



Hearing Transcript

Project:	The Droves Solar Farm
Hearing:	Recording of Issue Specific Hearing 1 Part 1
Date:	7 May 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.

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1

00:00:00.040 --> 00:00:00.620

Good morning.

2

00:00:05.280 --> 00:00:08.100

It's now 10:00 o'clock and time for this hearing to begin.

3

00:00:08.740 --> 00:00:12.520

I would like to welcome you all to the first issue-specific hearing for the Drovers

4

00:00:12.700 --> 00:00:16.460

Solar Farm project. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear

5

00:00:16.560 --> 00:00:17.340

me clearly?

6

00:00:19.560 --> 00:00:19.680

Could

7

00:00:20.620 --> 00:00:23.120

I have some hands at the right at the back, please? Thank you.

8

00:00:24.520 --> 00:00:28.400

I'm just checking online. I've got some hands online indicating you can

9

00:00:28.440 --> 00:00:28.700

hear me.

10

00:00:29.620 --> 00:00:32.980

Thank you. My name is Anthony Johnson.

11

00:00:33.040 --> 00:00:36.650

I'm a chartered civil engineer, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of

12

00:00:36.780 --> 00:00:40.720

State as the single examining inspector to examine this application.

13

00:00:41.420 --> 00:00:44.250

You'll also hear me referred to as the examining authority.

14

00:00:45.300 --> 00:00:49.160

The case manager is Sarah Norris, and she's supported here today by Emma

15

00:00:49.200 --> 00:00:52.380

Smith, and Tim Hole is providing support remotely.

16

00:00:53.400 --> 00:00:56.740

As well as the planning inspectorate case team, we are joined today by another

17

00:00:56.780 --> 00:01:00.040

inspector, Carl Pelling, who is

18

00:01:00.100 --> 00:01:02.600

observing the hearing for training purposes.

19

00:01:04.220 --> 00:01:08.080

I understand there are representatives of the media here today

20

00:01:08.620 --> 00:01:09.580

joining us online,

21

00:01:10.680 --> 00:01:13.440

and that they've made themselves known to the case team.

22

00:01:17.160 --> 00:01:20.780

I'll now deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person.

23

00:01:21.880 --> 00:01:25.140

Could everyone please set all devices and phones to silent?

24

00:01:26.360 --> 00:01:28.980

The toilets are located at the back of the hall.

25

00:01:30.260 --> 00:01:34.040

There is no fire alarm drill scheduled today, so should the

26

00:01:34.080 --> 00:01:36.460

fire alarm sound, please treat it as real.

27

00:01:37.300 --> 00:01:40.750

The nearest fire exits are at the back and at the front of the hall,

28

00:01:42.360 --> 00:01:45.740

and the fire assembly point is just outside in the car park.

29

00:01:46.640 --> 00:01:48.640

Please wait there for further instructions.

30

00:01:50.060 --> 00:01:53.960

Short breaks are planned for mid-morning at 11:30 and for

31

00:01:54.020 --> 00:01:57.960

mid-afternoon at 3:30, with a break for lunch at 1:00 o'clock.

32

00:01:58.600 --> 00:02:01.280

I'm aiming to finish no later than 5:00 o'clock.

33

00:02:06.180 --> 00:02:10.140

In terms of agenda and logistics, this meeting will follow the agenda

34

00:02:10.241 --> 00:02:14.160

published on the National Infrastructure Planning website on the 27th

35

00:02:14.240 --> 00:02:17.060

of April. Examination library reference

36

00:02:17.340 --> 00:02:20.200

EV2-001.

37

00:02:21.480 --> 00:02:24.179

It would be helpful if you had a copy of this in front of you.

38

00:02:25.420 --> 00:02:28.940

Could the applicant also display the agenda on the screen, please?

39

00:02:32.580 --> 00:02:36.420

This agenda is for guidance only, and I may add other considerations

40

00:02:36.480 --> 00:02:38.100

or issues as we progress.

41

00:02:38.420 --> 00:02:39.900

Sir, can I just stop you for a minute?

42

00:02:40.020 --> 00:02:42.600

I'm getting a message saying people online can't see anything.

43

00:02:43.420 --> 00:02:44.040

Oh, right.

44

00:02:44.980 --> 00:02:46.940

Okay, I've got a hand up online.

45

00:02:51.640 --> 00:02:55.480

Could the case team confirm if it's shared on the screen, please?

46

00:02:56.340 --> 00:03:12.820

I'm

47

00:03:19.580 --> 00:03:20.840

getting a message that's resolved.

48

00:03:22.080 --> 00:03:22.820

Okay, thank you.

49

00:03:26.720 --> 00:03:30.280

This agenda is for guidance only, and I may add other considerations
or

50

00:03:30.340 --> 00:03:31.760

issues as we progress.

51

00:03:32.560 --> 00:03:36.540

I will conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions
have been made

52

00:03:36.760 --> 00:03:39.240

and all questions asked and responded to.

53

00:03:40.020 --> 00:03:43.900

But if the discussion can't be concluded, then it may be necessary for

54

00:03:43.920 --> 00:03:47.320

me to prioritize matters and defer other matters

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00:03:48.120 --> 00:03:49.520

to further written questions.

56

00:03:50.500 --> 00:03:54.460

Likewise, if you cannot answer the questions being asked or require time to get

57

00:03:54.480 --> 00:03:58.180

the information requested, then please can you indicate that you need to

58

00:03:58.240 --> 00:03:59.360

respond in writing.

59

00:04:01.380 --> 00:04:05.260

Today's hearing is being undertaken in a hybrid or blended way, meaning some

60

00:04:05.300 --> 00:04:08.960

of you are present with us at the hearing venue, and some of you are joining us

61

00:04:09.040 --> 00:04:11.700

virtually using Microsoft Teams.

62

00:04:11.780 --> 00:04:15.620

I will make sure that however you have decided to join today, you will be

63

00:04:15.660 --> 00:04:17.840

given a fair opportunity to participate.

64

00:04:19.579 --> 00:04:23.120

A recording of today's hearing will be made available on the Drovers Solar Farm

65

00:04:23.220 --> 00:04:26.969

section of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as

66

00:04:27.000 --> 00:04:30.780

practicable after the hearing has finished.

67

00:04:30.820 --> 00:04:34.420

With this in mind, please ensure that you speak clearly into the microphone,

68

00:04:34.560 --> 00:04:38.280

stating your name and who you are representing each time before you speak.

69

00:04:39.860 --> 00:04:43.380

To use the microphone, just press the button until the light turns green,

70

00:04:43.840 --> 00:04:47.620

and then when you've finished speaking, press it again until it turns

71

00:04:47.680 --> 00:04:47.940

red.

72

00:04:49.740 --> 00:04:53.460

If you're not at a table with a microphone, there is a roving microphone, so please

73

00:04:53.540 --> 00:04:56.840

wait for one of these to be brought to you before you speak.

74

00:04:58.300 --> 00:05:02.120

If any individual or group wishes to use social media, report, film,

75

00:05:02.320 --> 00:05:06.260

or record during today's or any subsequent hearing, then they are

76

00:05:06.300 --> 00:05:09.980

free to do so. But please do so responsibly and with

77

00:05:10.060 --> 00:05:12.060

proper consideration for other parties.

78

00:05:12.840 --> 00:05:16.200

This must not be disruptive, and the material must not be misused.

79

00:05:16.780 --> 00:05:20.330

The definitive recording is the one that is being made by the audiovisual

80

00:05:20.440 --> 00:05:23.760

company and will be published on the National Infrastructure Planning

81

00:05:23.840 --> 00:05:27.000

website. Does anyone have any questions on this matter?

82

00:05:30.800 --> 00:05:34.020

I can see a hand up online. Amy Hart,

83

00:05:35.040 --> 00:05:35.920

do you have a question?

84

00:05:38.940 --> 00:05:41.140

No. Sorry. I forgot to lower my hand.

85

00:05:41.460 --> 00:05:41.620

Okay.

86

00:05:41.660 --> 00:05:42.900

I'll do that now. Thank you.

87

00:05:44.200 --> 00:05:44.560

Thank you.

88

00:05:46.020 --> 00:05:49.320

A link to the planning inspectorate's privacy notice was provided in the

89

00:05:49.360 --> 00:05:53.240

notification for this hearing. I assume that everybody here today has

90

00:05:53.300 --> 00:05:56.960

familiarized themselves with this document, which establishes how the

91

00:05:57.000 --> 00:06:00.510

personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the

92

00:06:00.580 --> 00:06:03.240

principles set out in data protection laws.

93

00:06:04.020 --> 00:06:06.960

Please speak to Sarah Norris if you have any questions about

94

00:06:07.020 --> 00:06:13.650

thisThe

95

00:06:13.710 --> 00:06:17.570

purpose of the hearing. Let me briefly explain the purpose of this issue-specific

96

00:06:17.650 --> 00:06:21.390

hearing. This hearing seeks to cover high-level matters on a range of

97

00:06:21.470 --> 00:06:25.080

issues, which includes site selection and

98

00:06:25.110 --> 00:06:27.270

alternatives, grid connection,

99

00:06:28.150 --> 00:06:31.890

cumulative effects, aviation, landscape and

100

00:06:31.930 --> 00:06:32.270

visual,

101

00:06:33.270 --> 00:06:36.030
cultural heritage, flood risk, and water

102
00:06:36.050 --> 00:06:39.950
resources. As mentioned previously, I aim to finish no later

103
00:06:39.990 --> 00:06:42.770
than 5:00 PM at the latest, and if

104
00:06:42.810 --> 00:06:46.530
necessary, any questions that we can't cover

105
00:06:46.570 --> 00:06:49.560
today will be carried over to my first written questions.

106
00:06:50.550 --> 00:06:53.350
I do have a fairly extensive list of questions which are

107
00:06:53.370 --> 00:06:57.250
primarily aimed at the applicant, but there are

108
00:06:57.310 --> 00:07:01.150
also some questions for other parties, particularly the local
authorities who are

109
00:07:01.190 --> 00:07:01.810
here today.

110
00:07:02.700 --> 00:07:06.570
The purpose of the hearing is to enable me, as the examining
authority, to

111
00:07:06.610 --> 00:07:10.550
gain further understanding of the evidence relating to the various
topics

112
00:07:10.610 --> 00:07:11.490
within the agenda.

113
00:07:12.950 --> 00:07:16.850
I will run through all of my questions on each topic agenda item
before then

114

00:07:16.930 --> 00:07:19.690

asking for any contributions from interested parties.

115

00:07:20.670 --> 00:07:24.590

Any representations from interested parties must relate directly to the

116

00:07:24.630 --> 00:07:28.530

discussion undertaken, and it is important to say that today is

117

00:07:28.590 --> 00:07:29.530

not an open floor

118

00:07:30.390 --> 00:07:33.490

session to give wider submissions on each of the topics on the

119

00:07:33.530 --> 00:07:37.310

agenda. If you do have wider points to make, please

120

00:07:37.350 --> 00:07:39.310

provide these in writing at deadline one.

121

00:07:41.070 --> 00:07:44.990

And it's important to note that written submissions carry exactly the same weight

122

00:07:45.250 --> 00:07:49.210

as oral submissions, so I will only have questions in relation to the

123

00:07:49.250 --> 00:07:50.550

purpose of the hearing today.

124

00:07:51.950 --> 00:07:55.470

Please note that this hearing is not to be used as a platform to make

125

00:07:55.530 --> 00:07:59.450

electioneering points, and any attempts to do so will not be tolerated.

126

00:08:01.230 --> 00:08:05.110

I would ask for those present not to interrupt whilst another person is giving

127

00:08:05.170 --> 00:08:08.750

evidence. Even though you may disagree strongly with what is being said,

128

00:08:09.290 --> 00:08:13.010

it's important that everyone has a fair opportunity to put their case

129

00:08:13.090 --> 00:08:15.090

without interruption or distraction.

