



Planning Inspectorate
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Event Transcript

Project:	Green Hill Solar Farm
Event:	Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) – Part 2
Date:	09 December 2025

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1

00:00:00.920 --> 00:00:04.430

Thank you, everyone. It's now 11:35 and the hearing is

2

00:00:04.460 --> 00:00:06.800

resumed. Thank you.

3

00:00:08.160 --> 00:00:10.980

So firstly, just going back to the applicant, I think you mentioned you were going

4

00:00:11.080 --> 00:00:13.740

to review a, a few matters over the break.

5

00:00:13.820 --> 00:00:13.990

Um,

6

00:00:14.860 --> 00:00:18.670

would you like to, uh, respond further on any of the, the questions I

7

00:00:18.700 --> 00:00:20.000

had, please?

8

00:00:20.980 --> 00:00:22.280

Uh, Claire Brodrick for the applicant.

9

00:00:22.340 --> 00:00:26.180

Um, we're going to come back in writing on the point about,

10

00:00:26.260 --> 00:00:30.120

um, the, uh, fire safety modeling

11

00:00:30.130 --> 00:00:32.020

that's been done in relation to the ancient woodland.

12

00:00:32.040 --> 00:00:35.700

We didn't manage to find the relevant references, so we'll come back

13

00:00:35.780 --> 00:00:39.300

on, on writing on that point. Thank you.

14

00:00:40.100 --> 00:00:43.240

That's fine. Thank you.

15

00:00:45.440 --> 00:00:49.340

So turning now to agenda item 3.3, which is effects for water

16

00:00:49.400 --> 00:00:51.200

environment and flood risk.

17

00:00:52.160 --> 00:00:55.600

Could the applicant provide an update with regard to water environment and flood

18

00:00:55.640 --> 00:00:58.870

ri- risk matters please, including, um, BESS safety and

19

00:00:58.920 --> 00:01:02.880

drainage, off-site flood risk in Grendon, and off-site

20

00:01:03.100 --> 00:01:06.120

flood risk in Lavendon, please? Thank you.

21

00:01:06.220 --> 00:01:09.920

Uh, Claire Brodrick for the applicant, um, I will just let the, um, applicant's

22

00:01:09.930 --> 00:01:13.360

teams dealing with this agenda item introduce themselves, as we

23

00:01:13.420 --> 00:01:17.230

have, um, some people in the room and some people joining

24

00:01:17.260 --> 00:01:21.000

virtually. Um, uh, Mr. Rigby, if you'd like to just introduce yourself first

25

00:01:21.100 --> 00:01:23.220

and, um, explain which topics you'll be covering?

26

00:01:23.240 --> 00:01:26.000

Thank you.

27

00:01:26.040 --> 00:01:29.690

Hello. Uh, my name is Josh- Joshua Rigby, associate director at

28

00:01:29.720 --> 00:01:33.360

Arthean. Uh, I will be speaking on behalf of the applicant in relation to

29

00:01:33.400 --> 00:01:36.160

hydrology drainage and flood risk matters.

30

00:01:36.180 --> 00:01:38.060

Thank you.

31

00:01:38.360 --> 00:01:40.540

Uh, Claire Brodrick for the applicant. We also have Mr.

32

00:01:40.580 --> 00:01:44.470

Paul Gregory, um, joining virtually, who will be dealing

33

00:01:44.500 --> 00:01:47.340

with BESS safety matters, so I'll just let him introduce himself.

34

00:01:47.400 --> 00:01:47.620

Thank

35

00:01:47.630 --> 00:01:55.120

you.

36

00:01:57.640 --> 00:02:01.530

Good morning. Uh, Paul Gregory for the app- speaking for the applicant on

37

00:02:01.740 --> 00:02:05.120

BESS safety. I have nine years' experience in all

38

00:02:05.220 --> 00:02:08.940

aspects of battery testing and (coughs) fire suppression

39

00:02:09.038 --> 00:02:10.020
explosion protection

40
00:02:10.100 --> 00:02:13.100
systems.

41
00:02:15.020 --> 00:02:18.180
Uh, Claire Brodrick for the applicant, thank you. We also have, um,
Mr.

42
00:02:18.200 --> 00:02:21.900
Si Gillett, um, who is also joining virtually,

43
00:02:22.000 --> 00:02:25.980
um, who can speak to matters relating to, um, the need for

44
00:02:26.040 --> 00:02:29.540
BESS and how BESS works with the solar, should that come up under
this

45
00:02:29.600 --> 00:02:33.360
agenda item topic. But I'll just let him introduce himself, in case
required.

46
00:02:33.380 --> 00:02:34.160
Thank you.

47
00:02:34.170 --> 00:02:34.320
(laughs)

48
00:02:35.580 --> 00:02:38.200
Thank you. Good morning. Si Gillett for the applicant.

49
00:02:38.280 --> 00:02:40.710
Um, I'm an energy need expert and, as Ms.

50
00:02:40.720 --> 00:02:44.660
Brodrick explained, I'm happy to talk to, um, BESS

51
00:02:44.740 --> 00:02:48.580
need and BESS operations, um, should any of those, uh, questions
come up

52

00:02:48.680 --> 00:02:50.960

in this, um, examination. Thank

53

00:02:51.000 --> 00:02:56.360

you.

54

00:02:58.880 --> 00:03:00.600

Josh Rigby on behalf of the applicant.

55

00:03:00.640 --> 00:03:04.160

So today, along with my colleagues Paul Gregory and Si Gillett, I'll address three

56

00:03:04.220 --> 00:03:07.460

matters listed under the item 3.3 of the agenda.

57

00:03:07.480 --> 00:03:11.300

I'll specifically, uh, will address the matters related to hydrology, flood risk

58

00:03:11.320 --> 00:03:15.030

and drainage, and Paul Gregory and Si Gillett can pick up, um, on the other

59

00:03:15.060 --> 00:03:19.000

matters. Uh, first, uh, item will be

60

00:03:19.010 --> 00:03:21.160

the battery energy storage system safety drainage.

61

00:03:21.240 --> 00:03:25.040

Second- Can

62

00:03:25.980 --> 00:03:27.380

you hear me now?

63

00:03:30.520 --> 00:03:33.740

Sorry. Josh Rigby on behalf of the applicant.

64

00:03:33.820 --> 00:03:37.300

Um, just picking back up on that. Today I will, along with my colleagues Paul

65

00:03:37.320 --> 00:03:40.780

Gregory and Si Gillett, I'll address three matters listed under ag-

66

00:03:41.400 --> 00:03:45.380

uh, item 3.3 of the agenda. Uh, specifically I'll address the

67

00:03:45.700 --> 00:03:49.460

matters related to flood hydrology, flood risk and drainage, and my

68

00:03:49.480 --> 00:03:51.620

colleagues will pick up the other matters.

69

00:03:51.740 --> 00:03:55.300

Um, the first point will be on the battery energy storage system safety and

70

00:03:55.380 --> 00:03:58.400

drainage. Second, uh, off-site flood risk in

71

00:03:58.440 --> 00:04:01.740

Grendon. And the third, off-site flood risk in Lavendon.

72

00:04:01.760 --> 00:04:05.660

I'll take each in turn. So the first point on battery energy storage

73

00:04:05.760 --> 00:04:09.740

safety and drainage. The design for the BESS drainage and firewalls and

74

00:04:09.780 --> 00:04:12.100

containment is set out in the flood risk assessment

75

00:04:12.860 --> 00:04:16.140

REP1-053, the BESS Annex J

76

00:04:16.440 --> 00:04:20.140

REP1-057, the back, the outline battery

77

00:04:20.260 --> 00:04:22.360
storage safety management plan,

78
00:04:22.420 --> 00:04:25.820
REP1-143, and the outline construction and

79
00:04:25.860 --> 00:04:28.660
environment- environmental management plan,

80
00:04:29.540 --> 00:04:31.020
REP1-131,

81
00:04:32.260 --> 00:04:34.740
including the updated hydrology chapter,

82
00:04:34.780 --> 00:04:38.600
REP1-023, which summarizes the full scheme

83
00:04:38.680 --> 00:04:40.500
position.

84
00:04:41.760 --> 00:04:45.340
For the BESS site, the Environment Agency flood map shows, before
planning shows

85
00:04:45.380 --> 00:04:48.730
that some of the area within the BESS is within flood zones one, two
and

86
00:04:48.800 --> 00:04:52.550
three. However, to fully understand the actual flood behavior on

87
00:04:52.640 --> 00:04:56.400
site, we have carried out detailed site-specific hydraulic

88
00:04:56.460 --> 00:04:59.540
modeling, which is reported within the best hydraulic modeling

89
00:04:59.600 --> 00:05:03.540
note, REP2-052, submitted at

90

00:05:03.560 --> 00:05:06.180
deadline two, and Annex J, which is

91
00:05:06.220 --> 00:05:07.740
REP1-057.

92
00:05:09.760 --> 00:05:12.950
The modeling reflects the actual ground levels, the shape of the water courses, and

93
00:05:12.980 --> 00:05:15.760
the over- the way that overland flow paths behave.

94
00:05:15.820 --> 00:05:19.200
It shows that the proposed BESS platform sit outside areas of significant flood

95
00:05:19.240 --> 00:05:23.050
depth or hazard, included, uh, with in-

96
00:05:23.080 --> 00:05:26.820
including consideration of climate change.

97
00:05:26.860 --> 00:05:30.240
The BESS system itself oper- operates as a dry facility.

98
00:05:30.280 --> 00:05:34.220
It does not use processed water. The drainage system inside each BESS compound

99
00:05:34.240 --> 00:05:37.260
is lined, sealed, and isolated from the ground.

100
00:05:37.380 --> 00:05:39.780
Under normal conditions, it remains dry.

101
00:05:39.800 --> 00:05:41.080
The only water that could enter

102
00:05:42.140 --> 00:05:45.620
the system is from rainfall or, in an emergency,

103

00:05:45.660 --> 00:05:46.660
firefighting water.

104

00:05:48.580 --> 00:05:49.700
Within An- Annex J,

105

00:05:50.940 --> 00:05:53.340
we also look at the reasonable worst case event.

106

00:05:53.350 --> 00:05:56.840
This is assessed as a fire occurring during the s- at the same time
as a one in a

107

00:05:56.900 --> 00:06:00.350
hun- a one-in-ten-year rainfall event.

108

00:06:00.420 --> 00:06:03.820
Even under that scenario, the drainage behaves as a sealed
containment area and

109

00:06:03.840 --> 00:06:05.560
keeps all water within the compound,

110

00:06:05.580 --> 00:06:09.352
compound-In practice, the system is dr-

111

00:06:09.532 --> 00:06:12.312
is designed to a much higher standard.

112

00:06:12.322 --> 00:06:16.072
The line sub-base will be sized for the one in 200 year rainfall
event, plus a

113

00:06:16.232 --> 00:06:18.492
40% allowance for climate change.

114

00:06:18.512 --> 00:06:22.442
The storage volumes in Annex J exceed the capacity needed for
rainfall and

115

00:06:22.512 --> 00:06:26.372

fire water at both BESS locations during a reasonable worst case

116

00:06:26.432 --> 00:06:27.832

event.

117

00:06:29.132 --> 00:06:32.152

The system is also designed to be isolatable.

118

00:06:32.192 --> 00:06:35.432

Automatic shutoff valves close on heat or smoke detection.

119

00:06:35.452 --> 00:06:39.362

Any water held in the system is then tested and discharged safely

120

00:06:39.372 --> 00:06:42.892

or removed from the site under arrangement set out in the battery safety management

121

00:06:42.952 --> 00:06:46.652

plan. These measures ensure physical containment,

122

00:06:46.672 --> 00:06:49.622

automatic isolation, and controlled discharge from the BESS

123

00:06:49.672 --> 00:06:53.272

facilities. Point two:

124

00:06:53.312 --> 00:06:54.732

off-site flood risk in Grendon.

125

00:06:56.032 --> 00:06:59.712

Grendon Brook runs alongside the eastern boundary of BESS one- of the BESS one

126

00:06:59.852 --> 00:07:03.832

area... and an ordinary drainage ditch at BESS two flows northwards into the

127

00:07:03.872 --> 00:07:07.552

River Nene, which is located to the north of Grendon

128

00:07:07.592 --> 00:07:10.242
Substation. Given the location...

129
00:07:10.272 --> 00:07:13.712
given this local hydraulic network and the wider influence of the River Nene

130
00:07:13.812 --> 00:07:16.242
system, we undertook site-specific hydraulic

131
00:07:16.532 --> 00:07:20.212
modeling. The hydraulic modeling is

132
00:07:20.232 --> 00:07:24.052
detailed in the best hydraulic modeling technical note Rep 2052

133
00:07:24.132 --> 00:07:28.072
submitted at deadline two, and further detailed in the

134
00:07:28.152 --> 00:07:32.132
FRA Annex J. The modeling shows that scheme

135
00:07:32.152 --> 00:07:35.932
layout avoids areas of signif- significant flood hazard and therefore the scheme as

136
00:07:35.952 --> 00:07:38.642
proposed does not alter floodplain behavior.

137
00:07:38.642 --> 00:07:42.492
There is no displacement of flood storage area, and there is no

138
00:07:42.532 --> 00:07:45.702
measurable change to flood levels or routing of the brooks or

139
00:07:45.792 --> 00:07:49.682
downstream. Modeling shows that parts of Station

140
00:07:49.752 --> 00:07:52.822
Road and adjacent access tracks can flood.

141

00:07:52.852 --> 00:07:56.552

This reflects the existing baseline behavior and is not worsened by the

142

00:07:56.572 --> 00:07:57.372

scheme.

143

00:07:59.172 --> 00:08:02.512

The construction... during construction, these conditions will be managed through

144

00:08:02.572 --> 00:08:05.572

the outline construction environmental management plan Rep

145

00:08:05.752 --> 00:08:06.612

1131.

146

00:08:07.752 --> 00:08:11.082

Uh, within that, the OCP sets out weather dependent

147

00:08:11.132 --> 00:08:13.932

controls, temporary routing and safe working procedures

148

00:08:14.952 --> 00:08:17.671

as is standard for most rural construction

149

00:08:17.712 --> 00:08:21.592

sites. Ensure construction access does not increase flood

150

00:08:21.611 --> 00:08:24.032

risk and does not access- uh, affect the water

151

00:08:24.092 --> 00:08:25.692

environment.

152

00:08:27.012 --> 00:08:30.532

For operation, the BESS and substation do not rely on continuous access during bad

153

00:08:30.572 --> 00:08:33.772

weather. The containment and drainage systems work independently of access

154

00:08:33.832 --> 00:08:36.552

conditions and access can be managed around adverse

155

00:08:36.592 --> 00:08:40.372

weather. Taking all this together, the scheme is neutral in

156

00:08:40.412 --> 00:08:42.991

terms of flood risk in Grendon.

157

00:08:44.572 --> 00:08:47.792

On point three: off-site flood risk in Lavendon.

158

00:08:47.892 --> 00:08:51.592

Um, the applicant has also carried out site-specific hydraulic

159

00:08:51.652 --> 00:08:55.492

modeling for Lavendon. Uh, the technical note is submitted as Rep

160

00:08:55.772 --> 00:08:59.512

2053 and submitted at deadline two.

161

00:09:01.012 --> 00:09:04.272

The work was commissioned to understand the specific flood mechanisms affecting the

162

00:09:04.332 --> 00:09:08.192

village and to test whether measures at Green Hill G or close to it could

163

00:09:08.212 --> 00:09:11.202

reduce flood risk that Lave- Lavendon currently endures.

164

00:09:12.612 --> 00:09:15.572

The modeling shows that the flooding in Lavendon is caused by several conge-

165

00:09:15.752 --> 00:09:18.382

converging flow paths and the north...

166

00:09:18.812 --> 00:09:21.992

from the north, northeast, and east.

167

00:09:22.052 --> 00:09:25.692

Only some of these pass through or are generated by Green Hill G.

168

00:09:27.192 --> 00:09:30.632

As a result, the potential measures tested within Green Hill G, such as small bonds

169

00:09:30.672 --> 00:09:33.632

and offline storage or leaky dams within the water courses themselves

170

00:09:34.532 --> 00:09:37.752

produce a negligible reduction in flood depth in La- in

171

00:09:37.832 --> 00:09:41.292

Lavendon. They did not change the flood extent or the number of properties

172

00:09:41.312 --> 00:09:45.072

affected. This concerns two- this confirms two

173

00:09:45.152 --> 00:09:48.412

things. The scheme does not increase flood risk in Lavendon

174

00:09:49.252 --> 00:09:52.752

and on-site measures at Green Hill G cannot meaningfully-

175

00:09:52.852 --> 00:09:55.172

meaningfully reduce the flood risk within the

176

00:09:55.212 --> 00:09:58.812

village. However, the modeling does provide clear evidence

177

00:09:58.952 --> 00:10:02.932

base that may help for any future catchment scale works by any

178

00:10:02.972 --> 00:10:04.172

other interested parties.

179

00:10:05.752 --> 00:10:09.652

So just in closing, across all locations in the evidence in ES

180

00:10:09.692 --> 00:10:13.512

Chapter 10 Rep 1023, the FRA

181

00:10:13.652 --> 00:10:17.612

Rep 1053, the annexes App 107 and App

182

00:10:17.732 --> 00:10:21.652

108, and the technical notes demonstrate that the BESS is fully- is safe

183

00:10:21.672 --> 00:10:25.292

and fully contained. The scheme does not increase flood risk in Grendon or

184

00:10:25.332 --> 00:10:29.292

Lavendon. Construction access will be managed safely during the-

185

00:10:29.392 --> 00:10:33.092

uh, during the construction period and all embedded mitigation is secured through

186

00:10:33.112 --> 00:10:36.672

the DCO requirements. Thank you.

187

00:10:39.031 --> 00:10:42.862

Thank you, Mr. Rigby. Are there any responses from

188

00:10:43.072 --> 00:10:46.432

the local authorities, please, on this issue?

189

00:10:47.531 --> 00:10:50.832

Uh, Gary Grant, um, on behalf of North- Northants

190

00:10:50.992 --> 00:10:54.192

Council. Um, ma'am, we do have

191

00:10:54.252 --> 00:10:58.222

online, uh, Reuben Das of Kier. Um,

192

00:10:58.412 --> 00:11:01.531

but, um, my understanding is as with the previous

193

00:11:01.612 --> 00:11:05.212

item, we have no further comment to make at this stage.

194

00:11:06.632 --> 00:11:10.152

Thank you. Any interested parties?

195

00:11:10.172 --> 00:11:12.271

Yes, please, in the room.

196

00:11:12.312 --> 00:11:15.612

Uh, Richard Humphries, Kings Counsel for Stop Greenhill

197

00:11:15.712 --> 00:11:19.592

Solar. It's just one question I'd like to raise in the light of

198

00:11:19.632 --> 00:11:23.512

what Mr. Rigby said. He's acknowledged that parts of

199

00:11:23.552 --> 00:11:27.452

Station Road can flood, but he says, "Well, that's an

200

00:11:27.492 --> 00:11:31.192

existing problem. We're not going to make it any worse." I wonder whether, through

201

00:11:31.292 --> 00:11:33.132

you, madam, I could ask

202

00:11:34.192 --> 00:11:37.892

how, uh, what, uh, the applicant envisages

203

00:11:38.352 --> 00:11:42.232

will be the route for, uh, emergency access, uh,

204

00:11:42.312 --> 00:11:45.992

emergency vehicles coming from, uh, local fire

205

00:11:46.072 --> 00:11:49.771
stations, et cetera, if Station Road is

206
00:11:49.792 --> 00:11:52.392
flooded when there's, um, a fire at BESS

207
00:11:52.752 --> 00:11:56.332
or...

208
00:11:56.952 --> 00:11:59.972
Thank you, Mr. Humphries. Um, if the applicant would like to respond on that poi-

209
00:11:59.982 --> 00:12:03.962
point, please. Um, emergency vehicle access to the BESS if Station Road is

210
00:12:04.012 --> 00:12:07.731
closed.

211
00:12:09.644 --> 00:12:13.054
Josh Rigby on behalf of the applicant. Um, the likelihood ...

212
00:12:13.084 --> 00:12:16.524
So the, the, the access does not flood during the one in 10

213
00:12:16.564 --> 00:12:19.634
year, um, predictive flood event.

214
00:12:19.784 --> 00:12:23.584
Um, therefore, um, the

215
00:12:24.104 --> 00:12:27.904
risk of a combined event ha- occurring at the exact same time, a fire,

216
00:12:28.004 --> 00:12:31.504
uh, which is already a, uh, low probability event

217
00:12:31.584 --> 00:12:35.444
occurring with a storm in excess of the one in 10 year storm,

218

00:12:35.564 --> 00:12:39.204

um, is de minimis.

219

00:12:41.583 --> 00:12:43.964

Thank you. Um, any further response at all, Mr.

220

00:12:43.984 --> 00:12:46.024

Humphries? Thank

221

00:12:46.064 --> 00:12:50.644

you.

222

00:12:55.704 --> 00:12:58.274

Is there anyone else in the room who wishes to comment on the flood risk and

223

00:12:58.344 --> 00:13:01.124

drainage at all? Yes, please, with the hand up

224

00:13:01.164 --> 00:13:03.584

there.

225

00:13:05.164 --> 00:13:09.044

Um, yes. Yeah, that's fine. Yeah. If you could turn the

226

00:13:09.104 --> 00:13:11.434

microphone on to bl- to speak, please, hopefully it'll work.

227

00:13:13.124 --> 00:13:16.984

Hello? It's working. Um, yes, I'm, I'm reading,

228

00:13:17.044 --> 00:13:19.424

so it's much easier if I could use the desk. Thank you.

229

00:13:19.524 --> 00:13:19.654

Um,

230

00:13:21.064 --> 00:13:23.124

as I said earlier, I wish to speak to this item-

231

00:13:23.144 --> 00:13:25.454

Sorry, just, could you just say your name before you start speaking, please?

232

00:13:25.454 --> 00:13:26.604

I've just ... Back to ...

233

00:13:26.614 --> 00:13:26.704

Oh, sorry.

234

00:13:26.744 --> 00:13:28.484

As I said earlier, I was going to speak to this item.

235

00:13:28.504 --> 00:13:31.784

My name's Michael Griffiths and, uh, I'm a Lavendon

236

00:13:32.224 --> 00:13:36.064

resident. Um, I want to speak today in support of the

237

00:13:36.184 --> 00:13:39.434

written representation which I will submit post the

238

00:13:39.464 --> 00:13:43.424

hearing. Um, and I also have accompanying

239

00:13:43.484 --> 00:13:47.464

that an engineering assessment which we've submitted entitled

240

00:13:48.204 --> 00:13:52.164

Assessment of Surface Water Run-off from the proposed Green Hill

241

00:13:52.724 --> 00:13:56.704

Solar Farm. And in particular we're talking about Green Hill

242

00:13:57.404 --> 00:14:01.224

G. So I've ... My oral statement today will

243

00:14:01.264 --> 00:14:04.574

follow the same structure as the written submission that I will, um,

244

00:14:04.884 --> 00:14:08.443

produce. But I first of all want to mention, just very

245

00:14:08.494 --> 00:14:11.064

briefly, a procedural concern.

246

00:14:11.164 --> 00:14:14.744

Um, bef- ... When re- ... When

247

00:14:14.804 --> 00:14:18.604

registering to attend today and speak, the planning inspectorate's

248

00:14:18.663 --> 00:14:22.544

online form required participants to reference

249

00:14:22.564 --> 00:14:25.244

documents from the list of received

250

00:14:25.324 --> 00:14:29.104

representations. However, the link provided in the

251

00:14:29.144 --> 00:14:32.904

form didn't take users to the Green Hill

252

00:14:33.004 --> 00:14:36.624

Solar Farm case. Instead it was directed you to a

253

00:14:36.664 --> 00:14:40.564

completely different application called the One Earth Solar

254

00:14:40.664 --> 00:14:44.254

Farm. Now, I've ... did mention this to the

255

00:14:44.744 --> 00:14:47.904

officer at the desk and I'm just seeking to get this

256

00:14:47.964 --> 00:14:51.904

rec-tified and acknowledged because clearly that could

257

00:14:52.004 --> 00:14:55.224

impact, uh, people's representation and what they're actually

258

00:14:55.284 --> 00:14:59.004

quoting. So turning to a number of the points,

259

00:14:59.084 --> 00:15:02.264

um, regarding the flood risk in Lavendon.

260

00:15:02.324 --> 00:15:06.064

Um, an initially misrepresentation in the developer's

261

00:15:06.104 --> 00:15:09.364

submissions. Um, Lavendon has a long and

262

00:15:09.424 --> 00:15:12.804

well-documented history of significant flood events.

263

00:15:12.844 --> 00:15:16.364

These have occurred as early as 1907, 1908,

264

00:15:16.404 --> 00:15:20.064

1980, 2012, 2015

265

00:15:20.824 --> 00:15:22.964

and in particular more recently,

266

00:15:23.204 --> 00:15:27.184

2018, 2020 and again in

267

00:15:27.384 --> 00:15:30.444

2024. You'll see from the

268

00:15:30.964 --> 00:15:34.804

engineering report that we've produced of photographic

269

00:15:34.944 --> 00:15:35.484

evidence,

270

00:15:36.344 --> 00:15:39.824

um, these events have caused property damage, road closures,

271

00:15:39.884 --> 00:15:43.284

emergency responses and significant disruption to

272

00:15:43.344 --> 00:15:47.064

residents. Despite this clear historical

273

00:15:47.164 --> 00:15:50.793

record, the developer's documentations claims that

274

00:15:50.984 --> 00:15:54.464

no historical flooding has occurred at or near the

275

00:15:54.524 --> 00:15:58.124

site. This is incorrect and it contradicts

276

00:15:58.164 --> 00:16:02.044

Environment Agency reports, local authority reports, Buckingham

277

00:16:02.184 --> 00:16:05.824

Fire and Rescue documentation, parish council evidence,

278

00:16:06.404 --> 00:16:10.344

as I've mentioned, the photographic and video records and eyewitness

279

00:16:10.384 --> 00:16:14.144

accounts. But in addition, fill

280

00:16:14.364 --> 00:16:18.184

G13 lies partially within flood

281

00:16:18.584 --> 00:16:21.954

zone three, yet no site-specific

282

00:16:22.024 --> 00:16:25.904

assessment and no exception test has been carried out.

