



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Light Valley Solar
Hearing:	Recording of Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH 1) - Part 2
Date:	29 July 2026

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:08:00 - 00:00:10:00

Okay. Thank you everybody. Welcome back.

00:00:13:02 - 00:00:43:09

I'd just like to welcome you all back to the open floor hearing for the Light Valley Solar Project application. Before I begin, can I just confirm that everybody can still hear me clearly and kind of also confirmed that the live stream and recording event has commenced? Okay, great. Thank you. So we'll continue on hearing contributions this morning. Um, I can run down to the next person on my list. I have a, uh. Steven. Ben, where I believe you're joining us online.

00:00:47:26 - 00:00:48:17

Hello.

00:00:48:29 - 00:00:49:24

Good morning.

00:00:51:26 - 00:01:12:27

Good morning, Mr. Ben. Um, okay, so you will have five minutes allocated for you to speak again. Uh, because you won't be able to see the clock in the room. I'll give you a 32nd warning when we're getting nearer to the close at that time. When you're comfortable, if you want to begin, if you could just introduce yourself and make your contribution, then. Thank you.

00:01:14:09 - 00:01:55:28

Thank you. Yes. My name is Stephen Benn. I live in Skipwith, and, um, there's just a few comments that I would like to make. Uh, really regard to the. I mean, the whole scheme seems to me, uh, not to be fully linked up. However, within the area that's going to affect Skipwith, um, during the installation area, we're going to have to remove the traffic calming measures. So I'm interested in how we're going to retain those in the in the meantime, they're also going to have to remove established trees and various, um, areas to give access to the heavy duty trucks.

00:01:56:00 - 00:02:26:18

Uh, I'm not sure how they're going to negotiate some of the tight turns without damaging some of the existing land. Whether they're going to Tech Tree as well as taking trees down, they're going to tech fences and posts. I presume they'll put it back together again and understand that they'll also need to take down overhead, power and telecom lines. And I just wonder why Skipwith, which is so far away from the main development of the solar panels, is going to need such heavy traffic and such damage into the main street.

00:02:27:04 - 00:03:03:23

I don't quite understand. So a little bit more information on that. And that was a later addition, not part of the original one that's just come out on part of the, uh, later, uh, established one. So as well as all the other concerns that they had. I don't know whether, um, the lady from South Milford was going to

mention that. I know she was talking about 13 councils. Uh, I think we probably should have broken those down into to give us more than the eight minutes, but I appreciate your allowing her to put in writing the details that was were going to be mentioned.

00:03:04:14 - 00:03:39:23

So that's it for me. Fairly short, a little bit on Skipwith. Um, I just don't understand why they need to put such heavy equipment through Skipwith. If actually we're not as affected as some of the other villages. Uh oh. Sorry. One comment I would make is the the, um, construction village, uh, between Skipwith Common and Recall. It does seem to be a long way from the center of the, uh, development. So obviously that will add to the traffic that's going from the village to the development.

00:03:40:23 - 00:03:44:16

Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for the, uh, for the opportunity to speak.

00:03:45:09 - 00:03:48:09

Thank you, Mister Vernon. Thank you for your contribution this morning.

00:03:55:29 - 00:04:03:28

I'll now move back on to people who are available in the room. Um, can I invite Claire Hotchkiss, please?

00:04:11:22 - 00:04:27:04

Thank you. Good morning. So, same rules again once you're comfortable. If you'd like to introduce yourself, you'll have five minutes. Um, okay. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. My name is Claire Hotchkiss, and I'm here representing myself as a resident.

00:04:27:09 - 00:04:57:18

Who will be affected by the scheme. Uh, first, I'd just like to make a comment that my children would like to be in attendance at one of these meetings, but unfortunately, they're all being held on workdays and within the working, working week, which I don't think helps. Secondly, I just like to make the point at what cost to my physical and mental health. Is my family home surrounded by solar panels on all sides? So whatever I see from my house, the back, the middle, the front where I will just see solar panels and nothing else else.

00:04:58:06 - 00:05:17:26

This will have a monumental impact on the rest of my life if it goes ahead. How can surrounding a property on all sides be considered proportional? Just and fair? No view, no property value, no wildlife, no quality of life. No choice. Thank you.

00:05:21:14 - 00:05:26:28

Thank you, Miss Hotchkiss. But again, please, please refrain from applauding.

00:05:35:01 - 00:05:44:04

Okay, next person I have on my list, therefore, is Elliot Grant. Just like you make you both way to the table. Thank you.

00:05:50:18 - 00:05:55:00

Again, five minutes, just as a reminder. And once you're comfortable and ready to go.

00:05:56:16 - 00:05:57:07

Thank you.

00:06:00:18 - 00:06:35:04

Good morning. My name is Elliot Grant, and I'm registering my concerns and issues on behalf of the residents of Siddall House, also referred to as Siddal Farm House on the DCO, which is located at site two, in the application on sheet 13 of the land plan. Firstly, any objection we have is not necessarily against the development of renewable energy itself, but to the way the scheme has been designed and the wholly disproportionate impact it would have on our home. Siddal House is one of the main properties affected at site two that would experience the greatest concentration of infrastructure anywhere within this application.

00:06:35:19 - 00:07:13:18

Whilst many residents will live near solar structures, Siddal House is unique because we would be positioned directly next to one of the largest proposed acreage of solar panels in the region, including a battery energy storage system and a substation. As you are aware, these are not simple ancillary features to a solar farm, but substantial. Substantial pieces of industrial electrical infrastructure with serious safety concerns. As an amalgam, they fundamentally change the character of the area from what is currently open agricultural countryside into large scale electricity generating, storage and distribution complex.

00:07:14:16 - 00:07:53:20

Battery energy storage systems require substantial engineering works, security fencing, CCTV, lighting, monitoring equipment, maintenance access and emergency response infrastructure. The proposed substation introduces transformers, switchgear, high voltage electrical equipment and associated buildings. Around these are hundreds of acres of four meter high panels enclosed by security fencing. This is in effect a substantial industrial development. The impact or the impact cannot be dismissed by planting hedgerows or trees, because the issue is not simply what we can or can't be seen.

00:07:53:22 - 00:08:30:00

It is the sound, the safety concern, the worry, the material change to our environment and what we'll have will have to live alongside every day for the next 40 to 60 years. The examining authority has recently identified that a visual amenity assessment has not been undertaken by the applicant, but it is clear the impact will be significant for Siddall House. It is deemed by the applicant that the development is temporary. It is clearly not by these timelines a lifetime, you might say. It is also highly debatable whether the landscape will ever truly be restored to its original agricultural state.

00:08:30:02 - 00:08:31:10

Post decommission.

00:08:32:27 - 00:09:03:06

Secondly, one of our greatest concerns is the cumulative impact on us as a family and individual individuals. The environmental statement assesses specific topics such as landscape, noise, transport and ecology separately. However, this does not reflect reality and how people experience living beside a development such as this. Each one of these issues we experienced simultaneously. Not one at one at a time. Not one at a time. Every time we go outside. Look outside the window.

00:09:03:08 - 00:09:21:12

Every time we leave our home. And every time friends or family visit. The cumulative effect of the battery energy storage system, the substation, and the surrounding solar panels will be far greater than the sum of their individual impacts. It results in the complete industrialization of our rural setting of our home.

00:09:25:16 - 00:09:49:00

The application also provides insufficient reassurance regarding emergency planning. This is a rural area, and we question whether local emergency services possess the equipment, water supplies and response capability required to deal with a significant battery storage incident. Infrastructure of this nature should be situated should not be situated close to residential properties.

00:09:53:04 - 00:10:24:02

Finally, we have significant concerns that the applicant has not addressed access to the to and from Siddall House as part of their application. The plan clearly shows infrastructure bills in fields on both sides of priced and common line 13035 and 13021 on sheet 13 of the land plan of which will ultimately mean accessibility issues along this road, not just to our property, but for access to local bridle and walkways.

00:10:24:19 - 00:10:54:20

Fixed income line is the main access to and from Siddall House and provides all utilities. The compulsory acquisition of significant part of this road are extremely disconcerting, given the level of traffic that will ultimately lose this stretch of road. The plan also shows that access to the site 13 H and 13 G on sheet 13 of the streets plan, which utilizes a current farm track that runs adjacent to Siddall House and runs all the way to the A63. Siddall House is right of access.

00:10:54:22 - 00:11:11:20

Use an easement to this track. No consideration. No consultation has been given by the applicant both to our access rights, nor to any significant buffer zone in relation to this access road and our property. Again, this is a great concern and it is secondary access road for our property and one which will be utilized for construction traffic.

00:11:11:22 - 00:11:18:00

Okay. Thank you. I'm afraid that's the time. Um, that was helpful. Thank you.

00:11:18:15 - 00:11:23:09

Um, could I maybe ask that? I do have more. Can I submit that by writing?

00:11:25:13 - 00:11:30:27

Yeah, you can, if you want to make, uh, written submissions are invited at deadline one.

00:11:31:12 - 00:11:32:02

Thank you.

00:11:34:00 - 00:11:45:25

What I would say is, if you use the email address that you've been provided to the Light Valley solar email address, and if you speak to Spencer or Harrison at the back of the room, they can provide you with that again for you to submit that that would be useful. Thank you.

