

916

00:55:30,656 --> 00:55:34,036

That is the substation that would be closest to the scheme, and that is the

917

00:55:35,616 --> 00:55:39,196

substation that the applicant considers to be most practicable to connect into

918

00:55:40,556 --> 00:55:44,376

Of the two substations, noting we've never been provided in writing with a

919

00:55:44,436 --> 00:55:45,416

formal

920

00:55:46,476 --> 00:55:49,716

confirmation of which substation the applicant would connect into.

921

00:55:52,876 --> 00:55:56,866

So in addition to regular customer update meetings with NGET, a

922

00:55:56,936 --> 00:56:00,316

series of coordination meetings and technical discussions were held between the

923

00:56:00,376 --> 00:56:03,956

applicant and NGET during the pre-application stage to understand the

924

00:56:03,996 --> 00:56:07,776

interaction between the two projects and any amendments

925

00:56:07,796 --> 00:56:11,696

required to avoid conflicts. This included two design workshops held

926

00:56:11,716 --> 00:56:15,516

in June and November 2025 to discuss the overhead line

927

00:56:15,556 --> 00:56:18,916

routing options and the design interaction between the two

928

00:56:19,016 --> 00:56:22,996

projects. Those discussions have directly influenced the design of

929

00:56:23,016 --> 00:56:26,736

the Meridian Solar Farm scheme and led to amendments to the proposed

930

00:56:26,776 --> 00:56:29,016

alignment within the grid connection route.

931

00:56:30,136 --> 00:56:34,076

As touched upon it within agenda item four, flexibility has been retained near the

932

00:56:34,116 --> 00:56:36,436

proposed Western B substation

933

00:56:37,456 --> 00:56:40,896

to allow either an overhead or underground connection solution

934

00:56:41,436 --> 00:56:45,126

and alternative routing options where necessary to coordinate with

935

00:56:45,156 --> 00:56:48,256

National Grid's emerging infrastructure.

936

00:56:48,316 --> 00:56:51,796

These discussions were generally constructive and focused on finding a coordinated

937

00:56:51,876 --> 00:56:53,336

solution for both projects.

938

00:56:54,456 --> 00:56:57,196

In response to its additional targeted consultation,

939

00:56:58,096 --> 00:57:01,916

NGET acknowledged that the project teams had worked collaboratively together

940

00:57:02,016 --> 00:57:06,006

over a number of months to discuss the design of the two schemes and

941

00:57:06,016 --> 00:57:09,916

jointly develop arrangements capable of accommodating the requirements

942

00:57:09,956 --> 00:57:10,996

of both projects.

943

00:57:12,616 --> 00:57:15,996

As we've touched upon, this position has become more complicated over recent months

944

00:57:16,036 --> 00:57:19,596

due to the changes in the status of the grid connection agreement

945

00:57:19,636 --> 00:57:22,416

resulting from the electricity connections reform process.

946

00:57:23,196 --> 00:57:27,116

While NGET's relevant representation indicates that engagement will continue during

947

00:57:27,156 --> 00:57:31,116

examination, subsequent correspondence has indicated that NGET is

948

00:57:31,126 --> 00:57:35,066

not currently progressing technical discussions with any energy projects

949

00:57:35,096 --> 00:57:38,076

with the Gate One offer, which includes the Meridian Solar Farm.

950

00:57:39,536 --> 00:57:43,176

This has inevitably limited the extent to which discussions can

continue on

951

00:57:43,216 --> 00:57:46,976

matters relating to the interaction between Meridian Solar Farm and the

952

00:57:46,996 --> 00:57:50,776

Grimsby Twirl Project. And my colleague, Ms.

953

00:57:50,836 --> 00:57:53,036

Powell, will touch upon the protective provisions shortly.

954

00:57:54,936 --> 00:57:58,596

Notwithstanding that position, the applicant has continued to seek

955

00:57:58,636 --> 00:58:02,176

engagement with NGET and remains keen to progress discussions where possible.

956

00:58:02,796 --> 00:58:06,376

The applicant considers it important to continue discussions on how the projects

957

00:58:06,436 --> 00:58:09,756

interact and to ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of the

958

00:58:09,776 --> 00:58:13,416

assumptions that are being relied upon as the various projects progress

959

00:58:13,976 --> 00:58:16,276

through their respective consenting processes.

960

00:58:17,276 --> 00:58:21,196

And I'd just like to note that in terms of the Gate Two process, part one of

961

00:58:21,236 --> 00:58:24,736

the criteria is to demonstrate readiness is further progression through the

962

00:58:24,756 --> 00:58:28,496
planning process. So the applicant is of the view that continuing with its DCO

963
00:58:28,536 --> 00:58:32,416
application is appropriate and further supports any

964
00:58:32,456 --> 00:58:35,656
future application as part of the Gate Two readiness criteria.

965
00:58:38,916 --> 00:58:42,416
And lastly, I'll just briefly touch on the Western Marsh to East

966
00:58:42,456 --> 00:58:44,456
Leicestershire project very quickly.

967
00:58:45,256 --> 00:58:49,096
And that's a separate NGET project that comes in from the west

968
00:58:49,176 --> 00:58:50,356
connecting into Western Marsh B.

969
00:58:51,956 --> 00:58:55,936
We haven't identified any conflicts or design interfaces

970
00:58:55,956 --> 00:58:59,396
at this point. However, NGET launched its stage two

971
00:58:59,436 --> 00:59:03,336
consultation yesterday, so the applicant will be reviewing those documents

972
00:59:03,376 --> 00:59:07,316
to patients and can provide an update at a further deadline

973
00:59:07,356 --> 00:59:09,355
if there is anything worth noting.

974
00:59:10,476 --> 00:59:13,896
So I think I'll hand over to Ms. Powell to discuss protective provisions.

975

00:59:15,736 --> 00:59:16,856

Thank you, Ms. Burns.

976

00:59:17,856 --> 00:59:21,536

And before I do briefly touch on protective provisions, just the discussion by Ms.

977

00:59:21,556 --> 00:59:25,196

Burns then also reminded me, I suppose, in response to some of the

978

00:59:25,236 --> 00:59:28,916

comments earlier, that there hasn't been an assumption

979

00:59:29,336 --> 00:59:32,896

or there's no longer an assumption by National Grid in this area

980

00:59:32,956 --> 00:59:35,136

that Meridian Solar would be coming

981

00:59:36,096 --> 00:59:36,476

forward,

982

00:59:37,296 --> 00:59:39,876

and so we shouldn't rely on that sort of commitment.

983

00:59:40,296 --> 00:59:43,966

We would just note that the town and country planning application,

984

00:59:44,036 --> 00:59:47,956

which Ms. Burns mentioned earlier, which was submitted

985

00:59:47,976 --> 00:59:51,616

by National Grid to South Holland District Council just a few months ago,

986

00:59:52,356 --> 00:59:56,256

in its needs statement for that substation, referred to the

987

00:59:56,296 --> 00:59:59,836

fact that Meridian Solar was coming forward in this area as part of the

988

01:00:00,015 --> 01:00:03,816

needs case for why these grid up-upgrades were required in this

989

01:00:03,896 --> 01:00:07,676

area. So there does appear to be still some reliance

990

01:00:07,836 --> 01:00:11,756

by National Grid on Meridian Solar coming forward in this area or some

991

01:00:11,816 --> 01:00:14,936

assumption that there would be a grid connection made in the future.

992

01:00:15,116 --> 01:00:18,916

So I suppose that's left the applicant with some confusion when

993

01:00:18,956 --> 01:00:22,756

it comes to the reliance or not by National Grid, and that's been made

994

01:00:22,976 --> 01:00:25,936

harder by the fact that we haven't had those technical discussions, although we

995

01:00:25,956 --> 01:00:27,155

would like to continue them.

996

01:00:28,036 --> 01:00:31,996

But I suppose before we wrap up this point, just to touch on the

997

01:00:32,006 --> 01:00:34,976

discussions that are progressing between the applicant and National Grid,

998

01:00:35,796 --> 01:00:39,636

is that the applicant and National Grid are discussing

999

01:00:41,276 --> 01:00:43,476

provisions within the development consent order.

1000

01:00:43,776 --> 01:00:47,616

So I've already noted the flexible siting area, which is intended to manage

1001

01:00:47,656 --> 01:00:51,276

that interrelationship. But in addition, the applicant and National Grid

1002

01:00:51,336 --> 01:00:54,816

are negotiating a set of bespoke protective provisions

1003

01:00:54,856 --> 01:00:58,796

for National Grid. So while these primarily relate to

1004

01:00:58,836 --> 01:01:02,036

interactions with National Grid's existing assets in the area,

1005

01:01:02,756 --> 01:01:06,216

the parties are also considering terms which would establish a process for

1006

01:01:06,296 --> 01:01:09,776

cooperation on the detailed design of the respective schemes,

1007

01:01:10,496 --> 01:01:14,436

and the applicant sent back comments on this on the 21st of August, and

1008

01:01:14,556 --> 01:01:16,456

awaits further comments from National Grid.

1009

01:01:17,196 --> 01:01:18,536

I would just note that

1010

01:01:19,616 --> 01:01:23,116

similar protective provisions have been agreed by National Grid and included in

1011

01:01:23,176 --> 01:01:26,996

made DCOs, which rely on a yet to be consented

1012

01:01:27,116 --> 01:01:30,456

or built grid infrastructure or substation that

1013

01:01:31,160 --> 01:01:31,560

That

1014

01:01:32,380 --> 01:01:36,140

DCO is connecting into. And an immediate, and I think quite relevant

1015

01:01:36,220 --> 01:01:40,090

example to Meridian, is the Outer Dowsing Wind Farm, which would also be

1016

01:01:40,160 --> 01:01:44,030

connecting into the Western Marsh substations, and

1017

01:01:44,080 --> 01:01:47,820

was consented in advance, obviously, of Grimsby to Walpole

1018

01:01:47,940 --> 01:01:51,580

being completed, and relied on that future work by

1019

01:01:51,700 --> 01:01:55,020

National Grid to consent and deliver those substations.

1020

01:01:55,640 --> 01:01:59,080

And the Outer Dowsing DCO, which has already been made, includes

1021

01:01:59,120 --> 01:02:02,700

cooperation provisions and its protective provisions with National Grid, which

1022

01:02:02,760 --> 01:02:05,600

enable that future design. So in short, the

1023

01:02:05,620 --> 01:02:09,550

applicant considers that that example and other

1024

01:02:09,550 --> 01:02:13,400

examples of made DCOs relying on future substations show that there is a way

1025

01:02:13,540 --> 01:02:17,130
forward for the parties, and we just hope that there is the opportunity,

1026
01:02:17,240 --> 01:02:21,180
perhaps through this examination process and ongoing direct discussions between the

1027
01:02:21,220 --> 01:02:22,400
parties, to resolve that.

1028
01:02:24,860 --> 01:02:26,040
Thank you very much, Ms Power.

1029
01:02:27,320 --> 01:02:29,240
Mr Basford, your hand is up.

1030
01:02:31,340 --> 01:02:34,660
Yes, just a few points to come back on there,

1031
01:02:34,960 --> 01:02:35,439
madam.

1032
01:02:38,080 --> 01:02:41,490
Ms Power has entirely properly referred to government policy.

1033
01:02:41,780 --> 01:02:45,180
However, government policy on the

1034
01:02:45,240 --> 01:02:47,400
consenting of

1035
01:02:48,480 --> 01:02:49,260
an NSIP

1036
01:02:50,280 --> 01:02:52,040
is, to an extent, irrelevant

1037
01:02:53,080 --> 01:02:56,740
when you have to consider whether there is a connection possible at all.

1038

01:02:56,880 --> 01:02:59,460

Now, the facts

1039

01:03:00,360 --> 01:03:04,280

which pertain here are that there is no offer

1040

01:03:04,320 --> 01:03:08,220

of a connection, there is no location, there is no bay,

1041

01:03:08,280 --> 01:03:11,640

there is nothing for the applicant when it gets past the

1042

01:03:11,660 --> 01:03:15,440

substation fence, if it can force its way to the substation fence.

1043

01:03:16,500 --> 01:03:20,490

It is not appropriate for the applicant to

1044

01:03:20,540 --> 01:03:23,860

attempt to force the hand of a regulated electricity

1045

01:03:23,960 --> 01:03:27,860

transmission owner, and to force the hand of the National Energy System

1046

01:03:28,100 --> 01:03:31,920

Operator by seeking to drive a grid

1047

01:03:32,000 --> 01:03:34,900

connection to a location where there is no offer.

1048

01:03:35,440 --> 01:03:35,880

And so,

1049

01:03:36,840 --> 01:03:38,000

madam, that is

1050

01:03:38,840 --> 01:03:39,800

just the fact, and

1051

01:03:40,980 --> 01:03:42,740
whatever the NPS may say,

1052
01:03:44,000 --> 01:03:47,160
the interference with the undertaking of National Grid does not

1053
01:03:47,200 --> 01:03:50,100
justify this type of measure.

1054
01:03:51,900 --> 01:03:55,320
We do say that discussions took place last year.

1055
01:03:55,460 --> 01:03:58,500
We agree that they took place. We also agree that they were
constructive, and we

1056
01:03:58,540 --> 01:04:02,420
are grateful for the manner in which the applicant has approached

1057
01:04:02,480 --> 01:04:04,860
those discussions. However, they have ended.