283

00:16:25.964 --> 00:16:28.764

We believe this omission is critical.

284

00:16:29.964 --> 00:16:33.764

Hydrological impacts of solar farms have not been adequately

285

00:16:33.804 --> 00:16:35.304
addressed in our opinion.

286

00:16:36.424 --> 00:16:39.724
Solar farms alter hydrological behavior.

287

00:16:40.844 --> 00:16:43.144
Solar panels are impermeable.

288

00:16:44.324 --> 00:16:45.164
These structures

289

00:16:46.084 --> 00:16:49.304
with the rainfall is shed rapidly from the panel edges.

290

00:16:49.824 --> 00:16:53.524
This leads to increased peak flows, higher run-off

291

00:16:53.884 --> 00:16:57.404
velocity, greater erosion potential and an

292

00:16:57.464 --> 00:17:01.264
increased likelihood of downstream flooding.

293

00:17:01.284 --> 00:17:05.064
There is extensive documentation and international research
confirming

294

00:17:05.104 --> 00:17:05.983
these effects.

295

00:17:07.264 --> 00:17:10.664
Despite this, the developer asserts that any change in run-off will
be

296

00:17:10.724 --> 00:17:14.384
negligible, as again mentioned this morning.

297

00:17:14.444 --> 00:17:18.184
This assertion is unsupported. No

298

00:17:18.404 --> 00:17:20.983

hydrological modeling has been presented.

299

00:17:21.004 --> 00:17:24.794

There are no NRCS curve number

300

00:17:24.944 --> 00:17:28.544

calculations. There are no rational method

301

00:17:28.584 --> 00:17:31.804

assessments and no Wallingford procedural

302

00:17:31.984 --> 00:17:35.684

analysis. For a development immediately

303

00:17:35.764 --> 00:17:39.464

upstream of a repeated flooded village, this

304

00:17:39.524 --> 00:17:42.124

lack of assessment, in my opinion, is

305

00:17:42.164 --> 00:17:45.964

unacceptable. Turning now to inaccurate

306

00:17:46.104 --> 00:17:47.424

soil and geology

307

00:17:48.484 --> 00:17:51.984

baseline conditions. The developer relies

308

00:17:52.064 --> 00:17:52.844

entirely

309

00:17:53.764 --> 00:17:55.384

on desktop mapping

310

00:17:56.904 --> 00:18:00.634

for soil depth, geology and infiltration assumptions.

311

00:18:00.644 --> 00:18:03.724

And I'm talking particularly about Lavendon remember here.

312

00:18:03.764 --> 00:18:07.704

However, actual observed conditions at Green Hill

313

00:18:07.784 --> 00:18:09.964

G are substantially

314

00:18:10.004 --> 00:18:13.828

different. Toil... Topsoil depth is

315

00:18:14.048 --> 00:18:17.608

100 to 150 millimeters, not

316

00:18:18.288 --> 00:18:21.428

300 millimeters. The underlying

317

00:18:21.508 --> 00:18:24.848

limestone is shallow. Infiltration

318

00:18:24.928 --> 00:18:28.808

capacity is significantly lower than assumed, and

319

00:18:28.908 --> 00:18:31.948

no site-specific infiltration test

320

00:18:32.988 --> 00:18:36.528

have been undertaken. This means that hydrological

321

00:18:36.548 --> 00:18:39.778

baseline used in the developer's assessments is

322

00:18:39.808 --> 00:18:43.728

incorrect. Turning

323

00:18:43.738 --> 00:18:47.568

to con- contradictions and, we believe, omissions across the developer

324

00:18:47.968 --> 00:18:51.668

documents. The developer's documents contain several

325

00:18:51.708 --> 00:18:55.208

contradictions and omissions. Flood zone boundaries

326

00:18:55.428 --> 00:18:59.377

differ across documents. Statements on

327

00:18:59.448 --> 00:19:02.808

historical flooding are inconsistent with known

328

00:19:02.868 --> 00:19:06.468

evidence. Areas of moderate to high risk on

329

00:19:06.528 --> 00:19:10.088

maps are described as low risk in text.

330

00:19:10.128 --> 00:19:13.828

Data availability is inconsistent.

331

00:19:13.928 --> 00:19:17.568

And importantly, as I've mentioned before, no downstream

332

00:19:17.728 --> 00:19:21.368

flood impact assessment has been provided.

333

00:19:21.468 --> 00:19:25.128

National policy statements and the MPPF

334

00:19:25.188 --> 00:19:28.968

require a demonstration that flood risk elsewhere will

335

00:19:28.978 --> 00:19:32.918

not be increased. This work, in our opinion,

336

00:19:32.968 --> 00:19:36.518

has not been completed. And talking

337

00:19:36.568 --> 00:19:40.068

about required work which is incomplete, the developer

338

00:19:40.148 --> 00:19:42.838
states the hydrological modeling is being

339
00:19:42.888 --> 00:19:46.528
undertaken, yet none of it has been submitted to this

340
00:19:46.568 --> 00:19:50.408
examination. Please remember, again, I'm talking about flood risk at

341
00:19:50.448 --> 00:19:54.208
Lavendon. There's no exceedance flow

342
00:19:54.588 --> 00:19:57.688
modeling, no cumulative impact

343
00:19:57.708 --> 00:20:01.248
assessment, no modeling of flood depth

344
00:20:01.968 --> 00:20:05.948
or velocity, or assessment of hazard or speed

345
00:20:05.988 --> 00:20:09.508
of offset. The application is therefore incomplete with

346
00:20:09.548 --> 00:20:11.268
respect to flood les- risk at

347
00:20:11.308 --> 00:20:14.848
Lavendon. So, in conclusion and very

348
00:20:15.028 --> 00:20:18.308
quickly summarizing, Lavendon has an expensi- extensive,

349
00:20:18.328 --> 00:20:21.888
sorry, and well-evidenced flood history.

350
00:20:21.928 --> 00:20:25.648
The site includes land within flood zone

351
00:20:25.668 --> 00:20:29.588
three. The hydrological impacts of the solar farm have

352

00:20:29.648 --> 00:20:33.318

not been adequately s- assessed. Soil and

353

00:20:33.408 --> 00:20:36.588

geology assumptions are incorrect.

354

00:20:36.648 --> 00:20:39.258

The developer's document contains contradictions and

355

00:20:39.288 --> 00:20:43.138

omissions. Key national policy requirements have not

356

00:20:43.148 --> 00:20:46.538

been met, and required hydrological

357

00:20:46.628 --> 00:20:50.008

work remains inconclusive. And I

358

00:20:50.048 --> 00:20:53.508

respectfully submit that the proposed development is, in its current

359

00:20:53.568 --> 00:20:56.148

form, unfair and cannot go

360

00:20:56.208 --> 00:20:59.888

ahead. GF13 presents a real and

361

00:20:59.928 --> 00:21:03.038

ongoing risk of increased water rain off... rain...

362

00:21:03.048 --> 00:21:07.038

water runoff, sorry, and downstream flooding affects

363

00:21:07.128 --> 00:21:11.048

Lavendon and should be removed. GF13 should be

364

00:21:11.108 --> 00:21:13.808

removed from the proposal. Thank you for

365

00:21:13.868 --> 00:21:15.288
listening.

366
00:21:17.868 --> 00:21:21.528
Thank you, Mr. Griffiths. If the applicant would like to respond,
please.

367
00:21:22.648 --> 00:21:24.128
Uh, Claire Project for the applicant.

368
00:21:24.188 --> 00:21:27.818
Um, obviously there were a number of points, some more sort of
policy

369
00:21:27.868 --> 00:21:30.228
related, some more technical raised there.

370
00:21:30.248 --> 00:21:33.848
There was reference to, um, an engineering assessment which I

371
00:21:33.888 --> 00:21:37.008
understood would be submitted at deadline three.

372
00:21:37.108 --> 00:21:40.938
Um, so the applicant will review that when it is submitted and, and

373
00:21:40.988 --> 00:21:44.448
respond to that at, at deadline four.

374
00:21:44.588 --> 00:21:47.948
Um, before I hand over to Mr. Rigby, there was a comment made, I
believe, in

375
00:21:47.968 --> 00:21:51.768
relation to there not having been a sequential test carried

376
00:21:51.848 --> 00:21:55.388
out. Um, so I just wanted to refer, um, to appendix

377
00:21:55.568 --> 00:21:58.208
B to the planning statement, which is rep

378

00:21:58.488 --> 00:22:02.028

2-043, um, and that sets

379

00:22:02.108 --> 00:22:05.988

out, um, both, uh, the sequential test that was undertaken and also the

380

00:22:06.008 --> 00:22:08.328

application of the exception test.

381

00:22:08.368 --> 00:22:11.767

So, appreciate maybe, um, that particular

382

00:22:11.848 --> 00:22:15.698

document, um, hadn't been located within the, the, the

383

00:22:15.788 --> 00:22:19.308

suite of application materials, so I provide, um, that

384

00:22:19.388 --> 00:22:22.548

reference there for assistance. Um, I will let Mr.

385

00:22:22.588 --> 00:22:24.297

Rigby respond, um,

386

00:22:25.348 --> 00:22:29.248

as succinctly as he can in relation to the, um, assessment

387

00:22:29.308 --> 00:22:33.248

work that has been undertaken, both in terms of, um, I think the two key

388

00:22:33.267 --> 00:22:37.008

points here was the acknowledgement of the, um, uh,

389

00:22:37.088 --> 00:22:40.448

existing and historic, um, flooding at Lavendon, and then

390

00:22:40.508 --> 00:22:44.108

separately, the actual modeling that's been undertaken

391

00:22:44.208 --> 00:22:48.088

for, um, site G, um, and how that modeling

392

00:22:48.108 --> 00:22:51.838

has been done in terms of, um, investigations of, um,

393

00:22:51.948 --> 00:22:54.848

ground conditions on the site. Thank you.

394

00:22:57.208 --> 00:22:58.828

Josh Rigby on behalf of the applicant.

395

00:22:58.908 --> 00:22:59.158

Um, uh,

396

00:23:00.048 --> 00:23:03.568

several points were raised. I'll try and pick up as many as I can.

397

00:23:03.578 --> 00:23:05.538

Please let me know if I have missed any.

398

00:23:05.648 --> 00:23:09.208

Um, with regards to the historic flooding on the

399

00:23:09.548 --> 00:23:13.448

site, uh, the report states that no recorded historic flooding

400

00:23:13.508 --> 00:23:17.468

is on the site. But it also goes on to say that this does not necessarily mean

401

00:23:17.488 --> 00:23:21.438

that the site has not flooded. Uh, we rely on

402

00:23:21.468 --> 00:23:25.428

the Environment Agency's data sets, uh, which are provided and the

403

00:23:25.448 --> 00:23:29.338

anecdotal evidence provided by, uh, attendance at the,

404

00:23:29.408 --> 00:23:33.358
uh, the public hearings. Um, so, the, the

405
00:23:33.468 --> 00:23:37.308
statement within the report is that there's no recorded flooding on
the site,

406
00:23:37.348 --> 00:23:40.208
which I believe is correct. Um,

407
00:23:41.708 --> 00:23:45.568
with regards to the historic in- uh, flooding in

408
00:23:45.588 --> 00:23:49.228
Lavendon, you know, the, the historic flooding in Lavendon is
acknowledged.

409
00:23:49.328 --> 00:23:50.438
Um,

410
00:23:51.608 --> 00:23:55.508
flooding offsite adjacent to watercourses is, is always going to

411
00:23:55.588 --> 00:23:57.018
occur. And the

412
00:23:58.288 --> 00:24:01.868
point of the reporting that has been done or the conclusions of the
reporting that

413
00:24:01.888 --> 00:24:05.588
has been done in the various assessments, including the ES

414
00:24:05.628 --> 00:24:09.568
chapter rep 1023, the FRA rep 1005, and

415
00:24:09.588 --> 00:24:11.898
the supporting annexes to the, those

416
00:24:11.928 --> 00:24:15.700
representations.... um, set out how the

417

00:24:15.740 --> 00:24:19.300

development itself, the proposed development, will not exacerbate the flooding

418

00:24:19.600 --> 00:24:21.480

that, uh, is

419

00:24:22.379 --> 00:24:23.720

leaving the site. The

420

00:24:24.580 --> 00:24:28.110

assertion that is put forward, uh, regularly on solar farms is that

421

00:24:28.480 --> 00:24:32.340

the solar panels themselves are hard-standing, but it ignores the

422

00:24:32.400 --> 00:24:35.879

fact that the underlying ground is and will

423

00:24:35.960 --> 00:24:39.620

remain and will be improved as permeable grassland.

424

00:24:39.740 --> 00:24:43.540

Um, a lot of the baseline sites that, including Green Algier, they are

425

00:24:43.580 --> 00:24:47.220

agricultural sites. They are worked, um, so the baseline conditions

426

00:24:48.200 --> 00:24:49.730

are regularly, um,

427

00:24:50.800 --> 00:24:54.700

misappropriated or misrepresented, um, in, uh, in,

428

00:24:54.740 --> 00:24:58.379

in the responses that, uh, to these type of development.

429

00:24:59.860 --> 00:25:03.720

With regards to the geology on the site, we rely on the surface water,

430

00:25:03.840 --> 00:25:07.800

uh, calculations that are, uh, n- nationally

431

00:25:07.840 --> 00:25:11.460

recognized. We use the FEH datasets, uh, that set the baseline

432

00:25:11.500 --> 00:25:13.340

conditions for the ground

433

00:25:13.379 --> 00:25:17.330

conditions. The point that we are putting

434

00:25:17.379 --> 00:25:21.260

across is that the baseline conditions are the baseline conditions,

435

00:25:21.280 --> 00:25:24.160

but they will not be affected by the proposed development.

436

00:25:25.180 --> 00:25:28.950

So, there is an existing surface water runoff from the site proposed

437

00:25:29.139 --> 00:25:32.780

th- as a result of the proposed development that will not increase through the

438

00:25:32.790 --> 00:25:36.000

embedded mitigations that we've, uh, provided throughout the department and that

439

00:25:36.020 --> 00:25:38.700

are detailed, um, in the submitted

440

00:25:38.720 --> 00:25:41.620

documents. Um,

441

00:25:44.139 --> 00:25:45.740

sorry, I'm just going through again.

442

00:25:46.340 --> 00:25:50.139

(sniffs) Uh, the surface water point about how we've assessed high,

some

443

00:25:50.200 --> 00:25:54.170

areas that are located in high and moderate risk areas and then concluded that

444

00:25:54.200 --> 00:25:57.370

the risk is low, is that with

445

00:25:57.400 --> 00:26:01.340

the inclusion of the embedded mitigation on the site, usually

446

00:26:01.420 --> 00:26:04.639

surface water flow routes follow topographical low points

447

00:26:04.760 --> 00:26:07.490

or existing water courses and things like that.

448

00:26:07.540 --> 00:26:10.810

All of which we have offsets from, ordinary and main rivers.

449

00:26:10.840 --> 00:26:14.780

We have, um, offsets from surface water flow routes.

450

00:26:14.879 --> 00:26:18.720

Um, we have offsets from the, uh, from the existing main

451

00:26:18.760 --> 00:26:21.559

rivers, um, as proposed, so that surface water is

452

00:26:21.580 --> 00:26:25.560

not... when, uh, we've assessed the risk to the development as

453

00:26:25.659 --> 00:26:27.060

low as a result of those flow

454

00:26:27.120 --> 00:26:30.800

paths. (smacks lips)

455

00:26:30.900 --> 00:26:34.680

Um, and with regards to the hydraulic modeling, we've undertaken

detailed hydraulic

456

00:26:34.740 --> 00:26:38.580

modeling of the site in Lavendon and the report was submitted at rep

457

00:26:38.740 --> 00:26:42.680

2, uh, um, deadline 2.

458

00:26:42.800 --> 00:26:44.430

Um, I believe I've

459

00:26:45.400 --> 00:26:46.560

addressed each of your comments

460

00:26:46.620 --> 00:26:50.060

there.

461

00:26:52.880 --> 00:26:56.420

Thank you. Mr. Griffiths, would you like to respond at all?

462

00:26:57.800 --> 00:27:01.680

I'm very conscious there are a lot of contributions to be made and I don't wish

463

00:27:01.720 --> 00:27:04.870

to take up, um, more time than is, is relevant.

464

00:27:04.940 --> 00:27:08.680

Um, the, uh, I, I would just, uh, make the

465

00:27:08.720 --> 00:27:12.690

point that the engineering report that I referred to, and

466

00:27:12.740 --> 00:27:16.569

that I'm particularly emphasizing, was submitted by the first

467

00:27:16.569 --> 00:27:20.470

deadline. Um, the reason why I've given evidence particularly to this

468

00:27:20.500 --> 00:27:23.659

report is 'cause I, uh, with such a vast amount of

469

00:27:23.720 --> 00:27:27.600

paperwork, um, I suspect on occasions that proper

470

00:27:27.700 --> 00:27:30.260

diligence isn't always given to every single one.

471

00:27:30.280 --> 00:27:34.270

But that was, was submitted, um, by, by, uh,

472

00:27:34.440 --> 00:27:38.420

Lavendon residents and by the author of the report, who I

473

00:27:38.460 --> 00:27:42.200

believe, um, is due to give evidence later this week

474

00:27:42.380 --> 00:27:46.360

as well, so there's gonna be ample opportunity for that report to be looked at

475

00:27:46.700 --> 00:27:50.460

and considered. I have to say that a number of the comments, I think we just agree,

476

00:27:50.780 --> 00:27:54.000

agree to differ on. Um, and

477

00:27:54.580 --> 00:27:58.370

I, I, I, I, I do believe that some of the, um, responses made, um,

478

00:27:58.420 --> 00:28:00.600

reinforce the points that I was making.

479

00:28:00.610 --> 00:28:03.139

Thank you.

480

00:28:04.940 --> 00:28:06.180

Thank you.

481

00:28:07.520 --> 00:28:09.180

Any final response from the applicant at

482

00:28:09.280 --> 00:28:11.620

all?

483

00:28:11.690 --> 00:28:15.720

(clicks tongue)

484

00:28:17.840 --> 00:28:21.540

Uh, Claire Broderick for the applicant, um, it was just to, um, note that we

485

00:28:21.659 --> 00:28:25.610

are still waiting for a response from the Environment Agency, so a lot of

486

00:28:25.620 --> 00:28:29.200

the comments on the nature of the methodologing and, uh,

487

00:28:29.240 --> 00:28:33.039

whether, um, the Environment Agency are satisfied with the level of detail

488

00:28:33.099 --> 00:28:36.170

that's provided will be documented in the statement of common ground, and my

489

00:28:36.220 --> 00:28:39.760

understanding is that's currently with the Environment Agency, uh, for comment.

490

00:28:39.780 --> 00:28:43.500

They've also requested, um, some further information in relation

491

00:28:43.580 --> 00:28:47.500

to certain flood risk activities which we might come onto as part

492

00:28:47.540 --> 00:28:50.820

of the update at the draft DCO hearing, um, tomorrow.

493

00:28:50.840 --> 00:28:54.780

But a number of, um, the points that were raised in terms of

criticisms of

494

00:28:54.900 --> 00:28:58.820

the, um, methodology, um, the applicant's position is obviously that if the

495

00:28:58.880 --> 00:29:02.520

Environment Agency is satisfied with the level of detail provided, then that should

496

00:29:02.560 --> 00:29:05.300

be sufficient for the Secretary of State to make a decision.

497

00:29:05.320 --> 00:29:07.900

Thank you.

498

00:29:09.100 --> 00:29:13.060

Thank you. Are there any other interested parties in the room

499

00:29:13.100 --> 00:29:15.060

who would like to comment on the issue

500

00:29:15.100 --> 00:29:17.540

please?

501

00:29:19.440 --> 00:29:22.740

(clicks tongue) I can see we don't have anyone

502

00:29:22.800 --> 00:29:25.639

online.

503

00:29:27.240 --> 00:29:30.290

(smacks lips)

504

00:29:30.760 --> 00:29:31.720

Okay.

505

00:29:32.720 --> 00:29:35.159

So we will now move to my own questions please.

506

00:29:35.220 --> 00:29:35.409

Um,

507

00:29:37.820 --> 00:29:39.710

firstly, an apology to Mr. Griffiths.

508

00:29:39.760 --> 00:29:43.300

Um, you mentioned, um, issues with making

509

00:29:43.360 --> 00:29:46.600

online, uh, representations and the referencing.

510

00:29:46.659 --> 00:29:49.980

Um, just to confirm that we will look into this and I do apologize that that's

511

00:29:50.000 --> 00:29:50.420

happened.

512

00:29:51.500 --> 00:29:51.720

Um,

513

00:29:52.560 --> 00:29:56.159

firstly to the applicant please, I've got a question, um,

514

00:29:56.720 --> 00:30:00.220

to check whether undeveloped buffer zones of a minimum of nine

515

00:30:00.300 --> 00:30:04.260

meters, uh, would be maintained adjacent to field drain-

516

00:30:04.300 --> 00:30:08.180

drains around field GF13? Um,

517

00:30:08.800 --> 00:30:12.260

I know you have, you have mentioned there, there will be offsets from surface water

518

00:30:12.340 --> 00:30:16.040

routes, but I wonder whether that specific, uh, field would

519

00:30:16.100 --> 00:30:19.600

include the buffer zones recommended by the local flood authority

520

00:30:19.659 --> 00:30:20.380

please?

521

00:30:23.370 --> 00:30:40.409

Uh,

522

00:30:40.449 --> 00:30:43.129

Clare Budgley of the applicant. We're just trying to find the relevant document

523

00:30:43.169 --> 00:30:45.379

that secures the, um, buffer zones.

524

00:30:45.389 --> 00:30:48.689

Hang on a second.

525

00:31:59.550 --> 00:32:00.510

Uh, Clare Budgley of the applicant.

526

00:32:00.550 --> 00:32:04.090

We've got a st- there's a standard nine-meter offset but we're just trying to check

527

00:32:04.110 --> 00:32:07.290

where the 15-meter reference came from.

528

00:32:07.310 --> 00:32:10.500

But it might appear that we need to take that one

529

00:32:10.510 --> 00:32:11.600

away.

530

00:32:13.550 --> 00:32:17.429

Yeah, I- I think the Lee- Lee Local Flood Authority guidance notes have got,

531

00:32:17.489 --> 00:32:17.649

um,

532

00:32:18.489 --> 00:32:22.389
recommends that a minimum of nine meters is maintained adjacent to
field

533
00:32:22.429 --> 00:32:26.189
drains. Um, so if you've got the nine-meter

534
00:32:26.729 --> 00:32:29.270
sort of reference, then that will be helpful, please.

535
00:32:29.310 --> 00:32:30.250
Uh, Clare Budgley of the applicant.

536
00:32:30.270 --> 00:32:34.129
Yes, the nine meters is secured in the concept design parameters and
one of

537
00:32:34.169 --> 00:32:36.719
the outline, um, management plans.

538
00:32:36.750 --> 00:32:40.459
We'll put the reference, um, paragraph reference in the,

539
00:32:40.550 --> 00:32:42.340
um, written summary of the speaking notes.

540
00:32:42.350 --> 00:32:46.110
Sorry, it was a fif- you'd referenced, I think, a 15 meters and that
had,

541
00:32:46.189 --> 00:32:49.500
um... I'd written down 15 meters which had confused us, so.

542
00:32:49.550 --> 00:32:50.110
Oh. No.

543
00:32:50.120 --> 00:32:50.850
No, no nine meters.

544
00:32:51.149 --> 00:32:54.090
Fine, thank you.

545

00:32:55.270 --> 00:32:57.330

Um, and my second question, please, to the applicants.

546

00:32:57.370 --> 00:33:01.330

Um, concern is raised by, um, Stop Greenhill that construction works could

547

00:33:01.340 --> 00:33:05.189

damage mole or land drains at some of the sites,

548

00:33:05.250 --> 00:33:08.418

um, increasing the risk of surface water flooding.

549

00:33:08.449 --> 00:33:10.330

What measures will be taken to prevent this,

550

00:33:10.350 --> 00:33:21.790

please?

551

00:33:49.590 --> 00:33:50.850

Uh, Clare Budgley of the applicant.

552

00:33:50.889 --> 00:33:54.810

Um, obviously depending on which element of the scheme, um, is being

553

00:33:54.830 --> 00:33:57.770

referred to then the- the measures that are put in place w- will differ.

554

00:33:57.810 --> 00:34:01.610

So within the solar PV sites themselves, there's obviously,

555

00:34:01.689 --> 00:34:05.629

um, uh, drainage mitigation measures, um, for

556

00:34:05.689 --> 00:34:08.909

any areas of sort of hard standing and those sorts of things which would

557

00:34:09.569 --> 00:34:13.230

need to operate, um, a sort of... In

558

00:34:13.310 --> 00:34:17.049

combination with any existing field draining, drainage, um, in

559

00:34:17.109 --> 00:34:20.779

terms of the construction methodology, um, there are commitments in terms

560

00:34:20.830 --> 00:34:24.770

of, um, obviously trying not to damage existing,

561

00:34:24.850 --> 00:34:28.819

um, drainage when carrying out sort of pegging activities a- and other works.

562

00:34:28.850 --> 00:34:32.580

And then repair of existing drainage, um, if it's

563

00:34:32.589 --> 00:34:35.679

required. And that's sort of obviously distinct to the construction

564

00:34:35.730 --> 00:34:38.330

methodology for, um, the cable route

565

00:34:38.389 --> 00:34:41.958

corridor, um, and the mitigation measures put in place will

566

00:34:41.989 --> 00:34:44.310

depend on the construction methodology.

567

00:34:44.370 --> 00:34:48.290

So for, um, uh, open cut trenching will

568

00:34:48.350 --> 00:34:50.909

defer to directional drilling and there may be a-

569

00:34:52.549 --> 00:34:56.279

areas where it is necessary to drill beneath existing, um,

570

00:34:56.449 --> 00:34:59.029

drainages, drainage in order to protect them.

571

00:34:59.049 --> 00:35:02.609

And other areas where, um, it can be carried out via open cut

572

00:35:03.069 --> 00:35:07.049

trenching with, um, some form of mitigation measure put in place during the works,

573

00:35:07.069 --> 00:35:10.819

and then the restoration of the current drainage system, um, as

574

00:35:10.850 --> 00:35:14.190

part of the, um, completion and restoration of the site

575

00:35:14.290 --> 00:35:17.580

post-construction. So, there are mitigation

576

00:35:17.649 --> 00:35:21.549

measures throughout the management plans in relation to interactions

577

00:35:21.569 --> 00:35:23.220

with existing, uh,

578

00:35:23.250 --> 00:35:28.009

drainage.

