



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

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

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

It is not a verbatim text of what was said at the above hearing. The content was produced using artificial intelligence voice to text software. It may, therefore, include errors and should be assumed to be unedited.

The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:09:06 - 00:00:39:15

Good morning everybody. It's now 930 in time for this hearing. To begin, I would like to welcome you all to this open floor hearing for the Light Valley Solar project. And I'll just confirm everybody can hear me clearly. Okay. And can I confirm that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced? Thank you. My name is Mark Willis. I am a chartered town planner and a planning inspector, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

00:00:40:17 - 00:00:45:09

I'm now going to ask the other panel members to introduce themselves. Thank you.

00:00:45:11 - 00:00:56:24

Good morning. My name is Matt Tandy. I'm a chartered water environmental manager, civil engineer and planning inspector. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the examining authority for this application.

00:00:58:28 - 00:01:09:20

Good morning. My name is Jonathan Medlin and I'm a chartered town planner and planning inspector. I've also been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

00:01:12:15 - 00:01:40:21

Thank you. So together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. I would also like to introduce other members of the Planning Inspectorate accompanying us today. Firstly, our case team Spencer Berryman and Harrison Coles. Please approach them if you have any questions. For those in the room, they are located towards the back of the room, which on my left and your right. For those online, you will need to email them using Light Valley Solar at Planning Inspectorate.

00:01:42:12 - 00:01:46:01

With Light Valley Solar being a single word.

00:01:48:12 - 00:02:18:02

We also have another inspector attending today for the purposes of training only. I'll now deal with a few housekeeping matters so for those attending in person, can I please ask that all devices and phones are on silent? Uh, there are toilets situated through the entrance. As you arrived on my right or to your left where you registered. For those watching in the overspill room, there are toilets within the same block. Exit the room and take the left.

00:02:19:26 - 00:02:40:01

I'm not aware of any emergency alarms planned for today, so I shouldn't alarm sound. Please make your way to the nearest fire doors again. For those in the room, it's to your right, my left? And for

those in the overspill room, you would need to leave the building the same way you entered. And the fire evacuation point is located at the front of the hotel.

00:02:42:24 - 00:02:57:15

No requests have been made for any special measures arrangements to enable participation in this hearing. But can I just check if that is correct? Not seeing anything? If that changes, then please let either Spencer or Harrison know.

00:02:59:22 - 00:03:28:09

And for those joining us on Microsoft Teams, can you just please ensure that your microphone is muted unless you're speaking? And finally, for those that are maybe watching the live stream today, should at any point we adjourn proceedings, we will have to stop the live stream in order to give us clear recording files. So at that point, which we recommence, it may be necessary to refresh your browser to view the restarted stream.

00:03:31:28 - 00:03:52:16

So turning to the format for today's hearing. This has been undertaken in a blended way. That means that there's some people here present with us in the venue, and some of you may be joining virtually, as I say, by Microsoft. Teams will make sure, however you participate today, you have given a fair opportunity to participate.

00:03:54:16 - 00:04:11:21

A link to the Planning Inspectorate. Some privacy notice has been provided in the notification for this hearing. We will assume everybody's familiarize themselves with that document, which establishes how our personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in data protection laws.

00:04:14:18 - 00:04:46:18

If you participate in today's hearing, it's important that you understand that you'll be recorded and you therefore consent to the retention and publication of digital recording. If you're attending virtually and don't want your image to be recorded, you can switch off your camera. And for those in the room that don't want to be recorded, there is an area at the very back of the room out of camera shot, so we'd encourage you to use that area also to avoid having to edit any digital recordings, we would ask that you try not to submit any information that you would rather keep private or confidential.

00:04:47:02 - 00:05:04:06

Again, please speak to one of the case team if you have any questions regarding that. Finally, a recording of today's hearing will be made available on Light Valley Solar Project section of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as practicable after the hearing is finished.

00:05:05:26 - 00:05:31:25

Now, in terms of the agenda today, I'll just give a very high level summary of the agenda. It's not a subject specific agenda. Um, in terms of items. Item one is introductions and arrangements, which we are currently on. The next item is the purpose of the open floor hearing. I'll move on to that in a moment and give a brief summary. Item three will be confirmation of those that are intended to speak today.

00:05:34:00 - 00:05:45:10

Item four will be an opportunity for the applicant to respond to any comments or issues that are raised today, should they wish to. And that's the final and then final item would be closing.

00:05:47:19 - 00:05:59:12

This open floor hearing has been split into two sessions, with one session this morning and a second session this afternoon. Are there any questions at this stage before I move on to the purpose of today's hearing?

00:06:03:07 - 00:06:04:08

Okay. Thank you.

00:06:06:00 - 00:06:39:29

So in terms of the purpose, as I say, this is an open floor hearing and it will follow. I'd say the agenda that's been published on the infrastructure website on the 14th of July. That's examination library EV 4001. And as I've said, this agenda is, um, this hearing's been split into two sessions, one this morning and another this afternoon. An open floor hearing is an opportunity for interested parties to make their case on any relevant matter orally. And therefore, for us to hear firsthand your thoughts about the application.

00:06:40:21 - 00:06:47:12

An interested party means persons who have previously made unregistered and relevant representation tours.

00:06:49:07 - 00:07:14:09

Therefore, begin by listening. Hearing from interested parties that have written in and requested to be heard, and then from other interested parties who have attended today and who have requested to also be heard. If, after all pre-registered speakers have presented there is time, there may be an opportunity for non interested parties to speak and to clarify a non interested party or those that have not submitted a relevant representation.

00:07:16:27 - 00:07:30:28

I will invite speakers to speak based on the order on my list and if you are here in the room, I would ask that you come to the table at the front when presenting. And for those on Microsoft Teams, I will invite you to speak at the appropriate time.

00:07:33:10 - 00:07:52:21

To ensure that the recording is as good as it can be. Can I ask that, please? Everybody should try to speak clearly by stating your name, and if you are representing others, who you are representing. Microphone has got a switch on it. Um, one switch for red means it's active. Switch it again to white, and it's not.

00:07:55:12 - 00:08:26:09

So before I move on to those confirming those you've notified of their intention to speak. Um, should make people aware that all persons who wish to make aural representations should note that

participation is subject to my power to control the hearing. This means that you can bring up any matter arising from the application that is important and relevant to the decision taken under the Planning Act 2008. However, if you bring up matters that are not important and relevant, I may interject briefly to explain this and ask you to move on.

00:08:27:04 - 00:08:48:08

It's important that we do hear what you have to say today, so please make sure that your contributions are to the point and focused, and please refrain from any cheering or applauding between speakers as this can disrupt proceedings. And we really do want to make the best use of the time that we have available and allow everybody who wishes to speak today the opportunity to do so.

00:08:50:14 - 00:09:09:27

With this in mind, we've set different speaking times for different people, different groups. So to clarify, these are eight minutes for membership organizations, formal groups or a spokesperson for several interested parties. For individual interested parties. There'll be an allocation of five minutes

00:09:11:16 - 00:09:30:13

for those joiners in the room. There is a digital clock it displayed in the center. It will count down from your allotted time. This will turn red when you have 30s left. For those using Microsoft Teams, I will provide a verbal prompt when you have 30s left because I'm mindful you won't be able to see the clock.

00:09:34:06 - 00:10:12:03

If, after having made your representation today, you've been asked to submit something specific or be given a specific action from us to follow up, we've requested these be provided at deadline one, which is currently Tuesday the 11th of August. We've also made provision for further open floor hearing to be held in the week commencing the 2nd of November, if necessary. For those that are not heard today, request to speak at any future open floor hearing or should also be received by deadline one which, as I say, is the Tuesday the 11th of August.