1058
01:04:05,350 --> 01:04:09,080
They last took place, of course, in November 2025, which is almost a
year ago.

1059
01:04:10,200 --> 01:04:14,160
Since that time, there have been material changes in circumstance,
and you'll

1060
01:04:14,200 --> 01:04:15,340
be familiar, as

1061
01:04:16,400 --> 01:04:19,680
planners, as to the way those must be handled in

1062
01:04:20,040 --> 01:04:22,420
addressing this point. So

1063
01:04:23,900 --> 01:04:27,780
since there is no longer any connection

1064

01:04:28,160 --> 01:04:31,780

offer with a location, since it is only a gate one offer, there has been a material

1065

01:04:31,840 --> 01:04:33,940

change in circumstance since then, and

1066

01:04:35,740 --> 01:04:39,360

there is no justification for authorizing a connection

1067

01:04:39,780 --> 01:04:42,620

which has no endpoint to it.

1068

01:04:45,040 --> 01:04:47,860

We note the position on Western Marsh.

1069

01:04:47,889 --> 01:04:50,140

And of course, with the applicant, we will keep that

1070

01:04:51,560 --> 01:04:55,280

under review. The position I will check, of course, in

1071

01:04:55,320 --> 01:04:58,600

relation to the Town and Country Planning Act application

1072

01:04:58,680 --> 01:05:00,560

for Western Marsh

1073

01:05:02,100 --> 01:05:05,820

A, and no doubt we can update you on that in

1074

01:05:05,860 --> 01:05:09,680

writing. And then the other thing that I would

1075

01:05:09,700 --> 01:05:13,460

reflect is that it is entirely appropriate and proper

1076

01:05:13,560 --> 01:05:17,300

for the applicant to offer protective provisions to National Grid

1077

01:05:17,360 --> 01:05:20,420

Electricity Transmission. We will look at those and engage

1078

01:05:20,460 --> 01:05:23,580

constructively with them. However,

1079

01:05:24,560 --> 01:05:28,320

that is without prejudice to the general point, which is that this grid

1080

01:05:28,340 --> 01:05:31,760

connection should not be authorized by the Secretary of State, and you should not

1081

01:05:31,820 --> 01:05:35,449

recommend it to them. And on that basis,

1082

01:05:35,640 --> 01:05:39,380

whilst we engage with the question of the protective provisions,

1083

01:05:39,930 --> 01:05:43,860

of course, it isn't the case that we consider those

1084

01:05:43,920 --> 01:05:45,520

to cure anything.

1085

01:05:46,420 --> 01:05:49,660

Should the project go ahead, then that would be how we operate it, but

1086

01:05:50,140 --> 01:05:53,660

the connection project we simply say should not take place.

1087

01:05:55,780 --> 01:05:56,680

Thank you very much.

1088

01:05:58,100 --> 01:06:00,220

Yes, your points have been noted, so thank you.

1089

01:06:02,120 --> 01:06:04,880

Would the applicant care to respond to the comments just made?

1090

01:06:05,860 --> 01:06:08,460

Taylor Power for the applicant. I don't want to -

1091

01:06:08,500 --> 01:06:08,780

Yeah

1092

01:06:09,559 --> 01:06:12,730

... continue an ongoing argument in the course of the hearing.

1093

01:06:12,820 --> 01:06:15,410

I think it's best we summarize our position in writing,

1094

01:06:16,300 --> 01:06:19,820

and in further direct discussions with National Grid to the extent that they're

1095

01:06:19,860 --> 01:06:20,380

open to them.

1096

01:06:21,360 --> 01:06:25,100

Thank you. So before we close this item on the agenda, is there

1097

01:06:25,140 --> 01:06:28,860

anybody else in the room that wishes to make any comments? Mrs Pennington?

1098

01:06:31,010 --> 01:06:32,700

Not sure whether this is-

1099

01:06:32,760 --> 01:06:34,840

Do you need a roaming mic brought to you?

1100

01:06:35,290 --> 01:06:37,580

Okay, yeah. Thank you.

1101

01:06:39,820 --> 01:06:43,660

I'm not sure whether this is the appropriate time to say it,

1102

01:06:44,160 --> 01:06:48,100

but you've just heard all about the energy projects that are coming

1103

01:06:48,180 --> 01:06:51,780
into Western Marsh. We've got a mass of

1104

01:06:51,840 --> 01:06:55,420
pylons coming in. Anything that can be done to

1105

01:06:55,500 --> 01:06:59,480
help any project that's

1106

01:06:59,520 --> 01:07:00,200
approved

1107

01:07:01,340 --> 01:07:04,980
to Meridian, if the cables could actually be put

1108

01:07:05,100 --> 01:07:09,000
underground instead of having another row of massive

1109

01:07:09,100 --> 01:07:12,720
pylons, even if only for a short stretch of the way,

1110

01:07:13,260 --> 01:07:14,500
that would really be

1111

01:07:15,420 --> 01:07:18,320
more than helpful to the residents of the Marsh.

1112

01:07:18,900 --> 01:07:19,860
Thank you.

1113

01:07:19,960 --> 01:07:20,860
Thank you very much.

1114

01:07:21,880 --> 01:07:22,700
Mr Semakula?

1115

01:07:25,000 --> 01:07:26,860
Joel Semakula for LCC.

1116

01:07:28,600 --> 01:07:32,490

The starting point, of course, is that the key interrelationship here is with

1117

01:07:32,880 --> 01:07:35,320

Grimsby to Walpole. We've heard what Mr Basford said.

1118

01:07:35,480 --> 01:07:39,360

It'll be no surprise to you that we rely on a

1119

01:07:39,400 --> 01:07:43,300

lot of what's already been put forward by NGET, and that objection is

1120

01:07:43,320 --> 01:07:46,660

relevant to our position on the interrelationship part here.

1121

01:07:46,680 --> 01:07:48,680

I won't repeat any of that. Now, there is

1122

01:07:50,516 --> 01:07:52,416

The additional point about cumulative effects.

1123

01:07:52,476 --> 01:07:52,605

Now,

1124

01:07:53,816 --> 01:07:56,316

it's not completely clear whether we want to deal with this right here within

1125

01:07:56,356 --> 01:07:59,516

interrelationship or whether that's saved for another day, but perhaps I can put

1126

01:07:59,556 --> 01:08:03,526

our position at a high level here, and then the detail to come at

1127

01:08:03,596 --> 01:08:04,216

a later point.

1128

01:08:05,076 --> 01:08:08,836

The first point is regarding the cumulative

1129

01:08:09,156 --> 01:08:12,636

amenity impact of construction. Of course, earlier on in this ISH, there was a

1130

01:08:12,676 --> 01:08:16,576

question around whether or not that construction process would

1131

01:08:16,596 --> 01:08:17,936

be consecutive or concurrent.

1132

01:08:18,916 --> 01:08:20,217

Now, the applicant is going to come

1133

01:08:21,036 --> 01:08:24,976

back to the XA with a response on that, but we say there's a cumulative

1134

01:08:25,016 --> 01:08:25,717

impact there,

1135

01:08:27,116 --> 01:08:30,177

in relation to other projects that also needs to be considered when determining

1136

01:08:30,217 --> 01:08:33,236

really what's the least disruptive and how that assessment is done in totality.

1137

01:08:33,276 --> 01:08:34,416

So that's the first point.

1138

01:08:35,396 --> 01:08:36,686

The second point really

1139

01:08:38,476 --> 01:08:41,406

relates to a number of cumulative concerns, which we set out in our

1140

01:08:42,156 --> 01:08:44,757

LIR at a high level.

1141

01:08:46,116 --> 01:08:46,826

There are really,

1142

01:08:47,717 --> 01:08:48,316

say here,

1143

01:08:49,816 --> 01:08:53,786

six points that we wish for the XA and to put the applicant on

1144

01:08:53,797 --> 01:08:55,566

notice of. The first is landscape.

1145

01:08:55,656 --> 01:08:59,036

So from a cumulative perspective, we're concerned about the clustering of

1146

01:08:59,076 --> 01:09:01,376

infrastructure around Western Marsh

1147

01:09:03,416 --> 01:09:06,356

and the effect on landscape character areas.

1148

01:09:08,396 --> 01:09:09,736

The second is heritage,

1149

01:09:12,016 --> 01:09:15,666

and there we're concerned about historic landscape character effects from combined

1150

01:09:15,696 --> 01:09:19,316

solar and grid infrastructure across, in particular, the fens and wash.

1151

01:09:23,656 --> 01:09:25,116

The third is ecology.

1152

01:09:28,076 --> 01:09:31,876

And just at a high level there, the big point here is about the loss of arable

1153

01:09:31,956 --> 01:09:35,637

land and cumulative impact on ground-nesting bird populations.

1154

01:09:41,177 --> 01:09:42,677

Fourth point is waste.

1155

01:09:46,776 --> 01:09:50,736

If all the solar NSIP and TCPA

1156

01:09:50,776 --> 01:09:54,596

schemes in Lincolnshire are consented, on our calculation, we're talking

1157

01:09:54,656 --> 01:09:57,016

about approximately 16 million panels

1158

01:09:57,876 --> 01:09:59,816

that would require recycling or disposal,

1159

01:10:01,016 --> 01:10:03,916

and there are no facilities currently available to process them

1160

01:10:04,736 --> 01:10:05,616

within this area.

1161

01:10:11,696 --> 01:10:15,476

Fifth really is socioeconomic, and I'll put this in one

1162

01:10:15,516 --> 01:10:18,336

sentence. No doubt we'll expand on it in item eight.

1163

01:10:19,916 --> 01:10:23,656

It's really we say, look, the cumulative industrialization of the countryside,

1164

01:10:25,616 --> 01:10:28,516

and we're concerned about the pressure on temporary worker

1165

01:10:28,596 --> 01:10:29,636

accommodation.

1166

01:10:32,716 --> 01:10:36,436

What we're talking about here is a visitor economy that's worth about £2.9 billion

1167

01:10:37,016 --> 01:10:39,606

to Lincolnshire. Sorry, that's two sentences, but that's what we're talking about

1168

01:10:41,516 --> 01:10:43,136

here when we're talking about that cumulative impact.

1169

01:10:43,166 --> 01:10:43,446

And then,

1170

01:10:45,496 --> 01:10:47,596

just to end, I'll start with BMV quickly and then traffic.

1171

01:10:47,656 --> 01:10:48,236

On BMV,

1172

01:10:50,296 --> 01:10:52,296

our headline position is that Lincolnshire

1173

01:10:53,156 --> 01:10:56,396

has already met its relative proportion of solar development.

1174

01:10:58,036 --> 01:11:02,016

I think we're accounting for something like 29% of all new solar granted

1175

01:11:02,036 --> 01:11:05,376

between Q3 2025 and Q1

1176

01:11:05,496 --> 01:11:06,485

2026.

1177

01:11:07,556 --> 01:11:11,456

And that's despite the fact that we only have about 5% of agricultural land.

1178

01:11:17,656 --> 01:11:21,436

On traffic, this is a very specific point relating to the

1179

01:11:21,516 --> 01:11:23,476

screening out from the cumulative assessment

1180

01:11:24,676 --> 01:11:27,556

of NGET's WMEL scheme, which we've already heard about.

1181

01:11:27,816 --> 01:11:31,706

Now, on the A16 and A151, we've got a problem with

1182

01:11:31,856 --> 01:11:32,476

that approach.

1183

01:11:33,876 --> 01:11:36,436

We say it's unacceptable given these schemes are overlapping.

1184

01:11:37,676 --> 01:11:39,176

So, I mean, those are the headline points.

1185

01:11:39,236 --> 01:11:42,876

We'll provide that detail, but we just thought it was an appropriate place to

1186

01:11:43,836 --> 01:11:45,716

set out Lincolnshire's concerns here.

1187

01:11:48,836 --> 01:11:51,276

Thank you. So if I've understood correctly, these

1188

01:11:51,296 --> 01:11:55,396

points

1189

01:11:55,416 --> 01:11:58,816

are specifically for their interrelationship with the other projects in the

1190

01:11:58,856 --> 01:11:59,756

locality.

1191

01:11:59,796 --> 01:12:00,575

Indeed, madam.

1192

01:12:00,636 --> 01:12:02,136

Yeah. Thank you.

1193

01:12:03,916 --> 01:12:07,795

I don't know if the applicant wishes to respond on that point in particular.

1194

01:12:09,976 --> 01:12:13,476

Taylor Power for the applicant. I might just briefly respond to both Ms Pennington

1195

01:12:13,516 --> 01:12:15,856

and Mr Semakula's points,

1196

01:12:16,856 --> 01:12:20,636

in the sense that the applicant, of course, completely understands the concerns

1197

01:12:20,676 --> 01:12:24,236

about cumulative impacts in the projects in this area, and that's been a

1198

01:12:24,276 --> 01:12:27,796

guiding element of the approach it's taken to design.

1199

01:12:28,256 --> 01:12:31,506

It's part of, for example, why the scheme has

1200

01:12:31,856 --> 01:12:34,536

assumed the connection into Western Marsh B,

1201

01:12:35,776 --> 01:12:38,676

where there's been a lack of clarity from National Grid because its connection

1202

01:12:38,716 --> 01:12:42,316

agreement and then Gate 1 offer have only ever referred to Western

1203

01:12:42,356 --> 01:12:46,176

Marsh. That's to reduce the extent that the

1204

01:12:46,236 --> 01:12:50,056

scheme is extending further north, and therefore creating additional

cumulative

1205

01:12:50,116 --> 01:12:53,596

impacts with Grimsby to Walpole or with the Utter Dowsing

1206

01:12:54,256 --> 01:12:57,236

wind farm, where it routes into Western Marsh.