579

00:35:33.700 --> 00:35:33.960

Thank you.

580

00:35:33.960 --> 00:35:37.210

Thank you. So that concludes my questions on flood risk and drainage.

581

00:35:37.310 --> 00:35:41.190

Um, moving on now to item 3.4, which

582

00:35:41.250 --> 00:35:42.790

is effects for landscape-

583

00:35:42.870 --> 00:35:44.390

Uh, Clare Budgley of the applicant.

584

00:35:44.410 --> 00:35:44.440

Oh, sorry.

585

00:35:44.440 --> 00:35:47.240

Sorry, I was just... Wanted to raise it if we could before we, um-

586

00:35:47.350 --> 00:35:47.359

Yeah.

587

00:35:47.359 --> 00:35:48.680

... moved on, is that, um,

588

00:35:51.069 --> 00:35:54.870

we had, um, some comments raised, um, that Professor Dobson who was

589

00:35:54.910 --> 00:35:58.850

here had some points he wanted to make about BEZ fire safety.

590

00:35:58.870 --> 00:36:02.690

Because we have Mr. Gregory available now for this agenda item, I was

591

00:36:02.710 --> 00:36:05.649

wondering whether we could perhaps address those comments now and then Mr.

592

00:36:05.670 --> 00:36:07.230

Gregory might be able to-

593

00:36:07.250 --> 00:36:07.380

Yeah.

594

00:36:07.380 --> 00:36:10.950

... um, uh, leave the, uh, the hearing rather than waiting-

595

00:36:11.009 --> 00:36:11.359

Yes. Yeah.

596

00:36:11.359 --> 00:36:13.859

... for any other business at the end, if that's possible.

597

00:36:14.049 --> 00:36:15.120

Um, and, um,

598

00:36:16.390 --> 00:36:20.120

Professor Dobson is still here and wishes to speak. Thank you.

599

00:36:20.130 --> 00:36:21.520

That would make sense certainly, um,

600

00:36:22.569 --> 00:36:23.430

yes.

601

00:36:41.200 --> 00:36:44.799

Madam, Professor Dobson has already, um,

602

00:36:45.520 --> 00:36:49.259

introduced himself to the inquiry at the beginning, um, and you have his

603

00:36:49.299 --> 00:36:52.620

written statement and his briefing note just to introduce you.

604

00:36:52.629 --> 00:36:52.750

Mm-hmm.

605

00:36:52.759 --> 00:36:53.149

Professor Dobson.

606

00:36:53.200 --> 00:36:56.919

Absolutely. Thank you.

607

00:36:57.399 --> 00:37:01.359

Thanks. Um... The big problem with BESS

608

00:37:01.439 --> 00:37:05.339

is that currently, the UK has not got any safety,

609

00:37:05.359 --> 00:37:08.799

uh, regulations and standards in place, so

610

00:37:09.439 --> 00:37:13.040

all of this is being done by flying by the seat of the pants, as it

611

00:37:13.080 --> 00:37:16.988

were. Uh, there are no safety standards, and you're all in

612

00:37:17.020 --> 00:37:20.980

the hands of the suppliers of the batteries and

613

00:37:21.020 --> 00:37:24.680

the battery management systems. And surprise,

614

00:37:24.740 --> 00:37:28.020

surprise, they're all coming from overseas.

615

00:37:28.080 --> 00:37:31.910

So we really are in a very vulnerable position in the UK on

616

00:37:31.959 --> 00:37:35.020

this. So that would be my first point, that

617

00:37:36.319 --> 00:37:40.220

we're dealing with battery energy storage systems for which there's

618

00:37:40.299 --> 00:37:43.600

no legislation and nobody is responsible

619

00:37:44.279 --> 00:37:48.220

for the, uh, safety of those, um,

620

00:37:48.500 --> 00:37:51.879

both in installation and what happens afterwards in the event of

621

00:37:51.890 --> 00:37:55.399

a, a disaster. So, that would be my first

622

00:37:55.439 --> 00:37:59.399

point. Then, um, the, the next point is in

623

00:37:59.419 --> 00:38:03.169

the layouts in this battery energy storage system planned here

624

00:38:03.959 --> 00:38:07.819

are very vague. Th- they don't really give details

625

00:38:07.879 --> 00:38:11.480

of the spacing between the containers, uh, or the

626

00:38:11.540 --> 00:38:15.399

number and size of them, but it looks as though there's well

627

00:38:15.439 --> 00:38:18.680

over 500 containers. They're going to be

628

00:38:18.740 --> 00:38:21.740

groups... grouped in, uh, batches of

629

00:38:21.839 --> 00:38:25.819

four. The spacing between the containers

630

00:38:25.859 --> 00:38:28.459

in those batches is not well specified.

631

00:38:28.500 --> 00:38:31.879

If you read them off the map, it looks like they might be a

632

00:38:31.959 --> 00:38:35.279

meter, and then the spacing between the

633

00:38:35.339 --> 00:38:39.180

clusters might be anything from 5 to

634

00:38:39.600 --> 00:38:43.540

10 meters, because the errors on reading off a small-scale map

635

00:38:43.560 --> 00:38:44.540

are huge.

636

00:38:45.160 --> 00:38:45.229

(coughs)

637

00:38:45.229 --> 00:38:48.979

So, that n- really does need clarification, because the fire

638

00:38:49.080 --> 00:38:52.740

service would need access to them, and so would the

639

00:38:52.799 --> 00:38:56.299

maintenance engineers who come round to inspect them.

640

00:38:56.359 --> 00:38:58.979

So that, that bit of information is completely

641

00:38:59.020 --> 00:39:02.379

missing. To emphasize

642

00:39:02.439 --> 00:39:06.299

the risk of these things, eh, I- if we

643

00:39:06.339 --> 00:39:09.759

look at each container is roughly containing four

644

00:39:09.819 --> 00:39:13.259

megawatt hours of electrical energy.

645

00:39:13.759 --> 00:39:17.540

Now, that's a lot. To put it into context, a

646

00:39:17.620 --> 00:39:21.500

ton of thr- TNT is three,

647

00:39:21.600 --> 00:39:25.488

uh, um... Is, is roughly... Sorry, the...

648

00:39:25.500 --> 00:39:29.200

put it the other way around. The, the container of four megawatt

649

00:39:29.299 --> 00:39:32.140

hours is roughly the equivalent of three tons of

650

00:39:32.180 --> 00:39:36.160

TNT, if it all went bang at once.

651

00:39:36.180 --> 00:39:39.319

But it's worse than that, because the battery

652

00:39:39.379 --> 00:39:42.479

containers have, within them, flammable

653

00:39:42.560 --> 00:39:46.540

liquid. The, uh, the electrolyte used in these

654

00:39:46.580 --> 00:39:50.140

batteries is an organic fluid which carries

655

00:39:50.160 --> 00:39:53.720

fluorinated compounds, and that's the way they work.

656

00:39:53.819 --> 00:39:57.540

But nobody seems to be concerned about the danger of that

657

00:39:57.620 --> 00:40:00.899

huge amount of flammable material contained on a

658

00:40:00.939 --> 00:40:03.779

site. And people like me worry about

659

00:40:03.839 --> 00:40:07.759

it. We have to, because if it all went wrong

660

00:40:07.799 --> 00:40:11.439

at once, it would be a big disaster.

661

00:40:13.140 --> 00:40:16.689

And then (sighs) to look at the next point I wanted to make, um,

662

00:40:17.799 --> 00:40:21.529

I've heard already today that there, there is, uh, comfort to some

663

00:40:21.560 --> 00:40:25.319

extent that the bunding of the battery energy

664

00:40:25.399 --> 00:40:29.299

storage site is sufficient to take, uh, fire

665

00:40:29.399 --> 00:40:33.359

water. My question would be, what assumption has

666

00:40:33.399 --> 00:40:37.240

been made about the time and the volume of fire water

667

00:40:37.879 --> 00:40:41.339

b- being applied by the firefighters?

668

00:40:41.419 --> 00:40:45.399

It could be two hours, and very often in the

669

00:40:45.460 --> 00:40:49.200

recommendations by the NFCCC, we see that two

670

00:40:49.279 --> 00:40:53.000

hours mentioned. But in reality, 24

671

00:40:53.080 --> 00:40:57.020

hours is much more common, because a lot of that water is

672

00:40:57.080 --> 00:41:01.040

being used to cool the other containers st- to stop them

673

00:41:01.080 --> 00:41:03.879

going critical and blowing up.

674

00:41:04.799 --> 00:41:06.560

So that's another point that needs to be

675

00:41:06.600 --> 00:41:09.580

addressed.

676

00:41:11.759 --> 00:41:13.950

Just reading my next point here. Um,

677

00:41:16.020 --> 00:41:16.220

so

678

00:41:17.720 --> 00:41:21.680

depending on the w- wattage of the panels, uh, uh, I put

679

00:41:21.720 --> 00:41:25.500

this in, uh, people have been worried about over-planting of the solar

680

00:41:25.520 --> 00:41:28.339

panels, and this was more my specialty in years

681

00:41:28.379 --> 00:41:32.069

ago. Solar panels have increased in area.

682

00:41:32.100 --> 00:41:35.000

They haven't increased in efficiency very much.

683

00:41:35.009 --> 00:41:38.319

So what we're finding is that developers are

684

00:41:38.399 --> 00:41:41.790

increasing the number of panels of larger area on

685

00:41:41.919 --> 00:41:45.799

sites. But personally, I would say this is okay.

686

00:41:45.839 --> 00:41:49.509

But what it does is it increases the potential power

687

00:41:49.580 --> 00:41:53.319

output of the overall site. So, uh, this

688

00:41:53.439 --> 00:41:56.460

affects the specification of the

689

00:41:56.560 --> 00:42:00.439

connections to the batteries and to the grid, and it's a point

690

00:42:00.520 --> 00:42:04.319

which really has to be made very clear at the outset as to what

you're planning

691

00:42:04.379 --> 00:42:04.700

for.

692

00:42:05.720 --> 00:42:09.299

Now I come to the thing about the fire and plume tests which have been

693

00:42:09.319 --> 00:42:12.890

conducted here by, um, Wärtsilä in

694

00:42:13.080 --> 00:42:13.680

Ohio.

695

00:42:14.600 --> 00:42:17.580

Uh, this work was not peer-reviewed.

696

00:42:17.680 --> 00:42:20.930

Um, it's assumed that the fire was contained in just one

697

00:42:20.960 --> 00:42:24.359

container, and the plans, as I've already

698

00:42:24.419 --> 00:42:27.669

mentioned, show very closely spaced containers on this

699

00:42:27.700 --> 00:42:31.319

site. So it would be unfair to assume that it would be

700

00:42:31.359 --> 00:42:34.744

confined to one container.... the temperatures

701

00:42:34.844 --> 00:42:38.724

reached in the heart of the fire are in excess of 900

702

00:42:38.764 --> 00:42:42.464

degrees, and this could easily, uh, cause

703

00:42:42.624 --> 00:42:45.884

problems in adjacent containers.

704

00:42:45.924 --> 00:42:49.884

But then we have, um, things like,

705

00:42:49.984 --> 00:42:53.684

uh, thermal gaps within the structure of the

706

00:42:53.744 --> 00:42:57.664

containers. This is where the lack of UK standards

707

00:42:57.764 --> 00:43:01.124

really shows up, because we don't have any

708

00:43:01.184 --> 00:43:04.244

condition for the s- the developer to

709

00:43:04.284 --> 00:43:08.144

supply a particular type of BESS container

710

00:43:08.184 --> 00:43:12.064

with all these thermal barriers built in between the modules, and between the

711

00:43:12.104 --> 00:43:15.544

module and the container itself. So, there's real

712

00:43:15.604 --> 00:43:19.464

inadequacies here. It's been left, if you like, to the

713

00:43:19.564 --> 00:43:21.604

supplier of the BESS units.

714

00:43:22.824 --> 00:43:26.484

Now, the final point I'd like to mention is about the emissions

715

00:43:27.064 --> 00:43:31.024

from these things. The, the, uh, modeling here has been

716

00:43:31.124 --> 00:43:35.104

done for, uh, a one kilometer area.

717

00:43:35.124 --> 00:43:37.364

That was what was assumed by the modeling.

718

00:43:37.944 --> 00:43:40.924

I would suggest that this needs to be checked.

719

00:43:40.944 --> 00:43:44.464

There are much better modeling, uh, packages around.

720

00:43:44.484 --> 00:43:48.084

The Met Office, in particular, is very good at this kind of

721

00:43:48.124 --> 00:43:52.094

thing, and I would be much more comfortable if this was done by

722

00:43:52.184 --> 00:43:54.074

a Met Office, uh,

723

00:43:55.044 --> 00:43:58.944

consultancy or, or agency. But worse than this

724

00:43:59.424 --> 00:44:02.964

is the PM10 issue that was brought up in the

725

00:44:03.024 --> 00:44:06.744

report. PM10s are particles

726

00:44:06.964 --> 00:44:08.784

of 10 microns diameter.

727

00:44:10.064 --> 00:44:14.004

Most of these BESS fires, uh, contain particles all

728

00:44:14.044 --> 00:44:16.634

the way down to fractions of an, of a

729

00:44:16.664 --> 00:44:19.724

micrometer. So, and they're the ones that are

730

00:44:19.764 --> 00:44:23.723

dangerous. The ones that are really dangerous to human health

731

00:44:23.784 --> 00:44:27.684

are the ones in the sub-one micron size

732

00:44:27.784 --> 00:44:31.204

range. And if you look at the report which has just been

733

00:44:31.284 --> 00:44:35.064

published of the big disaster at Moss Hill, uh, L-

734

00:44:35.084 --> 00:44:38.924

Moss Landing in California, you will find that there

735

00:44:38.964 --> 00:44:42.783

was heavy metal oxides spread for six or seven

736

00:44:42.824 --> 00:44:45.634

kilometers from the heart of the fire.

737

00:44:45.644 --> 00:44:49.164

But there was illness, respiratory problems for

738

00:44:49.284 --> 00:44:52.184

further than that. And it's these ultrafine

739

00:44:52.284 --> 00:44:55.144

particles which cause the problems of

740

00:44:55.204 --> 00:44:59.004

health. A small particle of less than 100

741

00:44:59.044 --> 00:45:02.984

nanometers, that's a tenth of a micrometer, can be

742

00:45:03.044 --> 00:45:05.664

absorbed directly into the brain.

743

00:45:05.704 --> 00:45:09.564

And it's that kind of worry which I have when dealing with any

744

00:45:09.684 --> 00:45:13.284

fire. Not just BESS, but any fire. My question would

745

00:45:13.344 --> 00:45:17.064

be, what are the, what are the particles in the small size

746

00:45:17.124 --> 00:45:21.104

range, what are they made of, and where are they likely to go?

747

00:45:21.644 --> 00:45:24.844

And I don't believe these have been addressed in any of the safety

748

00:45:24.944 --> 00:45:28.654

considerations for the event of a BESS failure.

749

00:45:28.664 --> 00:45:31.064

And I think I'd leave it at that point.

750

00:45:31.084 --> 00:45:33.264

Thank you.

751

00:45:35.324 --> 00:45:36.744

Thank you very much, Professor Dobson.

752

00:45:36.834 --> 00:45:40.624

Is there any response from the applicant on that please?

753

00:45:42.884 --> 00:45:44.224

Uh, Claire Project for the applicant.

754

00:45:44.244 --> 00:45:45.684

And before I bring in, um,

755

00:45:46.684 --> 00:45:50.424

Mr. Gregory to answer some of the specific questions in relation to,

756

00:45:50.524 --> 00:45:54.504

um, the specifications, um, I just wanted to reiterate

757

00:45:54.644 --> 00:45:58.304

that, um, as is consistent with other nationally

758

00:45:58.344 --> 00:46:01.984

significant infrastructure projects that include co-located energy

759

00:46:02.064 --> 00:46:05.564

storage, matters relating to, um, battery storage

760

00:46:05.684 --> 00:46:09.324

safety, um, are dealt with by requirement.

761

00:46:09.404 --> 00:46:13.084

Um, in this case, it's requirement six, which requires a battery

762

00:46:13.124 --> 00:46:16.674

storage safety management plan, um, to be submitted and approved

763

00:46:17.044 --> 00:46:20.644

prior to commencing works relating to, um, the

764

00:46:20.684 --> 00:46:24.404

BESS. Um, that, uh, battery storage safety management

765

00:46:24.504 --> 00:46:28.124

plan must be substantially in accordance with the outline plan.

766

00:46:28.184 --> 00:46:32.084

Um, the most, uh, uh, the, which is, um, reference

767

00:46:32.344 --> 00:46:35.684

APP-511.

768

00:46:36.364 --> 00:46:36.614

Um,

769

00:46:37.544 --> 00:46:40.384

the relevant planning authority, um, as part of that

770

00:46:40.404 --> 00:46:44.144

discharge of the requirement needs to consult both with

771

00:46:44.464 --> 00:46:48.404

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, um, and the

772

00:46:48.444 --> 00:46:52.333

Environment Agency to have their input before,

773

00:46:52.384 --> 00:46:54.333

um, the plan is finalized. Um,

774

00:46:55.884 --> 00:46:59.684

it is correct to say that there is, um, limited

775

00:46:59.784 --> 00:47:03.764

detail as part of the DCO application in relation to the specific type of

776

00:47:03.804 --> 00:47:06.044

technology that is going to be deployed.

777

00:47:06.064 --> 00:47:09.524

And that is consistent, um, with DCO applications

778

00:47:09.704 --> 00:47:13.444

whereby, um, consent is being sought for development that

779

00:47:13.504 --> 00:47:17.264

fits within, um, specified parameters, but allows for the

780

00:47:17.324 --> 00:47:21.164

applicant to take advantage of the most up-to-date technology that's

781

00:47:21.204 --> 00:47:23.804

available, um, at the point of construction.

782

00:47:23.844 --> 00:47:27.684

So, a particular type, um, uh, sort of, or, um,

783

00:47:27.744 --> 00:47:31.584

supplier of, um, BESS is not specified

784

00:47:31.704 --> 00:47:35.614
or, um, uh, controlled at

785
00:47:35.644 --> 00:47:39.624
this stage in the process. Um, and that's where the, the final details of the

786
00:47:39.684 --> 00:47:43.384
proposed storage system will be, um, submitted for

787
00:47:43.424 --> 00:47:47.144
approval post-DCO consent. So that, the, the level of

788
00:47:47.184 --> 00:47:51.084
detail is entirely consistent with, um, nationally

789
00:47:51.164 --> 00:47:54.324
significant infrastructure projects and the way in which, um, they are

790
00:47:54.364 --> 00:47:58.304
consented. Um, therefore, any indic- so

791
00:47:58.344 --> 00:48:01.524
the works plans specify the, uh, where the

792
00:48:01.624 --> 00:48:05.174
footprint of the BESS can be located, but any other

793
00:48:05.204 --> 00:48:08.904
drawings that are provided in terms of sort of indicative layouts

794
00:48:09.024 --> 00:48:11.804
are, as, uh, as they said, they are indicative.

795
00:48:11.864 --> 00:48:15.774
Uh, and final drawings setting out, um, the detail of the BESS and spacing and

796
00:48:15.824 --> 00:48:19.784
those sorts of things would be at the detailed design stage.

797

00:48:19.864 --> 00:48:23.664

Um, I will hand over to, um, Mr. Gregory, who can

798

00:48:23.704 --> 00:48:27.324

provide some, uh, responses in

799

00:48:27.384 --> 00:48:31.054

brief to, um, the points raised, both in terms of,

800

00:48:31.164 --> 00:48:35.094

um, sort of the, the various standards, um, that have,

801

00:48:35.204 --> 00:48:39.034

um, been applied, um, the safety, um, measures that

802

00:48:39.064 --> 00:48:42.564

will be, uh, put in place, um, but also an update on the

803

00:48:42.604 --> 00:48:46.464

discussions that have taken place with, um, the Fire and Rescue Service.

804

00:48:46.484 --> 00:48:47.124

Thank you.

805

00:49:02.294 --> 00:49:05.734

Thank you. Uh, Paul Gregory speaking for the applicant.

806

00:49:05.854 --> 00:49:09.394

Uh, thanks to Professor Dobson for some of his, uh, queries

807

00:49:09.474 --> 00:49:13.414

there. Um, I'll try and, uh, go through them in a, in a sort of

808

00:49:13.474 --> 00:49:17.314

relatively linear fashion. Um, but ultimately

809

00:49:17.434 --> 00:49:21.314

just to stress that the outline battery storage safety management

810

00:49:21.434 --> 00:49:25.314
plan, the OBSSMP, uh, rep 1-143

811
00:49:26.033 --> 00:49:29.564
has been prepared to prevent and fully mitigate the risks from a
BESS failure

812
00:49:29.614 --> 00:49:32.814
event. Uh, the safety objectives are listed in section

813
00:49:32.954 --> 00:49:36.314
2.4. And with the first comment, Professor

814
00:49:36.394 --> 00:49:39.714
Dobson's, uh, query, uh, relevant

815
00:49:39.814 --> 00:49:43.294
guidance, section 2.5 lists both

816
00:49:43.534 --> 00:49:47.454
UK and international standards, testing requirements, and

817
00:49:47.534 --> 00:49:51.194
codes, uh, which are very, now very rigorous for,

818
00:49:51.294 --> 00:49:55.174
uh, BESS systems. Uh, and there's, uh, quite an

819
00:49:55.214 --> 00:49:59.074
extensive list, but not exhaustive, uh, in there.

820
00:49:59.174 --> 00:50:02.954
Okay. So, uh, just I think it, it probably makes

821
00:50:03.014 --> 00:50:06.894
sense now just to briefly run through the,

822
00:50:06.954 --> 00:50:10.514
uh, statement of common ground with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue
just before

823

00:50:10.614 --> 00:50:14.364

I, I dig into, um, some more details from Professor

824

00:50:14.454 --> 00:50:18.434

Dobson's queries there. Okay. So, uh, (clears throat)

825

00:50:18.444 --> 00:50:22.194

the applicant has ensured site design is fully compliant with National Fire Chief's

826

00:50:22.254 --> 00:50:25.794

Council guidance and has worked closely with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue

827

00:50:25.894 --> 00:50:29.714

Service to address both site-specific operational and access

828

00:50:29.794 --> 00:50:32.274

requirements for the fire service.

829

00:50:32.334 --> 00:50:36.174

Um, section 5 of the OBSSMP covers all

830

00:50:36.234 --> 00:50:39.914

requisite firefighting considerations, including fire breaks,

831

00:50:39.974 --> 00:50:43.114

firefighting water containment, firefighting water supply

832

00:50:43.154 --> 00:50:47.014

requirements, all aspects of emergency planning, including

833

00:50:47.114 --> 00:50:50.394

emergency response plans and risk management plans.

834

00:50:50.494 --> 00:50:54.074

Uh, s- there's a summary of plume study consequence modeling, uh, to

835

00:50:54.114 --> 00:50:58.084

validate, uh, BESS site locations, which I'll return to, uh,

836

00:50:58.114 --> 00:51:01.214

a later point to add- to address some comments made by Professor

837

00:51:01.274 --> 00:51:05.104

Dobson. Um, the applicant and NFRS signed a statement of

838

00:51:05.194 --> 00:51:09.134

common ground at deadline two, which demonstrates that the applicant has followed

839

00:51:09.174 --> 00:51:13.124

all key BESS safety guidance and has fully assessed fire,

840

00:51:13.174 --> 00:51:16.674

explosion, toxic emission, and flood risks.

841

00:51:16.694 --> 00:51:20.394

The statement of common ground confirms the applicant commits to prioritizing

842

00:51:20.554 --> 00:51:24.454

four key safety areas identified by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue

843

00:51:24.554 --> 00:51:28.414

Service. Uh, point one is NFCC guidance for the

844

00:51:28.474 --> 00:51:32.234

design of, uh, BESS system sites. Uh,

845

00:51:32.314 --> 00:51:36.254

two is BESS safety standard commitments for the scheme.

846

00:51:36.374 --> 00:51:39.574

Uh, number three is BESS area firefighting provisions and

847

00:51:39.654 --> 00:51:43.214

expectations for NFRS involvement.

848

00:51:43.534 --> 00:51:47.423

Uh, and, uh, point four is NFRS site access and

849

00:51:47.494 --> 00:51:50.094
operational control requirements.