00:12:03:26 - 00:12:34:06

Okay, just moving on. Um, so just a response to, uh, Merrill. I think we spoke earlier in the morning. You requested, um, extra time to speak. We've given consideration to that. But as you've registered as an individual speaker today, we will be allowing you the five minutes. Um, with that in mind. Can I invite the next two speakers to the table if I can? Um, so I've got Meryl and Attila and, uh, knee jerk catcher.

00:12:35:02 - 00:12:35:25

Thank you.

00:12:50:27 - 00:12:59:20

Okay. Thank you again. So five minutes. Uh, I'll start with, um, please. Thank you. And you're ready.

00:13:02:20 - 00:13:49:09

Hi. My name is Morrell Atallah, and I'm a resident of Beijing, previously of Birkin and other properties within the area of this project. Um, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. I'm speaking not only for myself, but to try and give a voice to the wider community of people living around the area. Um, I also make it clear that I understand the need for energy infrastructure. Um, but my concern is about the scale of being proposed and the cumulative effect on the area and the human beings that live with these consequences. After watching yesterday's compulsory purchase hearing, I was particularly struck by the discussion around individual personal impact and compensation, and the importance of considering the impact of individual people versus, like Valley's approach, have seen individuals grouped together as a collective one, which is one of the least human things I've heard in a long time.

00:13:49:27 - 00:14:25:12

That is precisely the point I want to make today. People cannot be reduced to land parcels, property boundaries, financial figures, or compensation categories. There is a human impact going much deeper than this. And the argument yesterday was the negative landscape changes versus the local benefits of the project. Benefit to who is the big elephant in the room? And there is no evidence that the local level benefit, but substantial commercial asset benefit for Light Valley solar investors and power into the national grid. There are people whose homes will remain standing, but whose lives and livelihoods fundamentally changed, possibly forever.

00:14:26:18 - 00:14:59:08

So I'm going to go on and try and be a bit more brief. Um, so first of all, I want to give an example of Birkin. So I've been involved with, um, this project for a little while now, and Birkin, which is

substantially impacted on as a village, had absolutely no consultation by Light Valley Solar. They have a church, which is a social space which would have easily been used, and the village has a huge impact. Sprawling across the range between West, say, Birkin, and down to Harlem. There was no reasonable consulting and consultation.

00:14:59:12 - 00:15:40:06

Myself and another resident arranged to hold a meeting at the church, which was full, and most people were completely in the dark about the project which engulfed the fields around them. Also, the fisheries, with the impact on them not accounted for as a business or the personal impact. Likewise likewise with Woodhaven Kennels, where rescue dogs will suffer the loss of dog walking space due to the construction zone suggested and the allotments and residents nearby being surrounded by construction and solar development on a whole huge scale. Mr. and Mrs. Brown, from Birkin is still awaiting answers to four questions from Light Valet from April 2026, and this is only after a meeting was held with Care Mothers, prompting support from Light Valley Solar.

00:15:40:11 - 00:16:12:17

I believe they may have spoken to representatives today and still have no answers to this. There are also new areas not openly published that were previously not directly affected, and that is now my own village. I've been supporting the wider village for many years. I've been here 48 years with four generations in this community. I now find after moving to my last destination, which I hope to be our final home, that the village of Biggin is now expected to have a channel and wiped through the fields across.

00:16:15:23 - 00:16:50:03

So the cable corridor proposal has recently changed, I believe around autumn that probably that published information hasn't been made easy for anyone local to be aware. I did make residents aware last night, so unfortunately I don't have a voice here today except for myself. Recently, a small scale solar project was rejected in Little Fenton Village, close to begin due to begin not being suitable for construction traffic. So how is this okay for this project and why a new village has been suddenly impacted, not being given information and posing a serious lack of transparency.

00:16:50:06 - 00:17:20:18

Again from Light Valley Solar. So I make that clear. Begin. That has been added recently to the project. For many people, the homes are the biggest financial asset and the result of years, sometimes generations, of hard work. People have made choices to live in these villages because they value the rural environment and open countryside. The quieter way of life and the communities that exist here. Families lived in these areas for generations. I asked the inspector to look at these proposals in context of the area as a whole as a whole.

00:17:21:02 - 00:17:51:21

This part of Yorkshire is already surrounded by significant industrial and infrastructure development. We have Ferrybridge, Castleford, Drax, Aigburth and now the areas around Sherburn in Elmet experienced significant significant growth and change with the huge industrial park. Many residents have deliberately moved to these rural villages because they want a quieter environment, while still remaining within 15 to 20 miles of the town and industrial areas where their families, friends, jobs,

caring responsibilities are centered. For those in wider local communities living in more industrial areas.

00:17:51:23 - 00:18:18:19

Also come to these villages. Proposed for the project. To escape to the country, to cycle, walk, fish, have picnics with families, to name only a few. Why are they losing their green space also? These are not choices made lightly. People have worked hard to buy their homes and build their lives here. They should not be expected to simply accept that the environment surrounding their homes can be transformed on an enormous scale, while their concerns are treated as an unfortunate and avoidable side effect.

00:18:18:21 - 00:18:20:00

Thank you, thank you.

00:18:20:07 - 00:18:23:05

Perhaps a lot more and I'd really like to submit that, please.

00:18:23:07 - 00:18:30:06

Okay. Yeah. As I said, there's an opportunity in the draft timetable for written submissions at deadline one. Okay. Okay. Thank you.

00:18:30:13 - 00:18:41:18

Can I make one more statement about the Europe trip I've just been on very, very quick because I think it's really significant around what is happening in the UK right now. The motorways are laden with solar panels.

00:18:41:20 - 00:18:42:14

I think, I just.

00:18:42:19 - 00:18:45:07

Think they're not impacting on villages. They are not doing this.

00:18:45:09 - 00:18:50:24

They're not saying there is a lot. There is an opportunity to if you want to make the written representation. Thank you.

00:18:51:07 - 00:18:52:26

Thank you. Appreciate your time. Thank you.

00:18:53:07 - 00:18:55:24

Okay. We'll come on to our next speaker then.

00:18:58:05 - 00:19:32:11

Um, I need you. Yeah. Thank you. So again, when you're ready, uh, if you introduce yourself and we'll start the timer. Thank you. Okay. Good morning. Um, my name is Anuj Kotecha. I'm a local resident. Um, here in Es Creek. Um, I have a family of five children, and, um, uh, obviously me and my wife

live here. Um, my wife is from farming stock, which is relevant, I think, to this, um, and I have an elderly mother as well who's moved here, so I live I moved here 12 years ago, which is quite different to many people who've lived here for many generations.

00:19:32:13 - 00:20:00:11

So, uh, this comes to really the point I wanted to highlight, uh, are similar to some of the other individuals you've heard, because that's what this is really about. The impact on lots and lots and lots of individuals. That's what it's about. I think we can all see very clearly the overall impact that this proposal is going to have.

00:20:02:21 - 00:20:14:05

My family likes cycling. They like walking. They like horse riding. We've moved here because of the surrounding farmland and countryside.

00:20:17:23 - 00:20:18:25

It's obvious.

00:20:20:15 - 00:20:44:09

We can get lost in lots of documents and bullet points and individual issues. That is, this is a large scale industrialization of the area. It is that simple. It will be permanent. This will last into the next generation and actually the generation after that, it is straightforward. It's not complicated.

00:20:46:17 - 00:20:56:05

So I will leave you with two more thoughts. Um, the first one is what are the alternatives? I hear that there are alternatives.

00:20:57:21 - 00:21:32:05

And I noted, actually, that our, um, the minister in charge of net zero and energy security in April at a national growth, um, debate, specifically stated that plans are coming into place to make much more active use of brownfield sites and underutilized public assets like railway land. But you're making a decision here for the next 40 to 60, let's say, 100 years. If we're being really honest, the policy will change in 4 or 5 years.

00:21:32:07 - 00:22:02:12

So we're trusting you to guard that for us, please. My second thought and I'll leave you with this actually is on the ownership of Light Valley Solar. So it is owned by a global infrastructure investment firm. They have one objective that guides their decision making. It is not the needs of our community.

00:22:05:00 - 00:22:34:12

And in ten years time, long after this decision has been made and possibly people have changed jobs, we will be living with the impact of the decisions that are made at that time. The company may even have been sold on to someone else by then. So please do bear those two things in mind. I know you are okay, but we are looking for you to safeguard us on both of those. Thank you.

00:22:36:11 - 00:22:44:25

Thank you. Can I just thank you. I just asked, I was going to ask if you could just turn the microphone off, but no thank you. Thank you for your contribution.

00:23:03:16 - 00:23:14:12

Okay. Thank you. Um, so can I have the next two speakers, please? The table I've got, uh, Linda Wolstenholme and a Diana Armstrong.

00:23:16:23 - 00:23:17:08

Oh,

00:23:18:23 - 00:23:26:18

okay. Okay. Thank you for that. That's fine. In that case, can I invite, um, Colin Davies, then, please, to the table as well?

00:23:32:01 - 00:23:39:05

So, yeah. Um, when you sat ready and comfortable. I'll just give you a second.