00:10:14:14 - 00:10:33:05

Finally, as I mentioned under agenda item four, we've given the applicant an opportunity to respond to the comments made today. Once submissions have been made. Um, or else to respond in writing at deadline one. Can I perhaps just check with the applicant? Is it your intention to respond today or in writing?

00:10:37:26 - 00:10:40:00

Sorry, Mr. Fox. Yes, sorry. If you could just.

00:10:46:18 - 00:11:07:01

Mr. Fox and the applicant. I think the normal approach we try to take is we would do a short summary at the end, not seeking to respond to every point of detail, but to give kind of generic, not just not generic, sorry, but general responses to the points that have been raised in kind of total rather than every detail point. And if there are points of detail, we would respond, um, in writing.

00:11:07:20 - 00:11:19:14

Okay. And just to follow on from that, um, because we've got it in two sessions. Yes. Do you intend to do a summary of those that I heard this morning and one in the afternoon?

00:11:20:01 - 00:11:25:29

Uh, yeah, both. So I think we respond to this, this morning's comments and then this afternoon's comments.

00:11:28:00 - 00:11:29:08

Thank you. That's helpful.

00:11:52:22 - 00:12:08:28

Okay. Thank you. Um. Right. That is all I've got on item two, which is the purpose, really, of the hearing today. Well, again, before I move on to, um, confirm those that have registered to speak today. Is there any questions on what I've said so far?

00:12:11:27 - 00:12:30:13

Okay. Um, in that case, we will move on to, um, confirming those that I've got in attendance today. Um, I can see the list in front of me. So I will go through this list and, uh, ask that you confirm your attendance, please. So

00:12:32:01 - 00:12:37:18

I start with, um, but Helen Parish Council.

00:12:44:23 - 00:12:48:15

I've got South Milford Parish Council.

00:12:51:10 - 00:13:04:22

Just just to say when I asked you to come to the table, when you come to sit at the table, could you just announce who you are by name as well? That would be really helpful. Thank you. I've got a West Hadley Parish Council.

00:13:08:29 - 00:13:10:24

Recall. Parish council?

00:13:12:10 - 00:13:13:22

Yes, for our teams.

00:13:14:14 - 00:13:15:20

Okay. Thank you.

00:13:18:15 - 00:13:24:20

Uh, monk. Freeston. Parish council. Freeston. I apologize.

00:13:29:10 - 00:13:37:12

Uh, and then in terms of, uh, groups, I've got, uh, online, I believe, uh, British Horse society.

00:13:37:28 - 00:13:38:21

Yes, sir.

00:13:39:18 - 00:13:40:12

Thank you.

00:13:44:14 - 00:13:48:22

And then I think in individuals, um.

00:13:50:25 - 00:13:52:04

Double check my list.

00:13:55:18 - 00:14:01:09

So moving on to individuals. Um, I've got, uh, Louise Billingham.

00:14:06:04 - 00:14:18:14

Yeah, that was the question I was going to ask actually this morning. So I've got you down now. So just so I'm clear this morning. Um, are you speaking on behalf of yourself? And I understand possibly another person.

00:14:20:25 - 00:14:30:22

Okay. Yeah. And then this afternoon, as a representative of the rooftops, not, uh, countryside. Okay.

00:14:33:07 - 00:14:42:12

Thank you for that. So then moving on, I have, uh, Ben. Steven.

00:14:48:19 - 00:14:49:06

Know.

00:14:54:06 - 00:14:56:20

Uh, Claire Hotchkiss.

00:15:02:23 - 00:15:04:08

And Elliot grant.

00:15:05:27 - 00:15:06:19

Thank you.

00:15:09:20 - 00:15:15:18

A narrow Attila, Althia. Thank you. I'll tell that. Sorry.

00:15:21:15 - 00:15:23:02

And Oliver Tate.

00:15:28:26 - 00:15:32:23

Uh, Anita Kotecha. Thank you.

00:15:35:18 - 00:15:40:22

Okay, that concludes the list. Oh, yeah. Sorry.

00:15:49:22 - 00:15:58:00

Okay, so I'm just looking because we've got some more attendees. So, uh, and I've also got, uh, Linda Wallace Wolstenholme. Yeah. Okay.

00:15:59:18 - 00:16:18:24

So they're interested parties I've got registered, and then can I just check? I've got a a mr. Davies, Colin Davies. Yeah. I believe you're a non interested party. So if it's time available, at the end of the day, it'd be towards the end of the agenda hearing for your opportunity to speak. Okay.

00:16:21:29 - 00:16:52:03

Yeah. I think as I said in the introduction, in terms of status within the examination, you didn't make a relevant representation. So you're not what we would call an interested party. But you're welcome to speak today. But it will be later on after the registered interested parties have. But as I say, you're welcome to speak. It'll just be a little bit later on this morning. I think that concludes everybody that I've got on my list. Can I just check there? Isn't anybody else here?

00:17:13:28 - 00:17:23:20

Yeah. Sorry. I was just just checking online. We noticed I've got a Jane Ben online. Can I just ask? I haven't got you on in my list, but was it your intention to speak as well today?

00:17:28:02 - 00:17:59:08

Hello. It's actually Steve and Ben. I used my wife's teams. Um, so, um, apologies. I couldn't get Microsoft to change the name at the top, but, uh, um, yeah, I, I think I did get an invitation to speak. I did want to attend in person, but I can't now. Couldn't now make it this today. So I've joined via teams. Um, I'd be interested to have the opportunity to speak. However, at this moment in time, it's just, uh, it's really finding out more information for me from my point of view.

00:18:00:06 - 00:18:02:10

Okay. That's helpful. Thank you.

00:18:07:06 - 00:18:08:09

Yeah. Thank you.

00:18:39:25 - 00:18:51:09

Yeah. Okay. Well, we'll we'll consider that. Um, we'll move on, start some of the presentations because we got the parish councils first. And then when we get to that, I'll have a decision for you. Okay. Thank you.

00:19:00:01 - 00:19:34:13

Okay. So I think that kind of concludes all parties I've got registered to speak today. So we can now start to move on and invite speakers up a mindful that there's, um, several speakers today. So what I propose to do is if I could invite people up two at a time, perhaps to the table, just to help some of the disruption back and forth. Uh, and then I'll introduce each one to speak Individually. Um. I'll start with the formal groups, membership organizations and spokespersons.

00:19:34:22 - 00:19:49:22

Um, so can I remind each of these persons that they will have eight minutes each? And with that in mind, can I start with, please? Um, South Milford Parish Council and Harlem Parish Council. Thank you.

00:20:05:01 - 00:20:08:07

Good morning. Kerry Carter from South Milford parish Council.

00:20:08:09 - 00:20:32:28

Sorry. One second. Okay. I was just going to just clarify who speaks first, but that's that's helpful. Thank you. So yeah, I'll start with South Milford, please. And again, if you could um, when you start introduce with your name and that'll be helpful. You can see we've got, as I say, just a reminder. There's eight minutes on the clock there. Um, and it will count down, uh, eventually. So once you're comfortable. Ready to start? Uh, we'll start from there. Thank you.

00:20:33:14 - 00:21:05:29

Yeah. Before I start, if possible, as I mentioned, I'm Kerry Lloyd for Kerry Carter from South Milford Parish Council, but I'm also representing 13 other parish councils that are directly affected by the Light Valley solar proposal, namely Burke in Burton Salmon Chapel, Hattersley. S Hambleton, Helen Monk, Friston, recall, Skipwith, Thornbury, Thorpe, Willoughby, West Lee and so collectively we've pulled all the main common themes together to avoid duplication.

00:21:06:01 - 00:21:09:10

So before I start, I just wanted to clear that up. That's okay.

00:21:10:16 - 00:21:20:08

Yeah. Okay. Thank you. Good. Ask the team just to reset the timer. If I were just mindful, that took about 30s just to run through that. So thank you. That's helpful. Thank you.