850
00:51:50.194 --> 00:51:53.374
Um, the applicant has worked with NFRS to

851
00:51:53.414 --> 00:51:57.274
ensure, uh, that all, (clears throat) that site

852
00:51:57.354 --> 00:52:00.934
access is, (clears throat) is possible

853
00:52:01.594 --> 00:52:05.044
and emergency access routes are able, uh, are,

854
00:52:05.094 --> 00:52:08.274
accessible in all weather conditions and that NFRS

855
00:52:08.314 --> 00:52:11.994
appliances, uh, are able to access the site, uh,

856
00:52:12.054 --> 00:52:16.034
including, uh, making sure that vegetation doesn't im- impede
vehicle

857
00:52:16.114 --> 00:52:19.914
access. Uh, the applicant has agreed, uh, appropriate vehicle

858
00:52:19.974 --> 00:52:23.874
passing places with the fire service on all BESS area access

859
00:52:23.894 --> 00:52:27.774
roads, and the applicant confirms, uh, that the detailed design

860
00:52:27.854 --> 00:52:31.534
stage NFRS welfare areas and incident (clears throat)

861
00:52:31.594 --> 00:52:35.024
observation areas for the BESS areas will be fully agreed and

862
00:52:35.074 --> 00:52:38.794

accommodated for the scheme. Um, just

863

00:52:38.874 --> 00:52:41.914

to go back to a point from Professor

864

00:52:41.954 --> 00:52:45.614

Dobson about the system layout. While that is

865

00:52:45.694 --> 00:52:49.634

extensively covered, whilst it is illustrative, it's covered in

866

00:52:49.694 --> 00:52:52.034

the safety management plan, uh, section

867

00:52:52.274 --> 00:52:55.474

4.1.16 to section

868

00:52:55.774 --> 00:52:59.084

4.1.23 and, uh,

869

00:52:59.214 --> 00:53:02.754

paragraphs 4.1.24 to

870

00:53:02.974 --> 00:53:06.854

4.1.29 cover key BESS enclosure design

871

00:53:06.954 --> 00:53:10.673

features, including ingress protection ratings, which

872

00:53:10.714 --> 00:53:14.673

obviously have relevance to, uh, flood risk,

873

00:53:14.754 --> 00:53:18.704

uh, queries. And at the detailed design stage, the applicant will only

874

00:53:18.754 --> 00:53:22.694

select the best design with the appropriate ingress protection rating

875

00:53:22.814 --> 00:53:26.154

for either Greenhill BESS or Greenhill

876

00:53:27.054 --> 00:53:29.624

BESS C sites. Um,

877

00:53:32.434 --> 00:53:36.234

I think, um, one of the key new

878

00:53:36.274 --> 00:53:40.234

testing requirements, uh, which basically answers a lot of the

879

00:53:40.274 --> 00:53:44.154

queries raised by Professor Dobson is that, uh, the revised

880

00:53:44.214 --> 00:53:48.014

OBSNP, um, uh, which was submitted

881

00:53:48.054 --> 00:53:51.934

at, uh, deadline two I think it was, stipulates that the

882

00:53:51.994 --> 00:53:55.814

applicant, at detailed design, will only select the best system that has

883

00:53:56.394 --> 00:54:00.054

been, as mandated under NFPA855, the

884

00:54:00.214 --> 00:54:04.014

2026 revision, must have undertaken large-scale fire

885

00:54:04.094 --> 00:54:07.934

testing as part of UL9548 tests

886

00:54:08.014 --> 00:54:11.454

and/or third-party full-scale destruction testing.

887

00:54:11.514 --> 00:54:15.174

This testing involves the burning of four BESS systems to validate safe

888

00:54:15.434 --> 00:54:18.854

equipment spacing and performance test active and passive

889

00:54:18.894 --> 00:54:22.324

mitigation systems integrated into the BESS design.

890

00:54:22.354 --> 00:54:25.914

The objective of the test is to evaluate the thermal exposure impacts from

891

00:54:26.054 --> 00:54:29.574

developed BESS enclosure to determine propagation risk to

892

00:54:29.614 --> 00:54:33.434

adjacent BESS or equipment. Testing also defines the

893

00:54:33.474 --> 00:54:37.454

length of burn, duration of peak heat release rate, maximum burn

894

00:54:37.464 --> 00:54:38.714

temperatures, et cetera.

895

00:54:39.834 --> 00:54:43.414

Detailed design phase of the scheme will consider the life cycle of the battery

896

00:54:43.494 --> 00:54:46.234

system from installation all the way through to

897

00:54:46.294 --> 00:54:50.194

decommissioning. At the detailed design stage, the selected BESS will have

898

00:54:50.214 --> 00:54:53.814

undertaken the LSFT to fully inform

899

00:54:53.874 --> 00:54:57.634

inputs for risk assessment tools, which were utilized together

900

00:54:57.674 --> 00:55:01.314

with detailed consequence modeling to provide a comprehensive

901

00:55:01.454 --> 00:55:04.534

site operations and emergency response safety

902

00:55:04.574 --> 00:55:08.205

audit.... LSFT of the selected best design is

903

00:55:08.245 --> 00:55:11.566

conducted to establish minimum equipment spacing

904

00:55:11.846 --> 00:55:15.645

distances where there's no fire propagation to an adjacent BESS

905

00:55:15.656 --> 00:55:18.566

infrastructure, and the site-specific consequence

906

00:55:18.665 --> 00:55:22.185

modeling will provide (clears throat) a clear evidence-based

907

00:55:22.245 --> 00:55:26.125

case for the final BESS area installation plans at the detailed

908

00:55:26.165 --> 00:55:29.665

design stage. These will be fully agreed

909

00:55:29.725 --> 00:55:33.475

with NFRS. In addition, the applicant will also

910

00:55:33.506 --> 00:55:37.145

commission (clears throat) site-specific heat flux and flame tilt

911

00:55:37.225 --> 00:55:41.205

consequence modeling to account for site topography and wind conditions to

912

00:55:41.245 --> 00:55:44.176

establish final equipment spacing distances for the

913

00:55:44.225 --> 00:55:47.546

scheme. (coughs) Excuse

914

00:55:47.606 --> 00:55:51.185

me. The applicant confirms that in line with both

915

00:55:51.386 --> 00:55:54.765

NFCC, National Fire Chiefs Council, guidelines and

916

00:55:54.846 --> 00:55:58.286

NFPA 855 guidance, which is the, uh,

917

00:55:58.326 --> 00:56:02.185

global safety standard from North America for all BESS site

918

00:56:02.245 --> 00:56:06.046

design and safety, uh, that for all

919

00:56:06.066 --> 00:56:09.806

BESS failure scenarios, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are only

920

00:56:09.826 --> 00:56:13.455

expected to take a defensive firefighting strategy, i.e.

921

00:56:13.606 --> 00:56:16.446

observation and only applying boundary cooling if

922

00:56:16.466 --> 00:56:19.906

necessary. The BESS area water supply system for

923

00:56:20.026 --> 00:56:23.926

NFRS allows us for ease of access in all weather conditions

924

00:56:23.966 --> 00:56:27.806

and in- (clears throat) and ensures that firefighters do not have to operate within

925

00:56:27.846 --> 00:56:31.566

a smoke plume. Um, emergency response plans can

926

00:56:31.705 --> 00:56:35.526

only be drafted when based upon a specific BESS design.

927

00:56:35.586 --> 00:56:39.245

Uh, key safety content requires that all equipment within the BESS area is

928

00:56:39.306 --> 00:56:43.026

defined, battery system operating limits and test data are fully

929

00:56:43.086 --> 00:56:46.066

defined, and the BESS failure protection system is d-

930

00:56:46.086 --> 00:56:49.966

defined. Incident response tactics require significant test

931

00:56:50.046 --> 00:56:53.866

data and rigorous consequence modeling from the specific BESS

932

00:56:53.926 --> 00:56:57.486

design to develop safe protocols, uh, for incident

933

00:56:57.546 --> 00:57:01.326

response. Um, section 5.4.4 of the

934

00:57:01.366 --> 00:57:05.185

OBSSMP stipulates that the emergency response

935

00:57:05.286 --> 00:57:08.145

plan will follow NFCC and NFPA

936

00:57:08.966 --> 00:57:12.886

855 guidelines and stipulates the minimum content that an

937

00:57:12.966 --> 00:57:16.386

ERP must contain, including emergency

938

00:57:16.466 --> 00:57:19.906

procedures for all credible hazards and risks, including

939

00:57:20.006 --> 00:57:23.586

building, infrastructure and vehicle fires, wildfires,

940

00:57:23.625 --> 00:57:26.816

impacts on local residents, impacts on transport and

941

00:57:26.866 --> 00:57:30.645
infrastructure. And section 6.1.8 of the

942

00:57:30.685 --> 00:57:34.415
OBSSMP stipulates emergency response plans covering

943

00:57:34.466 --> 00:57:38.306
construction, operation, and decommissioning phases will be
developed

944

00:57:38.406 --> 00:57:42.026
once a construction team and an operator have been appointed.

945

00:57:42.066 --> 00:57:45.765
These plans will be developed in consultation with Northamptonshire
Fire and Rescue

946

00:57:45.866 --> 00:57:49.685
Service and other local emergency services to include the adequate

947

00:57:49.886 --> 00:57:53.486
provision of firefighting equipment on site and ensure that fire

948

00:57:53.566 --> 00:57:57.245
smoke and any release of toxic gases from a thermal runaway incident

949

00:57:57.665 --> 00:58:00.676
does not significantly affect site operatives, first

950

00:58:00.725 --> 00:58:03.075
responders, and the local community.

951

00:58:03.426 --> 00:58:07.026
This is secured through the DC0. Um,

952

00:58:07.946 --> 00:58:11.886
if I just, uh, then try to move on to the comments

953

00:58:12.265 --> 00:58:15.326
about the Wartsila testing and plume studies.

954

00:58:15.366 --> 00:58:19.346

So first of all, uh, the Wartsila testing was, as I've just

955

00:58:19.366 --> 00:58:23.106

described there, which is a large-scale fire testing, so that,

956

00:58:23.176 --> 00:58:26.466

that fire testing took place, uh, to establish

957

00:58:26.566 --> 00:58:29.645

minimum, uh, space equipment, spacing

958

00:58:29.745 --> 00:58:33.106

distances, and no fire propagation, uh,

959

00:58:34.265 --> 00:58:37.705

occurred in two separate tests that happened.

960

00:58:37.745 --> 00:58:41.466

Uh, since then, Wartsila have done several more large-scale, uh, burn testing

961

00:58:41.566 --> 00:58:45.205

to establish, uh, additional systems that they have.

962

00:58:45.306 --> 00:58:48.866

Uh, so this is now, uh, as is mandated under

963

00:58:49.286 --> 00:58:53.006

N- NFP 855, it has to be done as part of either

964

00:58:53.145 --> 00:58:56.806

UL 9540A testing or through an accredited

965

00:58:56.886 --> 00:59:00.366

third-party test facility, uh, such as CSA,

966

00:59:00.426 --> 00:59:04.145

DNV, uh, TUV SUD, et cetera. So this is both

967

00:59:04.245 --> 00:59:08.125

peer-reviewed and witnessed by fire protection, fire

968

00:59:08.185 --> 00:59:11.685

protection engineer experts. Okay.

969

00:59:11.786 --> 00:59:12.026

Um,

970

00:59:13.205 --> 00:59:16.886

now just to clear up some confusion over the

971

00:59:17.426 --> 00:59:21.406

terms of the plume study, the one kilometer radius

972

00:59:21.625 --> 00:59:24.685

for sensitive receptors is in fact part of

973

00:59:24.966 --> 00:59:28.406

NFCC guidance. Okay. Uh,

974

00:59:28.886 --> 00:59:32.846

so the plume study was commissioned particularly under

975

00:59:33.125 --> 00:59:36.955

that scope, uh, to assess the environmental impact of a BESS

976

00:59:37.046 --> 00:59:40.685

thermal runaway incident to all sensitive receptors within a one kilometer

977

00:59:40.705 --> 00:59:44.346

radius. So for example, that, uh, included the

978

00:59:44.366 --> 00:59:47.906

historic woodland, which is a public right-of-way too, which was

979

00:59:47.926 --> 00:59:50.006

referenced earlier this morning.

980

00:59:50.106 --> 00:59:53.826

Um, and basically the plume study must assess potential to cause air

981

00:59:53.886 --> 00:59:56.566

quality impacts during a BESS fire.

982

00:59:56.625 --> 01:00:00.185

Concentrations of carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, hydrogen

983

01:00:00.265 --> 01:00:03.526

chloride, hydrogen cyanide, hydrogen fluoride,

984

01:00:03.546 --> 01:00:07.446

ammonia, nitrogen dioxide, and particulates

985

01:00:07.765 --> 01:00:11.466

were modeled using, uh, atmospheric dispersion modeling

986

01:00:11.606 --> 01:00:15.346

software, uh, to determine the effects of BESS fire emissions on

987

01:00:15.446 --> 01:00:19.205

human health. The comments Professor Dobson made about

988

01:00:19.265 --> 01:00:23.185

particulate matter sizes are specifically through

989

01:00:23.246 --> 01:00:26.705

the contribution of the UK Health and Security

990

01:00:27.205 --> 01:00:30.296

Agency to previous, um, uh,

991

01:00:30.765 --> 01:00:34.685

DCO plume studies where they've asked that those two sizes

992

01:00:34.725 --> 01:00:38.506

for particulate matter are considered because they are,

993

01:00:38.606 --> 01:00:42.586

um, air quality, uh, benchmarks for, for

994

01:00:42.786 --> 01:00:45.946

UK air quality standards. So that is why

995

01:00:46.066 --> 01:00:49.725

particularly they are in there. But I, uh...

996

01:00:49.765 --> 01:00:52.705

It's probably easier in, in written evidence, but

997

01:00:52.826 --> 01:00:56.685

certainly, uh, I can talk through, uh,

998

01:00:56.705 --> 01:01:00.606

great detail about how all particulates, heavy metal particulates,

999

01:01:00.625 --> 01:01:03.765

which were referred to especially, are now, uh,

1000

01:01:03.826 --> 01:01:05.980

quantified through X-rays.....

1001

01:01:06.190 --> 01:01:09.410

uh, specifications, uh, and also FTIR

1002

01:01:09.890 --> 01:01:13.640

testing. But that's probably, uh, better to submit in writing

1003

01:01:13.710 --> 01:01:15.839

because it, it's quite detailed and technical.

1004

01:01:16.470 --> 01:01:20.210

Um, just to re- ... Uh, just to return

1005

01:01:20.310 --> 01:01:23.730

to, uh, the plume study, uh, the NFCC

1006

01:01:23.750 --> 01:01:27.740

recommendations that high level visibility assessment, uh,

1007

01:01:27.810 --> 01:01:31.680
impacts on, uh, local, uh, transport networks

1008
01:01:31.990 --> 01:01:35.319
were also included within the remit of that study.

1009
01:01:35.370 --> 01:01:38.850
Uh, the plume study concludes there are no significant impacts on sensitive

1010
01:01:38.890 --> 01:01:42.150
receptors. Nonetheless, at the detailed design

1011
01:01:42.250 --> 01:01:45.609
stage, the applicant will commission a BESS system and

1012
01:01:45.730 --> 01:01:49.629
site-specific plume analysis study to assess the environmental impact

1013
01:01:49.810 --> 01:01:53.729
of the site incidents to sensitive receptors within this one-kilometer

1014
01:01:53.990 --> 01:01:57.870
radius. Uh, if it isn't significant within one kilometer, it's not

1015
01:01:57.930 --> 01:02:01.390
significant within five kilometers, such as the way that gases

1016
01:02:01.430 --> 01:02:05.370
disperse. Um, toxic gas emissions to sensitive receptors

1017
01:02:05.549 --> 01:02:09.250
must be below relevant public health exposure limit guidelines

1018
01:02:09.609 --> 01:02:13.069
when the battery system of BESS is fully consumed and burnt

1019
01:02:13.150 --> 01:02:17.029
out. Production of particulate matter and a visibility impact assessment

1020

01:02:17.069 --> 01:02:20.170

on any transport links within this radius will also be

1021

01:02:20.210 --> 01:02:23.990

included. Uh, the emergency response plan produced at the detailed

1022

01:02:24.029 --> 01:02:28.009

design stage, uh, that the, the template of which is outlined in section

1023

01:02:28.270 --> 01:02:32.240

5.4.4 of the OBSMP, will incorporate all

1024

01:02:32.250 --> 01:02:36.150

necessary emergency response procedures and actions based

1025

01:02:36.190 --> 01:02:40.049

upon thermal runaway test data supplied by the BESS system

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01:02:40.370 --> 01:02:43.850

provider. However, as mentioned, that is either,

1027

01:02:43.970 --> 01:02:47.890

um, certified by UL or a

1028

01:02:48.009 --> 01:02:51.890

recognized, uh, global third-party,

1029

01:02:52.029 --> 01:02:52.330

uh,

1030

01:02:53.150 --> 01:02:56.460

entity such as, uh, DMV, TÜV SÜD, uh,

1031

01:02:56.490 --> 01:02:59.960

CSA. Okay? Um, I think just

1032

01:03:00.049 --> 01:03:03.790

a, a small point to make as s- somebody who's been involved

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01:03:03.850 --> 01:03:07.710

with, uh, hundreds of different battery tests f- across all

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01:03:07.790 --> 01:03:11.509

sorts of, um, different batch applications outside of

1035

01:03:11.569 --> 01:03:15.549

BESS, volumes of tox- toxic gases and heavy metal particulates

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01:03:15.558 --> 01:03:19.490

that can be emitted during thermal r- runaway, specifically in

1037

01:03:19.509 --> 01:03:23.470

BESS applications, are often partially contained

1038

01:03:23.509 --> 01:03:27.490

within the BESS enclosure structure itself or within modules, racks,

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01:03:27.509 --> 01:03:31.330

and the interior structure. Um, and they are not vented

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01:03:31.370 --> 01:03:33.350

directly out into the environment.

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01:03:33.430 --> 01:03:37.270

Uh, the EPRI white paper, The Evolution of Battery Energy Storage Codes

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01:03:37.310 --> 01:03:41.290

and Standards notes, whilst laboratory testing identifies

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01:03:41.330 --> 01:03:45.109

toxic compounds that are released, uh, by le- burning li-ion

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01:03:45.170 --> 01:03:48.980

batteries, they may be consumed internally, combusted, or may react to

1045

01:03:49.049 --> 01:03:52.460

form other non-toxic compounds before being released to the

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01:03:52.490 --> 01:03:56.390

environment. In recent events where batches have burned in this fashion,

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01:03:56.450 --> 01:04:00.370

fire services have announced that nearby air quality monitoring has shown the

1048

01:04:00.410 --> 01:04:02.759

air quality to be safe at safe levels.

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01:04:02.790 --> 01:04:06.420

You know, so typically, uh, there was reference to the Moss Landing

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01:04:06.569 --> 01:04:10.560

fire, um, in, uh, the US of

1051

01:04:10.589 --> 01:04:14.250

which isn't relevant to this scheme because that type of battery

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01:04:14.310 --> 01:04:17.589

system would not be selected. Uh, also the fact it was

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01:04:17.649 --> 01:04:21.029

100,000 battery racks in, in a power station,

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01:04:21.109 --> 01:04:24.870

again, from a safety and emissions perspective is, is simply not

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01:04:24.950 --> 01:04:28.250

relevant. And also, as someone who's quite,

1056

01:04:28.370 --> 01:04:31.549

um, well-connected with the Environment Protection Agency in the

1057

01:04:31.649 --> 01:04:35.630

US, um, I would, uh, draw some

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01:04:35.970 --> 01:04:39.250

doubt that some of the claims made there by Professor Dobson have been

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01:04:39.330 --> 01:04:42.819

validated by, uh, a governmental organization, for

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01:04:42.870 --> 01:04:43.490

example.

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01:04:45.569 --> 01:04:49.450

Hopefully, I think ... I apologize for, for the length

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01:04:49.529 --> 01:04:53.509

of that, but hopefully I think I've, uh, responded on,

1063

01:04:53.529 --> 01:04:55.430

on anything I had notes for there.

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01:04:57.950 --> 01:05:00.069

Claire Project for the applicant. Thank you, Mr. Gregory.

1065

01:05:00.109 --> 01:05:03.080

I appreciate that that was quite a lot of technical information.

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01:05:03.089 --> 01:05:06.509

Obviously, the applicant will be submitting a written summary of its oral

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01:05:06.589 --> 01:05:10.410

submissions. So, for those that were listening who want, um, to

1068

01:05:10.549 --> 01:05:14.190

look up the various acronyms and guidances that were

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01:05:14.310 --> 01:05:17.290

mentioned there, that will all be in the, um, written summary.

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01:05:17.390 --> 01:05:21.089

Um, also should, um, uh, Professor Dobson wish to, to

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01:05:21.149 --> 01:05:24.810

respond, he can obviously refer to that written summary in, in any

1072

01:05:24.870 --> 01:05:28.410

response that he wants to provide, um, at the, uh, deadline four.

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01:05:28.430 --> 01:05:30.450

Thank you.

1074

01:05:30.470 --> 01:05:34.330

Professor Dobson, would you like to make any response, um, now, please?

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01:05:34.430 --> 01:05:38.370

Yes, thank you. Yes. I don't accept much of what has

1076

01:05:38.450 --> 01:05:41.580

just been told to us because it's based upon, um,

1077

01:05:41.730 --> 01:05:45.710

speculation as to what will be done later in

1078

01:05:45.770 --> 01:05:49.069

terms of the design of the BESS, uh, layout.

1079

01:05:49.149 --> 01:05:53.089

I think we should be seeing now what the BESS layout is.

1080

01:05:53.130 --> 01:05:56.930

And certainly, if I was in the Northampton Fire Services, I would want to

1081

01:05:57.029 --> 01:06:00.670

see it, because I would want to know how I could maneuver a

1082

01:06:00.790 --> 01:06:04.710

fire engine inside the enclosure to deal with a fire.

1083

01:06:04.750 --> 01:06:08.500

So, I, I don't think th- that, uh, tha- that was

1084

01:06:08.569 --> 01:06:12.370

answered at all well. The other points I would make

1085

01:06:12.569 --> 01:06:16.549

is that, um, uh, we, we were told that there

1086

01:06:16.649 --> 01:06:20.410

are s- safety standards and regulations in the UK.

1087

01:06:20.450 --> 01:06:24.230

There are not. Uh, there are guidance notes, but there are

1088

01:06:24.290 --> 01:06:27.029

no safety standards and regulations.

1089

01:06:27.089 --> 01:06:30.989

So, in the event of a, a disaster, there is nobody there

1090

01:06:31.109 --> 01:06:33.630

to take responsibility for it.

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01:06:34.810 --> 01:06:38.710

The other two points related to emissions is

1092

01:06:38.810 --> 01:06:42.310

I'm fully aware of the American F- EPA, uh,

1093

01:06:42.330 --> 01:06:46.109

standards. They have consistently ignored

1094

01:06:46.410 --> 01:06:50.350

the ultrafine particles and I'm familiar with this because

1095

01:06:50.690 --> 01:06:54.299

for many years I led the European nano safety, uh,

1096

01:06:54.390 --> 01:06:58.109

programs. And it was established beyond any

1097

01:06:58.250 --> 01:07:02.210

doubt that most harm to human health and animal

1098

01:07:02.310 --> 01:07:06.089

health came from the particles which were smaller than a micron in

1109

01:07:06.230 --> 01:07:09.940

size, and they're carried along almost as well as

1100

01:07:09.950 --> 01:07:13.740

gas molecules are. They spread very widely--...

1101

01:07:13.740 --> 01:07:16.530

and they're ex- they can be extremely harmful.

1102

01:07:16.590 --> 01:07:19.990

So, I would submit that we have to be much

1103

01:07:20.050 --> 01:07:20.690

more,

1104

01:07:22.250 --> 01:07:26.160

uh, taking these things into account in establishing the safety

1105

01:07:26.290 --> 01:07:30.190

standards. And I, I think, uh, also, uh, there,

1106

01:07:30.230 --> 01:07:33.650

there has been very little work done on looking at the

1107

01:07:33.730 --> 01:07:37.370

composition and the particulates emitted from lithium-ion

1108

01:07:37.450 --> 01:07:41.190

battery fires. In fact, uh, I looked hard for

1109

01:07:41.210 --> 01:07:45.030

this to find a, a sensible scientific paper and there's only about

1110

01:07:45.210 --> 01:07:47.970

one or two in the past, uh, three

1111

01:07:48.050 --> 01:07:51.810

years. So, this is a gap in knowledge which

1112

01:07:51.990 --> 01:07:54.710

I think is in danger of endangering

1113

01:07:54.720 --> 01:07:58.580

health. So, I would submit that

1114

01:07:58.650 --> 01:08:02.530

it's not quite as clear as, uh, as Paul Gregory has just been telling

1115

01:08:02.590 --> 01:08:06.420

us, that there is a lot of unknown unknowns in there,

1116

01:08:06.450 --> 01:08:08.370

which we need to incorporate in any

1117

01:08:08.390 --> 01:08:10.610

decision-making.

1118

01:08:14.970 --> 01:08:17.980

Thank you. And just if the applicant would like to make any final response at all,

1119

01:08:18.090 --> 01:08:18.160

please?

1120

01:08:18.170 --> 01:08:19.210

Well, b- before, before-

1121

01:08:19.230 --> 01:08:19.830

Oh, I'm sorry.

1122

01:08:19.850 --> 01:08:23.730

Madam, before, um, Ms. Brodrick does, may I just make a couple of points so

1123

01:08:23.770 --> 01:08:27.190

that Ms. Brodrick can respond to, to, to those points,

1124

01:08:27.210 --> 01:08:28.410

please?

1125

01:08:28.490 --> 01:08:28.940

Yes, absolutely.

1126

01:08:28.950 --> 01:08:30.150

Thank you. Um,

1127

01:08:31.490 --> 01:08:35.230

a, a couple of points. First of all, uh, Richard Humphreys, uh, for Stop

1128

01:08:35.290 --> 01:08:38.890

Greenhill Solar. Um, reference was made by

1129

01:08:39.170 --> 01:08:42.790

Mr. Gregory to con- consultation with

1130

01:08:42.870 --> 01:08:45.970

the, um, Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment

1131

01:08:46.070 --> 01:08:49.830

Agency. There's been no reference to the

1132

01:08:49.870 --> 01:08:53.670

involvement or, or consultation with the Health and

1133

01:08:53.810 --> 01:08:57.310

Safety Executive. They, with the Environment

1134

01:08:57.390 --> 01:09:00.890

Agency, are the joint competent authority

1135

01:09:01.430 --> 01:09:04.890

under both the Planning Hazardous Substances

1136

01:09:04.990 --> 01:09:08.470

Regulations of 2015 and also the

1137

01:09:08.529 --> 01:09:12.120

COMAH, or the Control of, uh,

1138

01:09:12.410 --> 01:09:16.029

Major Accident Hazards Regulations of 2015.

1139

01:09:16.550 --> 01:09:19.729

So, that's an important element, HSE.

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01:09:19.770 --> 01:09:23.330

It's not just Environment Agency, important though Environment Agency

1141

01:09:23.350 --> 01:09:26.870

are. The second point i- is, is

1142

01:09:26.990 --> 01:09:30.830

this. The, uh, we are only two years

1143

01:09:30.890 --> 01:09:34.870

away, roughly, from the battery

1144

01:09:35.750 --> 01:09:39.200

storage being c- uh, actually coming into...

1145

01:09:39.270 --> 01:09:43.210

actually being built. So, we must surely, one asks

1146

01:09:43.230 --> 01:09:46.670

rhetorically, one must know pretty much now

1147

01:09:47.430 --> 01:09:51.090

what system will be operated. All that we have to go

1148

01:09:51.190 --> 01:09:54.000

on is APP205 and

1149

01:09:54.090 --> 01:09:57.950

206, which are the layouts, the

1150

01:09:58.010 --> 01:09:59.170

illustrative layouts.