00:23:41:04 - 00:23:47:01

Yeah. Sorry. I was going to say. Yeah. Yourself. If you want to start. When you're ready. When you're comfortable. Five minutes. Thank you.

00:23:48:15 - 00:23:49:04

Hello.

00:23:49:09 - 00:24:27:04

My name is Linda Wolstenholme, and I'm a resident of South Milford. I'm speaking really on behalf of myself and my husband. Uh, I'm trying not to repeat anything in my lengthy submission, or that's already been said today, but just to say that I, too, am not against, uh, green energy. It's about the cumulative effect. It's about the inappropriateness of this development. And I echo everything that's already been said, every every point. What I would like to just challenge really, is the lack of consideration of people's health and well-being.

00:24:27:06 - 00:25:06:17

It's been mentioned, I know already, but there's a huge emphasis on health and wellbeing, uh, by the NHS there in the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy. They recognised their health and wellbeing benefits of people enjoying countryside activities and a range of activities, and I'd like to focus particularly on the common lane aspect of the development, proposed development, which is site six and seven in particular, that are coming directly off Common Lane.

00:25:07:09 - 00:25:37:22

As has been said, it's a single track road. It's regularly used by walkers, dog walkers, cyclists, runners, uh, horse riders. There's um, also, um, a young shire horse that's being trained along there for to the harness. And the reason for that is because it's a dead end road. It's effectively no through traffic, and it's the safest area we've got for any sort of activities close to South Milford.

00:25:38:12 - 00:26:15:24

I don't think any of that has been taken into account. I don't think the traffic aspects have been adequately taken into account, and I would ask the inspectors to look very carefully at that. Um, points have already been made, so I won't mention any more around that aspect. Um, I'm also would like to challenge, um, Light Valley Solar. I've only had time to read about half of the 447 page document. That was a response to, um, the comments that you've had, but one in particular around the effects.

00:26:15:26 - 00:26:49:29

Common line is that the assertion that any impact on dogs or horses would not be any sort of major impact, it would be minimal. And um, as it's been mentioned, it's a rescue kennels on site seven that would be surrounded on three sides. The dogs are currently walked along Common Lane, which would be impossible. Uh, certainly during the construction period. And I don't believe that Light Valley Solar have adequately addressed the construction period.

00:26:50:06 - 00:27:26:25

Uh, they may talk about the end product, but not about the, uh, adequately about the impact during the construction period. And also our driving laws recognize that, um, horses can be a danger because they're a flight animal. And I don't see that, particularly during construction. The three, four sets of horse horses that are along, uh, Common Lane and the lane of Common Lane would be able to use that road for either riding or any other purpose.

00:27:27:11 - 00:28:00:19

I'd like to ask Light Valley Solar how they think those people are going to manage, let alone the people who might not readily get out of their houses that are along there. Do they expect people to keep horses in stables all the time if they have a stable? Um, how are they going to be able to hack out and there isn't anywhere else for them to go? Also, be sorry because it's a dead end road with the railway crossing at the end, which is now closed to traffic.

00:28:00:23 - 00:28:32:26

One might say somebody could go through the pedestrian gate, but there's equally a development on the other side which has been mentioned, the Gascoigne Wood development. So that's not any sort of option. And as I say, I don't think any of it has been taken into account adequately. Site six and eight, sorry, six, seven and eight were added through a desktop app. Uh, desktop exercise. I was told at the consultation in Sherborne that no one had actually been to the site.

00:28:33:06 - 00:28:56:29

So they had no idea of the environment. And I was also told that, um, light Valley Solar only dealing ground mounted solar. So they're not willing to consider any retrofit or other activity, other options or anything that involves compulsory acquisition, which I don't recommend, but their reasoning for choosing the sites is not good enough.

00:28:57:02 - 00:28:59:26

Okay, thank you, thank you, thank you for your contribution.

00:29:08:18 - 00:29:20:24

Okay, so, Mr. Davis, again, if you want to introduce yourself five minutes and make your contribution. Thank you. Good morning. My name is Colin Davis. I live along the Ashbrook Road.

00:29:20:26 - 00:29:21:11

Well, Drake.

00:29:21:13 - 00:30:12:08

Lane and my property, um, will back on to the proposed development by Lake Valley Solar. Um, I would like to acknowledge that the mitigation effects or plans that they put in place with a buffer zone, and the planting is appreciated. But I still feel the sheer scale of the development is an issue. There are only two specific points I wanted to raise. One was the height of the panels. A lot of people here have commented that these panels will be up to 14 foot high. I'm sure we've all, you know, on our train journeys from London to Back to York, have seen lots of solar panel developments where the panels are only sort of 6 to 8ft high, and I would just like the planning people to look into why do these solar panels have to be so high? Because obviously that is going to have a far more visual impact on the whole development if they were only sort of eight foot height.

00:30:12:20 - 00:30:45:12

I just wonder if my understanding is by having them 14 foot high and they tilt. This is going to make them much more efficient, probably make more money, probably increase the return on capital to the Australian owner of this company. And um, we're not allowed to take into account. So you're not allowed to take into account any effect on the devaluation of our properties with its development. So why should they be allowed to make more money just because they want the panels to be higher? And I would like you to look into that.

00:30:45:14 - 00:31:18:15

And if the only reason that the panels are going to be 14 foot high is to increase their profits in return on capital, then that should probably be taken into account. Um, the second point I like to make is the planned, um, planting of screen age. Um, obviously, by having the panels up to 14 foot high, the screen is going to have to be much greater. Um, and also, I'd like you to make sure that when they do put the planting in place that it is, um, is meaningful. It's not going to be like a foot tall tree that's going to take 20 years to grow.

00:31:18:17 - 00:31:41:05

Because, quite frankly, I won't be here to see the benefit of that. And I would like it to be, um, some strict conditions that they put some substantial planting in place that it early on. If they do go ahead with this early on in the development of it will provide adequate screenings for people not only from properties but along the roads as well. Thank you.

00:31:42:20 - 00:31:44:02

Okay. Thank you very much.

00:32:19:00 - 00:32:44:23

Okay. Thank you. Just just checking the list I think. So that concludes everybody that we've got down for speaking this morning. So thank you everybody for your contribution. That's been helpful. Um, next item therefore, on the agenda, as I said, was to invite the applicant to provide a response to

anything. And if they wish to do so, to what they've heard this morning. So can I invite Mr. Fox up to the table, please?

00:33:02:05 - 00:33:37:24

Thank you sir. Mr. Fox. Matthew Fox, legal director at Pinsent Masons, acting on behalf of the applicant. Um, I think firstly we want to say thank you for everybody's submissions this morning. Um, and the applicant does recognise the strength of feeling on the issues that have been raised. Um, this morning I also wanted to just start this by saying, obviously, we were aware that some of the issues that have been raised are on the agenda tomorrow. Um, so we won't go too much into the detail. Um, but I just wanted to give some initial responses with some document references in the hope that will actually assist parties in finalizing their written representations and looking at some of our application documentation.

00:33:39:05 - 00:34:10:23

Um, as a starting point, I think I want to just emphasize that, um, you know, there was points made around the applicant making sure that they consider the human impact. Um, and I know views may differ on this, but I wanted to emphasize that the applicant has sought to consider those aspects. The discussion yesterday was a specific discussion about private land interests and impacts to land. But in developing the application, the applicant has been considering the impacts to the community in the widest sense.

00:34:11:03 - 00:34:49:08

Um, and in undertaking our design approach, um, the design approach document, which is document reference app 216, explains that approach, including the design workshops that we held. Um, and through our consideration of setbacks and landscaping and our various other mitigation measures, we consider that we have sought to take individual impacts into it, into account. Um, and as part of that, we are very conscious of the impacts, um, to health and wellbeing. Um, and we have a suite of mitigation measures set out on our outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, which include a commitment to continued engagement post consent.

00:34:49:10 - 00:34:51:10

And during that construction period.

00:34:52:26 - 00:35:17:22

Um, I also wanted just to clarify, um, from one of the latter, um, submissions that the land in begun has not been recently added to the scheme. That land was there in the early stages of the project. Um, and, um, I think this is essentially an administrative point that when we, when any project, um, gets registered on the pin's website, um, we submit a.

00:35:17:24 - 00:35:47:26

Just one second. Mr. Fox, sorry to interrupt you. Just members of the public who are here, you've had your opportunity to speak today. You've been able to speak uninterrupted. The applicant has the right, and he's exercising that right to respond to some of those points and won't be interrupted either. Okay, I understand there's a feeling and a lot of this is, you know, sort of very emotional and I understand the feeling in the room. But you must enable this hearing to be conducted appropriately. Okay.

00:35:49:10 - 00:35:50:23

Mr. Fox, if you'd like to continue.

00:35:50:25 - 00:36:21:15

Thank you sir. So just to clarify, the issue is that the first register of project you provide shapefile, which shows the red line boundary and the Planning Inspectorate had recently, um, in a good way. Now put those shapefiles publicly available for every project website. So now the Pins website shows that shapefile, which doesn't end the red line boundary, which doesn't reflect the red line boundary that's actually in the application. So that's where that issue has risen. Um, a number of submissions that have been made today.