00:21:21:22 - 00:21:59:19

Whilst we support are the transition to renewable energy and understand the need for the country's energy security. We ask the examining authority to recognize the disproportionate burden this scheme places on our communities. We strongly object to the proposal due to the scale, the immaturity of design and the number of sites involved, and the lack of consideration of alternative energies that could have been used, that would have used, that would have produced the same amount of energy put over a less of the land required.

00:21:59:27 - 00:22:32:14

As it stands, this scheme will be the size of a small town, and as such, our communities will suffer within a short space of time, significant and unacceptable changes to the landscape and character,

appearance and amenity of the area. By taking the most commercially available land across the total number of sites. The project has become fragmented in a manner that that treats that creates greater impact on all aspects over a considerably larger area.

00:22:33:06 - 00:22:52:26

It's ours. It is our opinion that this project could have been better designed to significantly reduce the amount of land sacrificed, thereby lessening the impact on communities. Can they? Can the applicant please outline why they did not choose or did not consider other alternatives?

00:22:54:26 - 00:23:12:09

For generations we've we've experienced a tranquil, open, rural character of the area. However, we now find ourselves in the middle of an infrastructure corridor that connects all the energy provision across the north of England to Drax power station.

00:23:14:23 - 00:23:53:07

Large areas of agricultural land are being sacrificed to host a sprawling network of uncoordinated, nationally significant infrastructure projects and a disproportionate number of lower level green energy planning applications. When we looked at the figures last year, there were 15 and CIP projects and over 70 local planning applications that related to green energy. We feel strongly that the lack of coordination is leading to the area becoming saturated green energy infrastructure, and fear that this enforced industrialization and industrialization and damage will be permanent.

00:23:54:15 - 00:24:30:03

All the sites within the scheme comprise a productive arable land that contributes to local food security. But it's not the impact on food production. It's also the impact on others, such as tenant farmers and other associated contractors, who not only risk losing their jobs but face having the acreage they farm reduced. The 60 year project is not a temporary loss. The 13 mile cable corridor will be permanent. It will permanently scar the landscape and will not be removed as part of the decommissioning phase of the project.

00:24:31:02 - 00:25:14:02

In areas where the cable depth is less than 1.8m, the ability to farm the land will be significantly impaired, affecting crop yields, machinery access, and land recovery. We are seriously concerned about the cumulative impact of this proposal when considered alongside other approved residential, commercial and energy developments in the area. And we welcome the fact that yesterday you asked for an interrelationship review. In addition to the renewable energy projects, there are expansions to the Sherburne Industrial Estate, such as Sherburne two, Sherburne 42 and the Gascoyne Interchange development adjacent to site eight, the Lumby limestone quarry.

00:25:14:04 - 00:25:51:13

The Selby Motorway services on the A63, combined with new residential developments in nine of the villages. We asked the examining authority to that. Are they confident that the applicant has assessed the combined effects arising from multiple projects operating concurrently and sequentially, and can they show how this impact will be mitigated? The scale, the height and the spread of the solar panels and fencing will be clearly visible from roads, public footpaths and nearby homes as outlined in the zone of theoretical visibility.

00:25:52:10 - 00:26:05:04

There will be no escape from the views of the panels whilst driving, walking or cycling between the villages as recognised by North Yorkshire Council. At the Strategic Committee report on the in February.

00:26:12:08 - 00:26:45:21

The impact on residents will include glints and glare. Heat generation. Water pollution. Poor air quality from dust and recurrent noise from vibration. Not just from the panels, but from the battery storage system at Friston. Is the examining authority satisfied that the applicant has fully assessed the impact on the residents and businesses, especially those that are going to be surrounded on three sides such as Woodhaven Kennels, which is an animal reception center that will be right in the middle of the of site seven.

00:26:46:21 - 00:27:17:15

The impact on the animals of the noise, the dust will be horrendous. Eight of the parish councils have objected to the proposal on the grounds of highway safety and transport pressures. Whilst we're not qualified as experts, we do experience the problems on the road on a daily basis. It's our opinion that the applicant has not demonstrated that the local road network can safely accommodate the additional volume of traffic associated with the construction and maintenance of the scheme.

00:27:18:06 - 00:27:58:07

The baseline traffic surveys do not reflect the real life experience. There are already pressing transport challenges on the A63. There were A1 62 and the A19. The current volume of traffic on the A1 62 and the A63 in both directions, from Monk Frys to roundabout, was already operating above capacity, and there are no approved proposals to improve this junction. Many of the site's access routes are using constrained rural single track roads designed for local traffic, with no formal provision for pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders.

00:27:58:10 - 00:28:30:24

An increase in traffic on these roads will lead to more collisions. Further damage to the roads surfaces, and disruption to local communities who are impacted by the lack of connectivity between the villages. Can the applicant outline how they will mitigate the risks and manage the associated congestion around the site access routes. We're extremely concerned about the safety issues around the best of the East, and there's the risk of thermal runaway, which can cause fires, explosions and the release of toxic gases.

00:28:31:08 - 00:28:41:00

In order to respond to that type of incident, the fire service would need easy access in both directions and an area to manoeuvre around the site.

00:28:42:26 - 00:28:58:23

We're concerned that the best the location of the best. With the proximity to Mount Friston, there will not only be the issues in relation to access on the A63 for emergency services, but there will be the day to day sound emitted from that particular unit.

00:29:01:11 - 00:29:11:14

As is the examining authority confident that the applicant has continued as it can mitigate and manage the risks associated with the best at Friston.

00:29:16:28 - 00:29:26:19

In relation to the impacts of wildlife, there is a lack of data with regards to migrating birds, especially for sites six and eight. This is important as there are a number of.

00:29:28:03 - 00:29:29:20

Out of time now. Um.

00:29:29:28 - 00:29:32:27

Can I just mention one? One more thing.

00:29:33:24 - 00:29:42:08

Well, I was just going to say I'm mindful. You did say you represented a number, so I was going to say it would be helpful if you could submit your written summary, and then we will have that.

00:29:42:10 - 00:30:11:24

I just, I just if possible, I just want to mention one thing about the water supply, as we've seen, um, there are um, we feel that the applicant has not sufficiently covered the amount of water that will be needed for things such as cleaning the panels and, um, sort of, um, keeping the best, um, temperature down. And that will have an impact on the local water supply, especially during periods of drought.

00:30:11:26 - 00:30:25:09

Thank you. Yes, as I say, I appreciate this compressed time, but if you want to submit that written summary as well, then because of mindful it was a number of parish councils comments that'd be helpful. Um, thank you for that. Um.

00:30:46:17 - 00:30:56:19

Okay. Thank you. Um, in that case, I will move on to Helen Parish Council. I've got obviously two people down. Are you both in attendance, big or just one of you? Just so.

00:30:56:21 - 00:30:57:17

Yeah. So double.

00:30:57:19 - 00:31:09:03

Act. Double act. Okay, well, I'll leave you to split it up how you wish, but as I say, you've got eight minutes. Um, same rules apply. If you can, please, Um, when you're comfortable, when you can start. Thank you.

00:31:09:23 - 00:31:40:12

Thank you. Good morning. We are speaking on behalf of Helen Parish Council. I'm Steve Sadler, and this is Ali Oliver. We will hand over. Firstly, we're not opposed to renewable energy. We recognize the need to decarbonize our energy system, and we support the government's transition to cleaner sources

of power. Our concern is that this particular proposal places an unacceptable burden on one rural community, and in doing so, fails to achieve the careful balance that national planning policy requires.

00:31:41:10 - 00:32:12:00

Our written representation sets out our concerns in detail. Today, we focus on the principal issues that deserve scrutiny by the examining authority. The first content concerns agriculture and land use. This proposal would remove over 1000 hectares of productive agricultural land from use for 40 years. More than 70% of that land is classified as grade two or grade three, making it best and most fertile agricultural land.