1207

01:12:58,176 --> 01:13:01,796

It's also why the scheme has sought to engage with National Grid because

1208

01:13:01,836 --> 01:13:05,456

the applicant would like to ensure a cohesive design of

1209

01:13:05,516 --> 01:13:09,276

overhead lines which appropriately align with each other and

1210

01:13:09,316 --> 01:13:13,136

don't create an uncoordinated kind of wire scape of

1211

01:13:13,196 --> 01:13:13,796

impacts

1212

01:13:14,736 --> 01:13:18,636

of the overhead lines or of other infrastructure like cable ceiling in compounds.

1213

01:13:19,256 --> 01:13:21,436

So it's something that we're very cognizant about.

1214

01:13:22,016 --> 01:13:25,776

I think in respect of the broader list of cumulative assessment points that Mr

1215

01:13:25,856 --> 01:13:29,756

Semakula raised when it comes to heritage

1216

01:13:29,776 --> 01:13:33,496

and ecology and waste, we'll respond to each of

1217

01:13:33,536 --> 01:13:37,276

those in turn in the relevant rep response report as well as in the

1218

01:13:37,296 --> 01:13:40,896

response to the local impact report, presuming that Lincolnshire County Council

1219

01:13:40,936 --> 01:13:42,936

will set those out in further detail there too.

1220

01:13:44,836 --> 01:13:45,436

Thank you for that.

1221

01:13:46,656 --> 01:13:49,456

So I think if there are no further questions, we will finish

1222

01:13:50,776 --> 01:13:51,636

item six

1223

01:13:53,524 --> 01:13:56,884

And we'll move on to item eight. Yep.

1224

01:13:57,444 --> 01:13:59,004

So I'll hand over to Ms Davies.

1225

01:14:00,224 --> 01:14:02,704

So this item is about the habitats regulation assessment.

1226

01:14:04,184 --> 01:14:07,984

Functionally linked land, Natural England aren't here today.

1227

01:14:08,464 --> 01:14:11,824

In their absence, please can the applicant provide an update on your

1228

01:14:11,844 --> 01:14:15,584

discussions with them and describe the progress that's been made to address the

1229

01:14:15,624 --> 01:14:17,604

concerns that were raised in their relevant REP?

1230

01:14:20,204 --> 01:14:21,684
Thank you. David Coote

1231
01:14:22,564 --> 01:14:23,764
on behalf of the applicant.

1232
01:14:25,584 --> 01:14:29,124
Yes, so we have been in regular communication with

1233
01:14:29,404 --> 01:14:32,824
Natural England, both through the design process to this date

1234
01:14:34,064 --> 01:14:37,444
and in regular communication on the responses.

1235
01:14:38,944 --> 01:14:42,844
We've received and reviewed Natural England's commentary and

1236
01:14:42,884 --> 01:14:46,664
are preparing proposed revisions to documents

1237
01:14:47,084 --> 01:14:50,524
to be submitted at deadline one, alongside responses

1238
01:14:51,884 --> 01:14:53,684
directly to the comments. And

1239
01:14:54,864 --> 01:14:58,624
we don't anticipate these to be anything that would be significant
grounds for

1240
01:14:58,664 --> 01:14:59,824
disagreement with Natural England.

1241
01:15:00,544 --> 01:15:04,324
But we would look to scale these through the statement of common

1242
01:15:04,364 --> 01:15:04,764
ground.

1243
01:15:08,044 --> 01:15:10,784

In terms of Natural England's comments, specifically, they have

1244

01:15:10,824 --> 01:15:14,544
requested

1245

01:15:14,584 --> 01:15:18,064
further detail on noise and visual disturbance of functionally
linked land.

1246

01:15:20,124 --> 01:15:22,004
This will be included in the updated

1247

01:15:22,884 --> 01:15:23,944
HRA. That's

1248

01:15:25,184 --> 01:15:28,144
document APP 217 for reference.

1249

01:15:29,824 --> 01:15:32,644
In particular, looking at the process for identifying which areas

1250

01:15:32,664 --> 01:15:35,464
were identified functionally

1251

01:15:35,564 --> 01:15:37,404
linked land.

1252

01:15:42,124 --> 01:15:42,784
Their

1253

01:15:44,184 --> 01:15:45,364
commentary has asked for,

1254

01:15:46,164 --> 01:15:46,884
yes, identified

1255

01:15:48,164 --> 01:15:51,344
the point that all areas with species

1256

01:15:51,724 --> 01:15:55,564
supporting the designated sites to be considered

1257

01:15:55,924 --> 01:15:59,664

for functionally linked land. Our approach to assessment has been to take those as

1258

01:16:00,104 --> 01:16:03,004

potential functionally linked land, which has been taken into account,

1259

01:16:04,564 --> 01:16:05,444

and then to determine

1260

01:16:06,444 --> 01:16:10,364

if they provide an important function for supporting the life and reproduction of

1261

01:16:10,404 --> 01:16:13,424

those relevant populations to determine whether they're actually functionally

1262

01:16:13,434 --> 01:16:17,084

linked land or not. And that's the approach that's been taken in the

1263

01:16:17,304 --> 01:16:17,664

HRA.

1264

01:16:20,684 --> 01:16:23,644

In the HRA, we've identified four areas of functionally linked land.

1265

01:16:23,704 --> 01:16:27,284

I don't know if it would be helpful to show that on a plan.

1266

01:16:28,884 --> 01:16:29,204

Yes, please.

1267

01:16:29,664 --> 01:16:31,904

Yes, we have that. So that's document

1268

01:16:33,484 --> 01:16:37,104

217, figure three, which is page 79, I believe.

1269

01:16:43,024 --> 01:16:44,214
That looks like one. Yes. Thank you.

1270
01:16:45,444 --> 01:16:46,344
Just to confirm, this is the

1271
01:16:48,124 --> 01:16:51,584
plan that Natural England were commenting on when they said that they didn't think

1272
01:16:51,664 --> 01:16:55,604
sufficient account had been taken of the functionally linked land on the

1273
01:16:55,664 --> 01:16:56,044
site?

1274
01:16:57,344 --> 01:16:59,784
So yes, this is the document that we're referring to.

1275
01:16:59,824 --> 01:17:02,364
I haven't specifically said that they don't think

1276
01:17:03,324 --> 01:17:07,194
we haven't addressed the appropriate areas of functionally linked

1277
01:17:07,194 --> 01:17:11,064
land. Their concern was the clarity of the process by which we've

1278
01:17:11,104 --> 01:17:14,204
identified these particular areas and not other areas.

1279
01:17:15,864 --> 01:17:18,084
So these areas we have identified,

1280
01:17:19,924 --> 01:17:20,504
and we've done a

1281
01:17:21,364 --> 01:17:25,124
process of looking at all the areas where species

1282

01:17:25,244 --> 01:17:28,824
of interest have occurred, and these were the key hotspots.

1283
01:17:30,484 --> 01:17:34,464
So we have one which was identified adjacent to the good connection

1284
01:17:34,524 --> 01:17:38,303
corridor, where high numbers of golden plover were recorded.

1285
01:17:41,104 --> 01:17:44,624
The area adjacent to River Welland and to the southwest

1286
01:17:46,044 --> 01:17:48,644
is regularly used by large numbers of

1287
01:17:49,444 --> 01:17:50,744
a wide range of different waterfowl,

1288
01:17:51,684 --> 01:17:55,484
including geese and whooper swans and

1289
01:17:57,344 --> 01:17:58,304
ducks as well.

1290
01:17:59,864 --> 01:18:02,464
The area to the east

1291
01:18:03,564 --> 01:18:05,844
is one of the main drains that also

1292
01:18:06,004 --> 01:18:09,863
regularly supports a number of different

1293
01:18:09,923 --> 01:18:13,604
species of ducks, which are relevant to both the Wash and the washes.

1294
01:18:14,824 --> 01:18:17,724
And there is an area to the north, area D, so the northeast,

1295
01:18:19,164 --> 01:18:22,744

which didn't have such high numbers of birds recorded, but is

1296

01:18:22,844 --> 01:18:25,984

recorded by Natural England in their impact risk zones for the-

1297

01:18:26,204 --> 01:18:28,644

Just conscious of time. That's what we've already been sent.

1298

01:18:28,664 --> 01:18:30,264

So that's what we've been sent. So

1299

01:18:32,004 --> 01:18:35,564

as part of our response, we'll be setting out in more detail

1300

01:18:36,144 --> 01:18:40,064

a review of each of the areas where the relevant species have been

1301

01:18:40,104 --> 01:18:40,604

recorded,

1302

01:18:42,724 --> 01:18:46,684

and the numbers and the regularity of the use against a number

1303

01:18:46,724 --> 01:18:50,084

of criteria that Natural England have set out in their response.

1304

01:18:51,464 --> 01:18:54,324

So we will be providing a table that explains

1305

01:18:55,464 --> 01:18:59,354

which areas those species have been recorded in and our justification

1306

01:18:59,384 --> 01:19:02,524

for whether they're included or not included in the

1307

01:19:03,264 --> 01:19:04,614

designation functionally linked land.

1308

01:19:06,004 --> 01:19:07,884

So the point being that just because

1309

01:19:08,784 --> 01:19:12,404

some of a number of species occur does not necessarily mean it's functionally

1310

01:19:12,444 --> 01:19:16,404

linked if it is not providing significant and important function to

1311

01:19:16,424 --> 01:19:19,384

the supporting of the integrity of that species.

1312

01:19:19,784 --> 01:19:21,294

And that's all going to be submitted at deadline one?

1313

01:19:21,304 --> 01:19:23,324

And that will all be submitted at deadline one, yes.

1314

01:19:23,524 --> 01:19:23,884

Thank you.

1315

01:19:24,824 --> 01:19:25,684

Was there anybody

1316

01:19:26,544 --> 01:19:29,824

in the room or online who wants to comment on what they've heard about functionally

1317

01:19:29,884 --> 01:19:30,564

linked land?

1318

01:19:34,344 --> 01:19:34,584

Okay.

1319

01:19:35,604 --> 01:19:39,364

Then I want to move on to the effect on ornithology from the overhead lines.

1320

01:19:39,384 --> 01:19:39,584

Mm-hmm.

1321

01:19:44,744 --> 01:19:45,044

Thank you.

1322

01:19:45,944 --> 01:19:49,424

So in their response, Natural England broadly agreed with the process and findings

1323

01:19:49,684 --> 01:19:52,464

of the analysis in the HRA in relation to collision risk,

1324

01:19:53,744 --> 01:19:55,563

raising a few points of clarification.

1325

01:19:56,956 --> 01:19:59,236

So one was the recommendation for monitoring.

1326

01:20:00,436 --> 01:20:04,056

Second would be the requirement to agree design and model of line

1327

01:20:04,116 --> 01:20:07,776

markers or diverters with them prior to final

1328

01:20:07,796 --> 01:20:08,196

design.

1329

01:20:09,676 --> 01:20:13,236

And the third was a technical point on the collision risk

1330

01:20:13,336 --> 01:20:16,716

model that was used to inform the collision risk

1331

01:20:17,196 --> 01:20:18,596

assessment in the HRA.

1332

01:20:21,296 --> 01:20:23,916

Do you want me to go into detail on our response to each of those points?

1333

01:20:24,536 --> 01:20:28,296

Potentially. So the two questions about the DCO, what's the decision

1334

01:20:28,356 --> 01:20:28,716

been

1335

01:20:30,056 --> 01:20:33,016

about that? Are you going to include their recommendation in the DC0?

1336

01:20:33,576 --> 01:20:35,636

So in terms of the recommendation for monitoring,

1337

01:20:36,496 --> 01:20:40,356

currently our status is that it's not required

1338

01:20:40,516 --> 01:20:43,436

for the HRA, given that we don't rely on it

1339

01:20:43,856 --> 01:20:47,796

to mitigate any impacts. It wouldn't be

1340

01:20:47,836 --> 01:20:48,665

appropriate to rely on

1341

01:20:49,556 --> 01:20:51,386

monitoring as a mitigation measure,

1342

01:20:52,576 --> 01:20:56,276

and we can conclude no likely significant effects in the absence of monitoring.

1343

01:20:58,696 --> 01:20:59,156

However,

1344

01:21:00,176 --> 01:21:04,066

we do want to continue the discussion with Natural England in

1345

01:21:04,096 --> 01:21:07,186

terms of the appropriate mechanisms for securing some monitoring.

1346

01:21:07,546 --> 01:21:09,586

There is reference within the

1347

01:21:14,456 --> 01:21:15,456

OCEMP, I think,

1348

01:21:17,336 --> 01:21:19,276

for... I've got it written here somewhere.