00:36:21:17 - 00:36:54:20

So around, um, respect to alternatives. Um, and I just wanted to highlight, obviously, that we've, we've would say undertaken a thorough site selection assessment process as set out in document reference as 019. So if interested parties have concerns that that's where to look alongside chapter three. But the environmental statement and what those documents show is that we have considered a balance of a range of factors, including agricultural land, flood risk and greenbelt, amongst others.

00:36:54:26 - 00:37:28:19

Um, and that we have considered, um, brownfield land. Chapter three of the Environmental Statement and section 3.9 discusses alternative technologies, including alternative renewable technologies, and explains why, um, they are not appropriate in this location. Um, and the more general point of why do this when there's a range of other technologies that are being brought forward and other brownfield land by other developers? Um, I would just point people to the national policy statement, which makes clear that we need all forms of energy supply now to meet the challenge of climate change.

00:37:30:13 - 00:38:02:14

On various points made about agricultural land. Um, and I mean, in a general sense, I think there's the points that I would make that the government, in developing the national policy statement, could have made statements to say food security is a relevant planning issue. Could a made statement say all BMV, sorry, best, most personal land should be avoided at all costs. It has decided not to do that and has said you should seek to minimise it.

00:38:02:16 - 00:38:44:27

But renewable energy is important. Um, there is, I think, an assumption that the land, how it is used now in an agricultural environment would say the same for the entire 60 year length if a certain development farm was not there. Um, and that does not account for the fact that there are standard changes in agricultural practice over time, including the use of environmental sustainability initiatives and other forms of energy production production, and illustrate that point on the land at the moment of the 900 hectares of land in the scheme, 272.4 of that which is third of the scheme, is used for either Sustainable Farming initiative or to support the use of a anaerobic digestion plant.

00:38:45:15 - 00:39:18:03

It's almost a third of our scheme is not actually used for agricultural purposes. And for further context, as per the es of the 486 hectares of land, when the first development, that is 1% of the BMV land and Selby, and 0.08% of the BMV land in the Yorkshire and Humber region. In reference to the point

about the management of soils and restoration. I would just emphasise that those measures are set out in the Outline Soil Resources Management Plan, which is at 203.

00:39:18:06 - 00:39:44:21

If people have any concerns they can read that. But I would note that following their relevant representation and discussions with Natural England, they are content with our proposals for managing soil resources. And finally, in relation to the point about loss attendances. The SAS has only one job being lost within the side of the amendment cites that we have only one site has a

00:39:46:09 - 00:39:56:02

farm business tenancy which is on site one and otherwise that same site has some short term roaming and grazing commercial agreements. No other site has any other tenancies.

00:39:58:25 - 00:40:31:15

In relation to landscape impacts. Obviously recognises a strong sense of strength of feeling on that this morning. Um, and I think I'll just emphasize that we have cumulatively assessed the impacts to the landscape at the end of the Landscape and Visual impact assessment chapter. Um, that has considered other schemes. Um, and the conclusions in it are reflective of the fact that there is some distance between our schemes and other schemes, and a various ranges of intervening vegetation.

00:40:32:04 - 00:41:02:28

Um, I would also emphasize that the point was raised about accumulation of, um, different impacts within our environmental assessments, i.e., you know, landscape and visual and noise and air quality, assessing one receptor that is considered in our documentation that is, um, reference at 055. Um, and um, obviously there was a number of representations from individuals raising specific concerns about visual impacts of their properties. Um, and I just wanted to reassure the panel that we are talking to those residents.

00:41:03:06 - 00:41:34:28

Um, and, um, you know, on our approach on that, um, just, um, quickly, in relation to batteries. Um, I just wanted to emphasize that we have done modeling, um, which of the, um, emissions if there was a fire which is at 187, and our measures for managing impacts in relation to battery safety are set out in app 196, which is the outline battery safety management plan. The contents of that plan are agreed with the fire services, and the position of water supply is set out in that plan.

00:41:36:00 - 00:42:02:04

In relation to water supply more generally, that is has been considered and there is an assessment of that which is the water resources assessment in App 204, which makes clear that we have considered the impacts of using water for cleaning during the operational period, um, and assesses the different ways that water supply can be provided. And by way of update to that, I can confirm that Yorkshire Water have confirmed that there would be capacity to use supply from public networks

00:42:03:24 - 00:42:40:01

in relation to traffic. A number of issues raised there, um, which um, in summary, we are aware of the traffic regulation order in West Hadley. Um, I would note that that transport regulation order itself allows exceptions for access to property and exceptions for those. Electricity undertakers. Um. We are

continuing to discuss this with the council, but I would note I know I won't get to the substance of this too much, but under article 16 of our draft DCO we would be able to, if needed, suspend the operation of that row for the purposes of our development.

00:42:41:15 - 00:43:31:04

Um, in terms of management of traffic impacts, obviously we have our construction traffic management plan, which sets out a range of measures for how it impacts will be managed. The council is required to approve that management plan, the detailed version of it before we can commence construction. And from an enforcement point of view, this is a criminal offence. If we breached the terms of that management plan, which the council would be able to be enforced, and then in relation to some of the concerns raised about how we've taken account of local receptors in our routing and, and our management, um, one of the measures in the CTM construction management plan is that we've committed that deliveries are not allowed to take place before 930 or after 430 deliberately to take account of issues such as school room in relation to the point about, um, HGVs.

00:43:31:06 - 00:44:23:07

And we haven't set out the different categories of the numbers of types of HGVs. Um, that's because at that point in time we don't have that specific level of detail and as a result, the assessment is done on the worst case basis of using the largest, um, HGV size that would practically be used. And of course, we have separately assessed um, abnormal indivisible loads, which is appended to the transport assessment, that transport assessment deals with cumulative impacts in relation to other schemes and sets out the position in relation to the forest and roundabouts, um, and that the approach to that follows best practice and following engagement with the Council and National highways in relation to Skipwith, just to confirm that the need for traffic to route through that village and the compound that is nearby is in relation to the cable corridor only.

00:44:23:09 - 00:45:02:21

Not so the development sites and the concerns raised by British Parish Council in relation to King Running Lane. Um, I would just point to our response to that and PDA 014 road PCP Dash zero four, which also explains why the alternative locations mentioned wouldn't work for the scheme. Um, and for those who have raised concerns about things like common lane, um, and impacts access impacts in and around their properties. Um, obviously the the construction Environmental management Plan commits to for us to engage in both construction, as I said, where specific measures could be put in place to do to deal with those concerns.

00:45:02:25 - 00:45:33:17

That includes in reference to things like the stables and um, uh, uh, kennels. Um, two final points. Uh, um, there was a point, questioned about whether a whole life carbon assessment had been done for the scheme, just to confirm that is the case for those who want to look. That is in at 046 and at one, six, seven, which has the detail. Um, and finally, um, the concerns raised in respect of what happens after decommissioning.

00:45:33:19 - 00:46:09:24

So just to reassure everybody the scheme and the DCO is time limited. And once we've decommissioned decommissioned, that does not mean that the land could be considered brownfield. It returns to its current uses. Um, and any other proposal for any other form of development would have

to be assessed on the basis of a change of use from agricultural, not solar or brownfield. Um, our commitments in relation to decommissioning are set out in the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan. Um, and that um, makes clear that our commitment is that we would restore the land to the condition that it is currently in.

00:46:12:07 - 00:46:12:22

Thank you.

00:46:14:12 - 00:46:15:19

Thank you, Mr. Fox.

00:46:15:21 - 00:46:16:20

That's helpful.

00:46:17:21 - 00:46:19:08

Okay. Um, I.

00:46:19:10 - 00:46:20:01

Think that really.

00:46:20:03 - 00:46:21:17

Concludes all.

00:46:21:19 - 00:46:23:05

For this morning session.

00:46:23:07 - 00:46:43:27

So I'll just take this opportunity to thank everyone again for your contributions. Um, and also to remind you that if we'd asked you to submit something specific to us that that be submitted, please, by deadline, one which is currently identified for the 11th of August and for Mr. Fox, just to remind you again, responses to any of that to be submitted for deadline two.

00:46:44:17 - 00:47:14:20

Yes. Could I just make one more point? Sorry. Um, because I see Mark Corrigan on screen and I hadn't made the point was just to reference for his benefit. Um, that the details that you were asking for are in the Outline Landscape and Ecological Ecological Management Plan, which sets out the details of permitted paths and the public rights of way plans, um, which are in the volume two set of documents set out specifically the proposals in relation to the diversion. So I just wanted to make sure that he'd heard that.

00:47:15:00 - 00:47:15:15

Okay.

00:47:15:17 - 00:47:56:29

Thank you. So, as I say. Um. So. Yeah. Anything that's been specifically requested of yourselves this morning, please, by deadline one and the applicant to provide a summary of response to those

deadline two. Um, as I say, this is the first session of the open floor hearing. We will continue this afternoon with the second session, which will commence at 130, uh, with registration starting at 1 p.m.. Um, for those that are watching the live stream, can I just remind you that you may need to refresh your browser to view that restart stream at the relevant time? Uh, that really therefore just leads me to draw this session to a close and formally adjourn this hearing until 130 this afternoon.

00:47:57:18 - 00:48:03:27

Time is 12:03. And this open floor hearing is now adjourned. Thank you.