130

00:08:16.610 --> 00:08:19.990

I may refuse to hear evidence which is, in my view, irrelevant,

131

00:08:20.230 --> 00:08:24.110

vexatious, or frivolous, relates to the merits of a national

132

00:08:24.150 --> 00:08:27.870

policy statement, repeats other representations already

133

00:08:27.930 --> 00:08:31.750

made, or relates to compensation for compulsory acquisition of land

134

00:08:31.830 --> 00:08:33.850

or an interest in or over land.

135

00:08:35.270 --> 00:08:39.110

Additionally, I may request any person behaving in a disruptive manner to leave the

136

00:08:39.150 --> 00:08:42.750

hearing or to remain only if that person complies with

137

00:08:42.790 --> 00:08:43.929

specific conditions.

138

00:08:48.230 --> 00:08:49.030

Introductions.

139

00:08:49.970 --> 00:08:53.470

I'm now going to ask those of you who are participating in today's meeting to

140

00:08:53.510 --> 00:08:54.550

introduce yourselves.

141

00:08:55.870 --> 00:08:59.350

When I state your organization's name, could you introduce yourself,

142

00:08:59.450 --> 00:09:03.230

stating your name and who you represent and which

143

00:09:03.290 --> 00:09:05.270

agenda item you wish to speak to?

144

00:09:07.490 --> 00:09:10.770

If you're not representing an organization, please confirm your name,

145

00:09:11.190 --> 00:09:15.149

summarize your interest in the application, and confirm the agenda item

146

00:09:15.210 --> 00:09:17.070

upon which you wish to speak.

147

00:09:23.730 --> 00:09:26.670

Please could everybody also state how they wish to be addressed?

148

00:09:27.590 --> 00:09:30.410

Could I start with the applicant and their advisors, please?

149

00:09:31.130 --> 00:09:33.890

Good morning, sir. Good morning, everyone. My name is Alex Tresadern.

150

00:09:34.690 --> 00:09:37.730

I'm a senior associate for Pinsent Masons LLP.

151

00:09:37.770 --> 00:09:39.880

We're the solicitors for the applicant. Mr.

152

00:09:40.070 --> 00:09:41.820

Tresadern is fine for the purposes of today.

153

00:09:42.350 --> 00:09:45.830

I'm joined by various members of the applicant's team, as we

154

00:09:45.870 --> 00:09:49.080

intend, as you can imagine, to speak on all agenda items.

155

00:09:49.470 --> 00:09:53.110

I propose that everyone introduces themselves as and when they need to speak,

156

00:09:53.210 --> 00:09:56.630

rather than running through the list now, but equally happy to do so if you'd

157

00:09:56.670 --> 00:09:57.030

prefer.

158

00:09:58.990 --> 00:10:00.830

No, that sounds sensible. Thank you.

159

00:10:03.230 --> 00:10:07.210

Can we move on to the organizations and individuals that have given notice of their

160

00:10:07.350 --> 00:10:10.150

intention to speak? Starting with

161

00:10:11.130 --> 00:10:14.010

Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

162

00:10:15.690 --> 00:10:18.850

Good morning, sir. Mrs. Julie Barrow for the borough council.

163

00:10:19.390 --> 00:10:23.270

To my left, I also have Ms. Lynette Fawkes, who is conservation

164

00:10:23.330 --> 00:10:26.470

officer and supported by Ms. Lucy Smith. Thank you.

165

00:10:26.770 --> 00:10:28.110

And we wish to speak on all items.

166

00:10:36.490 --> 00:10:36.890

Thank you.

167

00:10:37.690 --> 00:10:39.750

Go next to Breckland District Council.

168

00:10:42.590 --> 00:10:44.890

Good morning. My name's Ms. Rebecca Collins,

169

00:10:46.630 --> 00:10:49.130

obviously representing Breckland Council.

170

00:10:50.390 --> 00:10:54.340

We would like the opportunity to speak on the relevant agenda items

171

00:10:54.370 --> 00:10:56.210

where you say the authority can speak.

172

00:10:57.370 --> 00:10:58.090

Thank you very much.

173

00:10:59.450 --> 00:11:01.530

Okay. Anybody else from Breckland Council?

174

00:11:03.990 --> 00:11:07.730

Yes. Thank you, sir. Mark Kettlemore, elected member of Breckland Council.

175

00:11:09.850 --> 00:11:12.410

Thank you. I'll go next to Norfolk County Council.

176

00:11:14.510 --> 00:11:18.330

Thank you, sir. Andrew Szurkowski for Norfolk County Council.

177

00:11:18.490 --> 00:11:19.690

Mr. Szurkowski is fine.

178

00:11:20.810 --> 00:11:24.110

I have two colleagues who are joining us

179

00:11:24.190 --> 00:11:24.870

online.

180

00:11:27.050 --> 00:11:30.110

There's John Percival, who's the county archaeologist,

181

00:11:31.410 --> 00:11:35.170

and also Sarah Tickner, or you may have her down as Sarah

182

00:11:35.250 --> 00:11:35.490

Luff,

183

00:11:36.530 --> 00:11:39.050

who will be joining us from the LLFA.

184

00:11:39.650 --> 00:11:43.170

Although I believe, sir, we did put in a request that, just

185

00:11:43.350 --> 00:11:46.530

to let you know, she's only available till 3:00 this afternoon.

186

00:11:49.650 --> 00:11:50.130

Thank you.

187

00:11:51.790 --> 00:11:55.710

Go next to the parish councils, please, starting with Spool

188

00:11:55.750 --> 00:11:57.410

with Pulgrave Parish Council.

189

00:11:59.050 --> 00:12:00.290

Good morning, sir. It's

190

00:12:02.150 --> 00:12:03.910

representing Spool with

191

00:12:05.090 --> 00:12:08.710

Pulgrave Parish Council. I'll be speaking to

192

00:12:08.770 --> 00:12:12.580

cumulative impact and landscape and visual

193

00:12:16.870 --> 00:12:18.500

Thank you, Mr. Bennett. And

194

00:12:19.750 --> 00:12:22.590

anyone else from your parish council? No. Okay.

195

00:12:22.670 --> 00:12:25.070

I'll move to Castle Acre Parish Council next.

196

00:12:26.350 --> 00:12:29.630

Good morning, sir. Good morning, everyone. I'm Anne Mason.

197

00:12:29.890 --> 00:12:33.710

I'm on Castle Acre Parish Council, and I would like to

198

00:12:33.810 --> 00:12:37.610

speak on agenda item 3.6, cultural

199

00:12:37.650 --> 00:12:39.310

heritage. Thank you.

200

00:12:43.750 --> 00:12:44.710

Thank you. Anyone else

201

00:12:45.670 --> 00:12:47.230

from Castle Acre Parish Council?

202

00:12:48.010 --> 00:12:51.090

Good morning, sir. I'm Tim Hubbard, Castle Acre Parish Council.

203

00:12:52.310 --> 00:12:55.510

I'm not specifically intending to speak on any item this morning.

204

00:13:07.970 --> 00:13:11.080

Okay. It makes sense to continue round the table. So Dr.

205

00:13:11.530 --> 00:13:14.150

Mark Holmes, are you intending to speak today?

206

00:13:16.270 --> 00:13:16.730

Okay.

207

00:13:19.330 --> 00:13:20.750

Okay, and the gentleman to your left?

208

00:13:21.290 --> 00:13:21.449

No.

209

00:13:22.190 --> 00:13:22.590

No. And

210

00:13:23.570 --> 00:13:25.410

is it James Wild, MP?

211

00:13:26.030 --> 00:13:29.510

Yeah, good morning, sir. James Wild, MP for North West Norfolk.

212

00:13:29.590 --> 00:13:33.490

I also will be making comments on behalf of my colleague, George Freeman, the MP

213

00:13:33.550 --> 00:13:37.310

for Mid Norfolk, who unfortunately is unwell and unable to attend.

214

00:13:37.350 --> 00:13:40.600

And I'll be speaking on behalf of my constituents, particularly in Castle Acre, who

215

00:13:40.610 --> 00:13:44.430

are extremely concerned at the scale of this proposed development

216

00:13:44.510 --> 00:13:48.249

at 2,700 acres. It would be three times the size of any

217

00:13:48.310 --> 00:13:52.130

existing solar farm. Having submitted my evidence, I intend to speak

218

00:13:52.190 --> 00:13:56.040

on the issues of site selection, cumulative aviation, and

219

00:13:56.090 --> 00:13:57.930

also the cultural heritage. Thank you.

220

00:14:00.910 --> 00:14:08.430

Okay.

221

00:14:08.510 --> 00:14:09.050

Before I

222

00:14:11.690 --> 00:14:14.830

go online, is there anyone else in the room today who wishes to speak

223

00:14:15.750 --> 00:14:17.090

on any agenda items?

224

00:14:20.170 --> 00:14:22.110

No, I'm not seeing any further hands up.

225

00:14:23.930 --> 00:14:26.790

Thank you. Now, if I could move on to virtual attendees.

226

00:14:26.890 --> 00:14:30.610

If you're with us on Microsoft Teams, please raise your hand if you wish to

227

00:14:30.710 --> 00:14:32.230

speak on any agenda item, and I'll

228

00:14:33.510 --> 00:14:33.950

come to you.

229

00:14:36.270 --> 00:14:39.090

Charlotte Jones, I'll start with you.

230

00:14:42.970 --> 00:14:43.790

Good morning, sir.

231

00:14:44.610 --> 00:14:48.070

My name is Charlotte Jones. I'm a Managing Associate at Addleshaw Goddard,

232

00:14:48.810 --> 00:14:51.450

acting on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission.

233

00:14:52.630 --> 00:14:56.530

I'm joined today by Tiffany Bate and

234

00:14:56.610 --> 00:14:58.970

Andra Dinca Pandaru.

235

00:15:00.190 --> 00:15:03.530

We wish to speak today on agenda item 3.2, grid connection.

236

00:15:11.390 --> 00:15:15.070

Thank you. I'll go next to Morgan Haringman.

237

00:15:20.270 --> 00:15:24.230

Good morning, sir. Morgan Hagingman speaking on behalf of the Environment

238

00:15:24.330 --> 00:15:27.570

Agency. With me today, I have technical

239

00:15:27.690 --> 00:15:31.570

specialists John Vine and Tom Sheen and Sarah

240

00:15:31.610 --> 00:15:35.110

Swire, and the agenda item we will be

241

00:15:35.270 --> 00:15:36.950

speaking on is

242

00:15:38.250 --> 00:15:41.670

item 3.7, progressive water

243

00:15:41.710 --> 00:15:43.350
resources. Thank you.

244

00:15:54.790 --> 00:15:55.250
Thank you.

245

00:15:57.190 --> 00:16:00.390
Christopher Waldron, Jonathan Wilson,

246

00:16:01.110 --> 00:16:02.630
are you intending to speak today?

247

00:16:06.210 --> 00:16:09.850
Good morning. We will respond to any questions or comments

248

00:16:10.390 --> 00:16:13.350
that are made in relation to aviation as necessary.

249

00:16:18.690 --> 00:16:19.110
Thank you.

250

00:16:20.310 --> 00:16:21.410
Is it Jonathan Wilson?

251

00:16:21.570 --> 00:16:26.070
Yeah.

252

00:16:28.170 --> 00:16:29.530
John Wilson will be fine, thank you.

253

00:16:29.560 --> 00:16:29.730
Okay.

254

00:16:32.550 --> 00:16:43.310
Okay,

255

00:16:43.650 --> 00:16:47.070
I do have a further name, but I'm not sure if they're present
online.

256

00:16:47.450 --> 00:16:48.990
Barbara Adamski.