00:32:12:02 - 00:32:49:29

This is not marginal land is some of the country's most productive farmland. Food security is an increasingly important national issue, and when government policy has repeatedly highlighted the importance of protecting productive agricultural land, we ask the EA to question whether this proposal has demonstrated that such a loss is justified. National planning policy requires that preference is given to lower quality agricultural land, brownfield sites, and previously developed land. So we remain unconvinced, and we ask the EA to challenge whether the applicant has adequately demonstrated why those alternatives could not have been pursued.

00:32:50:22 - 00:33:31:09

We are also concerned about the long term consequences for the land itself. 40 years represents an entire farming generation. The applicant acknowledges the risk of soil compaction and degradation in parts of the site, particularly sites six and seven. We therefore question whether the safeguarding of soils and the eventual restoration of productive agriculture can realistically be achieved after such an extended period. Accordingly, we asked the EA to consider carefully whether the applicant's assessment of the impact on agriculture and land use, both during construction and over the long operational life of the development, together with the proposed mitigation measures, is complete, evidence based and sufficient.

00:33:32:14 - 00:34:05:27

Our second concern is the cumulative effect of this proposal. We believe this is one of the most significant issues before this examination. The development is spread across multiple sites surrounding Hallam. This substantially increases its visual dominance and its impact on residents. So this proposal cannot be viewed in isolation. Residents are already facing Yorkshire Green, the proposed limestone quarry and housing developments in East and Helen, and South Milford and major Yorkshire water infrastructure works.

00:34:06:18 - 00:34:16:14

In addition, the future grid connection works associated with this solar farm will inevitably create further disruption. Despite despite being brought forward to a separate application.

00:34:18:24 - 00:34:42:26

From the perspective of local residents, these are not separate developments. They represent one continuous period of disruption affecting the same roads, the same communities and the same landscape. We therefore ask the EA to consider whether the applicant's assessment of these

cumulative and in combination effects is good enough, and whether the proposed mitigation generally reflects the reality that local communities are experience.

00:34:44:21 - 00:35:18:26

Turning now to landscape and visual effects. Hallam is an historic rural village whose character is defined by its open countryside, agricultural setting and long distance views. The introduction of extensive solar arrays. Battery storage compounds. Security fencing, CCTV infrastructure and all the associated developments across several sites would fundamentally alter that character for decades. Perhaps one example illustrates this well. Stand at the top of Dunsmuir Road, where residents and visitors currently enjoy uninterrupted views eastwards towards the Yorkshire Wolds.

00:35:19:03 - 00:35:52:14

Those views form part of the identity of our village and are valued by generations of local people. Under this proposal, this will be permanently changed and children living in and travelling through our local area may never experience that rural landscape. This is not simply a temporary construction. In fact, it represents a 40 year change to the character of the countryside, and we therefore ask the EA to consider whether the applicant's assessment of visual amenity, landscape, character and heritage impacts for the reflects the significance of these changes and whether the cumulative effects have been adequately assessed.

00:35:53:10 - 00:36:27:19

Our fourth, our fourth concern relates to transport, public rights and community safety. We're pleased that heavy construction traffic should now avoid Williams Conservation Area. However, the revised proposals now have greater impact on selected road locations. For example, Hill and villagers know well that Oakfield Lane is narrow, has very limited passing places, and is heavily used not only by vehicles but by horse riders, cyclists, walkers and dog walkers. The increase in construction traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles, creates understandable concerns regarding road safety, congestion and damage to already fragile rural roads.

00:36:27:27 - 00:37:00:03

Many of these roads have no footways, have weakened verges and historic dyke bridges. We are not satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated these routes can safely accommodate the proposed construction traffic over many months, without unacceptable impacts on residents and road users. Equally important are public rights of way. We believe that the proposed mitigation falls short of what local people require better connectivity, clearer alternative routes and improved access management could reduce conflict between construction traffic and those using the countryside on a daily basis.

00:37:00:09 - 00:37:33:12

At present, we do not believe that this has been adequately addressed. We also remain concerned that the future grid connection works likely to affect Helen Lane towards Britain. Salmon and Brotherton have not been fully considered as part of the overall transport assessment, despite their obvious cumulative impact on the community. We therefore ask the EA to consider whether the applicant's assessments relating to traffic, transport and public rights away are sufficiently robust and whether the proposed mitigation is genuinely adequate. And finally, we would like to address drainage in the water environment.

00:37:33:14 - 00:38:13:24

Helen has a long history of drainage challenges. The area relies upon historic drainage systems, many of which are unmapped. Local experience has demonstrated that even relatively small developments can damage these systems and increase local flooding. Given the scale of the proposed development, we believe much greater assurance is required that drainage infrastructure has been fully understood and Unprotected. We also asked the EA to consider whether the applicant has adequately assessed the demand for the many millions of litres of water required for each clean of the solar panels throughout the operational life of the development, and whether appropriate consultation has taken place with Yorkshire Water to ensure local residents will not be adversely affected during periods of peak demand.

00:38:14:07 - 00:38:47:00

Here we note the problems encountered at Cleeve Hill. In conclusion, we believe the proposal raises significant questions that have not yet been satisfactorily answered. We ask the EA to scrutinise carefully whether the applicant has fully assessed the impacts on productive agricultural land, cumulative effects, landscape heritage, traffic, public rights of way drainage and the wider rural community. Our request is not that renewable energy should be prevented, it is that renewable energy should be delivered in the right place, at the right scale, and with full regard to the communities who will live with the consequences for decades to come.

00:38:47:06 - 00:39:03:01

So we respectfully ask the EA to ensure that the evidence presented by the applicant is rigorously tested and that the proposed mitigation is demonstrably sufficient before any recommendation is made. Thank you. On behalf of Highland Parish Council and its residents.

00:39:04:20 - 00:39:20:11

Thank you. Okay. Thank you. As I said at the outset, I'd appreciate if people wouldn't cheer and applause. I appreciate the support in the room, but for the comments, but just for the ease of the smooth running of today's hearing, I appreciate if you could refrain from that. Thank you.

00:39:32:26 - 00:39:33:17

Could I just.

00:39:33:19 - 00:39:40:25

Ask, you mentioned about the Cleeve Hill water supply issues I think you mentioned. Could you just elaborate slightly on what that was,

00:39:42:12 - 00:39:44:12

or have I misheard what you said?

00:39:44:14 - 00:40:33:11

No. Um, we're not pretending to be experts here, but I'm sure you will agree that the News represented or shared widely with the public. That there was some suggestion that the water shortage in Kent was because of the enormous demands placed upon the supply at a time when supply was already under demand because of the climate. And we feel strongly, without any expert knowledge, that we are already in a climate situation where, you know, we had hosepipe bans most of last year,

we seem to be a bit lucky this year, and we just would like to make sure that you're making sure that we're not going to have our residents, um, without water at all.

00:40:33:13 - 00:40:34:07

Please.

00:40:34:09 - 00:40:35:13

Thank you. That's useful.

00:40:38:25 - 00:40:42:12

Okay. Thank you. Thank you both for your contributions this morning.

00:40:54:05 - 00:41:06:10

Okay. Thank you. So we'll move on. Uh, my next two speakers, if I can ask them to come to the table, please, would be, uh, West Hadley Parish meeting and Monk Ashton Parish Council as well, I believe.

00:41:14:16 - 00:41:30:04

Okay. Thank you. So again. Um, I've given eight minutes each. Um, I'll start with, uh, West Hadley, please, if you could again introduce yourself by name, please, uh, when you're comfortable, ready to start. The time will start. Thank you.