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:08:00 - 00:00:10:00

Okay. Thank you everybody. Welcome back.

00:00:13:02 - 00:00:43:09

I'd just like to welcome you all back to the open floor hearing for the Light Valley Solar Project application. Before I begin, can I just confirm that everybody can still hear me clearly and kind of also confirmed that the live stream and recording event has commenced? Okay, great. Thank you. So we'll continue on hearing contributions this morning. Um, I can run down to the next person on my list. I have a, uh. Steven. Ben, where I believe you're joining us online.

00:00:47:26 - 00:00:48:17

Hello.

00:00:48:29 - 00:00:49:24

Good morning.

00:00:51:26 - 00:01:12:27

Good morning, Mr. Ben. Um, okay, so you will have five minutes allocated for you to speak again. Uh, because you won't be able to see the clock in the room. I'll give you a 32nd warning when we're getting nearer to the close at that time. When you're comfortable, if you want to begin, if you could just introduce yourself and make your contribution, then. Thank you.

00:01:14:09 - 00:01:55:28

Thank you. Yes. My name is Stephen Benn. I live in Skipwith, and, um, there's just a few comments that I would like to make. Uh, really regard to the. I mean, the whole scheme seems to me, uh, not to be fully linked up. However, within the area that's going to affect Skipwith, um, during the installation area, we're going to have to remove the traffic calming measures. So I'm interested in how we're going to retain those in the in the meantime, they're also going to have to remove established trees and various, um, areas to give access to the heavy duty trucks.

00:01:56:00 - 00:02:26:18

Uh, I'm not sure how they're going to negotiate some of the tight turns without damaging some of the existing land. Whether they're going to Tech Tree as well as taking trees down, they're going to tech fences and posts. I presume they'll put it back together again and understand that they'll also need to take down overhead, power and telecom lines. And I just wonder why Skipwith, which is so far away from the main development of the solar panels, is going to need such heavy traffic and such damage into the main street.

00:02:27:04 - 00:03:03:23

I don't quite understand. So a little bit more information on that. And that was a later addition, not part of the original one that's just come out on part of the, uh, later, uh, established one. So as well as all the other concerns that they had. I don't know whether, um, the lady from South Milford was going to

mention that. I know she was talking about 13 councils. Uh, I think we probably should have broken those down into to give us more than the eight minutes, but I appreciate your allowing her to put in writing the details that was were going to be mentioned.

00:03:04:14 - 00:03:39:23

So that's it for me. Fairly short, a little bit on Skipwith. Um, I just don't understand why they need to put such heavy equipment through Skipwith. If actually we're not as affected as some of the other villages. Uh oh. Sorry. One comment I would make is the the, um, construction village, uh, between Skipwith Common and Recall. It does seem to be a long way from the center of the, uh, development. So obviously that will add to the traffic that's going from the village to the development.

00:03:40:23 - 00:03:44:16

Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for the, uh, for the opportunity to speak.

00:03:45:09 - 00:03:48:09

Thank you, Mister Vernon. Thank you for your contribution this morning.

00:03:55:29 - 00:04:03:28

I'll now move back on to people who are available in the room. Um, can I invite Claire Hotchkiss, please?

00:04:11:22 - 00:04:27:04

Thank you. Good morning. So, same rules again once you're comfortable. If you'd like to introduce yourself, you'll have five minutes. Um, okay. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. My name is Claire Hotchkiss, and I'm here representing myself as a resident.

00:04:27:09 - 00:04:57:18

Who will be affected by the scheme. Uh, first, I'd just like to make a comment that my children would like to be in attendance at one of these meetings, but unfortunately, they're all being held on workdays and within the working, working week, which I don't think helps. Secondly, I just like to make the point at what cost to my physical and mental health. Is my family home surrounded by solar panels on all sides? So whatever I see from my house, the back, the middle, the front where I will just see solar panels and nothing else else.

00:04:58:06 - 00:05:17:26

This will have a monumental impact on the rest of my life if it goes ahead. How can surrounding a property on all sides be considered proportional? Just and fair? No view, no property value, no wildlife, no quality of life. No choice. Thank you.

00:05:21:14 - 00:05:26:28

Thank you, Miss Hotchkiss. But again, please, please refrain from applauding.

00:05:35:01 - 00:05:44:04

Okay, next person I have on my list, therefore, is Elliot Grant. Just like you make you both way to the table. Thank you.

00:05:50:18 - 00:05:55:00

Again, five minutes, just as a reminder. And once you're comfortable and ready to go.

00:05:56:16 - 00:05:57:07

Thank you.

00:06:00:18 - 00:06:35:04

Good morning. My name is Elliot Grant, and I'm registering my concerns and issues on behalf of the residents of Siddall House, also referred to as Siddal Farm House on the DCO, which is located at site two, in the application on sheet 13 of the land plan. Firstly, any objection we have is not necessarily against the development of renewable energy itself, but to the way the scheme has been designed and the wholly disproportionate impact it would have on our home. Siddal House is one of the main properties affected at site two that would experience the greatest concentration of infrastructure anywhere within this application.

00:06:35:19 - 00:07:13:18

Whilst many residents will live near solar structures, Siddal House is unique because we would be positioned directly next to one of the largest proposed acreage of solar panels in the region, including a battery energy storage system and a substation. As you are aware, these are not simple ancillary features to a solar farm, but substantial. Substantial pieces of industrial electrical infrastructure with serious safety concerns. As an amalgam, they fundamentally change the character of the area from what is currently open agricultural countryside into large scale electricity generating, storage and distribution complex.

00:07:14:16 - 00:07:53:20

Battery energy storage systems require substantial engineering works, security fencing, CCTV, lighting, monitoring equipment, maintenance access and emergency response infrastructure. The proposed substation introduces transformers, switchgear, high voltage electrical equipment and associated buildings. Around these are hundreds of acres of four meter high panels enclosed by security fencing. This is in effect a substantial industrial development. The impact or the impact cannot be dismissed by planting hedgerows or trees, because the issue is not simply what we can or can't be seen.

00:07:53:22 - 00:08:30:00

It is the sound, the safety concern, the worry, the material change to our environment and what we'll have will have to live alongside every day for the next 40 to 60 years. The examining authority has recently identified that a visual amenity assessment has not been undertaken by the applicant, but it is clear the impact will be significant for Siddall House. It is deemed by the applicant that the development is temporary. It is clearly not by these timelines a lifetime, you might say. It is also highly debatable whether the landscape will ever truly be restored to its original agricultural state.

00:08:30:02 - 00:08:31:10

Post decommission.

00:08:32:27 - 00:09:03:06

Secondly, one of our greatest concerns is the cumulative impact on us as a family and individual individuals. The environmental statement assesses specific topics such as landscape, noise, transport and ecology separately. However, this does not reflect reality and how people experience living beside a development such as this. Each one of these issues we experienced simultaneously. Not one at one at a time. Not one at a time. Every time we go outside. Look outside the window.

00:09:03:08 - 00:09:21:12

Every time we leave our home. And every time friends or family visit. The cumulative effect of the battery energy storage system, the substation, and the surrounding solar panels will be far greater than the sum of their individual impacts. It results in the complete industrialization of our rural setting of our home.

00:09:25:16 - 00:09:49:00

The application also provides insufficient reassurance regarding emergency planning. This is a rural area, and we question whether local emergency services possess the equipment, water supplies and response capability required to deal with a significant battery storage incident. Infrastructure of this nature should be situated should not be situated close to residential properties.

00:09:53:04 - 00:10:24:02

Finally, we have significant concerns that the applicant has not addressed access to the to and from Siddall House as part of their application. The plan clearly shows infrastructure bills in fields on both sides of priced and common line 13035 and 13021 on sheet 13 of the land plan of which will ultimately mean accessibility issues along this road, not just to our property, but for access to local bridle and walkways.

00:10:24:19 - 00:10:54:20

Fixed income line is the main access to and from Siddall House and provides all utilities. The compulsory acquisition of significant part of this road are extremely disconcerting, given the level of traffic that will ultimately lose this stretch of road. The plan also shows that access to the site 13 H and 13 G on sheet 13 of the streets plan, which utilizes a current farm track that runs adjacent to Siddall House and runs all the way to the A63. Siddall House is right of access.

00:10:54:22 - 00:11:11:20

Use an easement to this track. No consideration. No consultation has been given by the applicant both to our access rights, nor to any significant buffer zone in relation to this access road and our property. Again, this is a great concern and it is secondary access road for our property and one which will be utilized for construction traffic.

00:11:11:22 - 00:11:18:00

Okay. Thank you. I'm afraid that's the time. Um, that was helpful. Thank you.

00:11:18:15 - 00:11:23:09

Um, could I maybe ask that? I do have more. Can I submit that by writing?

00:11:25:13 - 00:11:30:27

Yeah, you can, if you want to make, uh, written submissions are invited at deadline one.

00:11:31:12 - 00:11:32:02

Thank you.

00:11:34:00 - 00:11:45:25

What I would say is, if you use the email address that you've been provided to the Light Valley solar email address, and if you speak to Spencer or Harrison at the back of the room, they can provide you with that again for you to submit that that would be useful. Thank you.