1349

01:21:19,346 --> 01:21:19,676

I've

1350

01:21:20,936 --> 01:21:23,816

still lost my reference. But yes, it is referred to that

1351

01:21:24,676 --> 01:21:27,636

where appropriate, monitoring would be included as part of the

1352

01:21:29,616 --> 01:21:32,876

post-construction monitoring, but the scope of that hasn't been agreed,

1353

01:21:33,536 --> 01:21:36,956

and we would look to discuss with Natural England what the appropriate mechanism

1354

01:21:37,536 --> 01:21:41,476

for future monitoring would be and exactly what the goal, the aims of

1355

01:21:41,536 --> 01:21:45,336

that would be. But we don't see that it is necessary to

1356

01:21:45,376 --> 01:21:49,216

secure it as part of the HRA or ES in

1357

01:21:49,256 --> 01:21:51,056

terms of concluding

1358

01:21:52,736 --> 01:21:54,316

significant effects or as mitigation.

1359

01:21:55,056 --> 01:21:55,336

Okay.

1360

01:21:56,416 --> 01:21:59,256

And then the second one about the detailed design of the line markers.

1361

01:21:59,396 --> 01:22:00,616

What was the conclusion on that?

1362

01:22:00,896 --> 01:22:02,356

So the conclusion there, yes, it is

1363

01:22:03,636 --> 01:22:07,576

set out in the outline operation environment management plan,

1364

01:22:08,746 --> 01:22:09,556

that that would be

1365

01:22:10,516 --> 01:22:13,656

secured, and that is agreed, that we will

1366

01:22:15,896 --> 01:22:18,816

be consulting with Natural England on the final design of those markers.

1367

01:22:19,216 --> 01:22:22,786

There need to be certain parameters of practicality, deliverability,

1368

01:22:23,316 --> 01:22:26,116

appropriateness of those designs, both

1369

01:22:26,916 --> 01:22:30,736

in terms of how they can be installed and managed, but also in

1370

01:22:30,796 --> 01:22:33,526

terms of their appropriate effectiveness of design.

1371

01:22:34,436 --> 01:22:38,076

So we will be looking to consult with them further down the line

1372

01:22:38,836 --> 01:22:39,996

at detailed design stage.

1373

01:22:42,056 --> 01:22:42,386
Then

1374
01:22:43,316 --> 01:22:47,236
in the HRA, and I've got it as paragraph 5.2.6, it's stated

1375
01:22:47,296 --> 01:22:51,016
that undergrounding of the cable route may have greater impacts to
wintering

1376
01:22:51,056 --> 01:22:53,136
birds foraging and roosting in the area.

1377
01:22:54,016 --> 01:22:56,196
Can you explain that to me, please?

1378
01:22:56,596 --> 01:23:00,456
Yes. That point is not intended to say that

1379
01:23:00,516 --> 01:23:04,416
it will have. We

1380
01:23:04,456 --> 01:23:07,136
don't know what the impacts are. We haven't assessed what the
impacts would be

1381
01:23:07,176 --> 01:23:11,116
necessarily from undergrounding in detail, but that's just to

1382
01:23:11,136 --> 01:23:14,825
point out that there is a balance of impacts, and yes, there would

1383
01:23:14,856 --> 01:23:18,816
be likely greater temporary disturbance

1384
01:23:19,316 --> 01:23:23,036
of farmland, clean land, or land use by wintering

1385
01:23:23,076 --> 01:23:23,436
birds

1386

01:23:24,576 --> 01:23:26,985
during construction and operation, construction underground,

1387
01:23:28,676 --> 01:23:32,036
whereas the overhead line will have less construction impacts.

1388
01:23:32,176 --> 01:23:35,956
Obviously, in the longer term, it won't necessarily be the same because the

1389
01:23:37,556 --> 01:23:40,596
undergrounding will have only temporary impacts.

1390
01:23:40,676 --> 01:23:44,566
So it's that comment. I don't intend on

1391
01:23:44,596 --> 01:23:47,816
changing that because that comment is not trying to make a point that

1392
01:23:48,476 --> 01:23:50,896
undergrounding is necessarily a worse option.

1393
01:23:51,376 --> 01:23:53,256
We haven't overestimated the

1394
01:23:54,556 --> 01:23:57,816
impact of undergrounding. We're just stating that they are other considerations.

1395
01:23:59,596 --> 01:24:03,116
Okay. And then going back to Mr. Pennington's point from earlier about birds

1396
01:24:03,156 --> 01:24:06,706
hitting lines in fog, how would you respond to

1397
01:24:06,796 --> 01:24:07,556
that?

1398
01:24:07,636 --> 01:24:10,456
Yes. So we have done a collision risk assessment.

1399

01:24:10,716 --> 01:24:14,425

This included a collision risk model, which is the other point Natural

1400

01:24:14,456 --> 01:24:16,516

England had a comment on.

1401

01:24:17,756 --> 01:24:20,156

Now, the model, I have to be clear, is not

1402

01:24:21,176 --> 01:24:23,796

intended to be a prediction of number of collisions.

1403

01:24:23,896 --> 01:24:24,876

That's important,

1404

01:24:26,536 --> 01:24:29,476

but it does help us to understand where high levels of

1405

01:24:30,616 --> 01:24:34,196

transits are and what species are at most risk.

1406

01:24:35,736 --> 01:24:39,176

And in response to that assessment, which also

1407

01:24:39,196 --> 01:24:43,036

included a modeling of distribution of likely bird movements

1408

01:24:43,376 --> 01:24:47,116

from desk study data and evaluation of our survey

1409

01:24:47,216 --> 01:24:47,556

data,

1410

01:24:49,276 --> 01:24:51,976

we have identified two areas which we think are of

1411

01:24:52,956 --> 01:24:55,556

increased risk of bird collisions.

1412

01:24:56,776 --> 01:25:00,276

So one of those is adjacent to the area I mentioned earlier where the golden plover

1413

01:25:00,736 --> 01:25:02,436

were recorded adjacent to the line,

1414

01:25:03,276 --> 01:25:05,796

and the other is at the southern end of the grid connection corridor,

1415

01:25:07,296 --> 01:25:11,036

nearest to where the birds would be moving to and from the area by the River

1416

01:25:11,076 --> 01:25:11,456

Welland.

1417

01:25:13,936 --> 01:25:17,756

So that would be swans and geese

1418

01:25:18,376 --> 01:25:22,136

primarily, but also for common crane, which are known to

1419

01:25:22,316 --> 01:25:25,246

nest at Wicken Fen to the east of West Sporling,

1420

01:25:26,156 --> 01:25:27,206

is an important population,

1421

01:25:29,356 --> 01:25:33,276

and there were a number of cranes recorded on one occasion in

1422

01:25:33,336 --> 01:25:36,556

that area as well, although their distribution is relatively

1423

01:25:36,996 --> 01:25:40,856

sparse. So we have looked at it, and we've reviewed, assessed it,

1424

01:25:42,316 --> 01:25:46,016

and one of the points on the diverters, as I mentioned, their

design, we need to

1425

01:25:46,036 --> 01:25:47,376

make sure they are relatively visible.

1426

01:25:47,536 --> 01:25:50,976

A lot of these species fly at night, so it would need to be visible at night.

1427

01:25:51,396 --> 01:25:55,356

So these factors, and in poor visibility, so these need to be

1428

01:25:55,396 --> 01:25:57,906

taken into account in the detailed design of

1429

01:25:58,848 --> 01:26:01,428

And are line markers suitable for that purpose?

1430

01:26:01,828 --> 01:26:05,788

Yes. Line markers that have a high reflectivity are much more

1431

01:26:05,828 --> 01:26:09,708

detectable during fog conditions, though obviously the visibility will be reduced

1432

01:26:09,808 --> 01:26:11,908

still, but they are more appropriate.

1433

01:26:12,288 --> 01:26:13,028

And at nighttime?

1434

01:26:13,148 --> 01:26:13,908

And at night, yes.

1435

01:26:14,548 --> 01:26:14,878

Thank you.

1436

01:26:14,888 --> 01:26:18,788

There are models that are available that are more effective at night and in low

1437

01:26:18,828 --> 01:26:19,468
light conditions.

1438
01:26:20,168 --> 01:26:23,488
Thank you. Does anybody have any questions in the room?

1439
01:26:24,188 --> 01:26:26,088
Mr. Pennington, can you just wait for the microphone?

1440
01:26:32,108 --> 01:26:34,488
Yeah. Sorry to come back to this point.

1441
01:26:34,828 --> 01:26:35,808
I don't think it's switched on.

1442
01:26:38,988 --> 01:26:40,348
Or maybe it just needs to be closer.

1443
01:26:42,668 --> 01:26:46,308
Yeah. Sorry to come back to this point again, but I've lived in the

1444
01:26:46,408 --> 01:26:50,228
area of the substations for the last 77 years,

1445
01:26:50,728 --> 01:26:54,368
and to see the swans go over, fly over, they are beautiful.

1446
01:26:54,788 --> 01:26:58,688
They're a real beautiful bird. And last year there were nine swans

1447
01:26:58,768 --> 01:26:59,868
in a field

1448
01:27:00,688 --> 01:27:03,868
between substation B and the River Welland.

1449
01:27:04,428 --> 01:27:07,987
And to go and see three lay dead

1450
01:27:08,228 --> 01:27:11,768
in one go, in one morning, it's

1451

01:27:12,808 --> 01:27:16,728

tearful. It's terrible. You'd be in tears

1452

01:27:16,768 --> 01:27:18,728

if I showed you them. It's dreadful.

1453

01:27:19,088 --> 01:27:22,688

So just bear that in mind with the pylons, please.

1454

01:27:22,728 --> 01:27:26,428

Thank you, Mr. Pennington. Was there anyone else that wanted to comment

1455

01:27:26,948 --> 01:27:27,368

on,

1456

01:27:28,848 --> 01:27:32,268

well, in particular, the habitats regulation assessment?

1457

01:27:36,468 --> 01:27:39,648

Okay, that's the end of my questions on that item, so

1458

01:27:39,688 --> 01:27:41,788

we're moving on to item nine.

1459

01:27:43,148 --> 01:27:45,488

Thank you. So item nine is socioeconomics.

1460

01:27:45,748 --> 01:27:49,008

In the interest of ensuring that we are going to get through all of the agenda

1461

01:27:49,108 --> 01:27:52,948

items, I'm going to focus just on community issues in

1462

01:27:52,968 --> 01:27:56,728

this agenda, and I will put my other questions in

1463

01:27:56,748 --> 01:27:58,688

writing at ExQ1.

1464

01:27:59,628 --> 01:28:03,068

So to the applicant, can you provide me with a high-level

1465

01:28:03,268 --> 01:28:06,838

overview and justification of the potential community benefits of the

1466

01:28:07,048 --> 01:28:07,928

proposed development?

1467

01:28:08,768 --> 01:28:12,248

Can you keep it quite high level at this stage, please?

1468

01:28:13,448 --> 01:28:15,148

Yes, of course. Taylor Power for the applicant.

1469

01:28:15,288 --> 01:28:18,628

I will just pass over to our socioeconomic expert, Ms.

1470

01:28:18,708 --> 01:28:20,618

Esther Howell.

1471

01:28:21,068 --> 01:28:23,658

Esther Howell. Hello. I'm an Associate Director at

1472

01:28:23,708 --> 01:28:27,598

AECOM for the applicant. So in

1473

01:28:27,628 --> 01:28:31,268

the environmental statement, there's two community benefit key

1474

01:28:31,408 --> 01:28:31,888

areas

1475

01:28:32,848 --> 01:28:36,688

which we talk about. The first of those is employment

1476

01:28:36,788 --> 01:28:40,608

impacts and economic benefits, and the second

1477

01:28:40,728 --> 01:28:44,188

is active travel, public rights of way, and specifically a

1478

01:28:44,288 --> 01:28:47,968

new permissive path which is proposed. So I'll just summarize both of those.

1479

01:28:48,728 --> 01:28:52,328

So in terms of employment, during the construction phase,

1480

01:28:52,728 --> 01:28:55,908

we estimate that the project would support approximately

1481

01:28:55,948 --> 01:28:59,728

207 jobs in total on average per

1482

01:28:59,788 --> 01:29:02,368

annum during the construction of the scheme.

1483

01:29:03,508 --> 01:29:06,128

And just to justify that a bit and how it's derived,

1484

01:29:07,068 --> 01:29:10,468

the estimate is that 184 jobs will be on site.

1485

01:29:10,488 --> 01:29:14,188

They're the direct jobs. And then we apply assumptions

1486

01:29:14,268 --> 01:29:17,308

around displacement and

1487

01:29:17,788 --> 01:29:19,518

multiplier effects in the local economy,

1488

01:29:20,488 --> 01:29:23,828

and that gets us to 207 net

1489

01:29:24,148 --> 01:29:27,868

jobs. We consider the extent to which those jobs would be

1490

01:29:27,928 --> 01:29:31,788
taken up by people in the local area, so the study area

1491
01:29:31,848 --> 01:29:35,068
we use for this assessment is the 60-minute drive time.

1492
01:29:35,948 --> 01:29:39,188
And we estimate that approximately 60% of the

1493
01:29:39,248 --> 01:29:42,828
employment impacts would actually go outside the

1494
01:29:42,888 --> 01:29:45,888
60-minute drive time. So that implies

1495
01:29:47,328 --> 01:29:47,888
83

1496
01:29:48,848 --> 01:29:52,808
of the jobs would be taken up by workers within the 60-minute drive

1497
01:29:52,888 --> 01:29:53,128
time,

1498
01:29:54,508 --> 01:29:58,408
and the rest would go to workers beyond that 60-minute drive time.