257

00:16:54.170 --> 00:16:57.650
Could you confirm if you intend to speak today?

258

00:16:58.890 --> 00:17:01.010
Hello. Good morning. My name is Barbara Adamski.

259

00:17:01.020 --> 00:17:04.970
I'm representing CPA Norfolk, and I would

260

00:17:04.980 --> 00:17:08.690
like to speak on the agenda about landscape and visual impact.

261

00:17:08.891 --> 00:17:09.230
Thank you.

262

00:17:11.391 --> 00:17:14.470
Is there anyone else online? If you could put your hand up if you wish to speak

263

00:17:14.530 --> 00:17:14.850
today.

264

00:17:16.370 --> 00:17:16.770
I've got

265

00:17:17.891 --> 00:17:18.250
three

266

00:17:19.770 --> 00:17:23.671
screens worth. So I can only see one screen at a time, so if you

267

00:17:23.730 --> 00:17:26.750
can put your hand up, that will assist me.

268

00:17:32.670 --> 00:17:33.330
I

269

00:17:42.210 --> 00:17:46.190

wonder if I could just

270

00:17:46.250 --> 00:17:49.610

have some assistance from the AV team for a second, please.

271

00:17:49.790 --> 00:17:50.090

I'm just

272

00:17:50.910 --> 00:17:53.130

trying to get the second screen on the

273

00:17:54.250 --> 00:17:54.990

virtual room.

274

00:18:35.980 --> 00:18:39.140

I'll just go off microphone for a second while we sort this out.

275

00:18:49.500 --> 00:19:06.720

Sorry

276

00:19:06.740 --> 00:19:10.280

about that. The issue is resolved, so we'll continue to move on.

277

00:19:10.360 --> 00:19:10.820

Thank you.

278

00:19:22.220 --> 00:19:24.760

Okay, moving on to item three,

279

00:19:25.660 --> 00:19:29.380

issues, then. Item 3.1, we'll start with site selection and

280

00:19:29.440 --> 00:19:30.300

alternatives.

281

00:19:31.740 --> 00:19:33.740

I'll start with the first question.

282

00:19:36.160 --> 00:19:39.380

Can I ask the applicant to explain its approach to considering

283

00:19:39.540 --> 00:19:43.440

alternative site locations, sizes, and scales

284

00:19:43.480 --> 00:19:47.220

for the proposed development? Within the proposed site, what

285

00:19:47.380 --> 00:19:51.100

alternative locations for the substations and battery

286

00:19:51.260 --> 00:19:53.440

energy storage systems were considered?

287

00:19:56.220 --> 00:19:58.840

Thank you, sir. Alex Tresadern on behalf of the applicant.

288

00:19:59.260 --> 00:20:02.460

I believe I'm joined online by Tabitha Knowles from

289

00:20:02.660 --> 00:20:06.620

DWD, who I'm hoping will be present and possibly give

290

00:20:06.660 --> 00:20:08.000

us a wave or a noise if she is.

291

00:20:10.300 --> 00:20:11.220

Hello there. Hi.

292

00:20:11.320 --> 00:20:12.080

Excellent. Thank you.

293

00:20:13.080 --> 00:20:14.730

Tabitha, do you want to start on this item?

294

00:20:16.940 --> 00:20:20.340

Sure. Thank you. Ms. Tabitha Knowles on behalf of the

295

00:20:20.400 --> 00:20:24.140

applicant. If I could first start

296

00:20:24.220 --> 00:20:28.100

off with explaining the policy framework that's been applied

297

00:20:28.180 --> 00:20:31.560

to site selection and its consideration of alternatives,

298

00:20:32.140 --> 00:20:35.520

and where this is set out within the DCO application

299

00:20:35.580 --> 00:20:39.460

documents. And then move on to the approach taken to site

300

00:20:39.540 --> 00:20:43.100

selection, reasonable alternatives, to explain the why here

301

00:20:43.140 --> 00:20:46.840

point, and how this has informed the order limits.

302

00:20:48.060 --> 00:20:51.900

So the applicant's approach to site selection and its consideration of

303

00:20:51.920 --> 00:20:55.840

reasonable alternatives has been guided by relevant planning policy

304

00:20:55.860 --> 00:20:59.100

and guidance. In particular, that's part

305

00:20:59.500 --> 00:21:02.940

4.3 of National Policy Statement

306

00:21:03.500 --> 00:21:06.690

EN1, part 2.3

307

00:21:07.560 --> 00:21:11.040

of EN3, and part 2.2

308

00:21:11.720 --> 00:21:15.600

of EN5. And that sets out the applicable

309

00:21:15.609 --> 00:21:16.960

assessment principles.

310

00:21:17.780 --> 00:21:20.549

Three key points to note as part of this is,

311

00:21:21.380 --> 00:21:24.960

whilst there's no general legal or planning policy requirement to

312

00:21:24.980 --> 00:21:28.900

consider alternatives or to establish whether the proposed project

313

00:21:28.940 --> 00:21:32.880

represents the best option from a policy perspective, applicants are

314

00:21:32.920 --> 00:21:36.440

obliged to include information about reasonable alternatives that they have

315

00:21:36.520 --> 00:21:40.200

studied in their environmental statement, their ES, and

316

00:21:40.320 --> 00:21:43.240

where there is a specific policy requirement to do so.

317

00:21:44.240 --> 00:21:47.060

And just the policy reference on that is EN1

318

00:21:47.780 --> 00:21:51.540

4.3.9 and EN1

319

00:21:51.780 --> 00:21:53.620

4.3.15.

320

00:21:54.620 --> 00:21:57.940

The second point is that when considering alternatives,

321

00:21:58.560 --> 00:22:02.270

that should be carried out in a proportionate manner, and only alternatives that

322

00:22:02.340 --> 00:22:05.860

can meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be

considered.

323

00:22:06.800 --> 00:22:09.020

That is, that they'll need to be reasonable alternatives.

324

00:22:09.600 --> 00:22:13.440

It's recognized that most renewable energy resources can only be

325

00:22:13.480 --> 00:22:17.340

developed where the resource exists and where economically feasible.

326

00:22:18.400 --> 00:22:22.040

Alternative proposals that are not commercially viable or

327

00:22:22.080 --> 00:22:24.060

physically suitable can be excluded.

328

00:22:24.609 --> 00:22:27.880

The policy reference for that is EN1

329

00:22:27.920 --> 00:22:31.180

4.3.22 and

330

00:22:31.220 --> 00:22:34.560

EN3 2.3.5,

331

00:22:35.320 --> 00:22:38.640

EN3 2.3.9, and

332

00:22:38.740 --> 00:22:41.780

EN1 4.2.27.

333

00:22:42.820 --> 00:22:46.589

And the third point is that there's no prescribed methodology in

334

00:22:46.680 --> 00:22:50.540

national planning policy or guidance for site selection in relation to

335

00:22:50.580 --> 00:22:51.500

solar development.

336

00:22:52.700 --> 00:22:53.080

However,

337

00:22:53.900 --> 00:22:55.640

EN3 paragraphs

338

00:22:55.960 --> 00:22:58.580

2.10.21 and

339

00:22:58.880 --> 00:23:02.780

2.10.26 recognize that a viable

340

00:23:02.880 --> 00:23:06.600

grid connection is an essential material consideration for proceeding with

341

00:23:06.640 --> 00:23:07.140

development.

342

00:23:08.620 --> 00:23:12.540

EN3 paragraphs 2.10.19 through

343

00:23:12.600 --> 00:23:16.240

to 2.10.48 is also relevant,

344

00:23:16.760 --> 00:23:20.440

being factors likely to influence the siting of solar development.

345

00:23:21.860 --> 00:23:25.100

The National Grid's guidelines on siting and design,

346

00:23:25.940 --> 00:23:29.760

so that's commonly referred to as the Horlock and the Holford rules, have

347

00:23:29.860 --> 00:23:31.420

also been applied to the assessment.

348

00:23:32.160 --> 00:23:35.780

This guidance explains the approach taken to the transmission

349

00:23:35.880 --> 00:23:39.240

system of electricity for England to assist those parties

350

00:23:39.280 --> 00:23:42.720

responsible for designing and locating substations.

351

00:23:44.080 --> 00:23:47.060

This is aligned with EN5 paragraphs

352

00:23:47.320 --> 00:23:49.960

2.9.16 through to

353

00:23:50.140 --> 00:23:53.920

2.9.19, which also sets out the

354

00:23:53.940 --> 00:23:57.480

Holford rules, which provides guidelines for the routing of

355

00:23:57.560 --> 00:24:01.070

overhead high voltage electricity lines to minimize visual and

356

00:24:01.100 --> 00:24:04.900

environmental impact, and the Horlock rules, which provides

357

00:24:04.940 --> 00:24:08.830

guidance for the siting and design of substations and other

358

00:24:08.860 --> 00:24:12.280

related infrastructure to reduce the environmental impact of such

359

00:24:12.300 --> 00:24:12.940

developments.

360

00:24:14.280 --> 00:24:18.140

Importantly, National Grid also use this guidance to inform site

361

00:24:18.200 --> 00:24:22.180

selection and assessment of alternatives for its own projects coming forward.

362

00:24:23.700 --> 00:24:27.620

So the detail on the applicant site selection assessment and

363

00:24:27.640 --> 00:24:31.580

its consideration of alternatives is set out within the DCO application

364

00:24:31.640 --> 00:24:35.572

documents specifically Appendix one of the

365

00:24:35.612 --> 00:24:39.252

planning statement, titled Site Evaluation Report,

366

00:24:39.572 --> 00:24:43.112

and the reference for that is APP043,

367

00:24:44.432 --> 00:24:48.292

and that's with respect to an appraisal of alternative sites, and this demonstrates

368

00:24:48.372 --> 00:24:52.312

consideration of relevant policy and its applicability to the

369

00:24:52.352 --> 00:24:55.752

site evaluation process undertaken by the applicant.

370

00:24:56.952 --> 00:25:00.632

The other key document is the ES chapter

371

00:25:00.752 --> 00:25:04.652

four, Reasonable Alternatives and Design Evolution, and that

372

00:25:04.692 --> 00:25:08.012

references APP053,

373

00:25:09.032 --> 00:25:12.472

and with respect to the scheme layouts and choice of technology.

374

00:25:12.712 --> 00:25:16.652

So this chapter explains the legal and policy background relevant to consideration

375

00:25:16.672 --> 00:25:20.292

alternatives and the design development of the order limits.

376

00:25:20.872 --> 00:25:24.132

It also covers the evolution of the design of the scheme from the

377

00:25:24.192 --> 00:25:28.172

identification of the initial order limits through to the scheme's final

378

00:25:28.212 --> 00:25:31.702

design. So with respect to

379

00:25:31.772 --> 00:25:35.632

how the approach taken to site selection and consideration of

380

00:25:35.652 --> 00:25:39.592

reasonable alternatives has been applied to explain the why here

381

00:25:39.652 --> 00:25:40.032

point,

382

00:25:41.252 --> 00:25:45.052

the starting point was the grid connection offer from National Grid.

383

00:25:46.592 --> 00:25:50.512

The applicant's required to obtain land and consent for a new National

384

00:25:50.572 --> 00:25:53.462

Grid substation within their development consent order.

385

00:25:54.182 --> 00:25:56.972

This is detailed within the grid connection statement,

386

00:25:57.752 --> 00:26:01.742

APP181, which explains that the National

387

00:26:01.812 --> 00:26:05.692

Grid substation is to be sited and designed to connect the scheme

388

00:26:05.752 --> 00:26:09.452

to the 400 kV transmission network between the existing

389

00:26:09.472 --> 00:26:11.522

substations at Necton and Walpole.