00:12:03:26 - 00:12:34:06

Okay, just moving on. Um, so just a response to, uh, Merrill. I think we spoke earlier in the morning. You requested, um, extra time to speak. We've given consideration to that. But as you've registered as an individual speaker today, we will be allowing you the five minutes. Um, with that in mind. Can I invite the next two speakers to the table if I can? Um, so I've got Meryl and Attila and, uh, knee jerk catcher.

00:12:35:02 - 00:12:35:25

Thank you.

00:12:50:27 - 00:12:59:20

Okay. Thank you again. So five minutes. Uh, I'll start with, um, please. Thank you. And you're ready.

00:13:02:20 - 00:13:49:09

Hi. My name is Morrell Atallah, and I'm a resident of Beijing, previously of Birkin and other properties within the area of this project. Um, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. I'm speaking not only for myself, but to try and give a voice to the wider community of people living around the area. Um, I also make it clear that I understand the need for energy infrastructure. Um, but my concern is about the scale of being proposed and the cumulative effect on the area and the human beings that live with these consequences. After watching yesterday's compulsory purchase hearing, I was particularly struck by the discussion around individual personal impact and compensation, and the importance of considering the impact of individual people versus, like Valley's approach, have seen individuals grouped together as a collective one, which is one of the least human things I've heard in a long time.

00:13:49:27 - 00:14:25:12

That is precisely the point I want to make today. People cannot be reduced to land parcels, property boundaries, financial figures, or compensation categories. There is a human impact going much deeper than this. And the argument yesterday was the negative landscape changes versus the local benefits of the project. Benefit to who is the big elephant in the room? And there is no evidence that the local level benefit, but substantial commercial asset benefit for Light Valley solar investors and power into the national grid. There are people whose homes will remain standing, but whose lives and livelihoods fundamentally changed, possibly forever.

00:14:26:18 - 00:14:59:08

So I'm going to go on and try and be a bit more brief. Um, so first of all, I want to give an example of Birkin. So I've been involved with, um, this project for a little while now, and Birkin, which is

substantially impacted on as a village, had absolutely no consultation by Light Valley Solar. They have a church, which is a social space which would have easily been used, and the village has a huge impact. Sprawling across the range between West, say, Birkin, and down to Harlem. There was no reasonable consulting and consultation.

00:14:59:12 - 00:15:40:06

Myself and another resident arranged to hold a meeting at the church, which was full, and most people were completely in the dark about the project which engulfed the fields around them. Also, the fisheries, with the impact on them not accounted for as a business or the personal impact. Likewise likewise with Woodhaven Kennels, where rescue dogs will suffer the loss of dog walking space due to the construction zone suggested and the allotments and residents nearby being surrounded by construction and solar development on a whole huge scale. Mr. and Mrs. Brown, from Birkin is still awaiting answers to four questions from Light Valet from April 2026, and this is only after a meeting was held with Care Mothers, prompting support from Light Valley Solar.

00:15:40:11 - 00:16:12:17

I believe they may have spoken to representatives today and still have no answers to this. There are also new areas not openly published that were previously not directly affected, and that is now my own village. I've been supporting the wider village for many years. I've been here 48 years with four generations in this community. I now find after moving to my last destination, which I hope to be our final home, that the village of Biggin is now expected to have a channel and wiped through the fields across.

00:16:15:23 - 00:16:50:03

So the cable corridor proposal has recently changed, I believe around autumn that probably that published information hasn't been made easy for anyone local to be aware. I did make residents aware last night, so unfortunately I don't have a voice here today except for myself. Recently, a small scale solar project was rejected in Little Fenton Village, close to begin due to begin not being suitable for construction traffic. So how is this okay for this project and why a new village has been suddenly impacted, not being given information and posing a serious lack of transparency.

00:16:50:06 - 00:17:20:18

Again from Light Valley Solar. So I make that clear. Begin. That has been added recently to the project. For many people, the homes are the biggest financial asset and the result of years, sometimes generations, of hard work. People have made choices to live in these villages because they value the rural environment and open countryside. The quieter way of life and the communities that exist here. Families lived in these areas for generations. I asked the inspector to look at these proposals in context of the area as a whole as a whole.

00:17:21:02 - 00:17:51:21

This part of Yorkshire is already surrounded by significant industrial and infrastructure development. We have Ferrybridge, Castleford, Drax, Aigburth and now the areas around Sherburn in Elmet experienced significant significant growth and change with the huge industrial park. Many residents have deliberately moved to these rural villages because they want a quieter environment, while still remaining within 15 to 20 miles of the town and industrial areas where their families, friends, jobs,

caring responsibilities are centered. For those in wider local communities living in more industrial areas.

00:17:51:23 - 00:18:18:19

Also come to these villages. Proposed for the project. To escape to the country, to cycle, walk, fish, have picnics with families, to name only a few. Why are they losing their green space also? These are not choices made lightly. People have worked hard to buy their homes and build their lives here. They should not be expected to simply accept that the environment surrounding their homes can be transformed on an enormous scale, while their concerns are treated as an unfortunate and avoidable side effect.

00:18:18:21 - 00:18:20:00

Thank you, thank you.

00:18:20:07 - 00:18:23:05

Perhaps a lot more and I'd really like to submit that, please.

00:18:23:07 - 00:18:30:06

Okay. Yeah. As I said, there's an opportunity in the draft timetable for written submissions at deadline one. Okay. Okay. Thank you.

00:18:30:13 - 00:18:41:18

Can I make one more statement about the Europe trip I've just been on very, very quick because I think it's really significant around what is happening in the UK right now. The motorways are laden with solar panels.

00:18:41:20 - 00:18:42:14

I think, I just.

00:18:42:19 - 00:18:45:07

Think they're not impacting on villages. They are not doing this.

00:18:45:09 - 00:18:50:24

They're not saying there is a lot. There is an opportunity to if you want to make the written representation. Thank you.

00:18:51:07 - 00:18:52:26

Thank you. Appreciate your time. Thank you.

00:18:53:07 - 00:18:55:24

Okay. We'll come on to our next speaker then.

00:18:58:05 - 00:19:32:11

Um, I need you. Yeah. Thank you. So again, when you're ready, uh, if you introduce yourself and we'll start the timer. Thank you. Okay. Good morning. Um, my name is Anuj Kotecha. I'm a local resident. Um, here in Es Creek. Um, I have a family of five children, and, um, uh, obviously me and my wife

live here. Um, my wife is from farming stock, which is relevant, I think, to this, um, and I have an elderly mother as well who's moved here, so I live I moved here 12 years ago, which is quite different to many people who've lived here for many generations.

00:19:32:13 - 00:20:00:11

So, uh, this comes to really the point I wanted to highlight, uh, are similar to some of the other individuals you've heard, because that's what this is really about. The impact on lots and lots and lots of individuals. That's what it's about. I think we can all see very clearly the overall impact that this proposal is going to have.

00:20:02:21 - 00:20:14:05

My family likes cycling. They like walking. They like horse riding. We've moved here because of the surrounding farmland and countryside.

00:20:17:23 - 00:20:18:25

It's obvious.

00:20:20:15 - 00:20:44:09

We can get lost in lots of documents and bullet points and individual issues. That is, this is a large scale industrialization of the area. It is that simple. It will be permanent. This will last into the next generation and actually the generation after that, it is straightforward. It's not complicated.

00:20:46:17 - 00:20:56:05

So I will leave you with two more thoughts. Um, the first one is what are the alternatives? I hear that there are alternatives.

00:20:57:21 - 00:21:32:05

And I noted, actually, that our, um, the minister in charge of net zero and energy security in April at a national growth, um, debate, specifically stated that plans are coming into place to make much more active use of brownfield sites and underutilized public assets like railway land. But you're making a decision here for the next 40 to 60, let's say, 100 years. If we're being really honest, the policy will change in 4 or 5 years.

00:21:32:07 - 00:22:02:12

So we're trusting you to guard that for us, please. My second thought and I'll leave you with this actually is on the ownership of Light Valley Solar. So it is owned by a global infrastructure investment firm. They have one objective that guides their decision making. It is not the needs of our community.

00:22:05:00 - 00:22:34:12

And in ten years time, long after this decision has been made and possibly people have changed jobs, we will be living with the impact of the decisions that are made at that time. The company may even have been sold on to someone else by then. So please do bear those two things in mind. I know you are okay, but we are looking for you to safeguard us on both of those. Thank you.

00:22:36:11 - 00:22:44:25

Thank you. Can I just thank you. I just asked, I was going to ask if you could just turn the microphone off, but no thank you. Thank you for your contribution.

00:23:03:16 - 00:23:14:12

Okay. Thank you. Um, so can I have the next two speakers, please? The table I've got, uh, Linda Wolstenholme and a Diana Armstrong.

00:23:16:23 - 00:23:17:08

Oh,

00:23:18:23 - 00:23:26:18

okay. Okay. Thank you for that. That's fine. In that case, can I invite, um, Colin Davies, then, please, to the table as well?

00:23:32:01 - 00:23:39:05

So, yeah. Um, when you sat ready and comfortable. I'll just give you a second.