1499
01:29:58,888 --> 01:30:02,828
So happy to get out the relevant table and discuss that in more
detail if

1500
01:30:02,888 --> 01:30:06,648
that's useful. But that's set out within ES chapter 14,

1501
01:30:07,088 --> 01:30:10,848
Socioeconomics and Land Use, which is APP065.

1502
01:30:11,008 --> 01:30:12,348
I think just a high level-

1503
01:30:12,728 --> 01:30:12,968

Okay

1504

01:30:13,008 --> 01:30:14,758

... at this point. That's fine, thank you.

1505

01:30:14,768 --> 01:30:18,297

Great. We also cover, in that chapter,

1506

01:30:18,888 --> 01:30:21,328

GVA benefits, so gross value added to the

1507

01:30:22,188 --> 01:30:25,668

economy, and that's just a function of the employment

1508

01:30:25,708 --> 01:30:26,288

benefits.

1509

01:30:27,128 --> 01:30:31,068

We estimate that 22.3 million GVA per

1510

01:30:31,128 --> 01:30:34,948

year would result for the economy, of which 8.9 million would go

1511

01:30:34,988 --> 01:30:37,668

into the 60-minute drive time study area.

1512

01:30:40,048 --> 01:30:43,708

Submitted alongside the DC application was the

1513

01:30:43,808 --> 01:30:47,268

outlined skills supply chain and employment plan, which is

1514

01:30:47,328 --> 01:30:50,788

APP283, and that sets out a variety of

1515

01:30:50,828 --> 01:30:54,028

interventions which would be pursued post-consent to

1516

01:30:54,108 --> 01:30:56,628

maximize the employment benefits of the scheme.

1517

01:30:57,148 --> 01:31:01,088

So it describes a series of commitments and potential activities

1518

01:31:01,488 --> 01:31:04,448

which the applicant could pursue post-consent to

1519

01:31:05,368 --> 01:31:09,218

increase the access of local people to the jobs generated by the schemes,

1520

01:31:09,768 --> 01:31:13,028

to put in place skills training

1521

01:31:13,468 --> 01:31:17,428

initiatives and schools engagement programs, things like that which

1522

01:31:17,468 --> 01:31:21,288

would maximize the potential of the employment benefits to go

1523

01:31:21,348 --> 01:31:23,168

to people living within the local area.

1524

01:31:23,968 --> 01:31:27,268

So there's a requirement 20 of the draft DC0,

1525

01:31:28,008 --> 01:31:31,828

which sets out that no part of the authorized development may commence

1526

01:31:31,928 --> 01:31:35,888

until a final skills supply chain and employment plan is written,

1527

01:31:36,908 --> 01:31:40,858

and submitted to and agreed with the relevant local authority, which would

1528

01:31:40,868 --> 01:31:43,548

be South Holland District Council in this case.

1529

01:31:44,408 --> 01:31:47,188

And that final plan would be in accordance with the draft plan.

1530

01:31:48,388 --> 01:31:51,888

And yes, it will confirm the objectives and activities to be pursued.

1531

01:31:53,456 --> 01:31:57,196

During the operational phase, we estimate the scheme would generate 11 net

1532

01:31:57,436 --> 01:32:01,226

full-time equivalent jobs, and again, we estimate that

1533

01:32:01,256 --> 01:32:05,116

by taking the direct jobs, applying the

1534

01:32:05,156 --> 01:32:08,796

assumptions around multiplier effects, dead weight, so

1535

01:32:08,836 --> 01:32:12,696

existing jobs from the area it's being farmed that would be lost,

1536

01:32:13,496 --> 01:32:17,276

and multiplier effects of the jobs generated, and that gets us

1537

01:32:17,356 --> 01:32:21,236

to a net figure of 11. And again, potentially,

1538

01:32:21,336 --> 01:32:25,196

the skills supply chain and

1539

01:32:25,236 --> 01:32:29,016

employment plan would maximize the benefits of those jobs for local people.

1540

01:32:29,556 --> 01:32:32,316

During decommissioning, there'd also be employment impacts.

1541

01:32:32,416 --> 01:32:36,076

We assume they'd be largely the same as during construction

1542

01:32:36,156 --> 01:32:37,615

phase.

1543

01:32:38,536 --> 01:32:40,336

So moving on to the permissive path.

1544

01:32:41,216 --> 01:32:45,036

That's actually described within ES Chapter 10, Human Health, of the

1545

01:32:45,076 --> 01:32:47,876

environmental statement, which is APP-61.

1546

01:32:48,916 --> 01:32:51,776

That finds that there would be a minor beneficial

1547

01:32:52,536 --> 01:32:53,056

effect

1548

01:32:53,936 --> 01:32:55,056

on active travel

1549

01:32:56,596 --> 01:33:00,136

during the operational phase. So a new permissive path would be

1550

01:33:00,156 --> 01:33:03,876

provided, connecting to existing public rights of way between

1551

01:33:03,916 --> 01:33:06,856

Queensbank and Shepo Stow,

1552

01:33:08,556 --> 01:33:09,376

following the

1553

01:33:10,396 --> 01:33:12,156

boundary of the scheduled monuments.

1554

01:33:13,716 --> 01:33:17,656

And there'd be a corridor of approximately 20 meters wide,

1555

01:33:17,716 --> 01:33:20,816

which would be suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders.

1556

01:33:21,596 --> 01:33:25,176

There'd be boards providing information on the historic and natural

1557

01:33:25,236 --> 01:33:29,216

environment. And the design and implementation of that permissive path

1558

01:33:29,456 --> 01:33:32,676

would be secured through Regulation 16 of the DCO,

1559

01:33:33,416 --> 01:33:37,076

and in accordance with the outline landscape, ecology, and management

1560

01:33:37,176 --> 01:33:39,706

plan, which is APP-282.

1561

01:33:40,636 --> 01:33:44,596

There is a high-level plan of that permissive path, if it'd be useful to get that

1562

01:33:44,636 --> 01:33:44,836

up.

1563

01:33:46,676 --> 01:33:50,326

I don't need the plan at the minute, but what I do, I would like you to

1564

01:33:50,376 --> 01:33:52,216

expand a bit more on the permissive path.

1565

01:33:52,336 --> 01:33:55,636

Why was that pathway

1566

01:33:55,816 --> 01:33:58,456

selected? Is that quite a regularly used area?

1567

01:34:00,096 --> 01:34:01,616

Oh,

1568

01:34:02,456 --> 01:34:03,696

yeah, I'll pass to Astrid.

1569

01:34:08,116 --> 01:34:10,196

Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant.

1570

01:34:12,326 --> 01:34:15,556

So just to help with the reasoning of the location of the permissive path a little

1571

01:34:15,576 --> 01:34:15,776

bit.

1572

01:34:18,236 --> 01:34:21,976

It's been selected for the location and the

1573

01:34:21,996 --> 01:34:25,276

alignment of where it is in order to connect into existing PROW.

1574

01:34:25,896 --> 01:34:28,256

So it connects two separate parts of PROW.

1575

01:34:29,056 --> 01:34:29,936

And also,

1576

01:34:31,136 --> 01:34:32,816

the intention of it is to

1577

01:34:33,316 --> 01:34:37,106

also use it as part of

1578

01:34:37,156 --> 01:34:38,596

the

1579

01:34:40,976 --> 01:34:44,846

enhancement and information sharing on the local heritage features within the

1580

01:34:44,916 --> 01:34:45,186

area.

1581

01:34:46,196 --> 01:34:50,016

Within the outline archeological mitigation management strategy that will be

1582

01:34:50,036 --> 01:34:52,276
submitted at deadline one as well,

1583

01:34:53,076 --> 01:34:54,356
there will be a reference to it,

1584

01:34:55,756 --> 01:34:59,376
and therefore, the corridor used for the permissive path can include

1585

01:34:59,436 --> 01:35:02,996
information boards on the local heritage and natural

1586

01:35:03,036 --> 01:35:04,196
environment in the area.

1587

01:35:05,276 --> 01:35:08,916
So it's been seen as an opportunity to include further

1588

01:35:08,976 --> 01:35:12,766
information for the local community around the scheduled monument
and other

1589

01:35:12,796 --> 01:35:13,936
heritage assets in the area.

1590

01:35:14,916 --> 01:35:18,836
Thank you. Was it requested as a

1591

01:35:18,876 --> 01:35:21,016
community benefit following your consultation?

1592

01:35:25,416 --> 01:35:27,816
Astrid Tischler on behalf of the applicant.

1593

01:35:28,296 --> 01:35:32,096
I believe there were comments from

1594

01:35:32,136 --> 01:35:34,056

statutory consultation and from

1595

01:35:34,856 --> 01:35:38,816

previous stages of consultation with regards to incorporating

1596

01:35:38,896 --> 01:35:42,716

opportunities to provide recreational opportunities for the

1597

01:35:42,756 --> 01:35:43,526

local community.

1598

01:35:45,176 --> 01:35:49,096

And then as the applicant was reviewing options for

1599

01:35:49,136 --> 01:35:51,376

how to implement these opportunities,

1600

01:35:52,236 --> 01:35:56,096

this option was identified as presenting

1601

01:35:56,156 --> 01:35:56,796

additional

1602

01:35:57,656 --> 01:35:59,916

opportunities to also incorporate other

1603

01:36:00,656 --> 01:36:03,876

enhancements for the local community as part of it.

1604

01:36:04,676 --> 01:36:06,076

So also to provide heritage

1605

01:36:06,756 --> 01:36:09,756

enhancement at the same time as well.

1606

01:36:10,636 --> 01:36:11,076

Thank you.

1607

01:36:13,276 --> 01:36:17,196

Esther Howe for the applicant. Just to say, there's also the community benefit

1608

01:36:17,316 --> 01:36:19,296

fund which sits outside of the ES.

1609

01:36:19,856 --> 01:36:23,756

Yeah, I do want to touch on that in another question.

1610

01:36:23,946 --> 01:36:23,946

Okay.

1611

01:36:23,976 --> 01:36:24,396

Thank you.

1612

01:36:25,276 --> 01:36:25,776

Sorry, have you-

1613

01:36:26,356 --> 01:36:28,016

I've finished for the moment. Yeah, thank you.

1614

01:36:28,116 --> 01:36:28,256

Great.

1615

01:36:29,956 --> 01:36:33,686

Staying with local community benefits, I'm pretty sure it's in the

1616

01:36:33,736 --> 01:36:37,036

planning statement that one of the proposed benefits to local

1617

01:36:37,076 --> 01:36:37,966

communities

1618

01:36:38,776 --> 01:36:41,896

is the battery energy storage system.

1619

01:36:43,976 --> 01:36:46,596

Co-located battery energy storage system.

1620

01:36:47,256 --> 01:36:50,306

That might be one that you need to go and

1621

01:36:50,576 --> 01:36:51,276
revisit.

1622
01:36:53,076 --> 01:36:56,396
I am unclear as to why that is listed as

1623
01:36:56,496 --> 01:36:58,776
a community benefit.

1624
01:37:00,796 --> 01:37:02,036
And if you could help me with that.

1625
01:37:03,916 --> 01:37:04,876
Michelle Binns for the applicant.

1626
01:37:04,996 --> 01:37:07,696
It is listed under 4.3 as a benefit of the scheme.

1627
01:37:08,156 --> 01:37:11,916
I don't believe we describe it as a community benefit as such.

1628
01:37:13,576 --> 01:37:15,356
But it is described as a benefit?

1629
01:37:15,476 --> 01:37:19,276
We do describe it as a benefit because it allows for

1630
01:37:20,076 --> 01:37:23,626
sharing of the grid infrastructure, load shifting, smoothing out the
generation of

1631
01:37:23,696 --> 01:37:27,436
electricity to meet demand, security of supply, and reducing risk of

1632
01:37:27,476 --> 01:37:28,756
blackouts and brownouts.

1633
01:37:29,456 --> 01:37:30,616
Okay. That helps. Thank you.

1634
01:37:30,676 --> 01:37:31,016

Thank you.

1635

01:37:33,576 --> 01:37:37,496

If we could just turn back to the outline skills, supply chain,

1636

01:37:37,565 --> 01:37:39,836

and employment plan, which I believe is

1637

01:37:39,916 --> 01:37:43,816

APP-283. It stated in that document that

1638

01:37:43,836 --> 01:37:47,536

there are, I think, seven potential opportunities relating to skills, supply chain,

1639

01:37:47,576 --> 01:37:50,716

and employment which could be taken forward, which I know you've mentioned.

1640

01:37:51,216 --> 01:37:54,836

However, these opportunities are to be confirmed when the

1641

01:37:56,196 --> 01:37:58,356

full plan is developed post-consent.

1642

01:37:58,796 --> 01:38:00,696

With that approach in mind

1643

01:38:01,696 --> 01:38:05,616

And therefore, some uncertainty as to the opportunities

1644

01:38:05,676 --> 01:38:08,756

potentially taken forward. What weight should the ExA

1645

01:38:09,656 --> 01:38:10,656

give to that plan?

1646

01:38:12,896 --> 01:38:14,846

Esther Howe for the applicant. I

1647

01:38:15,816 --> 01:38:19,406

agree at this point that it is largely

1648

01:38:19,876 --> 01:38:23,696

potential opportunities, and there's not much certainty in there

1649

01:38:23,706 --> 01:38:25,316

about what will actually happen.