390

00:26:13.232 --> 00:26:17.152

Recent solar NSIP decisions, as outlined in

391

00:26:17.212 --> 00:26:20.832

section 4.4 of appendix one of the site

392

00:26:20.892 --> 00:26:24.452

evaluation report, APP043,

393

00:26:25.352 --> 00:26:29.012

confirms that the Secretary of State supports this approach to

394

00:26:29.072 --> 00:26:32.192

selecting grid connection points as an appropriate starting point.

395

00:26:33.412 --> 00:26:37.072

As such, the site selection exercise and its consideration of reasonable

396

00:26:37.132 --> 00:26:39.072

alternatives has formed two parts.

397

00:26:39.832 --> 00:26:43.732

Part one was the National Grid substation siting assessment, and

398

00:26:43.792 --> 00:26:47.412

part two was the site evaluation of the solar development

399

00:26:47.532 --> 00:26:47.872

site.

400

00:26:48.892 --> 00:26:52.412

As part of this, a sequential and logical approach was then carried

401
00:26:52.512 --> 00:26:56.131
out with reference to the relevant policy assessment principles.

402
00:26:58.052 --> 00:27:01.972
So as a result of that, appendix one, site evaluation report

403
00:27:02.012 --> 00:27:05.792
of the planning statement, APP043,

404
00:27:06.292 --> 00:27:10.092
confirms that a key principle and site evaluation process was to

405
00:27:10.132 --> 00:27:14.092
avoid areas of particular environmental and landscape sensitivity

406
00:27:14.452 --> 00:27:17.092
where possible to minimize potential impacts.

407
00:27:18.312 --> 00:27:21.872
Chapter four of the ES, Reasonable Alternatives and Design

408
00:27:21.932 --> 00:27:25.752
Evolution, APP053, also

409
00:27:25.832 --> 00:27:29.812
adds that amongst other considerations, the applicant sought to
develop a scheme

410
00:27:29.872 --> 00:27:33.752
that would avoid impacts on sensitive landscapes and environmental
features

411
00:27:33.832 --> 00:27:34.832
as far as possible.

412
00:27:36.892 --> 00:27:40.572
Another key part of the site selection process

413
00:27:40.912 --> 00:27:43.052
was that there was a willing landowner.

414

00:27:43.792 --> 00:27:47.292

At the same time as National Grid's offer for a 500 megawatt

415

00:27:47.332 --> 00:27:51.232

connection, a land agent indicated to the applicant that the

416

00:27:51.272 --> 00:27:54.872

landowner was willing to put forward the proposed site for a solar farm

417

00:27:54.932 --> 00:27:55.492

development.

418

00:27:56.412 --> 00:27:59.972

Single continuous sites with as few landowners as

419

00:28:00.072 --> 00:28:02.592

possible has been prioritized as part of the

420

00:28:02.652 --> 00:28:04.152

search.

421

00:28:05.162 --> 00:28:08.312

And this single willing landowner is located directly

422

00:28:08.352 --> 00:28:12.112

adjacent along the existing overhead lines and will provide

423

00:28:12.152 --> 00:28:13.972

sufficient land to the site

424

00:28:15.352 --> 00:28:18.652

for the scheme in its entirety, and also providing opportunities for

425

00:28:18.752 --> 00:28:22.042

flexibility and precisely where solar and associated

426

00:28:22.152 --> 00:28:24.052

mitigation could be located.

427

00:28:25.632 --> 00:28:29.532

The result of all of this is that the site location has been chosen as

428

00:28:29.572 --> 00:28:32.092

it's suitable for large scale solar development.

429

00:28:32.781 --> 00:28:36.752

The availability of significant capacity in the existing overhead line

430

00:28:36.772 --> 00:28:40.612

between Walpole and Necton was the primary driver in identifying a

431

00:28:40.672 --> 00:28:44.632

part of this part of Norfolk. When determining the appropriateness of

432

00:28:44.672 --> 00:28:48.452

a site, the applicant has considered a range of factors, including a

433

00:28:48.512 --> 00:28:52.402

large enough site area, topography, access, and

434

00:28:52.432 --> 00:28:53.792

the lack of designations.

435

00:28:54.612 --> 00:28:58.432

The available land fits the factors explored by the applicant in its assessment

436

00:28:58.972 --> 00:29:02.882

and is aligned with the relevant planning policy, being without many

437

00:29:02.882 --> 00:29:06.872

constraints and with the benefit of a potential viable connection point to be

438

00:29:06.892 --> 00:29:08.312

included within the site.

439

00:29:10.692 --> 00:29:14.512

Happy to also talk through the sequence of the

440

00:29:14.552 --> 00:29:18.272

site selection and its outcomes so that the method and criteria applied,

441

00:29:18.872 --> 00:29:22.332

if that's helpful. But that's set out at section

442

00:29:22.892 --> 00:29:26.552

four and section five of appendix one, site evaluation

443

00:29:26.612 --> 00:29:29.882

report of the planning statement, and then there's further detail set out

444

00:29:29.912 --> 00:29:33.852

within the ES chapter four, Reasonable Alternatives on Design

445

00:29:33.912 --> 00:29:35.512

Evolution. Thank you.

446

00:29:37.952 --> 00:29:38.792

Thank you, Ms. Knowles.

447

00:29:40.372 --> 00:29:43.692

Just on the second part of the question, in terms of the proposed site, what

448

00:29:43.732 --> 00:29:47.572

alternative locations for the substation and the battery energy

449

00:29:47.672 --> 00:29:49.312

storage systems were considered?

450

00:29:49.832 --> 00:29:53.572

So you've covered the first part. If you could just

451

00:29:53.612 --> 00:29:57.052

talk a bit more about the substation location.

452

00:29:59.352 --> 00:30:02.152
So the National Grid substation location.

453
00:30:03.232 --> 00:30:04.192
So that

454
00:30:05.692 --> 00:30:07.952
formed the starting point of the

455
00:30:09.352 --> 00:30:12.972
site selection process. The applicant undertook a

456
00:30:13.032 --> 00:30:16.872
desktop assessment to identify potential locations for the

457
00:30:16.912 --> 00:30:20.832
substation along that approximately 45-kilometer stretch

458
00:30:21.312 --> 00:30:24.052
of the existing 400 kV transmission line.

459
00:30:25.672 --> 00:30:27.732
And the key

460
00:30:30.052 --> 00:30:31.452
tests were

461
00:30:32.492 --> 00:30:32.872
that

462
00:30:33.732 --> 00:30:34.692
where the site

463
00:30:34.752 --> 00:30:38.716
inter-Interacted with a

464
00:30:38.756 --> 00:30:42.736
main road, being an A or B road, and the key reason

465
00:30:42.756 --> 00:30:44.696
for that is accessibility.

466

00:30:45.616 --> 00:30:47.836

And as a result of that, four possible

467

00:30:48.656 --> 00:30:52.336

zones were identified along that 45-kilometer stretch.

468

00:30:53.276 --> 00:30:56.756

A zone was then identified around one

469

00:30:56.856 --> 00:31:00.616

kilometer either side of the existing 400 kV

470

00:31:00.716 --> 00:31:01.516

overhead line,

471

00:31:02.676 --> 00:31:06.366

and an analysis was carried out of those

472

00:31:06.656 --> 00:31:07.426

four zones,

473

00:31:08.516 --> 00:31:11.246

generally with respect to environmental and technical

474

00:31:11.356 --> 00:31:15.316

factors. So zone four was identified as

475

00:31:15.356 --> 00:31:18.956

the most suitable location for the proposed national grid

476

00:31:19.016 --> 00:31:22.656

substation. It avoids protected areas

477

00:31:22.736 --> 00:31:26.726

like national landscapes, SSSIs, with

478

00:31:26.796 --> 00:31:30.536

only two nearby, being the River Nar and Castle

479

00:31:30.576 --> 00:31:31.176
Acre Common,

480
00:31:32.636 --> 00:31:32.816
and

481
00:31:33.656 --> 00:31:37.496
impact on that can be protected through careful design.

482
00:31:38.436 --> 00:31:41.576
The zone contains no significant heritage sites,

483
00:31:42.055 --> 00:31:45.906
wildlife designations, or ancient woodlands, and only

484
00:31:45.956 --> 00:31:49.836
small areas of lower priority habitats, and they can be largely

485
00:31:49.846 --> 00:31:53.736
avoided. Existing woodlands that could help screen the development

486
00:31:53.996 --> 00:31:56.386
are also possible.

487
00:31:57.236 --> 00:32:00.906
In addition, the site fits with planning policies, avoids
residential

488
00:32:00.976 --> 00:32:04.916
properties in its entirety, it being grade three agricultural

489
00:32:04.956 --> 00:32:05.316
land.

490
00:32:06.236 --> 00:32:09.396
There is some flood risk, but this can be managed through design.

491
00:32:09.896 --> 00:32:13.636
So generally overall, the site's landscape and vegetation will help

492
00:32:13.676 --> 00:32:16.076

minimize the visual and noise impacts as well.

493

00:32:20.376 --> 00:32:21.256

Thank you, Ms. Knowles.

494

00:32:23.036 --> 00:32:24.616

The next question,

495

00:32:25.856 --> 00:32:29.836

Mr. Tressiden, is does the size and scale that you've

496

00:32:29.956 --> 00:32:33.896

considered represent an optimum scale for solar development, or is

497

00:32:33.936 --> 00:32:36.076

there a certain scale or capacity

498

00:32:36.916 --> 00:32:40.076

of solar developments that represent the best efficiency?

499

00:32:41.696 --> 00:32:44.795

Thank you, sir. Alex Tressiden on behalf of the applicant.

500

00:32:45.235 --> 00:32:48.756

The scale of the scheme has been carefully considered by the applicant,

501

00:32:48.916 --> 00:32:52.176

balancing the need to maximize grid capacity in line

502

00:32:52.216 --> 00:32:56.145

with government policy, whilst also making the most efficient use of

503

00:32:56.216 --> 00:32:58.696

land and avoiding impacts, as Ms. Knowles has touched upon.

504

00:32:58.716 --> 00:33:02.576

I think just a clarification point that when we refer to the national policy

505

00:33:02.636 --> 00:33:06.556

statements, we are referring to the 2023 suite, which were in

506

00:33:06.616 --> 00:33:09.916

force at the time the application was submitted, and it's those policy

507

00:33:09.956 --> 00:33:13.256

statements that the application is to be examined in accordance with.

508

00:33:13.316 --> 00:33:17.276

So I think unless stated otherwise, we'll assume we're referring to 2023.

509

00:33:17.456 --> 00:33:21.296

Having said that, we will refer to some 2025 paragraphs because we

510

00:33:21.316 --> 00:33:24.666

believe the new policy is consistent in that regard, but just to clarify that

511

00:33:24.696 --> 00:33:28.456

point. The planning statement and the statement of need set out

512

00:33:28.466 --> 00:33:32.406

the justification for the scheme and its proposed scale within the context of

513

00:33:32.456 --> 00:33:36.106

the clear and urgent national need for low-carbon energy

514

00:33:36.106 --> 00:33:38.766

generation. And I'll pass over to my colleague, Mr.

515

00:33:39.076 --> 00:33:40.716

Simon Gillett, for more on this matter.

516

00:33:43.696 --> 00:33:46.056

Thank you, sir. Good morning. Simon Gillett for the applicant.

517

00:33:46.396 --> 00:33:50.036

You can refer to me as Mr. Gillett. And I'm representing the

518

00:33:50.076 --> 00:33:53.456

applicant on matters of need and energy market

519

00:33:54.096 --> 00:33:54.706

operations.

520

00:33:55.936 --> 00:33:59.776

So as my colleague Mr. Tressiden said, the context within which this scheme is

521

00:33:59.816 --> 00:34:01.896

coming forward is one of rapid climate change.