00:41:30:27 - 00:42:04:00

I'm Lynn Dobson, and I'm representing West Huddleston residents. I will focus on sight for. However, some of my points are also pertinent to other sites. First, I wish to question the overall suitability of the road network to site four. Since we submitted our initial representation. It has come to attention that on 15th June this year, North Yorkshire Council put in place a heavy commercial vehicle prohibition order for goods vehicles over seven and a half tonnes. The order covers the roads from the A19 through West Z on those around site.

00:42:04:02 - 00:42:44:09

For. The rationale for the order was that, and I quote, the roads in question are narrow in width, contain significant bends, and lack the necessary carriageway capacity to safely accommodate larger or heavier vehicles. Their use by heavy goods vehicles creates a heightened risk of danger to other road users due to restricted visibility, limited passing space, and the increased likelihood of conflict on tight bends. The proposed weight restriction is therefore considered necessary to avoid danger to persons or other traffic, and to preserve the amenity of the area by preventing unsuitable traffic from using roads that are not designed to accommodate it.

00:42:44:15 - 00:43:29:18

Although not prohibiting construction vehicles, this is tacit acceptance by North Yorkshire Council that these roads are inherently unsuitable for HGV traffic. Against this background, we ask the examiners require LVS to justify their choice of this route and to revisit the suitability of the route and alternatives. Second, the missing high and medium receptors and the single lane bridge. In the February 2026 transport documentation, LVS failed to identify the high and medium receptors present along the route from chapel Z through West Hattersley, namely the Doorstep Green Recreation Park, the village hall, the primary school and the children's playground.

00:43:29:20 - 00:44:01:28

Their February 2026 documents do not take full account of the narrow and in areas absent footways near these receptors, nor the school opening hours or use of the playground throughout the day. The single lane Tankards bridge was not mentioned. This grade two listed bridge has no footway and is at a point where two of the footpaths meet. It links the villages and is the only crossing point for pedestrians. No reasonable explanation has been provided by the applicant for the mission of these receptors.

00:44:02:01 - 00:44:39:03

This is indicative of a poor and cursory assessment that undermines the credibility and reliable reliability of the transport planning, especially as elves were informed of the presence of these receptors in mid 2025. The applicant states that roads should be no less safe than they currently are, and that concerns will be managed through the final Kemp. They state that deliveries will be scheduled to avoid peak travel periods. They state that temporary speed management measures will be agreed, and there will be strict penalties for drivers who do not comply with standards.

00:44:39:15 - 00:45:12:02

We ask the examiners to consider if this will fully address the risks, how will this be policed? What are the penalties and will these be transparent? How will the large number of vehicles transporting construction workers be managed? Will speed limits be imposed and enforced? What say will residents have on these points? This is also applicable to other sites. Construction work and vehicle movements are planned for Saturday mornings. This is the peak time for recreational use of the area, including bicyclists and horse riders.

00:45:12:04 - 00:45:42:27

This will present a high risk of accidents. We ask that the examiners explore this aspect further, and consider imposing significant restrictions on any weekend work to ensure safe recreational use and to allow residents to peacefully enjoy their weekend. The examiners are also asked to consider the dangers that the chapel handles. The crossroads where HGV is turning from the A19 may be impeded by parked cars and other traffic, resulting in traffic backing up.

00:45:42:29 - 00:46:24:04

This will be particularly dangerous for northbound traffic coming over the air bridge, where cars often speed and failed to anticipate stationary traffic just over the brow of the bridge at the crossroads. My third point is about the number and category of the HGV construction traffic and the presentation of the anticipated number of vehicles, including worker traffic, for both construction of site four and the associated cable corridor. The applicant's February 2026 documentation relating to transport planning has a baseline figure of 50 HGTV's per day, travelling on the Hattersley Road, the main route to site four.

00:46:24:21 - 00:47:03:14

As a result of queries raised by our parish, the applicant confirmed in April that the baseline figure was incorrect and should have been nine and not 50. HGTV's. This is not a minor rounding error, but a fundamental flaw and just one example of the unreliable assessment of traffic, which we have seen across all sites. Construction traffic would approximately double HGTV's on this route. Although this

error is acknowledged by LVS in the June 2026 response to relevant representations in that same document, they repeatedly refer back to tables in the 20.

00:47:03:17 - 00:47:34:17

In the. In the February 2026 documentation containing the baseline error, documents must be revised to ensure this error is corrected and new assessments conducted to support informed decision making. In addition, no breakdown of HGV categories provided for any of the proposed sites by elves. Currently, most HGV traffic through West Hudl see is delivery vans, small lorries and farm traffic. Large articulated lorries are infrequent.

00:47:34:20 - 00:48:06:15

We have asked the applicant to provide a breakdown of the HGV categories that will pass along the route to site. For there is clearly a material difference risk in the risk posed between a seven and a half ton and a 44 ton articulated lorry. It's difficult to understand how the applicant can reliably state the projected increase in the number of HGVs, without having some idea of the category and capacity of vehicles required, given they know the scale of the development, the construction period and the material that need to be delivered.

00:48:06:21 - 00:48:41:23

We asked the examining authority to require an outline breakdown of HGV categories. This should be done for all sites. The LVS documentation is opaque and doesn't allow a full picture of total traffic on this and surrounding roads. Information on construction, traffic and cable corridor movements are separated. LVS should be required to produce a reliable overview for each of the sites that more clearly presents traffic changes over the entire construction period. This would be more transparent and allow more informed decision making.

00:48:42:09 - 00:49:25:14

In conclusion, our view is that LVS has only conducted a superficial desktop study of the route to site four and have totally failed to identify the significant hazards and risk posed to residents and road users. It is apparent that the main imperative from LVS perspective is the availability of land and ease of access from the motorway and A19 to site four. Are the examiners satisfied that LVS has done enough to truly assess the impact of proposals in relation to traffic, and, given the unreliable assessments made, are the examiners content that the mitigations proposed by LVS are satisfactory? These questions are also relevant to other sites.

00:49:25:24 - 00:49:49:21

Finally, there's clearly an overall cumulative impact on the road network across the whole region covered by this proposal. Are the examiners satisfied, the elves have properly assessed the cumulative impact in relation to traffic across the whole area. We respectfully ask that the applicant as a whole be not be recommended, given the detrimental impact it will have on receptors and the villages and rural roads.

00:49:49:23 - 00:49:53:26

Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for that presentation.

00:50:01:02 - 00:50:03:08

Okay. Thank you. Um,

00:50:05:02 - 00:50:19:07

in that case, now move on. Uh, so we've got monk Friston Parish Council. Again, once you ready, if you want to introduce yourself. And we'll start from the council from then. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Hi.

00:50:19:09 - 00:50:50:25

Good morning. My name is Sean Hughes. I'm representing residents of Montfort Parish. Um, we've already submitted our, uh, representation that was primarily based on lots of feedback from open forums that were held within the parish, um, with local residents in attendance in um en masse, as it as it were. Um, there was unanimous support for renewable energy. Has been stated before from my, uh, other other colleagues who have already been to the to the table.

00:50:50:27 - 00:51:34:06

But there was widespread concern and no support for the Light Valley solar project in its in its current state. My colleagues from South Milford and Hallam, who are adjacent to our parish, have already highlighted many, many concerns. I would like to pick out some specific ones for price and if that's okay. The first one really from amongst amongst his perspective is the scale and location. Uh, the primary objective here is an objection from us is that it's it's such a large, uh, encompassing, uh, installation that almost every view into and out from that parish will be affected by this proposed development.

00:51:35:09 - 00:52:06:28

This proposal, when combined with other consent. Schemes will significantly alter the character of the landscape that surrounds the settlement, such that it will no longer be regarded as a rural location. Parish council and residents are also seriously concerned about the proximity to dwellings that this development would encompass, equally with the scale of the development and given. You've heard already this morning about the road network in the area.