00:23:41:04 - 00:23:47:01

Yeah. Sorry. I was going to say. Yeah. Yourself. If you want to start. When you're ready. When you're comfortable. Five minutes. Thank you.

00:23:48:15 - 00:23:49:04

Hello.

00:23:49:09 - 00:24:27:04

My name is Linda Wolstenholme, and I'm a resident of South Milford. I'm speaking really on behalf of myself and my husband. Uh, I'm trying not to repeat anything in my lengthy submission, or that's already been said today, but just to say that I, too, am not against, uh, green energy. It's about the cumulative effect. It's about the inappropriateness of this development. And I echo everything that's already been said, every every point. What I would like to just challenge really, is the lack of consideration of people's health and well-being.

00:24:27:06 - 00:25:06:17

It's been mentioned, I know already, but there's a huge emphasis on health and wellbeing, uh, by the NHS there in the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy. They recognised their health and wellbeing benefits of people enjoying countryside activities and a range of activities, and I'd like to focus particularly on the common lane aspect of the development, proposed development, which is site six and seven in particular, that are coming directly off Common Lane.

00:25:07:09 - 00:25:37:22

As has been said, it's a single track road. It's regularly used by walkers, dog walkers, cyclists, runners, uh, horse riders. There's um, also, um, a young shire horse that's being trained along there for to the harness. And the reason for that is because it's a dead end road. It's effectively no through traffic, and it's the safest area we've got for any sort of activities close to South Milford.

00:25:38:12 - 00:26:15:24

I don't think any of that has been taken into account. I don't think the traffic aspects have been adequately taken into account, and I would ask the inspectors to look very carefully at that. Um, points have already been made, so I won't mention any more around that aspect. Um, I'm also would like to challenge, um, Light Valley Solar. I've only had time to read about half of the 447 page document. That was a response to, um, the comments that you've had, but one in particular around the effects.

00:26:15:26 - 00:26:49:29

Common line is that the assertion that any impact on dogs or horses would not be any sort of major impact, it would be minimal. And um, as it's been mentioned, it's a rescue kennels on site seven that would be surrounded on three sides. The dogs are currently walked along Common Lane, which would be impossible. Uh, certainly during the construction period. And I don't believe that Light Valley Solar have adequately addressed the construction period.

00:26:50:06 - 00:27:26:25

Uh, they may talk about the end product, but not about the, uh, adequately about the impact during the construction period. And also our driving laws recognize that, um, horses can be a danger because they're a flight animal. And I don't see that, particularly during construction. The three, four sets of horse horses that are along, uh, Common Lane and the lane of Common Lane would be able to use that road for either riding or any other purpose.

00:27:27:11 - 00:28:00:19

I'd like to ask Light Valley Solar how they think those people are going to manage, let alone the people who might not readily get out of their houses that are along there. Do they expect people to keep horses in stables all the time if they have a stable? Um, how are they going to be able to hack out and there isn't anywhere else for them to go? Also, be sorry because it's a dead end road with the railway crossing at the end, which is now closed to traffic.

00:28:00:23 - 00:28:32:26

One might say somebody could go through the pedestrian gate, but there's equally a development on the other side which has been mentioned, the Gascoigne Wood development. So that's not any sort of option. And as I say, I don't think any of it has been taken into account adequately. Site six and eight, sorry, six, seven and eight were added through a desktop app. Uh, desktop exercise. I was told at the consultation in Sherborne that no one had actually been to the site.

00:28:33:06 - 00:28:56:29

So they had no idea of the environment. And I was also told that, um, light Valley Solar only dealing ground mounted solar. So they're not willing to consider any retrofit or other activity, other options or anything that involves compulsory acquisition, which I don't recommend, but their reasoning for choosing the sites is not good enough.

00:28:57:02 - 00:28:59:26

Okay, thank you, thank you, thank you for your contribution.

00:29:08:18 - 00:29:20:24

Okay, so, Mr. Davis, again, if you want to introduce yourself five minutes and make your contribution. Thank you. Good morning. My name is Colin Davis. I live along the Ashbrook Road.

00:29:20:26 - 00:29:21:11

Well, Drake.

00:29:21:13 - 00:30:12:08

Lane and my property, um, will back on to the proposed development by Lake Valley Solar. Um, I would like to acknowledge that the mitigation effects or plans that they put in place with a buffer zone, and the planting is appreciated. But I still feel the sheer scale of the development is an issue. There are only two specific points I wanted to raise. One was the height of the panels. A lot of people here have commented that these panels will be up to 14 foot high. I'm sure we've all, you know, on our train journeys from London to Back to York, have seen lots of solar panel developments where the panels are only sort of 6 to 8ft high, and I would just like the planning people to look into why do these solar panels have to be so high? Because obviously that is going to have a far more visual impact on the whole development if they were only sort of eight foot height.

00:30:12:20 - 00:30:45:12

I just wonder if my understanding is by having them 14 foot high and they tilt. This is going to make them much more efficient, probably make more money, probably increase the return on capital to the Australian owner of this company. And um, we're not allowed to take into account. So you're not allowed to take into account any effect on the devaluation of our properties with its development. So why should they be allowed to make more money just because they want the panels to be higher? And I would like you to look into that.

00:30:45:14 - 00:31:18:15

And if the only reason that the panels are going to be 14 foot high is to increase their profits in return on capital, then that should probably be taken into account. Um, the second point I like to make is the planned, um, planting of screen age. Um, obviously, by having the panels up to 14 foot high, the screen is going to have to be much greater. Um, and also, I'd like you to make sure that when they do put the planting in place that it is, um, is meaningful. It's not going to be like a foot tall tree that's going to take 20 years to grow.

00:31:18:17 - 00:31:41:05

Because, quite frankly, I won't be here to see the benefit of that. And I would like it to be, um, some strict conditions that they put some substantial planting in place that it early on. If they do go ahead with this early on in the development of it will provide adequate screenings for people not only from properties but along the roads as well. Thank you.

00:31:42:20 - 00:31:44:02

Okay. Thank you very much.

00:32:19:00 - 00:32:44:23

Okay. Thank you. Just just checking the list I think. So that concludes everybody that we've got down for speaking this morning. So thank you everybody for your contribution. That's been helpful. Um, next item therefore, on the agenda, as I said, was to invite the applicant to provide a response to

anything. And if they wish to do so, to what they've heard this morning. So can I invite Mr. Fox up to the table, please?

00:33:02:05 - 00:33:37:24

Thank you sir. Mr. Fox. Matthew Fox, legal director at Pinsent Masons, acting on behalf of the applicant. Um, I think firstly we want to say thank you for everybody's submissions this morning. Um, and the applicant does recognise the strength of feeling on the issues that have been raised. Um, this morning I also wanted to just start this by saying, obviously, we were aware that some of the issues that have been raised are on the agenda tomorrow. Um, so we won't go too much into the detail. Um, but I just wanted to give some initial responses with some document references in the hope that will actually assist parties in finalizing their written representations and looking at some of our application documentation.

00:33:39:05 - 00:34:10:23

Um, as a starting point, I think I want to just emphasize that, um, you know, there was points made around the applicant making sure that they consider the human impact. Um, and I know views may differ on this, but I wanted to emphasize that the applicant has sought to consider those aspects. The discussion yesterday was a specific discussion about private land interests and impacts to land. But in developing the application, the applicant has been considering the impacts to the community in the widest sense.

00:34:11:03 - 00:34:49:08

Um, and in undertaking our design approach, um, the design approach document, which is document reference app 216, explains that approach, including the design workshops that we held. Um, and through our consideration of setbacks and landscaping and our various other mitigation measures, we consider that we have sought to take individual impacts into it, into account. Um, and as part of that, we are very conscious of the impacts, um, to health and wellbeing. Um, and we have a suite of mitigation measures set out on our outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, which include a commitment to continued engagement post consent.

00:34:49:10 - 00:34:51:10

And during that construction period.

00:34:52:26 - 00:35:17:22

Um, I also wanted just to clarify, um, from one of the latter, um, submissions that the land in begun has not been recently added to the scheme. That land was there in the early stages of the project. Um, and, um, I think this is essentially an administrative point that when we, when any project, um, gets registered on the pin's website, um, we submit a.

00:35:17:24 - 00:35:47:26

Just one second. Mr. Fox, sorry to interrupt you. Just members of the public who are here, you've had your opportunity to speak today. You've been able to speak uninterrupted. The applicant has the right, and he's exercising that right to respond to some of those points and won't be interrupted either. Okay, I understand there's a feeling and a lot of this is, you know, sort of very emotional and I understand the feeling in the room. But you must enable this hearing to be conducted appropriately. Okay.

00:35:49:10 - 00:35:50:23

Mr. Fox, if you'd like to continue.

00:35:50:25 - 00:36:21:15

Thank you sir. So just to clarify, the issue is that the first register of project you provide shapefile, which shows the red line boundary and the Planning Inspectorate had recently, um, in a good way. Now put those shapefiles publicly available for every project website. So now the Pins website shows that shapefile, which doesn't end the red line boundary, which doesn't reflect the red line boundary that's actually in the application. So that's where that issue has risen. Um, a number of submissions that have been made today.