522

00:34:03.316 --> 00:34:07.176

The world is warming. It's continuing to warm until carbon emissions are

523

00:34:07.196 --> 00:34:08.576

sufficiently reduced.

524

00:34:09.616 --> 00:34:13.516

International relations have become tensioned, and the international supplies

525

00:34:13.656 --> 00:34:17.056

of energy have been weaponized. What that means is that

526

00:34:17.917 --> 00:34:21.716

consumer pockets have paid and continue to pay the price, yet we

527

00:34:21.736 --> 00:34:25.716

continue to need secure low-carbon energy for

528

00:34:25.736 --> 00:34:29.357

our communications, transport, heat, light, entertainment,

529

00:34:29.496 --> 00:34:33.417

comfort, and other matters. And it's important to

530

00:34:33.457 --> 00:34:37.076

set that out, sir, because government's objectives as stated

531

00:34:38.076 --> 00:34:41.676

in EN1 of 2023, paragraph

532

00:34:41.857 --> 00:34:45.536

2.3.3, that government's objectives are to

533

00:34:45.576 --> 00:34:49.056

ensure that the supply of energy always remains secure,

534

00:34:49.596 --> 00:34:53.417

reliable, affordable, and consistent with meeting the UK's

535

00:34:53.536 --> 00:34:57.476

legally binding target to cut greenhouse emissions to net

536

00:34:57.516 --> 00:34:59.866

zero by 2050.

537

00:35:01.196 --> 00:35:04.496

To do so, sir, and to provide some context on scale,

538

00:35:05.996 --> 00:35:07.676

government published the Clean Power

539

00:35:09.296 --> 00:35:13.156

2030 action plan in December 2024,

540

00:35:14.276 --> 00:35:17.236

and the statements of need, which is reference

541

00:35:17.396 --> 00:35:20.636

APP043 at section

542

00:35:20.956 --> 00:35:24.136

2.9, provides more information on that

543

00:35:27.156 --> 00:35:30.076

action plan, sir, and its relevance to the scheme.

544

00:35:30.856 --> 00:35:34.666

The fundamental point that I'd like to make, sir, is that

545

00:35:34.696 --> 00:35:38.296

the capacity of schemes needed to come forwards

546

00:35:38.956 --> 00:35:42.656

to meet government's objectives is unprecedented,

547

00:35:43.436 --> 00:35:47.296

and the capacity of schemes that are coming forwards and that

548

00:35:47.336 --> 00:35:51.136

indeed have already come forwards is not yet at a scale

549

00:35:51.176 --> 00:35:54.876

that meets that need. And therefore, there is a driver,

550

00:35:55.076 --> 00:35:58.996

sir, to continue to develop all forms

551

00:35:59.036 --> 00:36:02.116

of low-carbon generation to ensure

552

00:36:02.176 --> 00:36:03.096

that

553

00:36:04.156 --> 00:36:07.616

government's objectives can be met, but also that the risks

554

00:36:07.656 --> 00:36:10.836

associated with meeting government's objectives can be

555

00:36:12.056 --> 00:36:12.676

minimized,

556

00:36:14.436 --> 00:36:18.056

which essentially means a large number of schemes of a

557

00:36:18.176 --> 00:36:21.776

wide variety of low-carbon technologies are required to come

558

00:36:21.816 --> 00:36:25.556

forwards. Government has set capacity

559

00:36:25.616 --> 00:36:29.336

ranges of 45 to 47

560

00:36:29.376 --> 00:36:30.876

gigawatts of

561

00:36:31.696 --> 00:36:35.116

operational large-scale solar by 2030,

562

00:36:36.316 --> 00:36:40.196

and the 2035 capacity range increases

563

00:36:40.256 --> 00:36:44.068

up to 69 gigawatts, so

564

00:36:44.308 --> 00:36:46.368

a range from 45 to 69.

565

00:36:47.788 --> 00:36:51.348

But government has clarified that that is not a fixed ceiling

566

00:36:51.548 --> 00:36:55.248

on technology deployment, nor on project approvals,

567

00:36:55.748 --> 00:36:59.228

because even achieving those capacity

568

00:36:59.308 --> 00:37:02.788

ranges in the time state does not meet the

569

00:37:02.848 --> 00:37:06.768

need as anticipated for a low-carbon system

570

00:37:06.828 --> 00:37:08.228

by 2050.

571

00:37:09.768 --> 00:37:13.588

So, in terms of providing that overview, you asked a specific

572

00:37:13.688 --> 00:37:17.508

question around scale and efficiency of solar

573

00:37:17.608 --> 00:37:19.248

farms, and we do

574

00:37:20.288 --> 00:37:21.468

talk to that

575

00:37:22.388 --> 00:37:24.948

in the statement of need, principally in

576

00:37:25.868 --> 00:37:29.288

paragraph six. There are benefits

577

00:37:29.568 --> 00:37:33.048

to connecting solar farms to the

578

00:37:33.108 --> 00:37:36.808

large-scale national electricity transmission system.

579

00:37:39.068 --> 00:37:40.808

Those benefits are

580

00:37:41.788 --> 00:37:43.668

around the bulk transfer of power,

581

00:37:44.928 --> 00:37:46.928

around the transport of power

582

00:37:48.168 --> 00:37:51.828

from where it is generated to where it is needed and

583

00:37:51.988 --> 00:37:55.258

when it is needed in an unconstrained way.

584

00:37:56.188 --> 00:37:58.498

And as my colleague, Mr. Tressiden, said,

585

00:37:59.568 --> 00:38:03.528

this scheme has been designed to optimize the

586

00:38:03.688 --> 00:38:07.628

use of the grid connection facility that is available to it,

587

00:38:07.688 --> 00:38:11.548

and therefore the design principles of this scheme are particular to the size

588

00:38:11.608 --> 00:38:14.668

of that connection and also the

589

00:38:15.828 --> 00:38:17.628

specific locations of this point.

590

00:38:19.048 --> 00:38:19.968

I'll pause there, sir.

591

00:38:22.008 --> 00:38:22.848

Thank you, Mr. Gillett.

592

00:38:24.988 --> 00:38:28.788

Appreciate National Grid wanted to speak on the next item,

593

00:38:29.128 --> 00:38:33.008

grid connection. Just giving you the

594

00:38:33.068 --> 00:38:36.948

opportunity now, if you want to speak on any of the responses that we've had

595

00:38:36.988 --> 00:38:39.568

from the applicant so far, Charlotte Jones.

596

00:38:49.208 --> 00:38:50.577

Sorry, sir, can you repeat the question?

597

00:38:51.708 --> 00:38:54.888

Yes. So I recognize that you've said that you want to speak to agenda item

598

00:38:54.928 --> 00:38:55.797

3.2,

599

00:38:57.428 --> 00:39:01.328

but as this question's been about site selection, I just wondered if you wanted to

600

00:39:02.728 --> 00:39:06.608

respond to anything the applicant has said so far, or whether you

601

00:39:06.648 --> 00:39:09.548

want to wait to the next agenda item.

602

00:39:11.268 --> 00:39:14.318

I think we're happy to wait until the next agenda item, unless, Tiffany, Andrea,

603

00:39:14.328 --> 00:39:15.868

you have anything you'd like to add at this stage?

604

00:39:23.488 --> 00:39:25.208

I think we'll have to wait. I have nothing.

605

00:39:25.488 --> 00:39:26.128

Okay. Thank you.

606

00:39:27.008 --> 00:39:27.348

Thank you.

607

00:39:29.568 --> 00:39:33.457

So I'll now give the opportunity for any interested parties in the

608

00:39:33.548 --> 00:39:36.948

room to comment on the responses we've had so far.

609

00:39:37.528 --> 00:39:39.648

If you'd like to raise your hand, and I'll come to you.

610

00:39:43.308 --> 00:39:44.748
James Wild MP.

611
00:39:47.428 --> 00:39:50.548
Thank you very much, sir. Yeah. James Wild MP for North West Norfolk.

612
00:39:50.888 --> 00:39:53.908
National planning statement, EN1, paragraph

613
00:39:54.288 --> 00:39:58.228
4315 is explicit that applicants should include information

614
00:39:58.268 --> 00:40:02.068
about reasonable alternatives. I didn't hear in the questions

615
00:40:02.148 --> 00:40:05.468
that you put an answer to any other specific

616
00:40:05.508 --> 00:40:09.408
locations that were considered, and I haven't been able to find detail of that

617
00:40:09.468 --> 00:40:11.508
in the documentation that's been provided.

618
00:40:12.088 --> 00:40:15.888
Also, the applicant has not referred to the agricultural

619
00:40:15.968 --> 00:40:18.348
land and the planning requirements around

620
00:40:19.188 --> 00:40:23.168
BMV land, specifically to avoid the use of

621
00:40:23.988 --> 00:40:26.448
that land where possible in NPS

622
00:40:26.888 --> 00:40:30.848
EN3. And on this site, 55%

623

00:40:30.988 --> 00:40:34.828
of the proposed site is within the definition of

624
00:40:34.868 --> 00:40:38.708
BMV, 40% of the site is within moderate

625
00:40:38.768 --> 00:40:42.288
graded land, and only 2% of the proposed site is actual

626
00:40:42.448 --> 00:40:45.548
poor agricultural land. So I'm unclear

627
00:40:45.648 --> 00:40:49.048
how the applicant has considered and met the

628
00:40:49.108 --> 00:40:52.628
requirements in terms of avoiding the use of

629
00:40:52.668 --> 00:40:56.388
BMV land where possible. And the applicant

630
00:40:56.448 --> 00:40:59.188
also refers to the site as being

631
00:40:59.228 --> 00:41:02.087
0.01% of UK

632
00:41:02.767 --> 00:41:05.468
utilized agricultural land for this scheme.

633
00:41:05.518 --> 00:41:08.948
I have to say, people who live in the locality do find that a

634
00:41:09.648 --> 00:41:13.448
distorting statistic, because it doesn't reflect the impact on the

635
00:41:13.488 --> 00:41:17.068
local area of taking 2,700 acres of

636
00:41:17.148 --> 00:41:20.908
agricultural land. So, some clarity on which specific locations

637

00:41:20.968 --> 00:41:24.768

were considered and how the agricultural land issue

638

00:41:25.228 --> 00:41:26.728

was addressed would be welcome, sir.

639

00:41:29.468 --> 00:41:32.228

Thank you. Could the applicant respond to that, Mr. Tressiden?

640

00:41:32.568 --> 00:41:36.228

Thank you, sir. Alex Tressiden on behalf of the applicant. I'll come back to Ms.

641

00:41:36.268 --> 00:41:40.068

Knowles in a moment on site selection alternatives, but just noting

642

00:41:40.148 --> 00:41:42.488

on BMV land, paragraph

643

00:41:42.628 --> 00:41:46.528

2.10.29 of National Policy Statement EN3

644

00:41:46.908 --> 00:41:50.488

is clear that land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the

645

00:41:50.548 --> 00:41:54.508

suitability of the site location, and that wording is maintained in paragraph

646

00:41:54.628 --> 00:41:58.578

2.10.21 of the 2025 NPS. So our

647

00:41:58.608 --> 00:42:02.328

position is clear that the policies remain consistent in this regard, and

648

00:42:02.368 --> 00:42:05.728

both of those national policy statements, EN3 2023 and

649

00:42:05.828 --> 00:42:09.028
2025, continue to acknowledge that solar development is not

650
00:42:09.068 --> 00:42:12.738
prohibited on BMV land and that it is recognized that, at scale,

651
00:42:13.088 --> 00:42:15.148
developments may use some agricultural land.

652
00:42:15.248 --> 00:42:15.388
So

653
00:42:16.288 --> 00:42:19.558
we're happy to respond further in writing in further detail on this
matter, but

654
00:42:19.588 --> 00:42:22.168
that's just an initial point to raise. And then I wonder if Ms.