1151

01:10:00.030 --> 01:10:03.890

Um, we've heard from, um, Professor Dobson, and I think

1152

01:10:03.950 --> 01:10:07.470

it's option A, but the layout there shows some

1153

01:10:07.810 --> 01:10:11.510

550-odd containers. And he's

1154

01:10:11.550 --> 01:10:15.170

referred to spacing, some of them being apparently only a meter

1155

01:10:15.210 --> 01:10:18.730

apart. That doesn't seem to

1156

01:10:19.050 --> 01:10:22.530

meet any category of minimum

1157

01:10:22.590 --> 01:10:26.510

guidance for spacing. So, one has to ask,

1158

01:10:26.630 --> 01:10:30.170

if in due course when HSE

1159

01:10:30.530 --> 01:10:33.430

are eventually asked for their views, they

1160

01:10:33.590 --> 01:10:37.510

say... Or, for example, the National Fire and Rescue Service said,

1161

01:10:37.520 --> 01:10:41.450

"Oh, no, we want greater spacing," at that point,

1162

01:10:41.530 --> 01:10:45.190

what then? Either there won't be

1163

01:10:45.230 --> 01:10:46.210

enough space

1164

01:10:48.410 --> 01:10:52.210

at the, uh, Grendon BESS, so one has to

1165

01:10:52.270 --> 01:10:56.010

then go to BESS, uh, the one at C,

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01:10:56.110 --> 01:10:59.330

site C, which only has one access point, we

1167

01:10:59.350 --> 01:11:02.950

believe. Uh, so, i-

1168

01:11:03.350 --> 01:11:07.310

th- or if there's not enough space there, because we don't know what

1169

01:11:07.370 --> 01:11:11.270

these spacings requirements are actually going to be at this stage, and this is

1170

01:11:11.310 --> 01:11:15.250

the planning stage. Or we're going to f- be faced with

1171

01:11:15.310 --> 01:11:19.250

a DCO. "Oh, look, we built this. We need

1172

01:11:19.350 --> 01:11:23.230

more storage. It's in the public interest, the national interest that we

1173

01:11:23.290 --> 01:11:26.990

need more battery storage." So, something else will have to

1174

01:11:27.090 --> 01:11:30.350

give. The DCO will already have been given.

1175

01:11:30.370 --> 01:11:34.250

The parcel will have been sold. And that is why we

1176

01:11:34.290 --> 01:11:37.810

need to know at this stage what the spacing

1177

01:11:37.830 --> 01:11:41.690

requirements are, what implications for planning terms

1178

01:11:41.750 --> 01:11:45.610

that has at this stage, both in terms of bunding,

1179

01:11:45.670 --> 01:11:48.570

what the height, what potential height might it be?

1180

01:11:48.610 --> 01:11:51.950

One-and-a-half meter height concrete all the way round?

1181

01:11:52.030 --> 01:11:55.370

Uh, has the visual i- impact of that been looked at?

1182

01:11:55.510 --> 01:11:59.210

And, uh, likewise, uh, in terms of the spacing

1183

01:11:59.270 --> 01:12:03.010

requirements, will there be a need for further, uh, for further,

1184

01:12:03.070 --> 01:12:06.990

uh, land? We've already shrunk from BESSes 1, 2 and

1185

01:12:07.130 --> 01:12:07.610

3.

1186

01:12:08.690 --> 01:12:11.870

Where will the c- next compromise have to come?

1187

01:12:11.910 --> 01:12:14.670

So, I, I, I mention that we're only two years away.

1188

01:12:14.680 --> 01:12:18.530

Surely, we ought t- to know. It's not enough, with great respect, to say, "Oh,

1189

01:12:18.590 --> 01:12:22.160

this is what other pe- uh, other schemes have done." We're

1190

01:12:22.190 --> 01:12:25.870

dealing with the evidence before this in- examination

1191

01:12:26.490 --> 01:12:30.130

and frankly, pulling oneself up by, "Oh,

1192

01:12:30.150 --> 01:12:33.870

well, generally we haven't... we've been rather sloppy before," it doesn't

1193

01:12:33.890 --> 01:12:37.690

really, um, meet, uh, the, the, the, the

1194

01:12:37.770 --> 01:12:41.730

current matters. So, uh, the... And then it said,

1195

01:12:41.770 --> 01:12:45.630

"Oh, well, the NFCC only have a guidance for their

1196

01:12:45.690 --> 01:12:48.730

guidance because it's not a requirement, it's not mandatory.

1197

01:12:48.750 --> 01:12:52.090

Well, we ask you to do your plume test for a one-kilometer

1198

01:12:52.150 --> 01:12:55.970

radius." And yet Professor Dobson has referred to

1199

01:12:56.490 --> 01:13:00.470

examples where material, harmful material, had

1200

01:13:00.510 --> 01:13:03.750

been found some six or seven kilometers away, I think he

1201

01:13:03.810 --> 01:13:07.620

said. Now, "It may be," says Mr.,

1202

01:13:07.730 --> 01:13:10.750

uh, Gregory, "Oh, well, air quality for human

1203

01:13:10.810 --> 01:13:14.270

health, uh, requi- that's why we're only looking at one

1204

01:13:14.330 --> 01:13:17.820
kilometer." I don't accept that, but if just taking that as

1205
01:13:17.870 --> 01:13:21.650
posit. What about the environment, the other

1206
01:13:21.830 --> 01:13:25.406
ecological..... issues, including the water

1207
01:13:25.566 --> 01:13:29.186
environment. Rather important, as we heard from other

1208
01:13:29.226 --> 01:13:32.125
witnesses, we well know. What about them?

1209
01:13:32.146 --> 01:13:35.806
Because that's not covered by UK air quality

1210
01:13:35.925 --> 01:13:37.306
standards or anything else.

1211
01:13:38.465 --> 01:13:42.026
So, it's, it's not enough to say, "Oh, the NFCC

1212
01:13:42.106 --> 01:13:45.165
guidance is one kilometer," when we have

1213
01:13:45.705 --> 01:13:49.545
evidence of it being found, uh, ha- harmful material, very

1214
01:13:49.686 --> 01:13:53.415
unpleasant material, being found some six or seven kilometers

1215
01:13:53.505 --> 01:13:57.005
away. How did that arise there? There are all these

1216
01:13:57.045 --> 01:14:00.995
questions, and one comes back to the Wartsila simply not

1217
01:14:01.026 --> 01:14:02.786
being peer-reviewed. One,

1218

01:14:03.846 --> 01:14:07.205
one test, uh, and one would

1219

01:14:07.266 --> 01:14:10.806
really want to see a peer-review.

1220

01:14:10.866 --> 01:14:14.406
Not, with the greatest respect to Wartsila, a commercial

1221

01:14:14.505 --> 01:14:16.826
company, it's not sufficient,

1222

01:14:17.906 --> 01:14:21.686
b- in terms of independence and transparency, for there not to

1223

01:14:21.726 --> 01:14:25.175
be something before the, uh, examination, before

1224

01:14:25.205 --> 01:14:28.925
decision-maker, which shows that there has been a

1225

01:14:28.965 --> 01:14:32.866
proper peer-review. Um, uh, I

1226

01:14:32.946 --> 01:14:36.896
d- mean no discrepancy at all to Wartsila, but it is...

1227

01:14:36.925 --> 01:14:40.736
We all know, we all need, we all benefit from checks and balances

1228

01:14:41.246 --> 01:14:45.146
and independent scrutiny rather than, um, uh, our,

1229

01:14:45.205 --> 01:14:48.406
our particular, um, w- well-meaning but we may be

1230

01:14:48.446 --> 01:14:50.866
misguided. I think those are the points I wanted to make.

1231

01:14:50.925 --> 01:14:53.085
Thank you very much.

1232
01:14:55.026 --> 01:14:57.826
Thank you, Mr. Humphries. Is there any response from the applicant
at

1233
01:14:57.835 --> 01:14:59.125
all?

1234
01:14:59.226 --> 01:15:00.306
Uh, Claire Burch for the applicant.

1235
01:15:00.326 --> 01:15:03.545
Obviously, we've, um, explained in quite a degree of

1236
01:15:03.646 --> 01:15:07.585
detail, um, the work that's been undertaken to date as part

1237
01:15:07.625 --> 01:15:11.306
of the DCO application and the further work that will be done as

1238
01:15:11.366 --> 01:15:14.806
part of the, um, discharge of the requirement

1239
01:15:14.906 --> 01:15:18.505
relating to the, um, battery Safety Management

1240
01:15:18.646 --> 01:15:21.885
Plan. Um, and Mr. Gregory, um, explained the

1241
01:15:21.925 --> 01:15:25.186
further, um, studies and modeling that will be

1242
01:15:25.246 --> 01:15:28.786
undertaken once the detailed design, um, has been

1243
01:15:28.826 --> 01:15:32.146
confirmed, um, and that that will form part of the discharge of that

1244
01:15:32.186 --> 01:15:35.766

requirement. Um, as I mentioned earlier, that is standard for

1245

01:15:35.826 --> 01:15:39.486

DCO applications. The detailed design is not available at this stage in the

1246

01:15:39.545 --> 01:15:42.806

process. That is the same for all DCOs.

1247

01:15:42.875 --> 01:15:46.866

Um, some of the comments that were made, um, by

1248

01:15:46.885 --> 01:15:50.346

Mr. Humphries, um, are not, are not correct.

1249

01:15:50.366 --> 01:15:54.346

The works plans do clearly delineate where the BESS

1250

01:15:54.366 --> 01:15:58.226

can be located. Should the applicant wish to locate BESS outside of

1251

01:15:58.286 --> 01:16:01.486

that area, it would need to apply to amend the DCO

1252

01:16:01.526 --> 01:16:04.746

application. Um, other parameters

1253

01:16:04.826 --> 01:16:08.486

associated with the BESS, um, that relate to other planning

1254

01:16:08.545 --> 01:16:12.045

considerations such as landscape and visual are controlled by

1255

01:16:12.106 --> 01:16:12.686

the, um,

1256

01:16:13.545 --> 01:16:17.146

concept design parameters and principles, including height, and again that's

1257

01:16:17.165 --> 01:16:20.646

secured by way of requirement. So, there are strict

1258

01:16:20.686 --> 01:16:24.665

controls within the DC0 that ensure that the final design

1259

01:16:24.726 --> 01:16:28.714

has to meet the, uh, Rochdale Envelope that has been assessed in

1260

01:16:28.766 --> 01:16:31.275

the environmental statement. Um,

1261

01:16:33.125 --> 01:16:36.885

we've given a number of examples of, of where the Secretary of State

1262

01:16:36.965 --> 01:16:40.746

has, um, uh, considered that this, this

1263

01:16:40.846 --> 01:16:43.606

method of securing, um, safety measures is

1264

01:16:43.665 --> 01:16:46.835

acceptable. Um, we have

1265

01:16:46.885 --> 01:16:50.646

also, um, provided details of the engagement that has taken place with the

1266

01:16:50.686 --> 01:16:53.726

relevant stakeholders. It should be noted that other

1267

01:16:54.226 --> 01:16:57.306

stakeholders such as the HSE, um, are

1268

01:16:57.625 --> 01:17:01.366

consultees, um, as part of the DC0 application

1269

01:17:01.486 --> 01:17:05.106

process and they have not, um, as far as we're aware,

1270

01:17:05.146 --> 01:17:07.585

submitted any representations,

1271

01:17:09.026 --> 01:17:12.275

um, uh, uh, having any issues with the proposals, either at scoping, statutory

1272

01:17:12.326 --> 01:17:15.955

consultation, or when the DCO application was, um,

1273

01:17:16.125 --> 01:17:19.885

submitted. So, um, it's not correct to say that they haven't been involved in the

1274

01:17:19.925 --> 01:17:22.705

process, um, but we don't have anything further to say.

1275

01:17:22.726 --> 01:17:22.925

Thank

1276

01:17:22.986 --> 01:17:26.965

you.

1277

01:17:30.686 --> 01:17:34.505

Thank you. So, I think we will now

1278

01:17:34.545 --> 01:17:37.976

move on to, um, agenda item 3.4, which is Effects for

1279

01:17:38.066 --> 01:17:41.125

Landscape, and Mrs. Norman. Thank you.

1280

01:17:41.206 --> 01:17:41.616

Uh, Claire Burch-

1281

01:17:41.684 --> 01:17:41.695

W-

1282

01:17:41.925 --> 01:17:44.266

... for the applicant. The applicant's team is just going to sh-reshuffle.

1283

01:17:44.304 --> 01:17:45.806

Yes, sorry.

1284

01:18:00.486 --> 01:18:04.125

Madam, just whilst the... Um, Richard Humphries, um, Stop

1285

01:18:04.165 --> 01:18:07.846

Greenhill Solar. Just whilst the applicant's reshuffling, just in

1286

01:18:07.906 --> 01:18:11.665

terms of timing, um, here we are at

1287

01:18:11.726 --> 01:18:15.585

six minutes to one. Are you, if I may ask, are we

1288

01:18:15.606 --> 01:18:19.505

intending to- to work through and not have a lunch break?

1289

01:18:19.526 --> 01:18:23.406

Which I'm perfectly content, but if, if we are going to have a lunch

1290

01:18:23.505 --> 01:18:27.306

break, then is it inevitable that the

1291

01:18:27.465 --> 01:18:31.066

issues, for example, that I identified for, that I'd like to raise

1292

01:18:31.165 --> 01:18:34.625

under item four, I should be thinking about

1293

01:18:35.085 --> 01:18:36.766

bringing those back this evening?

1294

01:18:36.806 --> 01:18:40.465

And if so, will I be afforded sufficient time, bearing in

1295

01:18:40.526 --> 01:18:43.965

mind that other people wish to speak this evening, w- one's

1296

01:18:44.005 --> 01:18:47.885

limited, uh, to a particular time period?

1297

01:18:47.906 --> 01:18:51.706

Yeah. Yeah. W- we'll see what we, we can do. I- I'm mindful of time as well.

1298

01:18:51.726 --> 01:18:55.536

We, we will have to take a, a lunch break from a s- health and

1299

01:18:55.646 --> 01:18:59.366

safety point of view. I was hoping, hoping we could get a sort of half, do a

1300

01:18:59.446 --> 01:19:03.316

half-hour if people are agreeable to that, um,

1301

01:19:03.385 --> 01:19:07.226

uh, just to, to speed things up. But we're, you know, we're, we're hoping that the

1302

01:19:07.266 --> 01:19:10.806

landscape section won't be too long, then we'll take the half-hour

1303

01:19:11.066 --> 01:19:14.385

lunch break and then get through transport and have some

1304

01:19:14.446 --> 01:19:17.526

time, um, at the end for any other business.

1305

01:19:17.545 --> 01:19:20.236

We'll keep it under review, um, if it, it...

1306

01:19:20.245 --> 01:19:23.885

Thank you for your offer that you may be willing to defer to the open floor

1307

01:19:23.925 --> 01:19:27.866

hearing this evening, which may be helpful, but, uh, our intention

1308

01:19:27.906 --> 01:19:31.465

is to still try and get through to any other business and still wrap up

1309

01:19:31.505 --> 01:19:32.826
by 3:00 PM.

1310
01:19:41.376 --> 01:19:44.556
So, Gary Grant, North Northamptonshire Council.

1311
01:19:44.616 --> 01:19:48.476
Just to, um, in terms of contributions to this part

1312
01:19:48.536 --> 01:19:52.526
of the examination process, um, before opening,

1313
01:19:52.556 --> 01:19:55.736
if I could introduce, who wasn't in the room so I couldn't introduce him (laughs) .

1314
01:19:56.256 --> 01:19:59.896
Um, earlier, um, Mr. Ryan Mills, who is the

1315
01:19:59.956 --> 01:20:03.156
landscape consultant, um, responsible

1316
01:20:03.316 --> 01:20:06.806
for, um, the landscape input into the

1317
01:20:07.456 --> 01:20:11.036
LIR both on behalf of West West Northants and North

1318
01:20:11.136 --> 01:20:15.016
Northants. Uh, and, uh, we will be seeking to

1319
01:20:15.056 --> 01:20:18.116
make a contribution within this, um, part of the

1320
01:20:18.236 --> 01:20:22.396
examination.

1321
01:20:29.796 --> 01:20:33.456
MS. Project, have you got everyone you need now?

1322
01:20:34.916 --> 01:20:37.306

Would you like to do your introductions then? Thank you.

1323

01:20:37.396 --> 01:20:39.096

Uh, Claire Broderick, the applicant. Thank you.

1324

01:20:39.116 --> 01:20:42.966

Yes, I will let our, um, our topic speakers, um,

1325

01:20:43.356 --> 01:20:46.696

introduce themselves. Um, initially we have, uh, Mr.

1326

01:20:46.736 --> 01:20:50.196

Jackson who will speak to matters relating to LVIA, so

1327

01:20:50.756 --> 01:20:53.116

I will let Mr. Jackson introduce himself first.

1328

01:20:53.156 --> 01:20:56.816

Thank you.

1329

01:20:56.856 --> 01:20:59.336

Mr. Jackson on behalf of the applicant.

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01:20:59.396 --> 01:21:02.436

Um, I am Christopher Jackson. I can be referred to as

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01:21:02.756 --> 01:21:06.156

Chris. Um, I'm the director of landscape Architecture at Landpro.

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01:21:06.876 --> 01:21:10.816

We are responsible for the landscape visual impact assessment as

1333

01:21:10.856 --> 01:21:14.636

well as coordination of the landscaping and ecological

1334

01:21:14.676 --> 01:21:18.156

mitigation plans, the LEMs. That's the environmental master plan process within

1335

01:21:18.196 --> 01:21:20.776

which the scheme is designed.

1336
01:21:22.196 --> 01:21:23.176
Uh, Claire Broderick of the applicant.

1337
01:21:23.196 --> 01:21:26.776
And then we have, um, uh, different speakers dealing with, um, matters

1338
01:21:26.836 --> 01:21:29.816
relating to glint and glare should there be any points on that.

1339
01:21:29.826 --> 01:21:31.226
And I will just let them introduce themselves.

1340
01:21:31.236 --> 01:21:34.156
Thank you.

1341
01:21:34.216 --> 01:21:37.596
Uh, Josh Jones on behalf of the applicant discussing glint and glare in relation to

1342
01:21:37.606 --> 01:21:41.576
agenda item 3.4. Uh, I have nine years of experience

1343
01:21:41.596 --> 01:21:44.836
assessing environmental impacts and I am a member of the Institution of

1344
01:21:44.896 --> 01:21:46.876
Environmental Sciences.

1345
01:21:49.536 --> 01:21:50.576
Uh, Claire Broderick of the applicant.

1346
01:21:50.616 --> 01:21:53.596
And we should also have, um, Alexandra Clacy

1347
01:21:53.636 --> 01:21:55.726
virtually.

1348
01:21:55.876 --> 01:21:59.366

I, uh, yeah. Alexandra Clacy speaking on behalf of the applicant for

1349

01:21:59.436 --> 01:22:03.006

agenda 3.4. I've got three years of,

1350

01:22:03.096 --> 01:22:06.086

um, environmental assessment impact assessments

1351

01:22:06.956 --> 01:22:10.016

and, uh, will be assisting Josh when, when

1352

01:22:10.076 --> 01:22:12.976

needed. Thanks.

1353

01:22:14.936 --> 01:22:15.806

Claire Broderick of the applicant.

1354

01:22:15.836 --> 01:22:19.116

And that concludes, I believe, the, um, experts required to speak to this agenda

1355

01:22:19.156 --> 01:22:19.956

item. Thank you.

1356

01:22:19.996 --> 01:22:23.896

Thank you very much. Thank you. Erm, so perhaps we could start with asking the

1357

01:22:23.956 --> 01:22:27.676

applicant to provide an update, um, with regards to landscape design glint and

1358

01:22:27.696 --> 01:22:30.506

glare matters, um, since the previous hearings

1359

01:22:30.656 --> 01:22:34.376

ISH1. Um, just including progress on discussions

1360

01:22:34.416 --> 01:22:38.246

regarding viewpoints and photo montages, um, and any other

1361

01:22:38.296 --> 01:22:42.176
matters under discussion as detailed in the draft statement of
common ground.

1362
01:22:42.216 --> 01:22:44.596
Thank you.

1363
01:22:44.636 --> 01:22:48.416
Chris Jackson on behalf of the applicant.

1364
01:22:48.496 --> 01:22:51.996
A series of representative and specific viewpoints are shown on
Figures 8.10

1365
01:22:52.276 --> 01:22:55.936
APP308 to Figure 8.10.5

1366
01:22:55.996 --> 01:22:57.436
APP313.

1367
01:22:58.396 --> 01:23:01.796
Verified photography and photo montages are shown on Figure 8.14.1

1368
01:23:02.156 --> 01:23:03.656
APP334

1369
01:23:04.496 --> 01:23:07.956
to Figure 8.14.NN13

1370
01:23:08.056 --> 01:23:11.916
APP400. There are a total of 64 viewpoints

1371
01:23:11.956 --> 01:23:14.576
covering the study areas for the sites and the cable route corridor.

1372
01:23:14.696 --> 01:23:18.016
A total of 30 additional viewpoints have been included and
photography undertaken

1373
01:23:18.036 --> 01:23:21.536
as a result of the Section 42 consultation to date.

1374

01:23:21.556 --> 01:23:25.276

Milton Keynes City Council advised in its response to examiner's questions one

1375

01:23:25.956 --> 01:23:28.056

REP1170

1376

01:23:29.156 --> 01:23:33.125

question 16.0.3, the location for additional viewpoints

1377

01:23:33.156 --> 01:23:34.496

and photo montages.

1378

01:23:35.776 --> 01:23:39.436

Email correspondence was sent to Milton Keynes City Council on 20th of November

1379

01:23:39.576 --> 01:23:42.856

2025 confirming, as summarized in reference

1380

01:23:42.976 --> 01:23:46.796

MKCC012 written on the applicant

1381

01:23:46.856 --> 01:23:48.496

responses deadline one submissions

1382

01:23:49.076 --> 01:23:51.066

REP2050,

1383

01:23:53.376 --> 01:23:56.276

that the applicant will undertake winter photography of the additional viewpoints

1384

01:23:56.296 --> 01:23:58.536

requested and create photo montages as

1385

01:23:58.576 --> 01:24:02.336

requested. The applicant received a response from Milton

1386

01:24:02.396 --> 01:24:05.626

Keynes City Council confirming the precise locations of the desired

additional

1387

01:24:05.676 --> 01:24:08.376

viewpoints on Monday the 8th of December.

1388

01:24:09.576 --> 01:24:13.076

Photography is scheduled for completion in December and the applicant aims to

1389

01:24:13.136 --> 01:24:16.666

submit the photo montages by deadline four or deadline five,

1390

01:24:17.236 --> 01:24:20.696

depending on the availability of consultants to und- undertake the additional

1391

01:24:20.756 --> 01:24:24.556

visualization work. It's not a, uh, particularly,

1392

01:24:24.656 --> 01:24:28.636

uh, rapid process to undertake, so we'll aim to get them complete as soon as

1393

01:24:28.656 --> 01:24:32.056

possible, but un- unfortunately can't quite commit at this point in time as to

1394

01:24:32.096 --> 01:24:33.486

whether it'll be deadline four or deadline

1395

01:24:33.496 --> 01:24:36.176

five.

1396

01:24:39.536 --> 01:24:43.156

Would you like me to continue on to question, the second part of your question?

1397

01:24:43.956 --> 01:24:47.256

That summarizes the, uh, the position we are with the photo montages, so I'll now

1398

01:24:47.356 --> 01:24:50.296

move on to the position with the draft statements of common

1399

01:24:50.356 --> 01:24:54.256

ground. The applicant discusses statements of common ground, the

1400

01:24:54.356 --> 01:24:57.656

SOCGs, at regular monthly meetings with the host local authorities.

1401

01:24:57.666 --> 01:25:01.536

The most recent meeting took place in the week commencing the 24th of November, and

1402

01:25:01.596 --> 01:25:04.246

all councils are currently reviewing the statements of common ground following

1403

01:25:04.316 --> 01:25:06.176

applicant's response to local impact reports

1404

01:25:06.876 --> 01:25:08.616

REP2049.

1405

01:25:09.556 --> 01:25:13.456

The applicant has contacted landscape consultant appointed by West Northamptonshire

1406

01:25:13.496 --> 01:25:16.956

Council and North Northamptonshire Council and the Milton Keynes City Council

1407

01:25:16.996 --> 01:25:20.836

landscape officer to set up a meeting to discuss the matters still under

1408

01:25:20.876 --> 01:25:24.346

discussion and hopes an initial meeting will take place before the Christmas break.

1409

01:25:25.196 --> 01:25:27.056

I have also subsequently spoken to Mr.

1410

01:25:27.096 --> 01:25:30.696

Mills today to try and arrange a meeting in

1411

01:25:30.756 --> 01:25:33.666

person, and we hope to have that achieved hopefully sometime next week.

1412

01:25:34.596 --> 01:25:34.956

Thank you.

1413

01:25:42.756 --> 01:25:44.996

Thank you very much. That's helpful.

1414

01:25:45.096 --> 01:25:47.116

Um,

1415

01:25:50.635 --> 01:25:54.466

so turning, uh, to the local authorities,

1416

01:25:54.536 --> 01:25:58.456

um, Mr. Grant and Mr. Mills, did you want to come in

1417

01:25:59.096 --> 01:26:00.476

with your points? Thank you.