00:52:07:01 - 00:52:32:26

We are really kind of constricted by the A63 at the moment. That will be heavily congested. And with the scale of the of the development proposed, any bypass route that could possibly be built in the future is negated. So there have been no opportunity for this. If this project was built to bypass the the A63 and the A1 A2 in the in the in the foreseeable future.

00:52:35:00 - 00:53:13:16

Secondly, again from from our representation um loss of farmland, it's been evident this morning that there will be a huge swathe of viable farmland, uh, taking out production, which is, which is not really the best thing to do in terms of where we are. We're kind of full, full scale scarcity when other, more appropriate developments in the in proximity and understand that the planning sector have already been down to Ferrybridge to look at Ferrybridge D, which is possibly going to be consented next year, which would actually feed into the substation as well.

00:53:13:26 - 00:53:43:28

It's brownfield. It has no impact on on land usage and it will be 24 over seven. Availability. Power station versus the Light Valley solar A development which takes a massive swathe of land, productive land, and generates, at best, a lot less than a gas fired power station. Would. This. This station for every day, is potentially consented to be a hydrogen ready, clean fuel.

00:53:44:00 - 00:54:01:26

So again, it does feed into the clean energy mix. Also, another point on our representation was with regards to visual amenity and was particularly concerned because it in essence.

00:54:05:14 - 00:54:42:14

That concern goes beyond the parish boundary. The extract below from the the air spectacle zone of visibility relates only to this project and does not include the ongoing projects of battery storage around Brighton substation, which again has had a massive upgrade recently and is currently ongoing. Including new towers down the A63. It also doesn't take into consideration the recently consented event of 50MW solar farm, and the Pins reference is on our on our submission.

00:54:42:19 - 00:54:57:28

This all relates to my first point about the our small parish being completely surrounded by national infrastructure, which significantly changes the setting from a rural setting to an industrial setting.

00:55:00:00 - 00:55:33:17

And finally, um, again, I kind of skipped to a lot of points in terms to save time because they've been called by my other colleagues. But the other big kind of concern from parish perspective is that is the viability of the project like Valley Solar proposing to put many, many solar panels in very disparate areas? There must be significant cost to connect all of this together with transformers, infrastructure cables all the way through down to monks Rice and substation.

00:55:33:19 - 00:56:04:06

This is a significant cost. We would ask that the inspector look into that in terms of viability. Um, because as I mentioned earlier, other more appropriate projects can be built fairly locally without that infrastructure requirement. And then my other kind of final point is if this scheme does get the go ahead in any in any shape or form, we will be interested in the community benefit that will be available.

00:56:04:15 - 00:56:32:27

Um, this hasn't been um, presented in any major form from from the developer. And again, we would ask the inspector to look into that in detail and to be able to publish what that community benefit availability may be, not just among Frisch and Parish, but to other majorly affected parishes in the in the vicinity. That's my representation from parish council.

00:56:33:12 - 00:56:37:28

Okay. Thank you. Thank you for your time. Thank you for that contribution.

00:56:52:12 - 00:57:07:23

Thank you. In that case, we'll move now to, um, groups that are joining us online. Um, so I'll do these obviously individually. Uh, can I start, please, with the British horses? Sorry. Actually, recall parish council, if I may.

00:57:13:04 - 00:57:14:01

Good morning.

00:57:14:03 - 00:57:25:02

Good morning. Okay. Um, so, as I say, fortunately, you won't be able to see the timer. So what I will do, if that's okay. I'll try not to disrupt you too much, but I'll give you a warning at 30s.

00:57:25:23 - 00:57:29:27

Watch it. Watch you in front of me so I can see as well. Will try and make it work.

00:57:30:03 - 00:57:37:15

Okay, so again, same rules. Eight minutes. Um, if you want to introduce yourself, we'll start the timer from there. Thank you.

00:57:38:02 - 00:58:09:02

All right. Good morning. My name is Jeff Marston. I'm currently acting chair of recall parish council. For those of you who aren't familiar with the geography of the local area, recall is the next village south on the A19 to where you're currently sitting. It has a population of 2500. Um, as a parish council, we have debated and discussed the application on a number of occasions, and we are not opposed to solar power and the decarbonisation of the power generation in the UK. I want to make that clear from the outset.

00:58:09:04 - 00:58:46:19

Have we believed that this is an inappropriate development in the area and will have a detrimental effect on the, um, overall surroundings? We live in. The development in itself has a very limited impact on recall. Um, we have the cable corridor, which will cross the A19 just south of the village, and it comes down King Running Lane from S Creek, uh, crosses the A19, goes round our playground and down into the fields and then across the river, and we'll have two years of construction traffic, two years of traffic queuing on the A19 into York.

00:58:46:21 - 00:59:17:19

Two years of chaos and mud to live with. But eventually it'll go away. And there's a number of colleagues that have talked about that may or may not have a detrimental effect on agriculture. In the longer term, we're more concerned about the, um, late edition of a proposed construction camp in King Running Lane that is a single track, um, no. Through road leading from the A19 to Skipwith, coming through from Raquel. It has grass growing in the middle of it. It's that small. It has passing places.

00:59:17:21 - 00:59:51:25

It is an access road through to Skipwith Common and accesses a number of farms on it. There is a proposal from elves to put a construction village along that. We believe that that is totally and utterly inappropriate and as far as we're aware, no traffic assessment has been conducted for that. That route

is widely used by walkers, horse riders, cyclists to access Skipwith Common, and it is also subject at the moment to a planning application which is being opposed by the village for a waste site down there.

00:59:51:27 - 01:00:24:25

And I would strongly request that the applicant that completes a detailed traffic assessment for that, and reconsiders that there are a number of alternative sites available for construction village for construction sites in that area, not least Record Business Park and Record Industrial Estate, both of which are within a few hundred yards of King Running Lane and both of which could easily be accessed and give decent access to the A19. However, our bigger concern is the cumulative effect of this development on the surrounding area.

01:00:24:27 - 01:00:59:05

This development comes on top of solar farms that have already been approved at places like Hambleton, Cambuslang, Drax, Cliffe, North Duffield, Henry Borough and Market Weighton to name a few. These, put together with the elves development, will see an area stretching from the A19 at one in the east, along the M62 to Howden and up to the edge of York, covered with solar panels. As you fly into Leeds, Bradford or Airport or Manchester Airport, you'll know where you are because they'll be glinting at you.

01:00:59:24 - 01:01:30:15

The remaining area will be occupied by residential housing, villages and so on, or being used to grow maize for the anaerobic digestion plants, it will radically change the landscape and the economy of the local area. Currently, large countries of wheat are grown in the area, which are used in local feed mills and flour mills that will no longer be the case. This land will be taken out of agricultural production for the remaining for the next 40 years, and will have a detrimental effect on both agriculture and on tourism.

01:01:31:04 - 01:01:51:02

I think that should be taken into account. We would strongly request that a proper visual landscape study is undertaken, showing the cumulative effect of all of the proposed solar farms developments in the area, rather than just the ones being proposed by Light Valley Solar, because at the moment the light valley solar ones are being

01:01:52:17 - 01:02:29:28

imposed. Is that right? Both put on top of drawing showing fields rather than showing existing proposed solar farms. Added together, you get a much greater impression of the overall effect of the project. On a broader note, given the weaknesses in the national grid and our inability to import wind power from Scotland and to fully utilize existing solar farms. Should not the focus be on grid infrastructure, nor on building more solar farms? There is a real risk that will build this solar farm, and it won't actually be able to go anywhere and everybody is wasting their money and effort.

01:02:30:13 - 01:02:49:08

We would also ask for clarification of the status of the land where the solar farm is. When the solar farm is decommissioned. Will the land be classified as agricultural, or will it in fact be classified as brownfield and therefore ideal for future developments?