1650

01:38:26,196 --> 01:38:30,076

That is typical of where we can get to with these

1651

01:38:30,096 --> 01:38:33,916

things at this stage, and it's the same as we've

1652

01:38:33,936 --> 01:38:37,256

done across a number of other DCO

1653

01:38:37,316 --> 01:38:40,356

applications and solar schemes on this,

1654

01:38:41,316 --> 01:38:44,536

in that I think it's an appropriate level of

1655

01:38:44,556 --> 01:38:48,436

detail to get to at this stage when we have

1656

01:38:48,496 --> 01:38:50,356

limited certainty as to whether the

1657

01:38:52,396 --> 01:38:53,336

DCO will be

1658

01:38:54,196 --> 01:38:56,156

consented, and things will move forward.

1659

01:38:56,536 --> 01:38:59,936

But as I mentioned, there is a requirement in the DCO that

1660

01:38:59,996 --> 01:39:00,956

before

1661

01:39:02,096 --> 01:39:05,696

construction can commence, the final plan needs to be agreed with the

1662

01:39:05,736 --> 01:39:09,636

council. So, pretty rapidly, the applicant would look

1663

01:39:09,676 --> 01:39:13,396

to move forward and have discussions with the district

1664

01:39:13,466 --> 01:39:17,386

council, with LCC. We've talked about some of the agencies in

1665

01:39:17,476 --> 01:39:21,176

there who we think would be priority to speak to, and there was some

1666

01:39:21,256 --> 01:39:23,796

useful feedback provided by that as well

1667

01:39:24,656 --> 01:39:27,456

by LCC in their most recent response.

1668

01:39:28,576 --> 01:39:32,536

And yes, we're doing that exercise now on a number of other

1669

01:39:32,576 --> 01:39:35,796

schemes, so I would anticipate that being the next step.

1670

01:39:35,836 --> 01:39:39,706

But in terms of the maturity of those plans and the commitments, because it also

1671

01:39:39,716 --> 01:39:43,556

relates as well potentially to commitments which contractors

1672

01:39:43,616 --> 01:39:47,186

might make. So it needs to be thought through quite carefully in terms of what

1673

01:39:47,196 --> 01:39:49,276

those commitments might be. So-

1674

01:39:49,376 --> 01:39:52,816

I think just some of the languages may, could, and I totally

1675

01:39:52,826 --> 01:39:56,736

understand where you are in the process, but I think some of the language

1676

01:39:56,796 --> 01:40:00,576

maybe could be revisited. But that is just my initial overview,

1677

01:40:00,716 --> 01:40:01,416

so thank you for that.

1678

01:40:01,766 --> 01:40:05,566

And sorry, just to jump in from the applicant's perspective as well, in terms of

1679

01:40:05,576 --> 01:40:09,416

the drafting of the requirement that Ms. Howe referred to.

1680

01:40:10,015 --> 01:40:13,966

Quite purposefully, the applicant used the language that the final skills

1681

01:40:14,016 --> 01:40:17,466

supply chain employment plan must be substantially in accordance with

1682

01:40:17,536 --> 01:40:21,516

the outline version. So the applicant wouldn't be able

1683

01:40:21,596 --> 01:40:22,956

to submit a final version, which

1684

01:40:24,156 --> 01:40:28,145

dropped all of the opportunities that had been identified or was

1685

01:40:28,176 --> 01:40:31,796

completely different from the draft version that had been put forward.

1686

01:40:31,836 --> 01:40:35,556

And so we haven't said in general accordance, we've said in substantial

1687

01:40:35,636 --> 01:40:39,456

accordance to make it clear that we expect that draft version to be

1688

01:40:40,556 --> 01:40:43,916

substantially the same as the final one, if that assists at all.

1689

01:40:44,656 --> 01:40:46,876

I suppose, but going back to my question, what weight

1690

01:40:48,236 --> 01:40:51,986

should we give to the outline skills plan in its current form then?

1691

01:40:52,976 --> 01:40:56,856

Well, I suppose at least from my perspective, I think you could give considerable

1692

01:40:56,916 --> 01:40:59,256

weight to the current version.

1693

01:41:00,756 --> 01:41:04,196

Thank you. Before I move on to talk about

1694

01:41:04,616 --> 01:41:08,576

community fund, does anybody else in the room have any comments to make on anything

1695

01:41:08,616 --> 01:41:09,616

that we've just discussed?

1696

01:41:13,616 --> 01:41:15,396

I think I'll start on this, and then

1697

01:41:16,316 --> 01:41:20,096

Mrs. Eales, who's the Transport and Growth Manager at

1698

01:41:20,276 --> 01:41:20,736

LCC,

1699

01:41:21,616 --> 01:41:24,916

may have a point to add. LCC's key concern

1700

01:41:25,196 --> 01:41:26,496

regarding any

1701

01:41:29,016 --> 01:41:29,466

skills

1702

01:41:31,536 --> 01:41:33,176

offer is really that it's deliverable.

1703

01:41:34,016 --> 01:41:37,716

And we say that our concern behind this really is one around funding.

1704

01:41:37,796 --> 01:41:41,456

So if the applicant's going to rely on skills and employment

1705

01:41:41,516 --> 01:41:43,336

generation as a key benefit,

1706

01:41:44,836 --> 01:41:48,056

we're going to be saying that there should be some kind of provision of an annual

1707

01:41:48,116 --> 01:41:51,996

funding contribution for the lifetime of the development to really provide a

1708

01:41:52,036 --> 01:41:55,085

mechanism through which the key objectives there can be achieved.

1709

01:41:56,396 --> 01:41:59,316

And there's precedent for this in other NSIPs, and that's what we'll be calling for

1710

01:41:59,326 --> 01:42:00,096

here. So that's just on

1711

01:42:00,956 --> 01:42:04,696
that point. Mrs. Eales, is there anything you'd like to add on that?

1712
01:42:05,896 --> 01:42:08,126
Not on that point specifically, but more to back up-

1713
01:42:08,196 --> 01:42:10,276
Can you... Sorry, could you put your microphone...

1714
01:42:10,676 --> 01:42:10,986
Is it not-

1715
01:42:11,696 --> 01:42:12,046
It's on.

1716
01:42:14,456 --> 01:42:15,496
Is that a bit better? Yes.

1717
01:42:16,376 --> 01:42:17,776
I think related to that point,

1718
01:42:21,796 --> 01:42:23,816
and the number of local employees,

1719
01:42:25,016 --> 01:42:28,166
the 60-minute travel boundary, we

1720
01:42:29,736 --> 01:42:33,336
have quite sort of an issue with in that the 50 miles used, which I

1721
01:42:33,356 --> 01:42:34,256
appreciate is

1722
01:42:35,076 --> 01:42:38,336
like a standard, just does not work in Lincolnshire.

1723
01:42:38,876 --> 01:42:42,436
You cannot get 50 miles in an hour. It's just impossible.

1724
01:42:43,776 --> 01:42:47,696
So that would reduce the number of potential local employees, which

sort of further

1725

01:42:47,756 --> 01:42:51,256

justifies the need for that local upskilling and local

1726

01:42:51,276 --> 01:42:54,836

recruitment. So it's how Lincolnshire is really,

1727

01:42:55,656 --> 01:42:59,416

a point that we've made on other NSIPs as well.

1728

01:43:00,456 --> 01:43:01,716

Thank you. That's helpful.

1729

01:43:01,746 --> 01:43:02,216

It justifies that point.

1730

01:43:03,236 --> 01:43:05,456

Is there anybody else in the room or online?

1731

01:43:07,496 --> 01:43:08,756

Sorry, I'll turn back to the applicant.

1732

01:43:09,276 --> 01:43:12,056

Yeah. Esther Howe for the applicant. Just to clarify on that.

1733

01:43:12,696 --> 01:43:16,586

So we've used a 60-minute drive time, and we've mapped that with

1734

01:43:16,616 --> 01:43:17,336

GIS,

1735

01:43:18,696 --> 01:43:22,576

rather than using a straight line boundary of a certain number of

1736

01:43:22,616 --> 01:43:26,276

miles. Sixty minutes is, I

1737

01:43:26,296 --> 01:43:29,636

appreciate quite a long time, but I think that kind of gets around

1738

01:43:29,736 --> 01:43:30,436
the...

1739

01:43:31,296 --> 01:43:34,656
I think it's all hypothetical anyway, in a way, is the point.

1740

01:43:35,496 --> 01:43:39,046
We're saying that 60 minutes is a reasonable time to get to work,

1741

01:43:39,476 --> 01:43:43,296
and any longer than that you'd probably be looking at it's

1742

01:43:43,306 --> 01:43:45,316
too far to work from home every day of the week.

1743

01:43:46,556 --> 01:43:50,076
But yeah, that's kind of a key element of

1744

01:43:50,176 --> 01:43:53,856
certainly the job numbers and the local job numbers that we present.

1745

01:43:56,216 --> 01:43:57,016
Do you wish to come back?

1746

01:43:57,076 --> 01:43:57,496
I was going to say,

1747

01:43:58,336 --> 01:43:59,736
Mrs. Eales for Lincolnshire County Council.

1748

01:43:59,776 --> 01:44:02,996
I think it's going to be one of those things that we pick up later,
and at the

1749

01:44:03,076 --> 01:44:04,635
moment agree to disagree on.

1750

01:44:06,256 --> 01:44:06,546
No. That's fine.

1751

01:44:06,556 --> 01:44:09,436

Sort of living and working within the county and sort of having that

1752

01:44:10,288 --> 01:44:11,668

appreciation of what is reality.

1753

01:44:12,568 --> 01:44:15,967

Okay. Thank you. Does the applicant wish to...? No. Okay.

1754

01:44:16,088 --> 01:44:19,368

I'll move on to, this is actually my last question on

1755

01:44:19,788 --> 01:44:23,428

socioeconomics. So turning to the proposed community benefit

1756

01:44:23,548 --> 01:44:23,888

fund,

1757

01:44:25,408 --> 01:44:28,828

I'm fully aware that it's stated that it sits outside of the

1758

01:44:28,868 --> 01:44:32,198

examination and therefore the state has not been a consideration for Secretary of

1759

01:44:32,248 --> 01:44:32,588

State.

1760

01:44:33,448 --> 01:44:36,968

Can you just confirm why it hasn't been included

1761

01:44:37,308 --> 01:44:41,188

within the scheme and secured by a requirement or even

1762

01:44:41,588 --> 01:44:44,888

Section 106 agreement? I'm just trying to understand

1763

01:44:46,288 --> 01:44:48,308

your thinking on this. And also,

1764

01:44:49,108 --> 01:44:52,898

my main issue is I'm trying to establish how that community fund, if

1765

01:44:52,948 --> 01:44:53,457

it's not

1766

01:44:54,828 --> 01:44:58,208

before the Secretary of State, how it is going to be secured and

1767

01:44:58,228 --> 01:45:01,488

delivered. So what guarantees are there?

1768

01:45:01,548 --> 01:45:02,228

I accept

1769

01:45:03,088 --> 01:45:06,448

it sits outside the examination, but it still is a

1770

01:45:06,528 --> 01:45:10,368

key consideration in the wider

1771

01:45:10,448 --> 01:45:11,888

terms of this project. So

1772

01:45:13,388 --> 01:45:13,808

over to you.

1773

01:45:15,408 --> 01:45:17,278

Thank you very much. Taylor Powell for the applicant.

1774

01:45:17,468 --> 01:45:21,418

I think this is one we're going to need to come back in writing on just in terms of

1775

01:45:21,468 --> 01:45:25,208

the approach that's been taken. We can provide you a brief overview of what the

1776

01:45:25,228 --> 01:45:26,588

intention is with the fund.

1777

01:45:27,488 --> 01:45:31,448

But generally, the project has taken the same approach

1778

01:45:31,488 --> 01:45:34,988

of other recent DCO schemes in respect of keeping these funds

1779

01:45:35,048 --> 01:45:35,508

separate,

1780

01:45:36,928 --> 01:45:40,528

in accordance with best or current practice.

1781

01:45:40,608 --> 01:45:44,488

But I think we can come back to you in writing as to the exact

1782

01:45:44,528 --> 01:45:48,518

reasons, and I think that might be a lot more helpful to you than us addressing it

1783

01:45:48,628 --> 01:45:48,848

right now.

1784

01:45:48,908 --> 01:45:50,558

That is fine, but I will draw your attention-

1785

01:45:50,708 --> 01:45:50,788

Yeah

1786

01:45:50,798 --> 01:45:54,558

... as some very large projects do have community funds secured by

1787

01:45:54,588 --> 01:45:58,128

Section 106 agreements. So and in your

1788

01:45:58,208 --> 01:46:02,048

answer, I think it would be useful also if you could explain to me

1789

01:46:02,128 --> 01:46:06,058

how the figure was arrived at, so the calculation behind

1790

01:46:06,108 --> 01:46:06,228

that-

1791

01:46:06,668 --> 01:46:06,678

Mm-hmm

1792

01:46:06,678 --> 01:46:10,228

... and who you've liaised with. That type of

1793

01:46:10,268 --> 01:46:12,708

information would be really useful.

1794

01:46:12,818 --> 01:46:15,858

Is there anything anybody else would like to add on that?

1795

01:46:15,968 --> 01:46:19,758

I know it hasn't been answered, but would you like

1796

01:46:19,808 --> 01:46:21,708

to add anything to that topic?