1418

01:26:00.556 --> 01:26:04.496

Uh, Gary Grant, uh, counsel instructed by North Northants,

1419

01:26:04.516 --> 01:26:08.316

uh, Council. Um, just a very few, um,

1420

01:26:08.496 --> 01:26:12.256

preliminary, um, observations in relation to landscape

1421

01:26:12.336 --> 01:26:16.076

issues. Uh, you will know that one of the issues that's been raised and

1422

01:26:16.135 --> 01:26:19.576

addressed, um, in the local impact report and the

1423

01:26:19.596 --> 01:26:22.635

responses to the local impact repor- report relate to

1424

01:26:22.676 --> 01:26:26.596

the- the length of time over which the,

1425

01:26:26.676 --> 01:26:30.096

um, the operational phase of the sc- of the scheme will

1426

01:26:30.156 --> 01:26:33.896

proceed, uh, o- on the basis of assessment on 60-year

1427

01:26:33.956 --> 01:26:37.036

or alternatively 40-year period by reference to

1428

01:26:37.916 --> 01:26:41.796

the relevant, um, policy position, national policy

1429

01:26:41.856 --> 01:26:45.796

position. And, uh, the, um, those matters

1430

01:26:45.836 --> 01:26:49.076

are largely set out in writing and- and probably reasonably well

1431

01:26:49.116 --> 01:26:52.756

understood. The only point that, um, I would wish to

1432

01:26:53.416 --> 01:26:56.926

emphasize at this stage is that, um, within the

1433

01:26:56.976 --> 01:27:00.956

response, um, of the, uh, appellants,

1434

01:27:01.056 --> 01:27:04.176

um, reference has been made to a number of, uh, other

1435

01:27:04.236 --> 01:27:08.006

DCOs. Uh, and, uh, if I can

1436

01:27:09.056 --> 01:27:11.176

indicate where you will find that,

1437

01:27:11.336 --> 01:27:14.216

um, you will find that

1438

01:27:16.016 --> 01:27:18.846

in...

1439

01:27:19.836 --> 01:27:21.756

Forgive me.

1440

01:27:23.336 --> 01:27:26.016

Within that- that- that document and the- the

1441

01:27:26.856 --> 01:27:29.996

relevant inspector's reports and decision letters

1442

01:27:30.556 --> 01:27:32.736

are, uh, those

1443

01:27:33.536 --> 01:27:37.276

either at, in various Lincolnshire D- DCOs which

1444

01:27:37.336 --> 01:27:41.036

are, um, related to each other, uh, and

1445

01:27:41.536 --> 01:27:45.336

need to be considered in that context, or at Mallard Pass,

1446

01:27:45.376 --> 01:27:47.716

which I raised comment about on the last

1447

01:27:48.276 --> 01:27:52.016

hearing. Um, you will recall on the last hearing, a

1448

01:27:52.076 --> 01:27:55.076

question was asked, um, by the examiner as to whether

1449

01:27:55.135 --> 01:27:56.456

those, um,

1450

01:27:57.296 --> 01:28:00.376

decisions and inspector's reports were to be placed in the examination

1451

01:28:00.516 --> 01:28:03.896

library. Uh, I have noted that they have not been placed in the

1452

01:28:03.936 --> 01:28:07.806

examination library. Um, my position is that they should

1453

01:28:07.896 --> 01:28:10.856

be placed now very firmly in the examination

1454

01:28:10.936 --> 01:28:14.696

library, um, because contextually, it is important

1455

01:28:14.776 --> 01:28:17.416

for you as an examining authority to understand,

1456

01:28:18.396 --> 01:28:21.576

insofar as relevant, what material differences may lie

1457

01:28:22.135 --> 01:28:25.736

between those decisions which are relied upon

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01:28:25.816 --> 01:28:29.476

and this decision, which as Mr. Humphries correctly indicated, needs to be

1459

01:28:29.516 --> 01:28:32.756

considered explicitly on the merits of this particular

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01:28:32.836 --> 01:28:36.756

decision. So my request for- to

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01:28:36.836 --> 01:28:40.156

you is that, um, prior to further comment

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01:28:40.656 --> 01:28:40.976

on

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01:28:42.196 --> 01:28:46.176

the reliance upon that as evidence, because it plainly has now been relied upon

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01:28:46.216 --> 01:28:50.156

in evidence, um, needs to now be supplemented by

1465

01:28:50.196 --> 01:28:54.016

those documents being placed in the examination library.

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01:28:54.096 --> 01:28:58.056

Uh, and it's probably right that all of those participating in the

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01:28:58.066 --> 01:29:01.716

examination process should then have an opportunity to make comments by reference

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01:29:01.776 --> 01:29:03.736

to that.

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01:29:04.635 --> 01:29:08.376

Um, aside from that, um, it is right that, um,

1470

01:29:09.076 --> 01:29:12.516

actually quite a lot of progress is being made in terms of our

1471

01:29:12.635 --> 01:29:16.326

isolating what the areas of agreement are, disa- and

1472

01:29:16.416 --> 01:29:19.916

disagreement are through the statement of common ground process.

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01:29:19.996 --> 01:29:23.396

Uh, and, uh, uh, that is- that is indeed correct.

1474

01:29:23.776 --> 01:29:27.496

One further comment in relation to glint and glare before we actually get onto that

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01:29:27.516 --> 01:29:29.596

in any detail is that, um,

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01:29:30.416 --> 01:29:34.256
there's no issue taken from the, um, this council's point of view
with

1477
01:29:34.336 --> 01:29:38.296
respect to, um, how the position has been summarized.

1478
01:29:38.336 --> 01:29:42.076
However, um, in terms of the locations

1479
01:29:42.156 --> 01:29:45.876
of local roads which were discussed at hearing one

1480
01:29:46.416 --> 01:29:50.116
in West Northants, that is, um, an easier matter because of

1481
01:29:50.196 --> 01:29:54.076
the limited number of roads that that relates to West Northants

1482
01:29:54.135 --> 01:29:58.016
than for, uh, North Northants to deal with in quite the same

1483
01:29:58.056 --> 01:30:01.586
way. My instructions are, uh, that,

1484
01:30:01.675 --> 01:30:05.516
um, the roads within North Northants are first to be identified

1485
01:30:05.536 --> 01:30:08.866
by the, um, and those are the local roads over and above those
already

1486
01:30:08.896 --> 01:30:12.696
identified, first to be identified by the applicant and then to be

1487
01:30:12.736 --> 01:30:16.076
reviewed, um, by North Northants Council.

1488
01:30:16.376 --> 01:30:19.675
And- and we are content that that process should be allowed to take
place without

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01:30:19.736 --> 01:30:23.336

further comment but we will plainly reserve the right to fur- to further

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01:30:23.376 --> 01:30:27.175

comment, uh, upon that once that's all been, um, duly

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01:30:27.216 --> 01:30:31.096

considered. Um, apart from that, if I can hand

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01:30:31.175 --> 01:30:34.876

over t- to Mr. Mills to see if there's any further comment that he would wish to

1493

01:30:34.916 --> 01:30:36.076

make at this stage.

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01:30:40.756 --> 01:30:43.816

Thank you. Ryan Mills for North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire

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01:30:43.856 --> 01:30:47.536

Councils. Um, I think as, uh, Mr. Jackson

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01:30:47.636 --> 01:30:51.036

pointed out, we will be sitting down in the next couple of weeks to discuss the

1497

01:30:51.175 --> 01:30:54.036

statement of common ground and areas of disagreement.

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01:30:54.136 --> 01:30:57.226

Um, I think for the moment, um,

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01:30:58.316 --> 01:31:01.996

in terms of the local impact report and what has, uh, been

1500

01:31:02.396 --> 01:31:05.736

provided in terms of comments back from the applicant and those that perhaps we

1501

01:31:05.776 --> 01:31:09.316

will go back on again, that would relate to the 40-year and

1502

01:31:09.516 --> 01:31:13.236

60-year, um, duration discussion and very much in

1503

01:31:13.256 --> 01:31:16.556

relation to the cumulative impacts from a landscape

1504

01:31:16.596 --> 01:31:20.436

perspective. Um, the applicant has provided kind of six

1505

01:31:20.476 --> 01:31:24.326

primary reasons as to why this scheme would not become a defining

1506

01:31:24.396 --> 01:31:26.736

landscape characteristic of the area.

1507

01:31:26.836 --> 01:31:30.536

Um, which we don't necessarily agree on- uh, agree on.

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01:31:30.596 --> 01:31:34.536

Um, I'll quickly just summarize some of those points now for you,

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01:31:34.616 --> 01:31:37.136

but we will be providing them in writing as well.

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01:31:37.236 --> 01:31:41.216

Um, so the applicant states that the dispersed, um, nature of

1511

01:31:41.256 --> 01:31:44.796

the sites prevents this scheme from reading as a single cohesive

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01:31:44.836 --> 01:31:48.772

development. The council agrees this may be true from

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01:31:48.782 --> 01:31:52.122

a visual point of view, but cumulative landscape character effects are not

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01:31:52.152 --> 01:31:55.672

dependent on visual connection. For example, across the

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01:31:55.751 --> 01:31:59.251

Sidewell Plateau landscape character area, sites A,

1516

01:31:59.312 --> 01:32:02.432

A.2, B, C, D, and most of E

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01:32:02.932 --> 01:32:06.412

occupy a substantial portion of this landscape character area.

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01:32:06.432 --> 01:32:10.312

Their dispersed arrangement does not reduce influence, it merely extends the

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01:32:10.352 --> 01:32:13.392

footprint of land use change across a wider geographic

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01:32:13.452 --> 01:32:17.172

area. The cumulative landscape character influence is therefore

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01:32:17.212 --> 01:32:20.112

retained regardless of whether the sites are perceived together.

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01:32:22.032 --> 01:32:25.192

In terms of the strong framework of existing vegetation,

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01:32:25.751 --> 01:32:29.432

existing vegetation can reduce adverse visual effects, but it does not negate

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01:32:29.532 --> 01:32:33.512

landscape character change. Tall hedgerows and new woodland blocks may increase

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01:32:33.572 --> 01:32:37.452

enclosure and alter existing rural qualities and infrastructure remains

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01:32:37.512 --> 01:32:41.172

present behind them regardless of visibility.

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01:32:41.192 --> 01:32:44.372

The ability to screen elements does not remove the fact that multiple parcels

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01:32:44.392 --> 01:32:48.032

across the landscape will be changed from agriculture to solar, resulting in

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01:32:48.092 --> 01:32:50.812

substantial change in character.

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01:32:50.852 --> 01:32:54.792

And there was also a point about BNG, um, BNG

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01:32:54.852 --> 01:32:58.552

provides ecological benefits but does not mitigate landscape character change

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01:32:58.592 --> 01:33:01.712

arising from large-scale energy infrastructure.

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01:33:01.792 --> 01:33:05.632

Ecological enhancements and landscape character are related but separate planning

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01:33:05.652 --> 01:33:09.632

considerations. Biodiversity improvements do not diminish the scale of land

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01:33:09.712 --> 01:33:13.632

use change or the perceptual shift from open agricultural countryside to a managed

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01:33:13.672 --> 01:33:17.432

energy landscape. And then finally just a point on

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01:33:17.532 --> 01:33:21.132

legacy landscape, the concept of a legacy landscape may provide

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01:33:21.212 --> 01:33:24.132

long-term ecological and structural benefits.

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01:33:24.142 --> 01:33:26.992

This would only be realized following decommissioning.

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01:33:27.012 --> 01:33:30.322

For the entirety of the operational period, the character of the affected areas

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01:33:30.372 --> 01:33:33.242

remains defined by energy infrastructure rather than

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01:33:33.272 --> 01:33:36.972

farmland. A 60-year lifespan delays any legacy

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01:33:37.032 --> 01:33:40.672

value and prolongs this period during which adverse landscape character effects are

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01:33:40.712 --> 01:33:42.212

present.

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01:33:44.772 --> 01:33:46.552

Thank you. I believe that's all for now. Thank you.

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01:33:48.652 --> 01:33:52.622

Thank you very much, Mr. Mills and Mr. Grant. Uh, Ms. Brodrick, did you...

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01:33:52.632 --> 01:33:53.122

Oh, sorry.

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01:33:53.122 --> 01:33:54.242

(laughs) Did you want to answer

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01:33:54.352 --> 01:33:54.462

Oh-

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01:33:54.572 --> 01:33:55.462

Mr. Grant's was-

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01:33:55.512 --> 01:33:59.321

Yes, it... Yes, before we move on, um, in terms of

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01:33:59.372 --> 01:34:03.172

the, um, other examples of DCOs, um, the applicant

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01:34:03.292 --> 01:34:07.212

did signpost us to them, so we are aware of the other cases

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01:34:07.272 --> 01:34:09.432

that have been mentioned, the Malhad Pass and the Lincolnshire

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01:34:09.492 --> 01:34:11.812

ones.

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01:34:11.872 --> 01:34:15.592

Yeah, I th- I think it was in the action points to ISH1.

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01:34:15.612 --> 01:34:19.251

So it was agreed, um, because in, we live in this world of electronic

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01:34:19.372 --> 01:34:23.272

age that they provide the links to all of them, so we,

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01:34:23.292 --> 01:34:24.032

we have those.

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01:34:25.492 --> 01:34:29.312

Uh, I'm, I'm grateful. Uh, th- the point really is

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01:34:29.392 --> 01:34:33.312

to, is to, is to, uh, as it were, um, emphasize that,

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01:34:33.352 --> 01:34:37.122

um, you know, submissions can be properly addressed to the d-

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01:34:37.122 --> 01:34:39.992

d- differences between them. Um, self...

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01:34:40.032 --> 01:34:43.992

In, in many respects, they're self-evident, um, in terms of, of, of

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01:34:44.032 --> 01:34:47.571

the differences between them. But just to give a short summary, as,
as

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01:34:47.632 --> 01:34:51.492

indicated on the last, um, occasion, in relation to

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01:34:51.552 --> 01:34:55.272

the Malhad Pass, um, decision letter, um,

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01:34:55.292 --> 01:34:59.072

that is a decision which took place, um, in the context of an

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01:34:59.112 --> 01:35:03.012

initial application which was on a permanent basis, which was then
revised

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01:35:03.592 --> 01:35:07.192

to a 60-year, um, period, uh, a-

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01:35:07.392 --> 01:35:11.372

and, uh, within, within that, uh, decision, one

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01:35:11.432 --> 01:35:15.212

can see the way in which that has evolved in a way which is
materially different,

1573

01:35:15.292 --> 01:35:18.592

um, to the present, um, circumstance.

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01:35:18.672 --> 01:35:22.631

Um, the second point is that all of the other, uh,

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01:35:22.692 --> 01:35:26.592

reports, a- a- and indeed their related inspectors' reports,

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01:35:27.032 --> 01:35:30.072

are related to a series of,

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01:35:30.172 --> 01:35:33.932

um, uh, uh, applications for DCO which

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01:35:34.012 --> 01:35:37.552

were all granted, but would interrelate with each

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01:35:37.632 --> 01:35:41.112

other, uh, a- and, um, the power that's to be

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01:35:41.132 --> 01:35:45.072

provided o- on a very, very significant basis through

1581

01:35:45.112 --> 01:35:47.852

various land parcels on a conjoint- conjoined basis.

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01:35:47.872 --> 01:35:51.832

The, th- the cumulative impacts assessments there are

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01:35:51.872 --> 01:35:55.432

of interest to you in relation to the point that is made

1584

01:35:55.872 --> 01:35:58.932

by Mr. Mills so far as the sequential nature

1585

01:35:59.652 --> 01:36:03.432

of the level of harm that is, uh, is to be, um, to be

1586

01:36:03.512 --> 01:36:07.312

looked at. Uh, a- and, um, similarly,

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01:36:07.372 --> 01:36:11.252

um, there is clearly an overlap, an interrelationship, albeit they are

1588

01:36:11.291 --> 01:36:14.552

completely discrete, between heritage impacts

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01:36:14.652 --> 01:36:18.432

and, um, landscape impacts. So that when you have a

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01:36:18.652 --> 01:36:22.532

60-year period and one is assessing the heritage implications of a

1591

01:36:22.732 --> 01:36:26.652

60-year period as opposed to a 40-year period, you will have to take into account,

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01:36:26.712 --> 01:36:30.672

for example, um, the fact that,

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01:36:30.772 --> 01:36:34.532

um, i- in relation to the Lincolnshire, um,

1594

01:36:34.772 --> 01:36:38.612

solar projects, one at least, uh, of those identified

1595

01:36:39.052 --> 01:36:42.802

the fact that a 60-year period was to be considered e- or

1596

01:36:42.912 --> 01:36:45.982

equivalent to a permanent, um,

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01:36:46.032 --> 01:36:49.002

permission. Now bear in mind, um,

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01:36:49.372 --> 01:36:53.172

that in this particular case, the schemes put forward

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01:36:53.192 --> 01:36:56.932

within the design principles as being one which is minimizing

1600

01:36:56.972 --> 01:37:00.732

impacts, a- and bear in mind that principle

1601

01:37:00.852 --> 01:37:04.291

six within the design principles is, is

1602

01:37:04.392 --> 01:37:07.852

addressed to the reversibility of, of the scheme

1603

01:37:07.892 --> 01:37:11.612

effects, including in respect of landscape.

1604

01:37:11.652 --> 01:37:15.302

So it is being put forward as a virtue of the scheme that is, it is temporary and

1605

01:37:15.352 --> 01:37:18.832

reversible, but at the same time relying on a 60-year

1606

01:37:18.892 --> 01:37:22.832

period where other assessments have indicated how equivalent that is

1607

01:37:22.872 --> 01:37:26.762

or otherwise to permanence. So,

1608

01:37:26.812 --> 01:37:30.492

the way in which I, I would encourage you to consider this is on the basis

1609

01:37:30.532 --> 01:37:34.452

that there needs to be justification for the 60-year period, bearing in

1610

01:37:34.492 --> 01:37:38.372

mind what the National Planning Policy Statement says

1611

01:37:38.712 --> 01:37:41.392

in relation to the 40-year period being the norm.

1612

01:37:41.412 --> 01:37:45.291

And as yet, I see no justification for that,

1613

01:37:46.052 --> 01:37:49.958

and it needs to be provided.... a-

1614

01:37:49.958 --> 01:37:51.488

a- and, and really I think that it, in the

1615

01:37:52.367 --> 01:37:55.688

w- I would submit that once those m- matters have been

1616

01:37:55.768 --> 01:37:59.688

clarified, then we would wish to reserve the right to come back further on

1617
01:37:59.728 --> 01:38:01.128
that.

1618
01:38:01.708 --> 01:38:03.848
Of course. Thank you, Mr. Grant. Thank you. Ms.

1619
01:38:03.888 --> 01:38:07.768
Brodrick, uh, turning to you.

1620
01:38:07.827 --> 01:38:09.008
Uh, Claire Brodrick for the applicant.

1621
01:38:09.068 --> 01:38:13.008
Um, we obviously set out at the last issue-specific hearing, um, the

1622
01:38:13.028 --> 01:38:16.788
reasons why we considered a 60-year period to be,

1623
01:38:16.888 --> 01:38:20.788
um, a- acceptable, um, and that we weren't, uh, we didn't

1624
01:38:20.827 --> 01:38:24.808
consider that there would be any, um, reasons for

1625
01:38:24.827 --> 01:38:28.738
this particular scheme for a 40-year period to be,

1626
01:38:28.827 --> 01:38:30.258
um, imposed. Um,

1627
01:38:31.888 --> 01:38:35.608
we provided details of other schemes that have been granted for

1628
01:38:35.827 --> 01:38:39.808
60 years, including the ones, um, that, uh, Mr. Grant has referred to.

1629
01:38:39.827 --> 01:38:43.528
Um, we also acknowledged that there are other schemes that have sought to have,

1630
01:38:43.608 --> 01:38:47.288
um, a shorter time period. Um, as was mentioned with reference

1631
01:38:47.348 --> 01:38:51.068
to, um, NPS EN3, it does say that

1632
01:38:51.108 --> 01:38:54.348
40 years is typical, but it also then does say that applicants may

1633
01:38:54.407 --> 01:38:57.908
seek, um, consents for differing time periods of, of

1634
01:38:57.988 --> 01:39:00.708
operation, which is what's being done here.

1635
01:39:00.808 --> 01:39:04.388
Um, (sighs) I will just reiterate that the, whilst

1636
01:39:04.398 --> 01:39:08.288
the, um, decision letters are, are, are useful for

1637
01:39:08.308 --> 01:39:08.768
those,

1638
01:39:10.568 --> 01:39:13.758
um, uh, other projects, the way in which the examining authority had

1639
01:39:13.968 --> 01:39:17.648
to, um, consider the information is slightly different

1640
01:39:17.668 --> 01:39:21.628
because of, uh, as was mentioned, those applications were put in initially

1641
01:39:21.638 --> 01:39:25.367
without, um, a time limit, and then a time limit was

1642
01:39:25.408 --> 01:39:28.688
imposed, um, during the examination process, and then further

1643

01:39:28.728 --> 01:39:31.718

information was provided. For this particular

1644

01:39:31.728 --> 01:39:35.248

application, um, we have produced the information from the very

1645

01:39:35.348 --> 01:39:38.718

outset as to the effects for a 60-year period, and

1646

01:39:38.748 --> 01:39:42.548

therefore, the reasonable worst case has been assessed throughout the

1647

01:39:42.588 --> 01:39:46.548

entirety of the DC application, both for LVIA and other topics, as was

1648

01:39:46.588 --> 01:39:48.938

mentioned, such as cultural heritage.

1649

01:39:49.708 --> 01:39:53.188

Um, so the applicant's position is that, um, a, a 60-year period is

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01:39:53.228 --> 01:39:57.008

justifiable and the great need for solar energy generation,

1651

01:39:57.108 --> 01:40:00.268

um, is supported through the national policy statements.

1652

01:40:00.278 --> 01:40:04.068

In terms of, um, the other responses, um, that were just

1653

01:40:04.128 --> 01:40:08.088

made, before I hand over to Mr. Jackson on the LVIA

1654

01:40:08.168 --> 01:40:11.948

point, I just wanted to clarify the position in relation to glint and glare.

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01:40:11.988 --> 01:40:12.497

Obviously, the

1656

01:40:13.508 --> 01:40:16.937

action out of the last hearings was for the relevant, um,

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01:40:17.548 --> 01:40:21.428

planning authorities to supply specific local roads that they would

1658

01:40:21.468 --> 01:40:25.348

like to be, um, assessed on the basis that the glint and glare

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01:40:25.408 --> 01:40:29.048

assessment had made an assumption in relation to

1660

01:40:29.108 --> 01:40:32.367

local roads consistent with the methodology.

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01:40:32.448 --> 01:40:36.208

Um, some specific roads were provided, um, by

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01:40:36.268 --> 01:40:39.898

West Northamptonshire Council, which were then considered in a supplemental

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01:40:39.988 --> 01:40:42.668

technical note, um, that's been submitted.

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01:40:42.768 --> 01:40:45.948

I think Mr. Grant was suggesting that they would like the

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01:40:46.028 --> 01:40:49.437

applicant to provide a list of all of the local roads

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01:40:50.748 --> 01:40:54.568

affected by the scheme from which they will then choose which ones they would like

1667

01:40:54.648 --> 01:40:58.628

us to assess. But I just wanted to check that that was in fact what was

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01:40:58.668 --> 01:41:01.488

being requested. Thank you.

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01:41:01.628 --> 01:41:04.228

Gary Grant, uh, North Northants Council.

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01:41:04.268 --> 01:41:08.208

Um, that, that's not really strictly what, what I was suggesting,

1671

01:41:08.228 --> 01:41:11.888

and, and if that was the understanding, that's, um, probably my

1672

01:41:11.908 --> 01:41:15.668

error. What I was explaining was that I understand that there is

1673

01:41:15.748 --> 01:41:19.348

active discussion taking place between, um, the

1674

01:41:19.888 --> 01:41:23.827

Highways Officers of North Northants Council and the applicant's team, with respect

1675

01:41:23.908 --> 01:41:27.717

to refining and identifying those local roads through,

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01:41:27.808 --> 01:41:31.528

in North Northants, which is obviously a much wider area to which

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01:41:31.788 --> 01:41:35.327

the local road assessment, in addition to that which has been provided

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01:41:35.367 --> 01:41:38.888

already in respect of glint and glare, um, can

1679

01:41:38.988 --> 01:41:41.928

properly be, um, done.

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01:41:41.948 --> 01:41:43.448

And, um,

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01:41:44.308 --> 01:41:48.288

w- we welcome the approach of the applicant seeking to initially identify that, and

1682

01:41:48.308 --> 01:41:51.648

then that can be reviewed by, um, North

1683

01:41:51.657 --> 01:41:55.548

Northants, um, in a, in a constructive manner of engagement.

1684

01:41:55.588 --> 01:41:59.268

So it's not a question of we'll, we'll, you know, quite, it was a bit of an

1685

01:41:59.327 --> 01:42:03.288

oversimplification of, if I can put it that way, um, in the

1686

01:42:03.327 --> 01:42:07.268

way that it's been described. So that, that is a process which, as

1687

01:42:07.347 --> 01:42:11.008

I understand, is ongoing, and we're very happy to cooperate with that

1688

01:42:11.048 --> 01:42:13.108

ongoing process.

1689

01:42:15.248 --> 01:42:16.968

Thank you. Ms. Brodrick.

1690

01:42:16.988 --> 01:42:19.948

Uh, Claire Brodrick for the applicant. Um, thank you, that, that is helpful.

1691

01:42:19.988 --> 01:42:23.428

We will continue to have discussions on, on that basis then and we won't put it

1692

01:42:23.488 --> 01:42:26.327

down as a, a specific action, um, for us.

1693

01:42:26.348 --> 01:42:30.288

We know that conversations are going on with the, um, transport

officers,

1694

01:42:30.348 --> 01:42:34.178

and I think there's probably some further work, um, or conversation that s- needs

1695

01:42:34.208 --> 01:42:38.168

to take place to identify any particular concerns from a glint and

1696

01:42:38.188 --> 01:42:41.628

glare perspective, as opposed to the more general traffic/transport

1697

01:42:41.688 --> 01:42:44.268

conversations that are going on with those officers.

1698

01:42:44.288 --> 01:42:46.788

Thank you.

1699

01:42:49.148 --> 01:42:52.288

Thank you. Mr. Jackson, did you want to come back on any of the points?

1700

01:42:52.308 --> 01:42:54.588

Um, Chris Jackson on behalf of the applicant.

1701

01:42:54.668 --> 01:42:58.028

Um, as discussed earlier, we, uh, myself and Mr.

1702

01:42:58.068 --> 01:43:01.868

Mills are looking to arrange some, some in-person sessions to, to

1703

01:43:01.928 --> 01:43:04.608

sit down and work through the, the statement of common ground or any matters in

1704

01:43:04.728 --> 01:43:08.547

disagreement. Um, obviously there will be, uh, be points of professional

1705

01:43:08.768 --> 01:43:12.608

agreement and disagreement between us as we, uh, ultimately work

1706

01:43:12.668 --> 01:43:16.448

through the, uh, the findings of, of the LVIA and, and Mr.