655
00:42:22.258 --> 00:42:23.728
Knowles has anything further on the

656
00:42:24.828 --> 00:42:27.048
site selection alternatives point that was raised.

657
00:42:32.068 --> 00:42:35.028
Thank you. Tabitha Knowles on behalf of the applicant.

658
00:42:36.208 --> 00:42:37.928
Only just to

659
00:42:39.848 --> 00:42:40.828
reaffirm that

660
00:42:42.236 --> 00:42:46.026
A sequential and logical approach has been taken with

661
00:42:46.056 --> 00:42:47.416
reference to the relevant

662
00:42:48.436 --> 00:42:51.915

policy and guidance within national policy

663

00:42:51.986 --> 00:42:52.656

statements

664

00:42:53.636 --> 00:42:57.256

with respect to the consideration of alternatives, as well as

665

00:42:57.816 --> 00:42:58.516

National Grid

666

00:42:59.336 --> 00:43:01.536

guidelines on siting and design.

667

00:43:02.686 --> 00:43:05.956

And that the starting point was the Grid connection,

668

00:43:07.096 --> 00:43:08.156

and that that's a

669

00:43:09.096 --> 00:43:12.996

approach that's been taken on other NSIPs

670

00:43:13.856 --> 00:43:14.536

as well.

671

00:43:16.436 --> 00:43:20.256

And that the alternative sites, which are set out

672

00:43:20.296 --> 00:43:24.176

within the planning statement appendix

673

00:43:24.816 --> 00:43:26.796

one, site evaluation report,

674

00:43:27.516 --> 00:43:31.416

APP043, and the ES

675

00:43:31.496 --> 00:43:35.016

chapter four, reasonable alternatives on design evolution,

676

00:43:35.196 --> 00:43:38.676
APP053, which sets out

677

00:43:38.916 --> 00:43:40.596
that detail.

678

00:43:42.396 --> 00:43:46.376
The Grid connection, the alternatives considered were the four

679

00:43:46.455 --> 00:43:50.356
zones as part of that initial site selection exercise.

680

00:43:51.776 --> 00:43:55.146
And then within that, the next stage, there was

681

00:43:55.216 --> 00:43:58.256
consideration of the

682

00:43:59.276 --> 00:44:02.596
solar development and what parcels of land would be most

683

00:44:02.636 --> 00:44:05.996
appropriate for development within a

684

00:44:06.036 --> 00:44:07.836
five-kilometer radius.

685

00:44:09.076 --> 00:44:09.396
Thank you.

686

00:44:10.116 --> 00:44:14.016
Sir, I also note that Mr. Gillett wants to come in further on this
matter,

687

00:44:14.076 --> 00:44:14.956
if that would be acceptable.

688

00:44:16.256 --> 00:44:17.536
Certainly, yeah. Go ahead.

689

00:44:18.276 --> 00:44:19.796
Simon Gillett for the applicant. Thank you, sir.

690
00:44:21.236 --> 00:44:22.166
Just following on from

691
00:44:23.676 --> 00:44:27.416
my submission earlier, and to reiterate that there is an as

692
00:44:27.516 --> 00:44:31.056
yet unsatisfied and urgent need for an

693
00:44:31.116 --> 00:44:34.956
unprecedented capacity of new generation schemes to come

694
00:44:35.016 --> 00:44:38.816
forwards. And as discussed in the statement of need in

695
00:44:38.856 --> 00:44:42.506
section 3.6, the number of locations at

696
00:44:42.516 --> 00:44:45.876
which large-scale generators and large-scale solar

697
00:44:45.896 --> 00:44:49.256
generators in particular are able to come forward

698
00:44:50.036 --> 00:44:50.756
is limited.

699
00:44:52.496 --> 00:44:52.856
And

700
00:44:53.816 --> 00:44:57.776
that is important in the context of consideration of alternatives,
both of

701
00:44:57.816 --> 00:45:01.556
solar and of other low-carbon

702
00:45:01.676 --> 00:45:05.476

technologies, because, as is set out in

703

00:45:05.536 --> 00:45:06.196

EN1,

704

00:45:07.436 --> 00:45:10.236

paragraph 4.3.24,

705

00:45:11.596 --> 00:45:15.276

it is considered that all suitable sites for

706

00:45:15.676 --> 00:45:19.416

low-carbon technologies may also be needed rather than

707

00:45:19.476 --> 00:45:21.936

needed instead of specific

708

00:45:23.216 --> 00:45:25.676

developments which come forwards.

709

00:45:28.536 --> 00:45:32.436

There is a significant capacity of wind

710

00:45:32.496 --> 00:45:33.936

and solar schemes

711

00:45:34.856 --> 00:45:38.156

which are being proposed at present, sir, and that is

712

00:45:38.416 --> 00:45:41.996

important as well and can be contextualized because

713

00:45:43.056 --> 00:45:46.456

paragraph 3.3.20 of

714

00:45:46.616 --> 00:45:50.376

EN1 describes government's view that the net

715

00:45:50.456 --> 00:45:54.436

zero-consistent energy system of the 2050s is

716

00:45:54.516 --> 00:45:58.126

likely to be composed predominantly of wind and

717

00:45:58.256 --> 00:46:01.716

solar. And that further supports the view, sir, that

718

00:46:02.436 --> 00:46:06.336

potential alternative technologies, alternative in inverted

719

00:46:06.416 --> 00:46:10.276

commas in this instance, of different technologies in different locations

720

00:46:12.516 --> 00:46:16.456

cannot really be considered as alternatives at present, sir, because

721

00:46:17.196 --> 00:46:21.136

it is government's view that they will also likely be needed to come

722

00:46:21.196 --> 00:46:21.596

forwards.

723

00:46:24.596 --> 00:46:25.576

Thank you, Mr. Gillett.

724

00:46:26.816 --> 00:46:29.596

Any further points, James Wild, MP?

725

00:46:31.296 --> 00:46:34.176

No. Okay. Dr. Mark Holmes.

726

00:46:35.576 --> 00:46:38.596

Dr. Mark Holmes, local resident living in Southacre.

727

00:46:39.796 --> 00:46:43.776

I think it's important to point out that food security for this nation needs to be

728

00:46:43.816 --> 00:46:46.896

balanced against the issues of climate crisis and

729

00:46:48.856 --> 00:46:51.756

looking at solar or wind as supply.

730

00:46:53.076 --> 00:46:56.696

Taking 2,700

731

00:46:56.756 --> 00:46:58.335

acres out of

732

00:46:59.216 --> 00:47:02.976

use is a big chunk of a very important area of

733

00:47:03.076 --> 00:47:06.996

East Anglia's food production. I think that's a very important point

734

00:47:07.016 --> 00:47:10.905

to balance. And if you're saying that the Iran war is heightening our

735

00:47:11.036 --> 00:47:14.886

need for green energy, we also need to point out the Iran war equally heightens our

736

00:47:14.996 --> 00:47:18.296

need for food security. So it's important to balance those

737

00:47:18.356 --> 00:47:21.936

facts. And at the same time, I'd point out there's plenty of

738

00:47:21.956 --> 00:47:23.576

alternative sites for solar energy.

739

00:47:23.636 --> 00:47:27.316

Yes, we may need all of them, all the brownfield sites, all the

740

00:47:27.396 --> 00:47:31.036

roof space, all the car park space, et

741

00:47:31.076 --> 00:47:33.956

cetera, but we could have wind turbines.

742

00:47:34.136 --> 00:47:37.276

Three wind turbines in our site at the Droves

743

00:47:38.276 --> 00:47:41.696

site could work just as well to generate

744

00:47:42.176 --> 00:47:45.616

alternative energy. I'd be interested to hear the thoughts about wind as an

745

00:47:45.676 --> 00:47:46.256

alternative.

746

00:47:47.536 --> 00:47:47.876

Thank you.

747

00:47:49.696 --> 00:47:50.556

Mr. Tressiden.

748

00:47:51.796 --> 00:47:55.316

Thank you. I think a couple of points there from Dr. Holmes that we'll respond to.

749

00:47:55.436 --> 00:47:59.316

Firstly, just on food production, we're happy to set out our position in full in

750

00:47:59.356 --> 00:48:02.806

writing, but I would note that our assessment in chapter 11 of the

751

00:48:02.836 --> 00:48:06.646

environmental statement does conclude that the implications of the change from

752

00:48:06.656 --> 00:48:10.036

current farming practices will have minor or negligible effects on the

753

00:48:10.336 --> 00:48:13.986

local and national land-based economy and food production. And then I think Mr.

754

00:48:14.176 --> 00:48:17.936

Gillett will come in on the solar versus wind point.

755

00:48:21.676 --> 00:48:22.756

Simon Gillett for the applicant.

756

00:48:24.496 --> 00:48:24.576

So

757

00:48:26.136 --> 00:48:29.536

just need to point out that the scheme that is coming forward is a

758

00:48:29.616 --> 00:48:33.236

large-scale solar scheme. The applicant is a solar developer and therefore is

759

00:48:33.256 --> 00:48:35.236

proposing a solar scheme.

760

00:48:36.356 --> 00:48:37.556

The point was made that

761

00:48:38.396 --> 00:48:40.436

onshore wind could be

762

00:48:40.636 --> 00:48:44.574

suitableWorking

763

00:48:44.644 --> 00:48:48.404

back a few years, it is really only last year that the

764

00:48:48.444 --> 00:48:52.364

moratorium for onshore wind in the UK

765

00:48:52.404 --> 00:48:52.944

was lifted.

766

00:48:53.964 --> 00:48:55.644

And therefore, at the time of

767

00:48:56.464 --> 00:49:00.284
this scheme going through its development process and maturing

768
00:49:00.324 --> 00:49:03.484
through that process, onshore wind was not

769
00:49:04.204 --> 00:49:06.644
a viable alternative at this

770
00:49:07.644 --> 00:49:08.204
location.

771
00:49:10.204 --> 00:49:11.524
Government's position is that

772
00:49:12.464 --> 00:49:16.004
wind, being offshore and onshore wind, and solar is

773
00:49:16.084 --> 00:49:19.744
needed to meet the energy needs of the

774
00:49:19.784 --> 00:49:22.704
future, and therefore I refer back to the points around

775
00:49:23.584 --> 00:49:24.344
alternatives.

776
00:49:25.404 --> 00:49:29.344
And clearly, an onshore wind farm, the effects of that farm

777
00:49:29.364 --> 00:49:33.264
on the local environment would need to be assessed to determine if
that was

778
00:49:33.384 --> 00:49:35.044
suitable from a planning perspective.

779
00:49:35.544 --> 00:49:38.334
Because this scheme is a solar scheme, those effects have not

780
00:49:39.144 --> 00:49:40.884

been assessed as part of this application.

781

00:49:42.713 --> 00:49:46.924

Thank

782

00:49:46.944 --> 00:49:49.864

you, Mr. Gillett. Any further questions in the room?

783

00:49:49.944 --> 00:49:52.204

I've got two hands up. I'll go to

784

00:49:53.144 --> 00:49:55.084

Mr. Hubbard first. I think you had your hand up.

785

00:49:56.944 --> 00:50:00.524

Thank you, sir. It would be interesting, you mention efficiencies.

786

00:50:01.484 --> 00:50:05.024

Are you able to actually give us some clear figures about the

787

00:50:05.064 --> 00:50:09.024

efficiency of a solar farm? Because clearly, over the time of

788

00:50:09.084 --> 00:50:12.944

a year, for 50% of the time it will not be working due

789

00:50:13.004 --> 00:50:14.124

to nighttime alone.