01:02:51:07 - 01:03:26:07

And looking at, are we in fact looking at prospective sites for new villages, particularly given the proximity to York and Leeds? So are we effectively creating development potential development sites for a new model villages to cope with the housing demand from York and Leeds, or are we actually looking at returning these to agricultural land? That is very significant indeed, given the, um, uh, previous, uh, issues in relation to, um, a village, uh, new village being proposed adjacent to Craig on the community benefit.

01:03:26:09 - 01:04:01:21

This has been mentioned a couple of a couple of speakers already. It's mentioned by the applicant, but very little data has been given. No figure is being given, nor has the allocation for of this been proposed. And based on the.gov website, the baseline base level for the community benefit from projects like this appears to be £5,000 per megawatt hour per year generated based on that, that gives us around about £2.5 million of community benefit coming in from this project.

01:04:02:06 - 01:04:18:16

Please, could the applicant confirm that this is the case and how this will be allocated, And can we have assurance that this money will be spent in the local area and not disappear into coffers at Northallerton, which after all, is over an hour away from us?

01:04:23:21 - 01:04:27:11

That concludes the submission from the parish council.

01:04:29:03 - 01:04:30:18

Okay. Thank you very much.

01:04:33:11 - 01:04:41:17

I'll just ask a point of clarification. You mentioned a new proposal. Waste site can just check the name of the road. Was it? Did you say King Crediton Lane.

01:04:41:19 - 01:04:52:03

King Ronnie Lane? There is a there is a retrospective planning application for a waste wood site in there, with capacity of 37,500 tonnes per annum.

01:04:52:07 - 01:04:53:11

Okay. Thank you.

01:05:02:19 - 01:05:19:02

Okay. Thank you. You can now turn your camera off and welcome to stay obviously online. If you want to listen to the rest of the meeting they're hearing today. Um, I'd like to then move on to the next speaker, um, which is the British Horse Society. So, Mr. Corrigan.

01:05:20:29 - 01:05:26:06

Good morning. Thank you sir. Um, the British Horse Society's comment. Um, sorry.

01:05:27:02 - 01:05:37:06

One second. I was just going to introduce you. That's fine. Um, yeah. So, yeah, I'm just going to say same rules. It's eight minutes if you can. If you introduce yourself, we'll start the clock. So. Thank you.

01:05:37:08 - 01:06:15:00

Yeah. My name is Mark Corrigan. I'm the access field officer employed by the British Horse Society in Yorkshire. We submitted a comment in 2024 regarding Light Valley Solar Farm, and we received no response from it. Um, so in 2025, we submitted an objection highlighting the fact that none of the public rights of way were differentiated, making response extremely difficult for people. We're pleased to see that actually, now that's been rectified and all the public rights of way have been differentiated against within the plans.

01:06:15:02 - 01:06:45:28

There are still some issues within it that we feel such as, and this is entirely from the management of public rights of way and permissive paths. Um, document. So there's three um, permanent diversions, which again, it's vague, um, where they are, what they are, will they be consulted upon, or is the DCO simply going to divert them? Permissive path six permissive paths incorporated into the development.

01:06:46:08 - 01:06:50:00

What designation are these permitted paths? Again it's vague

01:06:51:15 - 01:07:34:18

4.2 in the permissive paths says that work on ten be designated permissive paths suitable for pedestrians and cyclists. Why? Why are equestrians being excluded as they were in the original documents within these permissive paths. The permissive paths don't show any lengths of what they are, so there's no lengths given for permissive bridleways. No lengths given for permissive footpaths. 4.25. Um, it's good to see that the British whole society is acknowledged, that our standards are so high that it's put in there, but I think it's more appropriate to put the British Standard be BS five, 7 or 9 for gaps.

01:07:34:20 - 01:08:09:07

Gates and Stiles, uh, in in there rather than just the British high society standards. That covers all of it. EMR applications. Pleased to see that the DMR applications currently held by North Yorkshire County Council have been recognised that they are in there, but it says that there will be kept open as far as practicable. I mean, what does that mean? And that's Noted on every one of the DMR applications. So again, that's vague permissive paths in solar sight.

01:08:09:09 - 01:08:34:00

For is noted just given the numbers. It doesn't say what they are. Bridleway footpath which could simply say FP or BW making it easier for people to see them, what they are and how they're going to be affected. And again, in 4.2.12, what are the lens permissive path cyclists and equestrians, but nothing as to the lengths?

01:08:36:15 - 01:09:08:06

We're a bit disappointed that we haven't been consulted in more detail with this, but there are some good things in there in that it is recognising public rights of way and it recognises good distances, corridors with the public rights of way. But again, we would like to see greater public benefit and eight kilometres for a for a scheme this size we don't feel is appropriate. And that's all the comments that I've got to make on this.

01:09:08:08 - 01:09:09:04

Thank you sir.

01:09:11:28 - 01:09:12:29

Thank you for that.

01:10:06:01 - 01:10:38:27

Sorry about that. Okay. Um, I think I can, uh, I actually know, um, Miss Billingham, I think you representing, uh, effectively another party, which has been confirmed this morning. Um, so if you'd like to come to the table now. Um, so, again, just to be clear, you're representing yourself and, uh, Tony Spencer. Okay. Yeah. Thank you. Um, on that basis. Um, and we've got notification of that then if you have eight minutes to speak.

01:10:38:29 - 01:10:45:27

Um, again, just introduce yourself. Just confirm that for the purpose of the recording. Uh, and when you're ready to go.

01:10:45:29 - 01:11:16:26

Thank you. My name is Louise Billingham, and I live in South Milford with my husband and our two children, who are age 12 and five. I'm also representing our neighbour Tony Spencer, who has lived in the area for 25 years. Our homes sit within sight six of the proposed Light Valley solar development, and we are among the residents who will be most severely affected by the plans. The development is proposed to surround three sides of our properties and every time we leave or return home, we will be driving through site six and site seven.

01:11:17:14 - 01:11:52:17

We fully support the transition to renewable energy, but this examination is not about whether renewable energy is needed. It is about whether this particular proposal has properly been consulted upon, properly assessed, and whether the harm that is going to be caused will be fully justified. We do not believe that it has. Firstly, we are concerned about the consultation process and the lack of transparency throughout the development of this scheme. State six, seven and eight were introduced after the original scoping stage, fundamentally changing the scale, impacts and environmental effects of the project.

01:11:52:19 - 01:12:28:11

This was clearly a material change. Yet it was not treated as one. Affected communities were not given a fair opportunity to comment on the scheme as it is now. Documents produced by the applicant. Conflicted project information was out of date or wholly incorrect. Questions went unanswered and still do, and meaningful public participation was undermined. These procedural

failures matter because they directly affect the quality and reliability of the environmental statement. Secondly, the applicant's assessment consistently understates the impact on our homes.

01:12:28:19 - 01:13:05:00

Our properties overlook the entirety of site six, and we will have to drive through the development simply to get to our home. The applicant accepts that there will be a high magnitude significant visual effect in year one, and concludes that by year 15, the effects become acceptable. 15 years represents the whole of our children's childhood and a significant part of our lives in our family homes. At 15 years, planting will not screen elevated, elevated first few floor views, and those views have not been properly assessed for either of our homes.

01:13:05:09 - 01:13:35:22

There is no property specific residential visual amenity assessment for our homes, despite what we believe is one of the greatest residential impacts anywhere across the scheme. The visualizations failed to consistently show the tallest tracker panels or winter conditions, despite the examining authority requesting worst case scenarios. We recognize that planning does not protect a view. However, this is not about losing a view. It is about a material change to the environment where we live.

01:13:35:27 - 01:14:10:16

We chose our homes because they are surrounded by open countryside and nature. Every morning we watched the sunrise across the fields. We share our homes with deer, badgers, geese, curlews, skylarks, tree sparrows, turtle doves, barn owls and many of the species. Common lane is valued by walkers, cyclists and horse riders because it is a peaceful rural landscape. This proposal replaces that environment with industrial infrastructure including solar arrays, fencing, CCTV, inverters, substations and battery storage.