1707

01:43:16.468 --> 01:43:20.268

Mills' LIR and, and, uh, we look forward to, uh, just pro-

1708

01:43:20.288 --> 01:43:23.708

progressing that. Thank you.

1709

01:43:23.768 --> 01:43:25.608

Thank you.

1710

01:43:26.548 --> 01:43:29.708

Um, are there any points from any of the other local

1711

01:43:29.768 --> 01:43:31.488

authorities at this stage?

1712

01:43:32.748 --> 01:43:33.468

Ms. Veddingham.

1713

01:43:33.478 --> 01:43:35.407

Um, Elizabeth Veddingham for Milton Keynes City Council.

1714

01:43:35.468 --> 01:43:38.568

Um, just wanted to say that the applicant's statement was accurate in that we've

1715

01:43:38.608 --> 01:43:42.308

agreed the additional viewpoints, um, and that the sort of final areas of

1716

01:43:42.368 --> 01:43:46.038

disagreement, um, we'll continue to discuss with the, within the, uh, statement of

1717

01:43:46.068 --> 01:43:48.008

common ground.

1718

01:43:49.248 --> 01:43:50.268

Thank you very much.

1719

01:43:52.824 --> 01:43:56.544

Okay. Um, turning to, um, Stop

1720

01:43:56.704 --> 01:43:59.904

Greenhill Solar, Mr. Humphreys, you indicated that you may wish to speak on this

1721

01:43:59.984 --> 01:44:00.324

item.

1722

01:44:01.424 --> 01:44:04.544

Y- yes. It will be, um, on the screen.

1723

01:44:04.624 --> 01:44:08.274

Um, Miss, Miss Carly Tinkler, I think it, she...

1724

01:44:08.284 --> 01:44:12.204

I can see she's listed there. She'd like to come in and say anything

1725

01:44:12.424 --> 01:44:13.624

at this stage. Thank

1726

01:44:13.684 --> 01:44:18.124

you.

1727

01:44:18.144 --> 01:44:22.024

Good afternoon. Uh, Carly Tinkler, acting for Stop

1728

01:44:22.034 --> 01:44:25.744

Greenhill Solar, chartered landscape architect.

1729

01:44:27.124 --> 01:44:31.023

Um, if it would be helpful, I- I'd like to read out a summary of seven

1730

01:44:31.124 --> 01:44:34.764

landscape and visual matters that I consider to be most relevant at this

1731

01:44:34.824 --> 01:44:36.854

point. Um,

1732

01:44:38.344 --> 01:44:42.274

(clears throat) start with a summary of, uh, of our position in terms

1733

01:44:42.344 --> 01:44:46.184

of landscape and visual effects. So, in

1734

01:44:46.244 --> 01:44:49.164

summary, I agree with the applicant's

1735

01:44:49.424 --> 01:44:53.254

LVIA, which is APP045,

1736

01:44:53.254 --> 01:44:56.934

that during construction and the first 15 years of

1737

01:44:56.984 --> 01:45:00.824

operation, the proposed development would give rise to

1738

01:45:00.844 --> 01:45:04.764

significant adverse effects on landscape character and vill-

1739

01:45:04.804 --> 01:45:08.644

visual amenity. However, in my opinion,

1740

01:45:08.784 --> 01:45:12.744

levels of adverse landscape and visual effects would be higher

1741

01:45:12.804 --> 01:45:16.644

than assumed in the LVIA. I do not

1742

01:45:16.724 --> 01:45:20.444

agree that after 15 years of operation,

1743

01:45:20.484 --> 01:45:23.204

apart from three of the numerous viewpoints

1744

01:45:23.264 --> 01:45:26.864

identified, effects on character and views would no

1745

01:45:26.904 --> 01:45:30.664

longer be significant adverse. And I do not

1746

01:45:30.724 --> 01:45:34.704

agree that effects on the character of the sites would

1747

01:45:34.764 --> 01:45:36.664

be significant beneficial.

1748

01:45:38.284 --> 01:45:41.784

In my opinion, the LVIA underestimates levels of

1749

01:45:41.844 --> 01:45:45.544

adverse landscape and visual effects and overstates

1750

01:45:45.784 --> 01:45:49.664

landscape and visual benefits. The majority of adverse

1751

01:45:49.704 --> 01:45:53.244

effects on character and views would be significant adverse for the

1752

01:45:53.284 --> 01:45:56.804

duration of the operation. The differences in

1753

01:45:56.904 --> 01:46:00.384

judgments are partly due to differing interpretations and

1754

01:46:00.464 --> 01:46:02.304

applications of the guidance

1755

01:46:02.744 --> 01:46:06.424

GLVIA3. Point one,

1756

01:46:06.524 --> 01:46:09.164

overestimation of landscape and visual

1757

01:46:09.204 --> 01:46:12.884

benefits. The matter of the

1758

01:46:12.944 --> 01:46:16.664
overestimation of landscape and visual benefits is explained in my
landscape

1759
01:46:16.784 --> 01:46:20.464
statement REP1/195,

1760
01:46:20.524 --> 01:46:23.364
paragraphs 2.3.2 to 13.

1761
01:46:24.344 --> 01:46:27.944
In summary, the LVIA concludes that after 15 years of

1762
01:46:27.984 --> 01:46:31.674
operation, effects on the character of, on the character of the

1763
01:46:31.684 --> 01:46:34.693
sites would be significant beneficial.

1764
01:46:34.724 --> 01:46:38.394
The main reasons why the LVIA overestimates levels of

1765
01:46:38.424 --> 01:46:41.854
beneficial landscape and associated visual effects are as

1766
01:46:41.884 --> 01:46:45.624
follows. The LVIA departs from

1767
01:46:45.704 --> 01:46:49.584
guidance by only assessing effects on the landscape fabric

1768
01:46:49.624 --> 01:46:52.684
of the sites, not their overall character, as I will

1769
01:46:52.744 --> 01:46:55.024
explain.

1770
01:46:55.844 --> 01:46:59.604
Landscape fabric is not mentioned in GLVIA3.

1771
01:47:00.384 --> 01:47:04.284

By fabric, the LVIA means landscape elements such as hedges

1772

01:47:04.304 --> 01:47:07.904

and trees. The LVIA

1773

01:47:07.924 --> 01:47:11.864

proposes to reduce high levels of adverse effects on landscape

1774

01:47:11.944 --> 01:47:15.504

character and visual amenity by mitigating measures, which

1775

01:47:15.524 --> 01:47:19.164

comprise reinforcing existing on-site vegetation and

1776

01:47:19.204 --> 01:47:22.864

planting new hedges and trees. It concludes that

1777

01:47:22.944 --> 01:47:26.884

after 15 years when the planting has matured, there would be

1778

01:47:26.944 --> 01:47:30.554

significant beneficial effects on the site's landscape, landscape

1779

01:47:30.584 --> 01:47:34.264

fabric or elements. However, the

1780

01:47:34.364 --> 01:47:37.884

LVIA assumes that these proposed landscape and visual

1781

01:47:37.944 --> 01:47:41.804

mitigation measures can be double counted as landscape and

1782

01:47:41.884 --> 01:47:45.834

visual enhancement measures and scheme benefits when

1783

01:47:45.884 --> 01:47:49.854

GLVIA3 paragraph 3.39

1784

01:47:50.604 --> 01:47:54.184

explains they cannot. The double counting error is

1785

01:47:54.224 --> 01:47:57.644

explained further in section 4.2 of my landscape

1786

01:47:57.724 --> 01:48:01.584

statement. Therefore, at best, the overall

1787

01:48:01.644 --> 01:48:05.604

effect of the fabric when mature would be neutral,

1788

01:48:05.644 --> 01:48:09.364

and at worst significant adverse due to the

1789

01:48:09.444 --> 01:48:12.864

adverse effects arising from the mitigation measures,

1790

01:48:12.924 --> 01:48:16.564

including uncharacteristically tall hedges, and most

1791

01:48:16.604 --> 01:48:19.784

importantly, in many cases, a total loss of

1792

01:48:19.804 --> 01:48:23.584

view. The applicant also claims long-term

1793

01:48:23.704 --> 01:48:27.244

soil benefits, but I do not agree, as I will explain under point

1794

01:48:27.384 --> 01:48:30.764

five. Point two, direct

1795

01:48:30.824 --> 01:48:33.244

effects on the overall character of the

1796

01:48:33.324 --> 01:48:37.303

sites. My conclusions about the direct effects on

1797

01:48:37.344 --> 01:48:40.924

the overall character of the sites are set out in my landscape statement at

1798

01:48:41.004 --> 01:48:44.243
paragraphs 2.3.2 to 20. In

1799
01:48:44.344 --> 01:48:48.164
summary, it is unclear why the LVIA has only

1800
01:48:48.204 --> 01:48:51.904
considered effects on landscape fabric and not the overall

1801
01:48:52.024 --> 01:48:54.564
character of the sites.

1802
01:48:55.484 --> 01:48:58.984
At paragraph 5.4, GLVIA3

1803
01:48:59.004 --> 01:49:02.724
explains that LVIA's should firstly establish the

1804
01:49:02.804 --> 01:49:06.404
site's overall character. This being derived from a

1805
01:49:06.444 --> 01:49:09.584
combination of factors of which landscape

1806
01:49:09.684 --> 01:49:13.084
elements, which the LVIA calls fabric, are just a

1807
01:49:13.144 --> 01:49:16.564
part. Other factors which the

1808
01:49:16.684 --> 01:49:20.004
LVIA has not considered include aesthetic and perceptual

1809
01:49:20.024 --> 01:49:23.524
qualities and natural, cultural, social, and visual

1810
01:49:23.664 --> 01:49:26.924
aspects, features, functions, and services as set out in

1811
01:49:26.984 --> 01:49:30.944
GLVIA3 and illustrated on page nine

1812

01:49:30.984 --> 01:49:34.864

of Natural England's 2014 publication An Approach to

1813

01:49:34.924 --> 01:49:38.604

Landscape Character Assessment in figure one, What is

1814

01:49:38.644 --> 01:49:42.204

Landscape? The factors of relevance to this

1815

01:49:42.244 --> 01:49:45.384

project are described in section 3.1 of my landscape

1816

01:49:45.484 --> 01:49:49.094

statement. Having established the site's overall

1817

01:49:49.144 --> 01:49:52.564

character, LVIA's should then assess, assess

1818

01:49:52.624 --> 01:49:56.384

effects on the site's overall character, not just

1819

01:49:56.464 --> 01:49:59.606

on the landscape elements or fabric....

1820

01:49:59.616 --> 01:50:03.296

as explained in GLVIA3 paragraphs 5.34 to

1821

01:50:03.496 --> 01:50:07.476

36. In reality, there would be significant

1822

01:50:07.636 --> 01:50:11.346

direct adverse effects on the overall character of the sites from

1823

01:50:11.516 --> 01:50:14.956

start to finish due to the change from green fields to

1824

01:50:15.016 --> 01:50:18.976

developed land, in this case, from agricultural to industrial

1825

01:50:19.116 --> 01:50:21.556
use. These direct effects could not be

1826
01:50:21.616 --> 01:50:25.176
mitigated. Point three,

1827
01:50:25.236 --> 01:50:29.056
indirect effects on character up to one kilometer from the

1828
01:50:29.136 --> 01:50:32.716
site's boundaries. Indirect effects on

1829
01:50:32.756 --> 01:50:35.696
character usually occur off-site.

1830
01:50:35.736 --> 01:50:39.236
Importantly, the LVIA assumes that all

1831
01:50:39.276 --> 01:50:42.896
adverse indirect- indirect effects on character can be

1832
01:50:42.996 --> 01:50:46.446
mitigated by screening views. Whereas effects on

1833
01:50:46.516 --> 01:50:50.086
non-visual experiential landscape qualities and

1834
01:50:50.236 --> 01:50:53.236
tranquility are very difficult, if not impossible, to

1835
01:50:53.276 --> 01:50:57.006
mitigate. Also, the LVIA predicts that

1836
01:50:57.056 --> 01:51:00.076
levels of indirect effects on the overall character of the

1837
01:51:00.086 --> 01:51:03.815
landscapes lying between the sites and up to- to one

1838
01:51:03.916 --> 01:51:07.796
kilometer from their boundaries would be exactly the same, which

1839

01:51:07.856 --> 01:51:11.576

of course, they would not. This error is partly due to the

1840

01:51:11.656 --> 01:51:15.376

LVIA having categorized all the landscapes within five

1841

01:51:15.456 --> 01:51:19.116

kilometers of the site's boundaries as having the same levels of

1842

01:51:19.196 --> 01:51:23.096

value and susceptibility to change, despite notable

1843

01:51:23.156 --> 01:51:26.836

localized variations. It is also due to the

1844

01:51:26.956 --> 01:51:30.396

LVIA not having factored in that the highest levels of

1845

01:51:30.436 --> 01:51:33.746

indirect effects on character occur closest to the

1846

01:51:33.856 --> 01:51:37.376

site, and levels reduce gradually with distance to

1847

01:51:37.456 --> 01:51:40.996

neutral. My assessment concluded that indirect

1848

01:51:41.056 --> 01:51:44.836

effects on the overall character of the landscapes closest to the sites

1849

01:51:45.336 --> 01:51:49.076

would be significantly adverse for the duration of the operation, and the

1850

01:51:49.096 --> 01:51:52.976

industrializing influences would extend for many kilometers beyond the

1851

01:51:53.076 --> 01:51:57.036

order limits. Point four, underestimation

1852

01:51:57.136 --> 01:52:00.956

of levels of adverse landscape and visual effects.

1853

01:52:00.966 --> 01:52:04.556

The main reasons why the LVIA underestimates levels of

1854

01:52:04.596 --> 01:52:08.355

indirect a- adverse effects on the character of the landscapes beyond the

1855

01:52:08.415 --> 01:52:11.636

site boundaries, and adverse visual effects

1856

01:52:11.696 --> 01:52:14.265

generally, include the above and other

1857

01:52:14.296 --> 01:52:18.156

factors. For example, the use of a four-point

1858

01:52:18.276 --> 01:52:22.176

scale, which skews the results, problems with the criteria

1859

01:52:22.296 --> 01:52:25.296

used for value and susceptibility.

1860

01:52:25.356 --> 01:52:29.296

Many visual receptors were scoped out on the basis of views currently being

1861

01:52:29.376 --> 01:52:33.116

screened by vegetation, whereas in future, they may not be.

1862

01:52:34.256 --> 01:52:38.016

Not all relevant landscape receptors, qualities, and functions were

1863

01:52:38.076 --> 01:52:41.776

identified nor factored into the baseline studies, so

1864

01:52:41.816 --> 01:52:44.296

effects on these receptors were not assessed.

1865

01:52:45.976 --> 01:52:49.156

Levels of landscape value and susceptibility to change were

1866

01:52:49.196 --> 01:52:52.916

underestimated due to the lack of granular baseline study and

1867

01:52:52.976 --> 01:52:56.716

analysis. Notable localized variations in

1868

01:52:56.816 --> 01:53:00.676

landscape character were not recognized and not factored into judgments

1869

01:53:00.686 --> 01:53:04.576

about landscape and visual value and susceptibility.

1870

01:53:04.636 --> 01:53:08.536

Levels of magnitude of effect were underestimated, partly due to the

1871

01:53:08.636 --> 01:53:12.436

LVIA not considering the cause and nature of many of the impacts and

1872

01:53:12.496 --> 01:53:16.456

effects. The LVIA did not differentiate between

1873

01:53:16.496 --> 01:53:19.396

direct and indirect landscape effects.

1874

01:53:19.436 --> 01:53:23.076

It did not factor in that levels of indirect effects reduced

1875

01:53:23.116 --> 01:53:26.116

gradually with his- with distance.

1876

01:53:26.136 --> 01:53:29.736

It erroneously assumes that all indirect effects on character can be

1877

01:53:29.796 --> 01:53:33.596

mitigated by screening. The adverse

1878

01:53:33.636 --> 01:53:37.246

effects arising from the proposed mitigation were not considered.

1879

01:53:37.256 --> 01:53:41.196

For example, tall hedges being unchar- uncharacteristic and total

1880

01:53:41.236 --> 01:53:45.176

loss of view. The LVIA does not report the worst

1881

01:53:45.296 --> 01:53:48.676

case visual scenario of effects at winter year

1882

01:53:48.716 --> 01:53:51.916

15, only in summer when trees would be in full

1883

01:53:51.976 --> 01:53:55.676

leaf. There is over-reliance on vegetation screen

1884

01:53:55.756 --> 01:53:59.116

views in the longer term, especially offsite.

1885

01:53:59.176 --> 01:54:02.676

Most importantly, the LVIA does not assess effects on the

1886

01:54:02.836 --> 01:54:06.756

overall character of the sites, only their landscape fabric, as

1887

01:54:06.856 --> 01:54:10.846

I have explained. This is a departure from the published guidance.

1888

01:54:11.476 --> 01:54:14.956

I also note that the LVIA has not af- assessed the effects

1889

01:54:14.996 --> 01:54:18.516

arising from the alternative option of BES on Site

1890

01:54:18.656 --> 01:54:21.976

C. Point five, soils and

1891

01:54:22.056 --> 01:54:25.836
agriculture. Effects on soils generally are set

1892
01:54:25.976 --> 01:54:29.916
out in Rep1/193. Those are

1893
01:54:29.956 --> 01:54:33.756
the appendices to my landscape statement in Appendix

1894
01:54:33.856 --> 01:54:37.576
CTE, Effects on Water and Soils. The

1895
01:54:37.696 --> 01:54:41.596
applicant claims that the development would result in long-term soil
benefits,

1896
01:54:41.636 --> 01:54:45.416
but I do not agree. This is explained in my landscape

1897
01:54:45.536 --> 01:54:48.636
statement at paragraph 6.2.22 to

1898
01:54:48.776 --> 01:54:52.616
34. But in summary, it is highly unlikely that the

1899
01:54:52.656 --> 01:54:56.366
land could or would be restored to its current condition and

1900
01:54:56.496 --> 01:55:00.056
use as the applicant proposes and assumes.

1901
01:55:00.066 --> 01:55:03.816
The soils ALC grades would almost certainly be lower than they are

1902
01:55:03.876 --> 01:55:07.706
now. The applicant appears to assume that

1903
01:55:07.756 --> 01:55:11.656
resting arable soils for long periods is beneficial

1904
01:55:11.736 --> 01:55:15.636

for soil health and quality. In fact, it

1905

01:55:15.696 --> 01:55:19.256

is the complete cessation of arable use that is

1906

01:55:19.296 --> 01:55:22.536

beneficial for soil health and quality in terms of

1907

01:55:22.576 --> 01:55:25.566

ecology because biodiversity

1908

01:55:25.616 --> 01:55:28.486

increases as fertility reduces.

1909

01:55:29.756 --> 01:55:33.536

However, here, the intention is to restore the land

1910

01:55:33.616 --> 01:55:36.776

to arable production. From an agricultural

1911

01:55:36.876 --> 01:55:40.836

perspective, long periods of resting are not beneficial

1912

01:55:40.936 --> 01:55:44.276

for soil health and quality because of the significant

1913

01:55:44.376 --> 01:55:48.336

reduction in fertility. It is extremely difficult to

1914

01:55:48.356 --> 01:55:51.976

restore soil fertility and can take decades.

1915

01:55:52.076 --> 01:55:56.066

Also, any ecological benefits that had accrued over time would

1916

01:55:56.096 --> 01:55:59.176

be lost when the land was returned to productive arable

1917

01:55:59.316 --> 01:56:02.820

use. In addition, the applicant has not

1918

01:56:02.840 --> 01:56:06.600

considered how the proposed wildflower meadow and pasture would

1919

01:56:06.640 --> 01:56:10.240

successfully establish on arable fields, given that they

1920

01:56:10.280 --> 01:56:14.200

require low fertility soils and the receiving soils are hurly-
highly

1921

01:56:14.280 --> 01:56:16.460

fertile. See Rep

1922

01:56:16.820 --> 01:56:20.240

1193, my Appendix C-T-F.

1923

01:56:21.540 --> 01:56:25.100

Furthermore, the applicant claims that continued agricultural

1924

01:56:25.260 --> 01:56:29.040

use, um, would happen by grazing sheep within the

1925

01:56:29.080 --> 01:56:32.860

solar array areas. However, this is considered very

1926

01:56:32.920 --> 01:56:36.880

unlikely to happen, and so far very few examples of this practice in

1927

01:56:36.940 --> 01:56:40.660

the UK have been found. The prospects of sheep being

1928

01:56:40.680 --> 01:56:42.660

raised is discussed in my Appendix

1929

01:56:42.720 --> 01:56:45.700

C-T-H. At paragraph

1930

01:56:45.900 --> 01:56:49.750

9.31.5, the applicant's

1931

01:56:49.880 --> 01:56:53.040
farming report, App 571,

1932
01:56:53.880 --> 01:56:57.500
reversed data from DEFRA's Land Use Statistics for England for

1933
01:56:57.620 --> 01:57:01.220
2024. The figures appear to suggest that

1934
01:57:01.320 --> 01:57:04.660
50% of solar sites are grazed by sheep.

1935
01:57:04.720 --> 01:57:08.580
However, I have seen emails on the subject and can

1936
01:57:08.640 --> 01:57:12.490
make them available if required, in which DEFRA explained that

1937
01:57:12.519 --> 01:57:16.040
the estimates exclude large-scale solar

1938
01:57:16.100 --> 01:57:19.260
farms. They are only for small commercial

1939
01:57:19.340 --> 01:57:23.280
agricultural holdings, i.e., those registered with the Rural

1940
01:57:23.400 --> 01:57:25.760
Payments Agency for payment or livestock

1941
01:57:25.840 --> 01:57:28.900
purposes. Point six,

1942
01:57:28.920 --> 01:57:32.810
design. The landscape-related aspects of site selection and

1943
01:57:32.920 --> 01:57:35.860
scheme design are in my Landscape Statement, Section

1944
01:57:36.080 --> 01:57:39.580
2.1. Regarding design generally, in

1945

01:57:39.740 --> 01:57:43.200
EXQ1/PD007, at

1946

01:57:43.260 --> 01:57:46.740
question 3.0.3, the

1947

01:57:46.750 --> 01:57:50.400
examining inspec- inspectors asked the applicant whether the project
should be

1948

01:57:50.460 --> 01:57:53.360
subject to an independent design review.

1949

01:57:53.370 --> 01:57:56.780
In my Landscape Statement at paragraphs 2.1.16 to

1950

01:57:56.820 --> 01:58:00.740
18, I said I thought it seemed unlikely that the high levels of

1951

01:58:00.820 --> 01:58:04.740
adverse landscape and visual effects arising from the scheme could

1952

01:58:04.780 --> 01:58:08.589
be mitigated through design measures other than those considered at

1953

01:58:08.640 --> 01:58:12.390
a much wider landscape scale, in terms of location

1954

01:58:12.780 --> 01:58:16.720
and perhaps siting, especially as the design of and materials

1955

01:58:16.820 --> 01:58:20.800
used for the majority of the scheme elements are predetermined.

1956

01:58:20.880 --> 01:58:23.420
However, EXQ1 question

1957

01:58:23.720 --> 01:58:27.460
3.04 asks the applicant about the selection of

1958

01:58:27.560 --> 01:58:30.060

colors for certain scheme elements.

1959

01:58:30.080 --> 01:58:33.640

At paragraph 2.2.20 of my Landscape Safe

1960

01:58:33.680 --> 01:58:37.300

Statement, I suggested that an environmental color assessment

1961

01:58:37.640 --> 01:58:41.340

could be the best way of integrating built form into its landscape and

1962

01:58:41.420 --> 01:58:45.320

visual context. Final point seven, glint

1963

01:58:45.360 --> 01:58:48.720

and glare. This matter is explained in my

1964

01:58:48.780 --> 01:58:52.420

Appendix C-T-I. The applicant's glint and glare

1965

01:58:52.480 --> 01:58:55.820

assessment, uh, GGA, is App 052-

1966

01:58:55.960 --> 01:58:58.820

052.

1967

01:59:00.180 --> 01:59:02.780

Glint and glare assessments primarily consider

1968

01:59:03.060 --> 01:59:06.960

safety. They assess the effects of glint and

1969

01:59:06.980 --> 01:59:10.320

glare on human receptors who, if affected by the

1970

01:59:10.340 --> 01:59:14.180

phenomena, could potentially cause a major accident

1971

01:59:14.720 --> 01:59:17.780

resulting in large numbers of casualties and

1972

01:59:17.900 --> 01:59:21.560

fatalities, i.e. pilots and people in air traffic

1973

01:59:21.620 --> 01:59:25.240

control towers, train drivers, and people driving

1974

01:59:25.250 --> 01:59:28.550

vehicles along major national, national and regional

1975

01:59:28.640 --> 01:59:29.950

roads.

1976

01:59:30.860 --> 01:59:34.660

GGAs usually consider effects on the safety of people

1977

01:59:34.800 --> 01:59:38.760

using minor roads and lanes, and sometimes public rights of

1978

01:59:38.840 --> 01:59:42.480

way. The applicant's glint and glare assessment has done

1979

01:59:42.600 --> 01:59:46.450

so, along with receptors at horse facilities and agricultural

1980

01:59:46.560 --> 01:59:50.040

workers at the examiner's request.

1981

01:59:50.100 --> 01:59:53.460

However, as in other glint and glare assessments,

1982

01:59:54.019 --> 01:59:57.000

these people are always categorized as low

1983

01:59:57.260 --> 02:00:01.220

sensitivity receptors, mainly due to the assumption

1984

02:00:01.260 --> 02:00:05.240

that only low numbers of people use minor roads and public rights of

1985

02:00:05.300 --> 02:00:08.980

way, and therefore any incidents would result in

1986

02:00:09.100 --> 02:00:11.120

low numbers of casualties.

1987

02:00:12.019 --> 02:00:15.470

Therefore, if I may add that the discussions about other roads being

1988

02:00:15.519 --> 02:00:19.460

identified, um, it's almost certain that

1989

02:00:19.520 --> 02:00:22.540

the effects will be discovered to be low for those reasons.

1990

02:00:22.559 --> 02:00:26.440

And those reasons are explained in the applicant's glint and glare paragraphs

1991

02:00:26.500 --> 02:00:29.180

15.4.21 and

1992

02:00:29.400 --> 02:00:32.440

22, and explained further in my

1993

02:00:32.500 --> 02:00:36.440

paragraphs, uh, Appendix I 123

1994

02:00:36.480 --> 02:00:39.130

to 28 and 49 to 77.