00:36:21:17 - 00:36:54:20

So around, um, respect to alternatives. Um, and I just wanted to highlight, obviously, that we've, we've would say undertaken a thorough site selection assessment process as set out in document reference as 019. So if interested parties have concerns that that's where to look alongside chapter three. But the environmental statement and what those documents show is that we have considered a balance of a range of factors, including agricultural land, flood risk and greenbelt, amongst others.

00:36:54:26 - 00:37:28:19

Um, and that we have considered, um, brownfield land. Chapter three of the Environmental Statement and section 3.9 discusses alternative technologies, including alternative renewable technologies, and explains why, um, they are not appropriate in this location. Um, and the more general point of why do this when there's a range of other technologies that are being brought forward and other brownfield land by other developers? Um, I would just point people to the national policy statement, which makes clear that we need all forms of energy supply now to meet the challenge of climate change.

00:37:30:13 - 00:38:02:14

On various points made about agricultural land. Um, and I mean, in a general sense, I think there's the points that I would make that the government, in developing the national policy statement, could have made statements to say food security is a relevant planning issue. Could a made statement say all BMV, sorry, best, most personal land should be avoided at all costs. It has decided not to do that and has said you should seek to minimise it.

00:38:02:16 - 00:38:44:27

But renewable energy is important. Um, there is, I think, an assumption that the land, how it is used now in an agricultural environment would say the same for the entire 60 year length if a certain development farm was not there. Um, and that does not account for the fact that there are standard changes in agricultural practice over time, including the use of environmental sustainability initiatives and other forms of energy production production, and illustrate that point on the land at the moment of the 900 hectares of land in the scheme, 272.4 of that which is third of the scheme, is used for either Sustainable Farming initiative or to support the use of a anaerobic digestion plant.

00:38:45:15 - 00:39:18:03

It's almost a third of our scheme is not actually used for agricultural purposes. And for further context, as per the es of the 486 hectares of land, when the first development, that is 1% of the BMV land and Selby, and 0.08% of the BMV land in the Yorkshire and Humber region. In reference to the point

about the management of soils and restoration. I would just emphasise that those measures are set out in the Outline Soil Resources Management Plan, which is at 203.

00:39:18:06 - 00:39:44:21

If people have any concerns they can read that. But I would note that following their relevant representation and discussions with Natural England, they are content with our proposals for managing soil resources. And finally, in relation to the point about loss attendances. The SAS has only one job being lost within the side of the amendment cites that we have only one site has a

00:39:46:09 - 00:39:56:02

farm business tenancy which is on site one and otherwise that same site has some short term roaming and grazing commercial agreements. No other site has any other tenancies.

00:39:58:25 - 00:40:31:15

In relation to landscape impacts. Obviously recognises a strong sense of strength of feeling on that this morning. Um, and I think I'll just emphasize that we have cumulatively assessed the impacts to the landscape at the end of the Landscape and Visual impact assessment chapter. Um, that has considered other schemes. Um, and the conclusions in it are reflective of the fact that there is some distance between our schemes and other schemes, and a various ranges of intervening vegetation.

00:40:32:04 - 00:41:02:28

Um, I would also emphasize that the point was raised about accumulation of, um, different impacts within our environmental assessments, i.e., you know, landscape and visual and noise and air quality, assessing one receptor that is considered in our documentation that is, um, reference at 055. Um, and um, obviously there was a number of representations from individuals raising specific concerns about visual impacts of their properties. Um, and I just wanted to reassure the panel that we are talking to those residents.

00:41:03:06 - 00:41:34:28

Um, and, um, you know, on our approach on that, um, just, um, quickly, in relation to batteries. Um, I just wanted to emphasize that we have done modeling, um, which of the, um, emissions if there was a fire which is at 187, and our measures for managing impacts in relation to battery safety are set out in app 196, which is the outline battery safety management plan. The contents of that plan are agreed with the fire services, and the position of water supply is set out in that plan.

00:41:36:00 - 00:42:02:04

In relation to water supply more generally, that is has been considered and there is an assessment of that which is the water resources assessment in App 204, which makes clear that we have considered the impacts of using water for cleaning during the operational period, um, and assesses the different ways that water supply can be provided. And by way of update to that, I can confirm that Yorkshire Water have confirmed that there would be capacity to use supply from public networks

00:42:03:24 - 00:42:40:01

in relation to traffic. A number of issues raised there, um, which um, in summary, we are aware of the traffic regulation order in West Hadley. Um, I would note that that transport regulation order itself allows exceptions for access to property and exceptions for those. Electricity undertakers. Um. We are

continuing to discuss this with the council, but I would note I know I won't get to the substance of this too much, but under article 16 of our draft DCO we would be able to, if needed, suspend the operation of that row for the purposes of our development.

00:42:41:15 - 00:43:31:04

Um, in terms of management of traffic impacts, obviously we have our construction traffic management plan, which sets out a range of measures for how it impacts will be managed. The council is required to approve that management plan, the detailed version of it before we can commence construction. And from an enforcement point of view, this is a criminal offence. If we breached the terms of that management plan, which the council would be able to be enforced, and then in relation to some of the concerns raised about how we've taken account of local receptors in our routing and, and our management, um, one of the measures in the CTM construction management plan is that we've committed that deliveries are not allowed to take place before 930 or after 430 deliberately to take account of issues such as school room in relation to the point about, um, HGVs.

00:43:31:06 - 00:44:23:07

And we haven't set out the different categories of the numbers of types of HGVs. Um, that's because at that point in time we don't have that specific level of detail and as a result, the assessment is done on the worst case basis of using the largest, um, HGV size that would practically be used. And of course, we have separately assessed um, abnormal indivisible loads, which is appended to the transport assessment, that transport assessment deals with cumulative impacts in relation to other schemes and sets out the position in relation to the forest and roundabouts, um, and that the approach to that follows best practice and following engagement with the Council and National highways in relation to Skipwith, just to confirm that the need for traffic to route through that village and the compound that is nearby is in relation to the cable corridor only.

00:44:23:09 - 00:45:02:21

Not so the development sites and the concerns raised by British Parish Council in relation to King Running Lane. Um, I would just point to our response to that and PDA 014 road PCP Dash zero four, which also explains why the alternative locations mentioned wouldn't work for the scheme. Um, and for those who have raised concerns about things like common lane, um, and impacts access impacts in and around their properties. Um, obviously the the construction Environmental management Plan commits to for us to engage in both construction, as I said, where specific measures could be put in place to do to deal with those concerns.

00:45:02:25 - 00:45:33:17

That includes in reference to things like the stables and um, uh, uh, kennels. Um, two final points. Uh, um, there was a point, questioned about whether a whole life carbon assessment had been done for the scheme, just to confirm that is the case for those who want to look. That is in at 046 and at one, six, seven, which has the detail. Um, and finally, um, the concerns raised in respect of what happens after decommissioning.

00:45:33:19 - 00:46:09:24

So just to reassure everybody the scheme and the DCO is time limited. And once we've decommissioned decommissioned, that does not mean that the land could be considered brownfield. It returns to its current uses. Um, and any other proposal for any other form of development would have

to be assessed on the basis of a change of use from agricultural, not solar or brownfield. Um, our commitments in relation to decommissioning are set out in the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan. Um, and that um, makes clear that our commitment is that we would restore the land to the condition that it is currently in.

00:46:12:07 - 00:46:12:22

Thank you.

00:46:14:12 - 00:46:15:19

Thank you, Mr. Fox.

00:46:15:21 - 00:46:16:20

That's helpful.

00:46:17:21 - 00:46:19:08

Okay. Um, I.

00:46:19:10 - 00:46:20:01

Think that really.

00:46:20:03 - 00:46:21:17

Concludes all.

00:46:21:19 - 00:46:23:05

For this morning session.

00:46:23:07 - 00:46:43:27

So I'll just take this opportunity to thank everyone again for your contributions. Um, and also to remind you that if we'd asked you to submit something specific to us that that be submitted, please, by deadline, one which is currently identified for the 11th of August and for Mr. Fox, just to remind you again, responses to any of that to be submitted for deadline two.

00:46:44:17 - 00:47:14:20

Yes. Could I just make one more point? Sorry. Um, because I see Mark Corrigan on screen and I hadn't made the point was just to reference for his benefit. Um, that the details that you were asking for are in the Outline Landscape and Ecological Ecological Management Plan, which sets out the details of permitted paths and the public rights of way plans, um, which are in the volume two set of documents set out specifically the proposals in relation to the diversion. So I just wanted to make sure that he'd heard that.

00:47:15:00 - 00:47:15:15

Okay.

00:47:15:17 - 00:47:56:29

Thank you. So, as I say. Um. So. Yeah. Anything that's been specifically requested of yourselves this morning, please, by deadline one and the applicant to provide a summary of response to those

deadline two. Um, as I say, this is the first session of the open floor hearing. We will continue this afternoon with the second session, which will commence at 130, uh, with registration starting at 1 p.m.. Um, for those that are watching the live stream, can I just remind you that you may need to refresh your browser to view that restart stream at the relevant time? Uh, that really therefore just leads me to draw this session to a close and formally adjourn this hearing until 130 this afternoon.

00:47:57:18 - 00:48:03:27

Time is 12:03. And this open floor hearing is now adjourned. Thank you.