1797

01:46:23,468 --> 01:46:24,268

Yes, madam. Just

1798

01:46:25,148 --> 01:46:28,028

three brief points, starting where you finished off.

1799

01:46:28,088 --> 01:46:28,948

I think we

1800

01:46:29,908 --> 01:46:33,608

would really encourage the applicant to engage in that ongoing dialogue with some

1801

01:46:33,628 --> 01:46:36,248

of the local skills providers. So I think

1802

01:46:36,288 --> 01:46:39,778

we'll mention people like Lincoln College, Boston College,

1803

01:46:39,928 --> 01:46:43,648

LCC Employment and Skills team as particular groups, in terms of

1804

01:46:43,658 --> 01:46:47,628

assisting moving forward with that community fund and what's required

1805

01:46:47,668 --> 01:46:51,528

there. That's the first. The second point relates to

1806

01:46:51,808 --> 01:46:55,368

permissive paths. Never quite got to raise this point slightly earlier, but

1807

01:46:56,248 --> 01:47:00,177

we really do welcome and acknowledge the proposal to create that permissive path as

1808

01:47:00,188 --> 01:47:03,208

an enhancement to the existing PROW network.

1809

01:47:03,648 --> 01:47:07,508

Of course, we agree with the principle of improving connectivity and public

1810

01:47:07,788 --> 01:47:11,488

access through the scheme, and there's positive intent

1811

01:47:11,528 --> 01:47:13,408

behind that which the council supports.

1812

01:47:13,848 --> 01:47:16,248

But we do wish to draw to your attention, madam,

1813

01:47:17,308 --> 01:47:18,948

one particular matter of concern.

1814

01:47:19,308 --> 01:47:22,748

It's really regarding the legal status of those routes as currently proposed.

1815

01:47:23,488 --> 01:47:24,328

As you'll be aware,

1816

01:47:25,328 --> 01:47:28,928

permissive paths, by their very nature, do not carry the same

1817

01:47:28,988 --> 01:47:32,708

protections as a public right of way. They're not dedicated rights.

1818

01:47:33,308 --> 01:47:36,988

They exist only at the discretion of the landowner, and they can be withdrawn or

1819

01:47:37,028 --> 01:47:38,608

extinguished at any time.

1820

01:47:39,788 --> 01:47:41,048

Crucially, of course, only remain

1821

01:47:42,488 --> 01:47:44,748

temporary in character for the duration of the proposed development.

1822

01:47:44,808 --> 01:47:47,768

That's really the concern for the County Council.

1823

01:47:48,208 --> 01:47:50,668

So what we're seeking really, we'd seek that permanence.

1824

01:47:50,708 --> 01:47:54,408

So we'd recommend that those routes are dedicated as public rights of way

1825

01:47:54,428 --> 01:47:56,248

instead, which would allow them to be

1826

01:47:57,848 --> 01:47:59,278

protected in perpetuity,

1827

01:48:00,248 --> 01:48:04,228

recorded on OS survey plans, for example, and we say will provide

1828

01:48:04,268 --> 01:48:07,248

a permanent betterment as an outcome of the proposal.

1829

01:48:07,308 --> 01:48:07,918
And so that's something

1830
01:48:08,768 --> 01:48:12,268
we really wish to raise with the applicant.

1831
01:48:12,308 --> 01:48:15,448
And the third point really, turning

1832
01:48:16,408 --> 01:48:20,308
on the matter of socioeconomics, is turning to the environmental

1833
01:48:20,388 --> 01:48:20,748
statement.

1834
01:48:22,628 --> 01:48:25,488
It's our view that it fails to assess really the economic
contribution of the

1835
01:48:25,548 --> 01:48:27,408
agricultural land that would be lost.

1836
01:48:28,087 --> 01:48:31,988
I don't want to belabor the point too much on the agricultural land
because we've

1837
01:48:32,048 --> 01:48:32,657
spoken about it

1838
01:48:34,048 --> 01:48:37,388
a lot already in this hearing. But our own

1839
01:48:37,428 --> 01:48:40,368
consultants estimate potential annual output

1840
01:48:41,188 --> 01:48:44,888
from a 1,064 hectares solid development area is at

1841
01:48:44,928 --> 01:48:47,878
between, I think £1.43 million and

1842

01:48:47,888 --> 01:48:50,188
£1.90 million.

1843
01:48:51,848 --> 01:48:54,088
And then of course that's per annum.

1844
01:48:56,088 --> 01:48:59,228
And so that's a significantly greater figure if we think about the 40-year

1845
01:48:59,628 --> 01:49:00,568
period. So

1846
01:49:02,328 --> 01:49:04,328
we think this is something that should be assessed.

1847
01:49:04,368 --> 01:49:08,328
It's a socioeconomic impact, and it's something that we wish the XA

1848
01:49:08,628 --> 01:49:11,968
to be aware of as it considers this aspect of the ES.

1849
01:49:14,148 --> 01:49:17,668
Thank you very much. Would the applicant like to respond to any of the points made?

1850
01:49:18,628 --> 01:49:20,588
Yes, thank you. Taylor Powell for the applicant.

1851
01:49:21,708 --> 01:49:23,228
I understand there to be three points.

1852
01:49:23,488 --> 01:49:26,208
I'll address the first two, and then I might pass to Ms.

1853
01:49:26,228 --> 01:49:29,888
Howe in respect of the last point to the extent she has anything to

1854
01:49:29,968 --> 01:49:33,728
say. Just in respect of the colleges mentioned, I would note that

1855

01:49:33,768 --> 01:49:37,568

those are referenced in the outline skills supply chain and employment

1856

01:49:37,628 --> 01:49:40,508

chain currently. But the applicant would be very open to any further

1857

01:49:40,528 --> 01:49:44,218

discussions with Lincolnshire County Council or otherwise in

1858

01:49:44,268 --> 01:49:46,258

respect of collaboration with those.

1859

01:49:47,028 --> 01:49:50,908

In respect of the point regarding the permissive path and securing that as a public

1860

01:49:50,968 --> 01:49:54,948

right of way, the reason why it hasn't been secured as a public right of

1861

01:49:54,968 --> 01:49:55,648

way is

1862

01:49:56,468 --> 01:50:00,288

reflecting consultation with the landowner and it somewhat ties to your

1863

01:50:00,328 --> 01:50:04,028

third point in the sense that once the scheme is decommissioned, that

1864

01:50:04,068 --> 01:50:07,788

landowner anticipates it being returned to agricultural

1865

01:50:07,948 --> 01:50:11,918

use. And if the permissive path cuts through these fields, then

1866

01:50:11,968 --> 01:50:15,808

that could ultimately thwart it being returned to agricultural use at the end of

1867

01:50:15,848 --> 01:50:19,768
the scheme. So the intention and what is secured within the DCO is

1868
01:50:19,808 --> 01:50:23,688
to secure it as a permissive path for the operation of the scheme
when

1869
01:50:23,728 --> 01:50:25,708
it's not in that agricultural use.

1870
01:50:26,178 --> 01:50:29,848
But to provide the flexibility for landowners in the future to
return it to

1871
01:50:29,928 --> 01:50:32,728
agricultural use if that's considered the best approach at the time.

1872
01:50:33,388 --> 01:50:36,388
And then I will just pass to Ms. Howe in respect of the questions

1873
01:50:36,428 --> 01:50:39,048
regarding BMV, if she had an answer.

1874
01:50:39,088 --> 01:50:41,508
If not, we could take that point away in writing.

1875
01:50:42,988 --> 01:50:44,768
Esther Howe for the applicant. Thank you.

1876
01:50:46,188 --> 01:50:49,948
Yes, I think it's something we'll need to come back fully on in
writing.

1877
01:50:50,008 --> 01:50:50,588
I mean, just

1878
01:50:52,128 --> 01:50:54,332
how we approach it in the ES ...

1879
01:50:55,232 --> 01:50:59,032
is not in terms of value of the output from the

1880
01:50:59,072 --> 01:51:01,442
land. We approach it in terms of

1881
01:51:02,932 --> 01:51:06,882
employment, which is obviously fundamental to economic

1882
01:51:06,952 --> 01:51:10,862
value because labor is where much of the spending goes,

1883
01:51:11,732 --> 01:51:12,852
where the value goes.

1884
01:51:14,492 --> 01:51:17,712
And then as described, we talk about multiplier impacts and so on.

1885
01:51:17,772 --> 01:51:21,692
But in terms of the loss of the existing agricultural

1886
01:51:21,792 --> 01:51:25,252
land, again, we haven't got vast amounts of

1887
01:51:25,572 --> 01:51:29,072
detail on that admittedly, but we feel we've done a

1888
01:51:29,112 --> 01:51:30,912
proportionate assessment within the ES.

1889
01:51:31,512 --> 01:51:35,452
And obviously, the landowners within

1890
01:51:35,512 --> 01:51:39,472
the solar development areas have voluntarily put their land into
this

1891
01:51:39,512 --> 01:51:42,832
scheme. It's a form of diversification

1892
01:51:43,792 --> 01:51:47,772
for them. There aren't any tenants, tenant farmers who are being
told they can't

1893

01:51:47,812 --> 01:51:49,872
farm that land anymore.

1894

01:51:51,112 --> 01:51:55,012
Yes, there may be some contractors who are servicing that land to an

1895

01:51:55,072 --> 01:51:58,722
extent, but it's not appropriate to talk about

1896

01:51:59,872 --> 01:52:03,152
direct jobs being lost, we feel, from that land.

1897

01:52:03,612 --> 01:52:07,342
So thinking about it in those terms, that's our

1898

01:52:07,452 --> 01:52:10,932
starting point. As I say, we haven't approached it in terms of

1899

01:52:11,692 --> 01:52:12,972
the value of the output,

1900

01:52:13,992 --> 01:52:15,432
so I'd need to take that away.

1901

01:52:16,312 --> 01:52:17,652
But I do think if you're

1902

01:52:18,732 --> 01:52:22,572
broadening the scope of the assessment to talk about downstream
indirect

1903

01:52:22,612 --> 01:52:26,532
benefits, then we probably need to broaden the assessment of the
benefits of

1904

01:52:26,632 --> 01:52:30,372
the scheme in terms of wider economic benefits of the

1905

01:52:30,992 --> 01:52:33,112
scheme and look at the net impacts.

1906

01:52:33,652 --> 01:52:36,812

Business rates, for example, which the solar farm will pay and

1907

01:52:37,532 --> 01:52:41,392

things like that. We haven't broadened our scope to include things like

1908

01:52:41,452 --> 01:52:42,992

that. So yeah, that's

1909

01:52:44,312 --> 01:52:45,752

my initial comment.

1910

01:52:47,192 --> 01:52:49,132

Thank you. Do you wish to respond?

1911

01:52:50,392 --> 01:52:53,482

No, madam. I think we can deal with the rest in writing, so thank you.

1912

01:52:53,512 --> 01:52:57,212

Excellent. Well, in that case, we'll move on to item 10, which is

1913

01:52:57,312 --> 01:52:58,532

aviation safety.

1914

01:53:00,492 --> 01:53:03,382

Defense Infrastructure organization, are you still

1915

01:53:04,232 --> 01:53:04,752

online?

1916

01:53:05,882 --> 01:53:06,552

We are, yes.

1917

01:53:06,732 --> 01:53:09,712

Thank you for your patience. I do appreciate it.

1918

01:53:09,772 --> 01:53:11,752

I realize it's been a long day for you.

1919

01:53:12,572 --> 01:53:15,652

I'll be as quick as I can. So the content of your relevant

1920

01:53:15,752 --> 01:53:19,652

representation is noted, and I'm not going to ask you to repeat

1921

01:53:19,672 --> 01:53:23,652

the content of it word for word. However, I am interested in

1922

01:53:23,672 --> 01:53:26,472

knowing whether you've had any further dialogue

1923

01:53:27,472 --> 01:53:28,472

with the applicant,

1924

01:53:29,492 --> 01:53:33,252

since your submission and whether your position has changed

1925

01:53:33,352 --> 01:53:35,292

in any way, please.

1926

01:53:36,832 --> 01:53:40,452

Yes, certainly. So my colleague, who's been doing directly with the

1927

01:53:40,512 --> 01:53:43,892

applicant isn't here today, unfortunately.

1928

01:53:43,902 --> 01:53:46,892

However, the applicant and them have been in quite good

1929

01:53:47,292 --> 01:53:47,942

communication.

1930

01:53:48,792 --> 01:53:52,252

So the applicant has provided the requested information for ourselves

1931

01:53:52,732 --> 01:53:54,872

in terms of the designs we require.

1932

01:53:55,632 --> 01:53:58,131

But they're still currently subject to SME assessment.

1933

01:53:59,012 --> 01:54:02,552

So till we receive those back, we can't advise the applicant any further whether it

1934

01:54:02,561 --> 01:54:04,212

would be deemed acceptable or not.

1935

01:54:06,752 --> 01:54:09,872

Thank you. That's useful. I'll turn to the applicant.

1936

01:54:09,912 --> 01:54:11,352

Do you have any updates?

1937

01:54:14,032 --> 01:54:17,412

Not in addition to what Mr. Manners has raised, but we

1938

01:54:18,152 --> 01:54:21,192

hope to progress a statement of common ground setting out those matters and thank

1939

01:54:21,232 --> 01:54:22,832

them for their engagement today.