1995

02:00:40.320 --> 02:00:44.300

In my opinion, it is not acceptable to say that because receptor numbers are

1996

02:00:44.360 --> 02:00:48.340

low, levels and effects would be low because multiple

1997

02:00:48.460 --> 02:00:51.160

casualties/fatalities would not occur.

1998

02:00:51.260 --> 02:00:54.980

Surely, just one fatality, serious injury along a local

1999

02:00:55.059 --> 02:00:57.620

grain- lane or public right of way should be of

2000

02:00:57.660 --> 02:01:01.540

concern. Also, many of the lanes and public

2001

02:01:01.580 --> 02:01:05.500

rights of way in the study area are popular and very well used,

2002

02:01:05.540 --> 02:01:09.480

especially the long distance trails and the footpaths and bridleways which

2003

02:01:09.520 --> 02:01:12.860

connect them to each other and to the towns and villages.

2004

02:01:12.880 --> 02:01:15.680

Many users are of high visual sensitivity.

2005

02:01:16.880 --> 02:01:20.240

GGAs, including this one, also assess effects on

2006

02:01:20.280 --> 02:01:24.140

residential visual amenity. However, they do not

2007

02:01:24.220 --> 02:01:28.009

assess effects on public visual or social recreational

2008

02:01:28.140 --> 02:01:31.559

amenity in terms of the adverse changes to the

2009

02:01:31.580 --> 02:01:35.340

experiences of people using local lanes and public rights of way

2010

02:01:35.860 --> 02:01:39.480

and visiting heritage assets, equestrian centers and other attractions.

2011

02:01:40.120 --> 02:01:43.960

There is no analysis of the effects of glint and glare on visual

2012

02:01:44.040 --> 02:01:47.920

or other amenity in the LVIA or other documents, nor

2013

02:01:47.980 --> 02:01:51.680

on landscape character. The GGA

2014

02:01:51.740 --> 02:01:55.080

erroneously assumes that existing and/or proposed

2015

02:01:55.120 --> 02:01:58.070

vegetation would fully screen views all year

2016

02:01:58.140 --> 02:02:01.860

round, whereas, A, most views would only be filtered in

2017

02:02:01.940 --> 02:02:05.840

winter, B, elevated views would not be screened, and

2018

02:02:06.020 --> 02:02:09.880

C, some existing tree belts relied on to fully screen a very thin

2019

02:02:09.920 --> 02:02:13.128

and gappingAlso, the GGA

2020

02:02:13.228 --> 02:02:17.148

erroneously assumes, as does the LVIA, that views would

2021

02:02:17.208 --> 02:02:20.588

be screened by vegetation for the duration of the 60-plus year

2022

02:02:20.728 --> 02:02:24.648

operation, which cannot be guaranteed and is highly unlikely,

2023

02:02:24.688 --> 02:02:27.507

as explained in section 4.4 of my landscape

2024

02:02:27.607 --> 02:02:30.867
statement. In addition, the risks to both

2025
02:02:31.067 --> 02:02:34.987
aviation and ground-based receptors from bird strike have not been

2026
02:02:35.027 --> 02:02:38.867
considered. If an issue, a bird hazard management plan

2027
02:02:38.907 --> 02:02:42.697
may have to be produced, which could have serious implications for
the

2028
02:02:42.768 --> 02:02:46.388
landscape, visual, and ecological assessments.

2029
02:02:46.407 --> 02:02:50.008
Importantly, the examiners asked the applicant to consider the

2030
02:02:50.067 --> 02:02:52.987
ecological effects of glint and glare.

2031
02:02:53.008 --> 02:02:56.768
Paragraphs I.32-39 of my appendix

2032
02:02:56.867 --> 02:03:00.808
CTI explain why, in my opinion, the applicant's

2033
02:03:00.867 --> 02:03:04.317
assessment is inadequate. My assessment that

2034
02:03:04.367 --> 02:03:08.348
concluded that many receptors could be significantly adversely
affected

2035
02:03:08.388 --> 02:03:11.268
by glint and glare. Note that during

2036
02:03:11.367 --> 02:03:15.366
ISH-1, the applicant's landscape expert confirmed that

2037

02:03:15.468 --> 02:03:19.168

no screen planting is proposed along the public rights of way running through

2038

02:03:19.248 --> 02:03:22.888

solar arrays. So the adverse effects of glint and glare would not be

2039

02:03:22.898 --> 02:03:26.508

mitigated. Thank you very much.

2040

02:03:27.867 --> 02:03:31.447

Thank you, Ms. Tinkler. Um, just doing a

2041

02:03:31.487 --> 02:03:34.827

little time check. Um, mindful that we've only got, um,

2042

02:03:35.628 --> 02:03:38.848

till 3:00 today. Um, is there anything, Ms. Brodrick or Mr.

2043

02:03:38.888 --> 02:03:41.907

Jackson, you want to come back on, what you've heard from Ms.

2044

02:03:41.947 --> 02:03:45.708

Tinkler there? Um, bearing in mind the time?

2045

02:03:45.718 --> 02:03:47.928

(laughs) As succinctly as possible, please.

2046

02:03:49.048 --> 02:03:50.107

Uh, Claire Brodrick for the applicant.

2047

02:03:50.148 --> 02:03:53.117

Yes, very mindful, um, of the time, um, and I think

2048

02:03:54.048 --> 02:03:57.607

probably in terms of, obviously, a very detailed response was just given over a

2049

02:03:57.688 --> 02:04:00.907

range of different topics, some within this agenda item and some falling

2050

02:04:00.968 --> 02:04:04.947

into other ES topics. Um, so I think probably

2051

02:04:04.987 --> 02:04:08.907

in terms of the most efficient use of time, we will respond in,

2052

02:04:08.947 --> 02:04:11.288

in writing to those points. But Mr.

2053

02:04:11.308 --> 02:04:13.947

Jackson may wish to make a couple of high-level

2054

02:04:14.527 --> 02:04:18.148

observations, um, and then we will follow that in more detailed written

2055

02:04:18.228 --> 02:04:21.308

submission. Thank you.

2056

02:04:21.387 --> 02:04:23.468

Mr. Jackson on behalf of the applicant.

2057

02:04:24.008 --> 02:04:27.928

Um, a- any... As, as, um, as m- as my

2058

02:04:27.947 --> 02:04:30.677

colleague, Ms. Brodrick, pointed out, there is, there's a, there's a...

2059

02:04:30.677 --> 02:04:33.987

quite a vast array of, of crossover that was just been discussed by, by Ms.

2060

02:04:34.027 --> 02:04:36.827

Tinkler in regards to, uh, the different technical disciplines and how they

2061

02:04:36.848 --> 02:04:40.248

interrelate within the landscape vision impact assessment.

2062

02:04:40.348 --> 02:04:44.338

Um, I discussed at the beginning when I introduced myself that, uh,

2063

02:04:44.428 --> 02:04:47.378

we're also responsible for the, the environmental master plan.

2064

02:04:47.407 --> 02:04:50.978

Uh, the LVIAs and the environmental master planning is an iterative approach that,

2065

02:04:50.987 --> 02:04:53.478

that considers all of the various different technical disciplines.

2066

02:04:53.567 --> 02:04:57.428

Um, we work closely with, with all of the, the different consultants that are

2067

02:04:57.447 --> 02:04:59.718

involved in delivering the design of the scheme.

2068

02:04:59.788 --> 02:05:03.138

Um, for example, glint and glare colleagues, hydrology colleagues, um,

2069

02:05:03.188 --> 02:05:07.148

ecology, uh, heritage, for example, you know, undertaking site visits with, um,

2070

02:05:07.468 --> 02:05:11.228

members of Historic England, as well as being out on site with our, um, hydrology

2071

02:05:11.268 --> 02:05:15.048

consultants. Um, l- understanding the, uh, the way that the, the

2072

02:05:15.128 --> 02:05:18.827

sites sit and then trying to mitigate and,

2073

02:05:18.928 --> 02:05:22.607

um, present a design that is as, uh, robust and

2074

02:05:22.628 --> 02:05:25.607

encompassing of all the different technical, uh, constraints that we

have across

2075

02:05:25.648 --> 02:05:29.527

the sites. Um, so the LVIA, uh,

2076

02:05:29.567 --> 02:05:32.148

as I said, is, is an iterative document that is, is progressed throughout the

2077

02:05:32.208 --> 02:05:35.228

course of the, uh, the design of the scheme.

2078

02:05:35.248 --> 02:05:38.978

And during that timeframe, there is ongoing consultation, or has been in...

2079

02:05:38.987 --> 02:05:41.628

with, um, with North Northamptonshire and, and then subsequently West

2080

02:05:41.668 --> 02:05:44.288

Northamptonshire's landscape architect, uh, Mr.

2081

02:05:44.327 --> 02:05:46.447

Ryan Mills, who's obviously with us today.

2082

02:05:46.487 --> 02:05:50.138

During that time period, um, from, from the beginning of, of

2083

02:05:50.228 --> 02:05:53.668

scoping through to examination, the LVIA

2084

02:05:53.728 --> 02:05:56.888

methodology was presented to Mr. Mills, discussed with Mr.

2085

02:05:56.907 --> 02:06:00.827

Mills at length and, uh, and is now within a statement of common ground

2086

02:06:00.848 --> 02:06:04.268

that we have an agreement on the methodology that's been undertaken.

2087

02:06:04.288 --> 02:06:07.748

As discussed previously, Mr. Mills and myself still have some disagreements in the

2088

02:06:07.808 --> 02:06:10.088

application of that methodology and the findings and some of the effects that

2089

02:06:10.428 --> 02:06:13.148

professional judgment that sits in there.

2090

02:06:13.228 --> 02:06:17.208

Um, so regards to the LVIA methodology, um, as I said, it, it's

2091

02:06:17.228 --> 02:06:20.487

been, um, been agreed through a longstanding consultation process with the local

2092

02:06:20.508 --> 02:06:21.968

authorities. Um,

2093

02:06:23.107 --> 02:06:26.947

the methodology proposed by, uh, by the stock group, by, by Ms.

2094

02:06:26.987 --> 02:06:29.748

Tinkler is of a, of a different approach.

2095

02:06:29.808 --> 02:06:33.647

Uh, uh, again, the guideline for landscape visual impact assessment volume

2096

02:06:33.708 --> 02:06:37.308

three by Landscape Institute doesn't offer a, a

2097

02:06:37.567 --> 02:06:41.487

prescriptive approach to LVIA. It is as defined by the title, it's

2098

02:06:41.527 --> 02:06:44.838

guidelines, and it has some, some clear, um,

2099

02:06:45.608 --> 02:06:49.228

suggestions and, and requirements of what should or should not be undertaken within

2100

02:06:49.708 --> 02:06:53.388

LVIA. Um, and the LVIA, as presented with

2101

02:06:53.428 --> 02:06:57.067

the, the application for the Green Hill scheme, um, as I said, uh,

2102

02:06:57.088 --> 02:07:01.008

is... complies with that, um, that piece

2103

02:07:01.048 --> 02:07:04.288

of guidance. (clears throat) Um, there are a couple of other points I'd just like

2104

02:07:04.367 --> 02:07:07.468

to, to clarify. Um, the

2105

02:07:08.367 --> 02:07:12.147

landscape visual impact assessment findings do not find any

2106

02:07:12.728 --> 02:07:16.248

significant beneficial effects to landscape character

2107

02:07:16.608 --> 02:07:20.288

or to visual amenity as a consequence of development of the scheme either at,

2108

02:07:20.388 --> 02:07:22.527

uh, construction year one operation.

2109

02:07:23.188 --> 02:07:24.487

Um, where we

2110

02:07:25.428 --> 02:07:29.348

identify significant beneficial effects, those are the results of the impro-

2111

02:07:29.407 --> 02:07:31.487

um, improvements to landscape fabric.

2112

02:07:31.508 --> 02:07:35.168

So this is the, uh, the amount... (laughs) To, to

2113

02:07:35.228 --> 02:07:39.088

oversimplify it, the, the... take the amounts of trees we have on site today, look

2114

02:07:39.108 --> 02:07:42.268

at the amount of trees we have on site following the establishment of the, uh, the

2115

02:07:42.288 --> 02:07:46.188

landscape scheme, and there is a, a large shift upwards in

2116

02:07:46.228 --> 02:07:49.487

that, in that... um, the amount of, of hectares and hedgerow improvement

2117

02:07:50.048 --> 02:07:53.888

and grassland reversion. Um, and so it's that landscape fabric

2118

02:07:54.228 --> 02:07:55.798

increase. And I would, um,

2119

02:07:56.668 --> 02:07:57.428

again, just,

2120

02:07:58.248 --> 02:08:01.327

uh, direct, um, Ms. Tinkler to paragraph

2121

02:08:01.567 --> 02:08:05.288

7.25 of GLVIA which directly references

2122

02:08:05.888 --> 02:08:09.447

landscape fabric, um, and then also,

2123

02:08:09.548 --> 02:08:09.928

um,

2124

02:08:11.008 --> 02:08:14.168

references within the, um, landscape effects assessing their

significance.

2125

02:08:14.188 --> 02:08:17.308

There's a sec- section in there that, that discusses landscape fabric and, and, and

2126

02:08:17.348 --> 02:08:20.206

how that is then brought through. And as...

2127

02:08:20.236 --> 02:08:23.256

as we then use within the methodology, it's those tangible elements exist on site,

2128

02:08:23.296 --> 02:08:26.336

the trees, the hedgerows, the, the scrubland, the margins,

2129

02:08:26.396 --> 02:08:30.056

the, the, the other bits and pieces that we all consider that make up the

2130

02:08:30.116 --> 02:08:32.076

actual elements and landscape in front of us.

2131

02:08:32.086 --> 02:08:35.896

(inhales sharply) The next point is obviously that, that is

2132

02:08:35.956 --> 02:08:39.316

looking at how we increase that overall landscape.

2133

02:08:39.336 --> 02:08:42.716

We've, we've worked with the, um, published landscape character guidelines, as well

2134

02:08:42.756 --> 02:08:46.726

as discussions with the officers, uh, at Northamptonshire, as well as our own s-

2135

02:08:46.776 --> 02:08:50.606

own s- on-site evaluation of the landscape to deliver a scheme that

2136

02:08:50.716 --> 02:08:54.676

is, um, aligned to the existing landscape character of the

2137

02:08:54.716 --> 02:08:57.976

sites, with the intention that that

2138

02:08:58.116 --> 02:09:01.936

mitigation, once in play, would then lead to that long-term legacy

2139

02:09:01.956 --> 02:09:04.416

landscape benefit that, that we all, all... Mr.

2140

02:09:04.436 --> 02:09:07.856

Mills touched on earlier. Um, that being the fact that

2141

02:09:08.336 --> 02:09:09.916

following decommissioning of the

2142

02:09:10.736 --> 02:09:14.336

infrastructure on site, so that's, that's all of the, um,
aboveground

2143

02:09:14.376 --> 02:09:17.676

infrastructure on site whi- which this DCO confirms will be removed.

2144

02:09:17.736 --> 02:09:21.316

Once that is removed and the scheme put back to

2145

02:09:21.616 --> 02:09:25.256

landowner's use, so... Our understanding, being put back to

2146

02:09:25.296 --> 02:09:28.926

agriculture, um, that the existing...

2147

02:09:28.936 --> 02:09:32.136

Or that point in time, the existing landscape framework that would
have been

2148

02:09:32.156 --> 02:09:35.446

provided with the solar scheme would, would be harmonious with the
landscape

2149

02:09:35.536 --> 02:09:37.776

character and lead to a long-term benefit.

2150

02:09:37.846 --> 02:09:41.786

We discussed at issues-specific hearing one the suggestion, obviously,

2151

02:09:41.816 --> 02:09:45.756

that the, the hedgerows being grown to a, to a, uh, four to four and a

2152

02:09:45.796 --> 02:09:48.136

half meters high would be in congress.

2153

02:09:48.156 --> 02:09:51.336

We've accepted that that sits within the landscape visual impact and the visual

2154

02:09:51.376 --> 02:09:55.356

impact assessment part of that. And again, as discussed at that point, when those

2155

02:09:55.376 --> 02:09:59.356

are returned back to the landowners, it's within their remit and their control to

2156

02:09:59.396 --> 02:10:03.336

manage those as they see fit. Um, but it's our assumption at that point in

2157

02:10:03.396 --> 02:10:06.876

time that the equivalence of the present-day landscape

2158

02:10:06.916 --> 02:10:10.046

protections would be in place, so that the, the Hedgerow Act and the Forestry

2159

02:10:10.096 --> 02:10:12.076

Commission requirements on, on woodland felling.

2160

02:10:12.116 --> 02:10:16.076

So, our assumption is that the substantive landscape gains that are provided

2161
02:10:16.096 --> 02:10:18.416
at that point would persevere.

2162
02:10:18.496 --> 02:10:20.496
Um, the

2163
02:10:22.816 --> 02:10:26.536
landscape character is looked at differently from landscape fabric.

2164
02:10:26.556 --> 02:10:29.566
So la- landscape fabric is bringing forward those beneficial effects
that I've just

2165
02:10:29.596 --> 02:10:33.316
discussed, but the landscape character is recognized within the LVIA

2166
02:10:33.616 --> 02:10:37.536
as being significantly adversely impacted as a result of the
industrialization

2167
02:10:37.596 --> 02:10:41.396
of the landscape, as a result of the, um, the solar

2168
02:10:41.496 --> 02:10:44.136
infrastructure being brought in. And as Ms.

2169
02:10:44.176 --> 02:10:48.096
Tinkler correctly identifies, that decreases as you

2170
02:10:48.136 --> 02:10:51.456
move further and further away from within... from the sites
themselves.

2171
02:10:51.496 --> 02:10:54.816
What we've looked at is a series of study areas, and the reason for

2172
02:10:54.876 --> 02:10:58.576
that is so that we don't dilute

2173
02:10:58.716 --> 02:11:02.666
the significance of effects in regards to when reviewing landscape

character areas.

2174

02:11:02.696 --> 02:11:06.256

In fact, Mr. Mills and myself had a conversation on site previously when we were

2175

02:11:06.296 --> 02:11:08.396

undertaking the site visit about this very point.

2176

02:11:08.436 --> 02:11:10.336

If you, if you imagine you've got a very large

2177

02:11:11.436 --> 02:11:15.025

study a- uh, sorry, landscape character area, which is the, the published,

2178

02:11:15.116 --> 02:11:18.836

um, uh, documentation, then you've got the, the actual

2179

02:11:18.936 --> 02:11:22.386

area inside it, you know, the line that's been arbitrarily drawn on a map for,

2180

02:11:22.396 --> 02:11:26.305

for a study. If you have a very large one, there can be, often be the,

2181

02:11:26.336 --> 02:11:29.796

the criticism that you would then suggest that while the scheme is sat

2182

02:11:29.816 --> 02:11:33.756

within the bottom corner, it's only occupying a very small percentage

2183

02:11:33.796 --> 02:11:37.236

of the, of the actual character area, so therefore the effect on the character area

2184

02:11:37.256 --> 02:11:38.376

itself is negligible.

2185

02:11:39.176 --> 02:11:40.576
Actually, what... If you then look at

2186
02:11:41.516 --> 02:11:45.016
the effect on that immediate character of in the site and its
immediate

2187
02:11:45.056 --> 02:11:47.416
setting could actually be significant.

2188
02:11:47.436 --> 02:11:50.556
And so what you don't want to do is dilute the significance of
effects just by

2189
02:11:50.596 --> 02:11:53.376
looking at larger landscape character areas.

2190
02:11:53.386 --> 02:11:57.356
So, what we've done is undertaken a, um, a review

2191
02:11:57.396 --> 02:12:01.266
of all the published landscape character areas, as well as reviewed
it on site.

2192
02:12:01.296 --> 02:12:05.116
There is a description of the character of each individual

2193
02:12:05.196 --> 02:12:09.176
site along with an assessment of value, susceptibility,

2194
02:12:09.196 --> 02:12:12.296
and sensitivity within, um, the LVIA

2195
02:12:12.496 --> 02:12:16.276
appendix. And that... Sorry, let me just get the reference up for
that,

2196
02:12:16.316 --> 02:12:17.376
ma'am. That is at

2197
02:12:17.696 --> 02:12:21.376
8.3.2.2.1 of the

2198

02:12:21.436 --> 02:12:24.876

LVIA appendix, which is the

2199

02:12:24.916 --> 02:12:28.736

revised version that was submitted with the, um, the

2200

02:12:28.816 --> 02:12:31.836

contents and the links set for it, which is

2201

02:12:31.976 --> 02:12:35.956

REP1041. Um, so

2202

02:12:36.016 --> 02:12:39.976

that sets out the, the on-site assessment and the, the, the

2203

02:12:40.016 --> 02:12:42.816

landscape and visual impact assessment for each of the individual sites with each

2204

02:12:42.856 --> 02:12:46.676

individual study areas. Whilst, um, and to, to draw on one of Ms.

2205

02:12:46.686 --> 02:12:50.396

Tinkler's points, whilst there is a, what could appear to be a, a blanket

2206

02:12:50.496 --> 02:12:54.066

score that's been processed across all of the individual study areas and all

2207

02:12:54.116 --> 02:12:58.036

individual sites, that, that has actually, in fact, been an individual assessment

2208

02:12:58.056 --> 02:13:01.786

undertaken. And it's the conclusions of the LVIA that,

2209

02:13:01.816 --> 02:13:05.756

within the categories that have been identified with the methodology, findings sit

2210

02:13:05.836 --> 02:13:09.736

within the same bands. So it's not that it's, it's been

2211

02:13:09.836 --> 02:13:11.936

blanketly applied across the entire scheme.

2212

02:13:12.136 --> 02:13:15.356

Each site, each study area has been looked at independently.

2213

02:13:15.396 --> 02:13:18.956

It's just that where we've found it, it all sits

2214

02:13:19.036 --> 02:13:22.836

within. And that's not suggesting that they're all at the same point

2215

02:13:22.856 --> 02:13:26.516

within that band. They may move, some to the top or some to the bottom, but they

2216

02:13:26.576 --> 02:13:29.196

all generally sit within that, that same banding.

2217

02:13:29.216 --> 02:13:33.056

But each individual site has been looked at in

2218

02:13:33.096 --> 02:13:35.516

regards to all of the various different things that Mr.

2219

02:13:35.556 --> 02:13:38.866

Tinkler suggested, such as the cultural heritage references, the setting of the

2220

02:13:38.876 --> 02:13:40.826

heritage assets, and the way that those

2221

02:13:41.796 --> 02:13:45.176

features outside the sites form the character and our, our general appreciation of

2222

02:13:45.196 --> 02:13:48.326

the landscape within which the scheme is, is being located.

2223

02:13:48.416 --> 02:13:48.576

Um,

2224

02:13:49.816 --> 02:13:50.376

I think-

2225

02:13:50.436 --> 02:13:51.626

So-sorry, Mr. Jackson-

2226

02:13:51.676 --> 02:13:51.816

Of course.

2227

02:13:51.826 --> 02:13:55.566

... sorry to, uh, interrupt. Um, uh, just conscious, um, I'm, I'm in

2228

02:13:55.616 --> 02:13:56.736

charge of timings-

2229

02:13:56.756 --> 02:13:56.766

(laughs)

2230

02:13:56.796 --> 02:13:57.635

... and, um, we're-

2231

02:13:57.656 --> 02:13:58.846

Not a, not a problem,

2232

02:13:58.916 --> 02:14:02.726

We are... I s- I did promise people a lunch break, so, um, I- I-

2233

02:14:02.816 --> 02:14:05.076

I'll, um, I'll wrap it up then if, if, uh-

2234

02:14:05.086 --> 02:14:05.486

If... Yeah, that-

2235

02:14:05.576 --> 02:14:06.676

Understood. Not a problem.

2236

02:14:06.776 --> 02:14:06.946
Thank you.

2237
02:14:06.946 --> 02:14:10.816
Um, I suppose the, um... Just to sort of draw to a

2238
02:14:10.876 --> 02:14:13.216
close, um, then obviously working with

2239
02:14:14.176 --> 02:14:16.186
Glensonglaire colleagues, there are...

2240
02:14:16.276 --> 02:14:20.156
Um, uh, Ms. Tinkler referenced the,

2241
02:14:20.176 --> 02:14:23.376
the, the non-screening of, of public rights away within the sites.

2242
02:14:23.396 --> 02:14:26.356
And I just wanna close it out that we discussed that again at the last

2243
02:14:26.396 --> 02:14:30.156
issues-specific hearing. Where it's been appropriate, we've put, um, planting

2244
02:14:30.196 --> 02:14:33.416
alongside footpaths. However, where we believe that that would lead to an

2245
02:14:33.456 --> 02:14:37.416
in-congress legacy landscape, we haven't planted alongside the, uh, the

2246
02:14:37.436 --> 02:14:41.146
hedgerows so that we don't have the, uh, the tram tracks once the infrastructure

2247
02:14:41.156 --> 02:14:44.116
has been removed. Thank you.

2248
02:14:45.536 --> 02:14:49.416

Thank you very much. Um, I did have a couple of questions, but I'm quite happy to

2249

02:14:49.476 --> 02:14:51.656
move them to questions in writing.

2250

02:14:51.756 --> 02:14:55.396
Um, and so I think if there's nothing further, that probably

2251

02:14:55.416 --> 02:14:59.236
draws to a close the landscape and visual matters. I'm just having a look round.

2252

02:14:59.916 --> 02:15:01.576
Anything online?

2253

02:15:01.636 --> 02:15:05.556
Yeah. So, um, we will take a, a rather belated

2254

02:15:05.956 --> 02:15:08.476
(laughs) , um, lunch break for, for 30 minutes.

2255

02:15:08.496 --> 02:15:12.126
I'm also gonna have a word with the AV company and see if I can, um,

2256

02:15:12.256 --> 02:15:16.036
nicely ask if we could go slightly beyond 3:00 PM to just try and get

2257

02:15:16.096 --> 02:15:19.756
transport and any other business, um, in.

2258

02:15:19.796 --> 02:15:23.106
But, uh, uh, for now, um, we will

2259

02:15:23.156 --> 02:15:26.366
adjourn, and we will come back at, uh,

2260

02:15:26.556 --> 02:15:27.916
2:20. Thank

2261

02:15:27.976 --> 02:16:10.956
you.