790

00:50:15.224 --> 00:50:18.984

And the other thing, in terms of assessment for solar, you will, I hope,

791

00:50:19.664 --> 00:50:23.624

be aware that we already have two solar units fairly close

792

00:50:23.644 --> 00:50:27.584

to Swaffham already. So it clearly might be a

793

00:50:27.664 --> 00:50:30.994

site that's suitable... Sorry,

794

00:50:31.584 --> 00:50:35.544

for wind. So there are two wind sites already

795

00:50:35.624 --> 00:50:37.084

close to Swaffham.

796

00:50:37.984 --> 00:50:41.824

So it's clearly a site that wind could be regarded as a

797

00:50:41.894 --> 00:50:42.944

sensible alternative.

798

00:50:45.844 --> 00:50:47.844

Thank you. Mr. Treston, if you could respond.

799

00:50:47.924 --> 00:50:50.164

Thank you, Sir Alex Treston for the applicant.

800

00:50:50.484 --> 00:50:52.864

I know we've touched on cumulative effects a bit there, which

801

00:50:53.744 --> 00:50:57.624

I think I'll save for the agenda item and not to repeat our point

802

00:50:57.704 --> 00:51:01.364

on solar versus wind and the points that Mr. Gillett has raised.

803

00:51:02.704 --> 00:51:05.324

On efficiency, I think I will pass back over to Mr. Gillett, though.

804

00:51:08.464 --> 00:51:11.204

Simon Gillett for the applicant. So this is a point that

805

00:51:12.504 --> 00:51:16.464

is discussed in the statement of need, and in particular, if I can draw your

806

00:51:16.524 --> 00:51:19.794

attention to figure 8.1 and

807

00:51:20.084 --> 00:51:20.864

8.2

808

00:51:21.704 --> 00:51:25.384

of the statement. Sorry, that's APP043

809

00:51:25.844 --> 00:51:28.483

is the application document reference number for that.

810

00:51:28.724 --> 00:51:31.284

Figure 8.1 and 8.2.

811

00:51:32.464 --> 00:51:35.344

And refer back to excuse me, to

812

00:51:35.384 --> 00:51:37.424

the government's policy

813

00:51:38.684 --> 00:51:40.744

view that the

814

00:51:42.104 --> 00:51:45.524

energy system of the future will predominantly

815

00:51:45.824 --> 00:51:49.744

consist of wind and solar. And those two figures in the statement

816

00:51:49.784 --> 00:51:51.884

of need provide the evidence that supports

817

00:51:52.764 --> 00:51:53.584

that statement.

818

00:51:54.444 --> 00:51:56.244

The representation was made that

819

00:51:58.124 --> 00:52:01.884

the sun doesn't shine at night, and that is obviously correct, sir.

820

00:52:02.124 --> 00:52:05.104

The proposal is coming forward with a battery storage

821

00:52:05.184 --> 00:52:08.924

facility to support the solar scheme to meet the

822

00:52:09.104 --> 00:52:11.324

future needs of the energy market.

823

00:52:13.324 --> 00:52:17.254

The representation was also to provide some efficiency numbers,

824

00:52:17.844 --> 00:52:21.644

and I just want to call out the difference between efficiency and productivity.

825

00:52:25.584 --> 00:52:27.824

Solar is approximately

826

00:52:28.644 --> 00:52:32.044

23% to 25% efficient.

827

00:52:33.184 --> 00:52:36.744

What do we mean by that? We mean that the energy contained in

828

00:52:36.824 --> 00:52:40.764

the free, plentiful sunlight that hits

829

00:52:41.164 --> 00:52:42.104

the solar panels,

830

00:52:43.424 --> 00:52:46.914

about 23% to 25% of that energy is converted into

831

00:52:46.944 --> 00:52:49.344

electrical energy, which we can then use,

832

00:52:50.404 --> 00:52:53.744

with no marginal byproducts, no CO2

833

00:52:53.804 --> 00:52:55.744

generation from that,

834

00:52:56.584 --> 00:53:00.044

or liberation, I should say, from that generation.

835

00:53:02.544 --> 00:53:05.583

So that's the number on efficiency, and that number is increasing

836

00:53:06.504 --> 00:53:07.144

all the time.

837

00:53:09.484 --> 00:53:12.464

And in terms of the productivity

838

00:53:13.524 --> 00:53:17.164

of solar, which is sometimes also called the load factor

839

00:53:17.604 --> 00:53:18.144

of solar,

840

00:53:19.724 --> 00:53:19.884

a

841

00:53:22.164 --> 00:53:25.664

unit solar farm in the UK

842

00:53:26.084 --> 00:53:27.744

will, depending on its design,

843

00:53:29.004 --> 00:53:32.924

produce the equivalent of 10.5 to

844

00:53:33.144 --> 00:53:35.444

13% of

845

00:53:36.344 --> 00:53:38.724

its equivalent rated capacity.

846

00:53:39.784 --> 00:53:43.684

Which means if you've got a one megawatt solar farm, that would

847

00:53:43.704 --> 00:53:46.084
produce the equivalent of

848
00:53:46.624 --> 00:53:47.764
105

849
00:53:49.824 --> 00:53:53.464
kilowatts to 130 kilowatts

850
00:53:54.224 --> 00:53:56.064
base load equivalent per year.

851
00:53:57.524 --> 00:54:00.784
More of that is in the summer than the winter, and clearly

852
00:54:01.464 --> 00:54:05.064
that is during the daytime rather than the nighttime.

853
00:54:05.124 --> 00:54:08.064
And I've mentioned battery

854
00:54:08.724 --> 00:54:09.564
already.

855
00:54:10.584 --> 00:54:14.444
Figure 8.2 of the statement of need provides

856
00:54:16.004 --> 00:54:19.944
an analysis of the expected

857
00:54:20.044 --> 00:54:23.584
level of generation from a combined wind and

858
00:54:23.764 --> 00:54:27.604
solar portfolio in the UK in the event

859
00:54:27.614 --> 00:54:31.404
that government's 2030 capacity ranges have

860
00:54:31.444 --> 00:54:34.964
been built out. And it shows that during the summer,

861

00:54:35.324 --> 00:54:36.504
when solar is stronger,

862

00:54:37.824 --> 00:54:39.984
UK wind is weaker.

863

00:54:40.884 --> 00:54:41.704
And in the winter,

864

00:54:42.644 --> 00:54:46.284
when wind is stronger, solar is weaker And those

865

00:54:46.584 --> 00:54:50.244
portfolios on that month average level

866

00:54:50.324 --> 00:54:54.244
basis complement each other to support

867

00:54:54.964 --> 00:54:57.274
a generation dependability,

868

00:54:58.404 --> 00:54:59.864
security of supply

869

00:55:00.864 --> 00:55:02.424
across

870

00:55:04.084 --> 00:55:06.024
each month of the year.

871

00:55:06.964 --> 00:55:10.404
And final point, sir, is that the battery which is proposed as

872

00:55:10.464 --> 00:55:14.024
associated development to this scheme would further support

873

00:55:14.564 --> 00:55:18.504
harnessing energy from the scheme at points

874

00:55:18.564 --> 00:55:22.334
when demand is lower and releasing it when demand is

875
00:55:22.384 --> 00:55:26.084
higher, so supporting the utility of that scheme within the energy

876
00:55:26.124 --> 00:55:27.404
market.

877
00:55:28.864 --> 00:55:29.684
Thank you, Mr. Gillett.

878
00:55:31.244 --> 00:55:32.184
Can I go to

879
00:55:33.884 --> 00:55:35.604
Mr. Czerekowski?

880
00:55:36.484 --> 00:55:39.184
Yes. Thank you, sir. Andrew Czerekowski for Norfolk County Council.

881
00:55:40.924 --> 00:55:44.664
I think just the three or four points just in response to the
comments we've had.

882
00:55:45.644 --> 00:55:46.544
I think firstly,

883
00:55:47.464 --> 00:55:50.054
in response to the comment from Tabitha Knowles,

884
00:55:51.944 --> 00:55:54.604
I think one of the fundamental issues that remains in the scheme,
and I don't

885
00:55:54.644 --> 00:55:57.744
really want to trespass too much on the next topic we've got coming
up, and we may

886
00:55:57.904 --> 00:56:01.464
discuss this further, but the current position with this project, of
course, is

887

00:56:01.524 --> 00:56:04.694

it's got a great one. As I understand it, it has a gate one grid connection offer,

888

00:56:05.324 --> 00:56:08.764

and as a result, the applicant at this stage doesn't actually know the detail of

889

00:56:09.384 --> 00:56:13.144

the grid connection that they're going to be offered and exactly where and when

890

00:56:13.204 --> 00:56:17.024

that will be provided. So I think there's a very big proviso that has to be put

891

00:56:17.104 --> 00:56:20.404

on how the project is assessed given that position.

892

00:56:20.424 --> 00:56:22.344

But, sir, I don't want to say too much about it at the moment because I suspect

893

00:56:22.384 --> 00:56:24.044

we'll cover it in the next issue.

894

00:56:25.424 --> 00:56:28.204

Actually, an additional point that's just occurred to me in the wake of Mr.

895

00:56:28.224 --> 00:56:28.904

Gillett's comments

896

00:56:30.184 --> 00:56:33.624

is he's mentioned the whole issue of the

897

00:56:33.684 --> 00:56:37.644

strategic energy mix here, and I don't know whether he's able to offer any

898

00:56:37.684 --> 00:56:41.324

comment in terms of the way that NESO are

899

00:56:41.364 --> 00:56:43.474

currently looking at

900

00:56:43.624 --> 00:56:47.544

essentially the part that solar has to play in

901

00:56:47.584 --> 00:56:51.544

terms of that strategic mix that is what's being aimed at.

902

00:56:52.684 --> 00:56:56.004

I've certainly heard comments made to me that actually

903

00:56:56.144 --> 00:56:59.684

there's a lot of solar projects coming forward, so it raises that critical issue in

904

00:56:59.724 --> 00:57:03.664

terms of what's that level of mix. So, what's the proportion of solar?

905

00:57:03.744 --> 00:57:06.084

Is there provision? Is there ever provision? Is there underprovision?

906

00:57:06.424 --> 00:57:10.124

I don't think we've got anyone from NESO attending,

907

00:57:10.824 --> 00:57:14.584

but it would be interesting just to get a bit of commentary on that position.

908

00:57:15.064 --> 00:57:18.344

And then the third and fourth points just comes round again to

909

00:57:19.364 --> 00:57:20.504

the issue of alternatives,

910

00:57:21.564 --> 00:57:25.364

and Tabitha Knowles spoke briefly about this, and it's really just

911

00:57:25.384 --> 00:57:28.084

to reiterate the points we set out in our

912

00:57:29.104 --> 00:57:33.004

relevant representation that in terms of consideration of the

913

00:57:33.084 --> 00:57:35.093

alternatives, this is getting more into the detail,

914

00:57:36.844 --> 00:57:40.284

is the issue of the connection to

915

00:57:40.784 --> 00:57:44.744

the National Grid substation. We've obviously expressed our concern about

916

00:57:44.764 --> 00:57:47.524

the fact that that

917

00:57:48.424 --> 00:57:48.904

connection

918

00:57:49.864 --> 00:57:53.834

is not going to be undergrounded. When you go to the

919

00:57:53.884 --> 00:57:57.284

site and see it, particularly when you see the site from Castle Acre to the north,

920

00:57:58.244 --> 00:58:01.804

you cannot miss the line of pylons that goes across

921

00:58:02.224 --> 00:58:06.184

what is a rising hillside there. And clearly, there's going to be

922

00:58:06.244 --> 00:58:09.764

a concern, particularly from the residents to the north, about the addition of any

923

00:58:10.124 --> 00:58:11.444

additional pylons

924

00:58:12.264 --> 00:58:16.244

to the overhead line that's already there in terms

925

00:58:16.264 --> 00:58:17.204

of that grid connection.