01:14:11:01 - 01:14:48:00

It represents a complete transformation and material change of our local environment and will fundamentally affect our enjoyment of our homes, our mental and physical health, well-being and our quality of life. Thirdly, we are concerned about the safety across the whole of the scheme. But locally, to us, common lane is narrow single track and a dead end road. It is in reality a footpath heavily used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Yet it is proposed to carry substantial construction traffic during the construction phase and maintenance traffic throughout the lifetime of the project.

01:14:48:06 - 01:15:08:24

Emergency access has not been convincingly demonstrated, despite this being the only route to our homes. Firstly, we are concerned about the proposal for an emergency aircraft landing area immediately adjacent to our property. If the applicant considers it necessary to safeguard land for aircraft in the area

01:15:10:21 - 01:15:42:24

who are in distress, then serious questions must be asked about why it should be placed next to a residential property and be surrounded by electrical infrastructure. We are aware of previous aircraft incidents in this area and respectfully ask that this field remains free from development so it can serve

as a genuinely safe emergency landing area. Finally, we ask the examining authority to require a minimum 250 metre buffer between solar infrastructure and all residential properties.

01:15:43:19 - 01:16:21:23

This is not without precedent during the West Solar Farm examination. The examining authority supported a 250 meter stand off to protect residential amenity and avoid industrialization of rural outlooks. We respectfully ask that the same approach is adopted here, to ensure consistency across examinations and to provide a fair level of protection for those living closest to nationally significant solar developments. A buffer would reduce visual dominance, protect privacy and outlook, and lessen the psychological health and wellbeing impacts of living immediately beside industrial scale infrastructure.

01:16:22:17 - 01:16:57:15

There is a growing body of evidence that large scale solar developments create a localised heat island effect. Residents should not be expected to endure a measurably hotter local environment alongside the already significant visual traffic and amenity impacts. This provides yet another compelling reason why a minimum 250 meter buffer is both reasonable and necessary. If the examining authority is minded to recommend consent, we ask that significant changes are made. Solar infrastructure should be moved much further away from homes and businesses.

01:16:57:27 - 01:17:42:11

Common lanes should be protected by substantial landscape buffers incorporating mature native trees. Earth bonding and species rich habitats that genuinely support wildlife and people's well-being, not just narrow strips of planting. As the applicant's own Chief Development Officer, Dave Elvin has said, and I quote, with good design, it can appear as if the site isn't there. We simply ask that those principles of good design are applied here across all seven sites. We also ask that the development is required to achieve an independent school rating of excellent, and that a transparent, whole life carbon assessment is secured so that the project sustainability claims can be independently verified.

01:17:43:00 - 01:18:24:27

We ask the panel to remember that this application is not simply about generating renewable energy. There must be a balance. Renewable energy can and should be delivered in a way that respects the landscape, protects wildlife, and works in partnership with local communities. This application will have a profound impact on the future of real families, real homes, real species and real countryside. National need is important, but it should not come at any cost. The scale, pace of change and location of this proposal are fundamentally wrong, and we respectfully ask the examining authority to recognise the true extent of the harm that this development would cause.

01:18:25:04 - 01:18:25:27

Thank you.

01:18:27:27 - 01:18:28:22

Very much.

01:18:51:26 - 01:19:05:10

Okay. Thank you. Just deliberating on a break, but I think we'll do one more speaker and then we'll take a short come for a break. Um, so can I invite, please? Um, Oliver Tate to the table?

01:19:14:00 - 01:19:32:04

Be more helpful if you could sit down, if that's okay. Please. Just just because of the microphone and the recording. Yeah. So just to clarify, as an individual, it's five minutes. So we'll change the time to five minutes. Again if you could please introduce yourself and and then time will start from there. Thank you.

01:19:36:08 - 01:19:41:11

Sorry. Start the microphone. Can we reset the timer please? Yes.

01:19:42:13 - 01:20:15:07

So I'm a fourth generation farmer from Burt and Salmon Farm there for over a hundred years. Um, and I'm probably one of the only, um, farmers in the area that hasn't sort of subdued and been bullied to signing over their land to, like, by this early signing. Heads of terms. Um, not that I blame many of them, because as an industry, we are in crisis. Uh, inputs are soaring, um, costs and prices are declining. And companies like, like ballet, Solar Island, Green Power exploiting that.

01:20:15:09 - 01:20:43:12

And farmers are doing what they can to just secure their future, which means signing ahead to terms. Um, what happens if you don't sign into terms like me? I don't want them to run a cable route across our land because of the impact it will have. You get a monthly, rather threatening letter to sign terms. Um, and if you don't, you land on a compulsory purchase, and there's not much choice in it. Can I have a quick show of hands? Who here loves the countryside and love where they live?

01:20:43:14 - 01:20:48:04

Excuse me, Mr. Tate. Now it's your opportunity to present your case. Oh.

01:20:48:06 - 01:21:20:00

Fair enough. Yeah. No worries. So the concern is that this project will take 900 hectares of prime arable land, arable fruit crop production, land out of production indefinitely for 40 years as a minimum of 900 hectares of land. Just to put it into context, if it was, all wheat would produce 7500 tonnes of wheat, which would produce 13.5 million loaves of bread. As a country, we are 62% self-sufficient in food production. If projects like this go ahead.

01:21:20:02 - 01:21:28:04

They set a precedent and they continue to grow across the countryside, which will further threaten our food security.

01:21:30:22 - 01:22:03:06

Now they state that the project is an environmentally friendly build. I would strongly disagree. You only have to look at the project that's going to put Campbell's first. It looks something like a desert with four meter high panels. There is nothing growing in between. So how can take in 680 hectares for panels? Be an environmentally an environmental gain. And not only that, it adds to a fire risk. The land cannot be managed. The panels stand four meters high with little space.

01:22:03:08 - 01:22:34:28

They often claim that livestock can graze them. They can't. The whole point is to capture sunlight and not let it hit the floor. Grass cannot grow. It cannot support livestock. We're experiencing the second drought in a row. An extreme drought. We've not had rain of any considerable amount for a long time. Everything is so dry and it prevents a huge fire risk as well. There is no way that it can be. It can be managed. It's going close to houses. Um, and from working in Australia and experiencing wildfires, they are devastating.

01:22:35:00 - 01:22:43:06

We have to look at the news to see what's happening in France. I think it's a big danger to people living amongst them. Um,

01:22:45:06 - 01:23:14:27

the second question is why would a company so like Valley Solar, owned by Island Green Power, owned by Macquarie Asset Management, who were a 748 billion Aussie dollar asset management company, have interest in taking our countryside that we love to fill with solar panels to produce electric that's supposedly going to be cheaper. I don't think that's the case.

01:23:16:22 - 01:23:42:20

I guess the main thing I've waffled a little bit, I don't have much of a speech and I'm kind of winging it. I should be bailing straw. We should become violent. But I'm here, and I guess the point I want to get across is this is a permanent attack on our countryside and attack on where we live and will impact all of our futures. Everyone in this room who loves where they live. They live here for a reason and they don't want to see it go.

01:23:44:08 - 01:23:47:15

So without waffling, too much more. That's my piece.

01:23:48:24 - 01:24:23:11

Hey. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you everybody. As I say, I appreciate I appreciate the support in the room, but please refrain from me. Applaud. Um, now, as I said, does seem a good time to perhaps take a short comfort break. Um, so I think what we'll do is we'll, um, adjourn the hearing until 1115. Till 1115. Um, so if we can reconvene at 1115. Uh, therefore, as I say this, this hearing is temporarily adjourned till 1115.

01:24:23:13 - 01:24:24:03

Thank you.