1940

01:54:23,652 --> 01:54:27,592

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Manners. That's actually all I've got for you.

1941

01:54:27,712 --> 01:54:31,292

So I do appreciate your time. The final question I

1942

01:54:31,392 --> 01:54:35,132

have on aviation safety is to the

1943

01:54:35,212 --> 01:54:36,352

applicant.

1944

01:54:37,392 --> 01:54:40,952

I have to admit, I'm a little bit confused in terms of the

1945

01:54:40,972 --> 01:54:44,682

position with both Peterborough and Spalding Gliding

1946

01:54:44,772 --> 01:54:47,212

Club and, is it Fenland Aero Club?

1947

01:54:48,992 --> 01:54:51,222

We saw comments,

1948

01:54:53,492 --> 01:54:57,352

well, kind of communication with yourselves, I think at consultation

1949

01:54:57,512 --> 01:55:00,092

phase, and then it's gone very quiet.

1950

01:55:01,412 --> 01:55:05,352

Can you just give me an update as to where you are, please, and what the situation

1951

01:55:05,432 --> 01:55:05,592

is?

1952

01:55:06,932 --> 01:55:09,092

Yes, of course. And I'll just pass over to Mr.

1953

01:55:09,312 --> 01:55:13,131

David Vernon, who is the primary point of contact for

1954

01:55:13,191 --> 01:55:14,332

the project with those.

1955

01:55:16,852 --> 01:55:18,771

Yeah. David Vernon for the applicant.

1956

01:55:19,392 --> 01:55:23,332

We've engaged extensively with the gliding club since the inception of the

1957

01:55:23,372 --> 01:55:24,752

projects in 2023.

1958

01:55:25,692 --> 01:55:29,152

There is a statement of common ground progressing with the gliding club,

1959

01:55:30,752 --> 01:55:34,232

but it's not envisaged that the club have any further issues with us.

1960

01:55:34,332 --> 01:55:34,832

We've

1961

01:55:35,992 --> 01:55:36,492

amended

1962

01:55:38,392 --> 01:55:42,012

the design through the consultation, taking account of the gliding club's

1963

01:55:42,032 --> 01:55:43,172

issues and

1964

01:55:44,832 --> 01:55:45,792

things that they wanted to see,

1965

01:55:46,752 --> 01:55:50,232

such as we've taken a section of panels out at the western-most

1966

01:55:50,332 --> 01:55:54,252

runway, the underground of between A and B for the

1967

01:55:54,292 --> 01:55:58,152

inter array area, final location of the 400 kV

1968

01:55:58,192 --> 01:56:01,832

sub. So we've done a lot of work with the club

1969

01:56:02,032 --> 01:56:04,632

ongoing, and we continue to engage with them, as I said,

1970

01:56:05,452 --> 01:56:09,322

as the application progresses, but there will be a statement of

1971

01:56:09,372 --> 01:56:10,992

common ground detailing all of that.

1972

01:56:12,312 --> 01:56:16,152

We also have presented in a bespoke meeting with club representatives, the glint

1973

01:56:16,192 --> 01:56:20,092

and glare assessment, and took them through all the detail linked to

1974

01:56:20,152 --> 01:56:20,352

that.

1975

01:56:21,212 --> 01:56:24,992

So the engagement we've had with Peterborough Spalding

1976

01:56:25,052 --> 01:56:27,172

Gliding Club has been really good.

1977

01:56:27,252 --> 01:56:29,712

To be fair, the opposite is of Fenland Aero.

1978

01:56:29,772 --> 01:56:33,152

We have tried to engage with the aero club at Fenland.

1979

01:56:33,452 --> 01:56:36,832

They've been notified in stages one and two of the consultation.

1980

01:56:37,592 --> 01:56:40,872

I've visited the club in 2024 and

1981

01:56:40,912 --> 01:56:44,452

2025 to try and speak to representatives. No one was available.

1982

01:56:45,172 --> 01:56:46,892

Left my details for further follow-up,

1983

01:56:47,812 --> 01:56:50,362

but had no contact since.

1984

01:56:51,312 --> 01:56:55,152

We don't envisage the project will have any issues with it, but given its location

1985

01:56:55,192 --> 01:56:59,072

and what it does, we continue to try to engage with them,

1986

01:56:59,092 --> 01:56:59,682

but

1987

01:57:00,696 --> 01:57:04,436

I don't know whether any representatives came to the physical consultation events.

1988

01:57:04,516 --> 01:57:08,216

They didn't make themselves known to us as representatives of the club,

1989

01:57:08,696 --> 01:57:10,636

but we'll continue to try to engage.

1990

01:57:10,696 --> 01:57:12,856

But to date, we've had nothing from them.

1991

01:57:14,296 --> 01:57:18,016

Thank you. That's really useful understanding of the position.

1992

01:57:18,956 --> 01:57:22,876

Does anybody have any comments on aviation safety or aviation

1993

01:57:22,896 --> 01:57:24,396

in general, in the room or online?

1994

01:57:36,816 --> 01:57:39,906

Thank you. The gentleman in the checked shirt, I think I missed-

1995

01:57:40,776 --> 01:57:41,056

Yes

1996

01:57:41,066 --> 01:57:44,776

... your hand up. Sorry, if it's socioeconomics, we can go back.

1997

01:57:47,236 --> 01:57:47,636

Is it on?

1998

01:57:48,736 --> 01:57:52,556

Yeah. So just wanted to make a, or get a question to clarify

1999

01:57:53,396 --> 01:57:56,476

about the jobs which the solar farm is proposed to

2000

01:57:57,316 --> 01:58:00,636

produce full-time. Does that take into account the loss of

2001

01:58:00,696 --> 01:58:04,575

agricultural jobs and the downstream loss of jobs in

2002

01:58:04,636 --> 01:58:06,056

agricultural food processing?

2003

01:58:07,796 --> 01:58:09,396

Is the applicant able

2004

01:58:10,476 --> 01:58:11,696

to provide a response, please?

2005

01:58:12,416 --> 01:58:14,356

Esther Howe for the applicant.

2006

01:58:15,276 --> 01:58:16,616

So it does

2007

01:58:17,896 --> 01:58:20,076

take it into account. Well, so

2008

01:58:21,576 --> 01:58:25,346

in terms of how we factored it into the assessment,

2009

01:58:26,316 --> 01:58:28,916

we have considered

2010

01:58:29,776 --> 01:58:32,576
that the scheme estimate the scheme will provide

2011
01:58:33,596 --> 01:58:37,176
11 net new jobs, but that takes

2012
01:58:37,236 --> 01:58:41,076
account of any jobs which might be lost

2013
01:58:41,116 --> 01:58:42,226
from what's called dead weight,

2014
01:58:43,236 --> 01:58:44,836
jobs which would be lost

2015
01:58:45,836 --> 01:58:49,696
on the existing cultural land, and we've actually considered

2016
01:58:49,756 --> 01:58:53,616
it and decided to assume that there would be zero FTE

2017
01:58:53,676 --> 01:58:56,306
jobs lost from the existing land, which is farmed.

2018
01:58:57,316 --> 01:59:00,956
As I mentioned, there are no tenants there at the moment.

2019
01:59:01,016 --> 01:59:04,816
There may well be some contractors, but it's highly unlikely that they're reliant

2020
01:59:04,896 --> 01:59:08,656
on those particular farms for a large proportion

2021
01:59:08,796 --> 01:59:11,876
of their revenue, and so we've assumed zero.

2022
01:59:13,056 --> 01:59:16,536
And then we've applied multiplier effects to

2023
01:59:16,596 --> 01:59:20,196

estimate indirect and induced employment

2024

01:59:20,516 --> 01:59:21,926

associated with those

2025

01:59:23,236 --> 01:59:24,616

operational phase jobs,

2026

01:59:25,416 --> 01:59:27,956

which boosts the net jobs figure up to 11.

2027

01:59:28,336 --> 01:59:32,016

So we haven't done a full assessment of downstream

2028

01:59:32,096 --> 01:59:33,856

impacts within the supply chain,

2029

01:59:35,456 --> 01:59:37,696

which I think is what's being referred to here.

2030

01:59:38,156 --> 01:59:42,046

That level of detail and kind of that angle hasn't been within the scope of our

2031

01:59:42,076 --> 01:59:45,876

assessment to do. But yeah, that's my

2032

01:59:45,896 --> 01:59:48,636

comments in terms of what we have done and how we've approached it within the

2033

01:59:48,676 --> 01:59:49,636

environmental assessment.

2034

01:59:50,696 --> 01:59:52,576

Does that answer your question?

2035

01:59:52,616 --> 01:59:56,586

Yeah. Sorry, it's not been done, so it's not been considered in terms of

2036

01:59:56,776 --> 01:59:59,616
the agriculture jobs assuming it's zero.

2037
01:59:59,676 --> 02:00:00,736
I don't think you can take this-

2038
02:00:01,396 --> 02:00:04,356
Can I just wait for the microphone? Sorry, that was my fault.

2039
02:00:04,416 --> 02:00:04,616
Yeah.

2040
02:00:05,836 --> 02:00:09,756
Is it on, yes? Yeah. I don't think you can take this much amount of
land out of

2041
02:00:09,836 --> 02:00:13,516
agricultural production and assume zero effect on jobs,

2042
02:00:14,056 --> 02:00:17,796
and I think you do have to take some consideration of downstream
processing

2043
02:00:18,396 --> 02:00:21,936
of this amount of land's production in the local area as well.

2044
02:00:22,036 --> 02:00:22,236
So

2045
02:00:23,336 --> 02:00:27,216
11 jobs to me seems to be a net increase in jobs

2046
02:00:27,296 --> 02:00:29,276
seems to be a bit optimistic.

2047
02:00:31,276 --> 02:00:31,776
Thank you.

2048
02:00:32,196 --> 02:00:35,736
I should have told my name. It's David Raines, Meridian Action
Group.

2049

02:00:36,436 --> 02:00:37,096

Thank you, Mr. Raines.

2050

02:00:38,256 --> 02:00:41,776

Is there anything you wish to add in writing? No, but thank you very much, Mr.

2051

02:00:41,816 --> 02:00:42,096

Raines.

2052

02:00:44,236 --> 02:00:47,716

Don't think there are any more hands up or

2053

02:00:47,736 --> 02:00:51,126

online, so thank you. I'll now hand over to Ms.

2054

02:00:51,276 --> 02:00:53,776

Davies for agenda item number 11.

2055

02:00:55,136 --> 02:00:58,776

So moving on to any other matters. We haven't been notified that

2056

02:00:58,816 --> 02:01:01,216

anyone wishes to raise any other matters.

2057

02:01:01,336 --> 02:01:05,256

But before we close, can I check if there is anything that anybody does want to

2058

02:01:05,296 --> 02:01:07,166

raise on the matters that we've discussed

2059

02:01:07,176 --> 02:01:09,996

today? Mr. Raines.

2060

02:01:16,876 --> 02:01:20,476

Yes. Just going back to the cumulative impact and

2061

02:01:20,775 --> 02:01:23,076

interaction with other projects.

2062

02:01:25,336 --> 02:01:29,076

Nesso are currently doing a strategic review of what energy is required

2063

02:01:29,116 --> 02:01:32,586

where and due to report in 2027, late 2027.

2064

02:01:33,476 --> 02:01:33,976

And

2065

02:01:34,936 --> 02:01:38,896

they've said to me that what's the situation that's going

2066

02:01:38,916 --> 02:01:42,295

on at the moment is that energy planning is done on an ad hoc

2067

02:01:42,376 --> 02:01:43,216

basis.

2068

02:01:44,816 --> 02:01:48,636

And I think nothing illustrates that better than the discussion between

2069

02:01:49,536 --> 02:01:52,956

Meridian and National Grid, arguing over

2070

02:01:53,076 --> 02:01:57,036

access to Western Marsh. And that also illustrates how

2071

02:01:57,376 --> 02:02:00,516

congested this area is with infrastructure, and in my view,

2072

02:02:00,696 --> 02:02:01,436

overloaded,

2073

02:02:02,696 --> 02:02:06,676

and the cumulative impact that there will be of these two schemes

2074

02:02:06,696 --> 02:02:09,976

and how disjointed the strategic

2075

02:02:10,616 --> 02:02:11,436
aspect of it is.

2076

02:02:13,356 --> 02:02:13,816
Thank you.

2077

02:02:14,676 --> 02:02:15,916
Ms. Power, did you want to respond to that?

2078

02:02:17,236 --> 02:02:20,936
No. The point is very much taken, and I think we've discussed it in

2079

02:02:20,996 --> 02:02:23,956
detail today, so I don't think anyone else wants to hear more from
me on that point

2080

02:02:24,016 --> 02:02:24,256
today.

2081

02:02:25,276 --> 02:02:28,476
Was there anybody else who wanted to raise anything under any other
business?

2082

02:02:29,546 --> 02:02:31,936
I can't see any hands going up in the room. Anybody online?

2083

02:02:36,356 --> 02:02:39,696
Thank you. In which case, I'll move to agenda item 12,

2084

02:02:41,936 --> 02:02:45,116
which is review of actions arising and closings.

2085

02:02:45,176 --> 02:02:47,216
We've got a number of action points.

2086

02:02:48,036 --> 02:02:51,656
We won't run through them all now, but we'll publish them on the
project

2087

02:02:51,756 --> 02:02:53,536
webpage as soon as possible.