926

00:58:18.144 --> 00:58:20.984

And I think the other point that we raised in our written

927

00:58:21.024 --> 00:58:24.384

representation was, again, as part of the

928

00:58:24.684 --> 00:58:28.364

consideration of alternatives, is that the application still doesn't, at this

929

00:58:28.444 --> 00:58:30.884

stage, identify whether it's going to make use of

930

00:58:30.924 --> 00:58:34.304

mixed panels

931

00:58:34.444 --> 00:58:35.884

or the

932

00:58:37.784 --> 00:58:39.584

non-fixed panels, the tracking panels.

933

00:58:39.624 --> 00:58:41.344

Sorry, I was trying to find the right words there.

934

00:58:41.424 --> 00:58:44.264

It would be nice really to have a firmer view on that.

935

00:58:47.164 --> 00:58:50.784

Thank you. As you said, we will be moving on to the grid

936

00:58:50.864 --> 00:58:54.804

connection. So if the applicant could focus on other

937

00:58:54.864 --> 00:58:58.564

aspects, and then we'll cover the grid connection under the next agenda

938

00:58:58.604 --> 00:58:58.864

item.

939

00:58:59.204 --> 00:59:01.204

Thank you, sir. Alex Friszyn on behalf of the applicant.

940

00:59:01.234 --> 00:59:03.084

You've taken the words out of my mouth for the first point.

941

00:59:03.144 --> 00:59:05.994

We obviously have a response to that, but we'll do that in the next agenda item.

942

00:59:06.404 --> 00:59:10.024

I think just generally on the relevant representation received from Norfolk County

943

00:59:10.084 --> 00:59:14.044

Council, we will respond in full, as we will for all relevant representations,

944

00:59:14.084 --> 00:59:17.984

in writing at deadline one, and those matters that have been addressed will be

945

00:59:18.024 --> 00:59:21.284

picked up in the statement of common ground that's been shared with the council's

946

00:59:21.324 --> 00:59:24.344

representative for discussion. I don't know if Mr.

947

00:59:24.804 --> 00:59:27.244

Gillett wants to speak about the NESO and strategic mix. Thank you.

948

00:59:34.184 --> 00:59:35.824

Sorry. Go ahead, Mr. Gillett.

949

00:59:36.104 --> 00:59:37.864

Thank you, sir. Simon Gillett for the applicant.

950

00:59:38.544 --> 00:59:40.144

So table 2.1

951

00:59:41.364 --> 00:59:45.024

of the applicant's statement of need, that's APP043,

952

00:59:46.024 --> 00:59:49.604

sets out government's clean power capacity ranges for

953

00:59:49.764 --> 00:59:52.564

2030 and for 2035.

954

00:59:53.584 --> 00:59:57.544

And it is these ranges which have been

955

00:59:57.664 --> 01:00:01.474

used recently by NES0 to reprioritize the

956

01:00:01.524 --> 01:00:02.724

connections queue.

957

01:00:04.084 --> 01:00:07.264

So I won't go into the details on that because the numbers

958

01:00:08.044 --> 01:00:11.884

speak for themselves, and I mentioned 45 to 47 gigawatts of

959

01:00:11.944 --> 01:00:14.754

solar in 2030,

960

01:00:16.404 --> 01:00:20.114

or range of that, and range from 45 to 69 by

961

01:00:20.344 --> 01:00:23.364

2035. And I explained in an earlier

962

01:00:25.544 --> 01:00:26.424

delivery that

963

01:00:27.424 --> 01:00:31.204

those numbers are not yet sufficient to get all the way

964

01:00:31.384 --> 01:00:31.644

to

965

01:00:34.964 --> 01:00:35.564

2050.

966

01:00:36.484 --> 01:00:40.404

The important point that I wanted to raise here, and this is explained

967

01:00:40.504 --> 01:00:43.924

more fully in section 2.9 of the

968

01:00:44.064 --> 01:00:47.784

statement of need, is that the clean power 2030

969

01:00:47.824 --> 01:00:49.184

capacity ranges are not

970

01:00:49.204 --> 01:00:52.960

prescriptive There are guidelines,

971

01:00:53.040 --> 01:00:56.840

sir, and government has retained optionality within

972

01:00:56.880 --> 01:01:00.820

those guidelines that it's given to help the industry and the sector

973

01:01:00.880 --> 01:01:04.740

along the road towards net zero, and it

974

01:01:04.780 --> 01:01:08.760

effectively reserves the right to change those capacity ranges

975

01:01:09.420 --> 01:01:10.260

in the future.

976

01:01:11.520 --> 01:01:15.080

Maybe up, maybe down. We will all have a view on that.

977

01:01:16.180 --> 01:01:19.520

But the point being that in order to get to its

978

01:01:19.640 --> 01:01:22.960

target, which is a clean power system,

979

01:01:24.159 --> 01:01:28.020

which means that over 95% of the electricity

980

01:01:28.160 --> 01:01:31.900

generated in the UK is from clean sources, and that

981

01:01:32.100 --> 01:01:35.920

more electricity is generated from clean sources in the

982

01:01:36.020 --> 01:01:39.580

UK than is consumed from any

983

01:01:39.640 --> 01:01:41.860

electricity source in the UK.

984

01:01:42.960 --> 01:01:46.360

Government needs projects to get connected and get operational.

985

01:01:47.440 --> 01:01:49.300

And therefore, it is possible that if

986

01:01:50.520 --> 01:01:52.140

the mix of projects

987

01:01:53.060 --> 01:01:54.420

which become operational

988

01:01:55.700 --> 01:01:59.560

this year, next year, is different to

989

01:01:59.620 --> 01:02:01.360
the trajectory that government has

990
01:02:02.280 --> 01:02:05.800
indicated through those clean power capacity ranges,

991
01:02:06.320 --> 01:02:09.940
then it may need to update those ranges in

992
01:02:10.020 --> 01:02:13.980
order to protect its clean power

993
01:02:14.860 --> 01:02:15.380
targets.

994
01:02:16.240 --> 01:02:18.060
And that, I think, really, sir, is the

995
01:02:20.540 --> 01:02:21.160
principle

996
01:02:22.160 --> 01:02:23.640
behind the point that

997
01:02:24.520 --> 01:02:25.320
government make

998
01:02:26.700 --> 01:02:30.620
in planning for new energy infrastructure, which was the

999
01:02:30.660 --> 01:02:34.480
consultation response to the new NPSs when they say that the

1000
01:02:34.500 --> 01:02:37.940
capacity ranges are not designed to limit or constrain

1001
01:02:38.180 --> 01:02:42.050
consent or the number of projects coming forwards, because a robust

1002
01:02:42.140 --> 01:02:46.070
pipeline of projects is needed to get us through to 2050.

1003

01:02:46.700 --> 01:02:47.280

So,

1004

01:02:48.860 --> 01:02:52.840

I think that really sets out quite clearly

1005

01:02:52.900 --> 01:02:54.660

the position that

1006

01:02:56.980 --> 01:03:00.940

the scale of change needed in the energy market to get us

1007

01:03:01.000 --> 01:03:03.960

to where we need to be to

1008

01:03:04.220 --> 01:03:06.460

maintain a hope of being

1009

01:03:07.640 --> 01:03:11.200

net zero by 2050 is so significant

1010

01:03:11.340 --> 01:03:11.920

that

1011

01:03:14.960 --> 01:03:18.580

an unprecedented capacity of all schemes, of all technologies is

1012

01:03:18.620 --> 01:03:22.520

required to come forward, and that need is not yet met, sir.

1013

01:03:24.380 --> 01:03:28.100

Thank you, Mr Gillett. Any further comments

1014

01:03:28.340 --> 01:03:32.200

in the room? James Wild, and also at the back, I'll come to you

1015

01:03:32.280 --> 01:03:33.580

after James Wild MP.

1016

01:03:34.940 --> 01:03:38.240
Thank you, sir. Just on the energy mix point that

1017
01:03:38.980 --> 01:03:41.740
Mr Gillett has made several times now.

1018
01:03:41.840 --> 01:03:45.760
In that statement of need document, it confirms that

1019
01:03:45.800 --> 01:03:49.180
potentially up to 10 gigawatts of rooftop solar could

1020
01:03:49.200 --> 01:03:52.820
deploy before 2030. We already have

1021
01:03:52.880 --> 01:03:56.740
20 gigawatts of existing capacity, 2.4 gigawatts

1022
01:03:56.820 --> 01:04:00.740
under construction, and 12 gigawatts in planning, not including this

1023
01:04:00.800 --> 01:04:04.340
scheme. Those are figures provided to me by the Energy

1024
01:04:04.500 --> 01:04:07.240
Minister, Michael Shanks, in a written parliamentary answer.

1025
01:04:07.760 --> 01:04:11.400
So, with the existing capacity and 10 gigawatts of rooftop solar,

1026
01:04:11.820 --> 01:04:15.400
we could meet the government's 45-gigawatt target without any

1027
01:04:15.460 --> 01:04:17.120
further land-based schemes.

1028
01:04:20.700 --> 01:04:22.560
Mr Tressiden, could you respond on that?

1029
01:04:22.920 --> 01:04:24.340
I may go straight to Mr Gillett.

1030

01:04:27.000 --> 01:04:30.860

Sir, section 2.9 of the statement of need borrows from the Clean Power

1031

01:04:31.180 --> 01:04:31.900

2030

1032

01:04:33.340 --> 01:04:37.100

Action Plan, which explicitly states that the

1033

01:04:37.140 --> 01:04:41.100

capacity ranges set out in that table do not include rooftop

1034

01:04:41.140 --> 01:04:44.920

solar, and that rooftop solar is expected to come forward as well.

1035

01:04:45.540 --> 01:04:47.900

But aside from the

1036

01:04:50.200 --> 01:04:53.480

hope, the expectation that rooftop solar will grow,

1037

01:04:54.660 --> 01:04:57.500

the capacity ranges are for 45 to

1038

01:04:57.700 --> 01:05:01.480

47 gigawatts of large scale, not

1039

01:05:01.520 --> 01:05:05.060

including rooftop solar, by 2030, and

1040

01:05:05.160 --> 01:05:08.900

currently 45 to 69 gigawatts of large scale, not

1041

01:05:08.939 --> 01:05:12.079

including rooftop solar, by 2035, sir.

1042

01:05:15.800 --> 01:05:17.660

Any further comment, James Wild

1043

01:05:18.520 --> 01:05:18.680

MP?

1044

01:05:19.540 --> 01:05:20.420

Gentleman at the back.

1045

01:05:21.680 --> 01:05:22.730

Yeah. Tony Morgan, I-

1046

01:05:22.760 --> 01:05:24.880

If you just wait for a second, we'll get a microphone to

1047

01:05:24.940 --> 01:05:27.520

you.

1048

01:05:30.140 --> 01:05:30.220

Yeah.

1049

01:05:31.180 --> 01:05:32.040

Can you hear me okay?

1050

01:05:32.100 --> 01:05:32.820

Yeah.

1051

01:05:32.880 --> 01:05:36.440

Yeah. So, it's Tony Morgan. I'm a Castlacre resident and a

1052

01:05:36.460 --> 01:05:40.340

retired electrical engineer. I just want to go back to the efficiencies of

1053

01:05:40.380 --> 01:05:43.160

the solar panels and the farm itself.

1054

01:05:43.820 --> 01:05:46.040

So basically, we're in big numbers.

1055

01:05:46.100 --> 01:05:50.060

We're looking at 10% final electricity output from

1056

01:05:50.080 --> 01:05:53.740
a solar farm. So, when you're saying you're

1057
01:05:53.780 --> 01:05:57.380
capable of generating enough electricity for, say, 400,000

1058
01:05:57.460 --> 01:06:00.620
homes, in reality, it's only 10% of that.

1059
01:06:01.410 --> 01:06:04.720
And then also, you have to consider the backup factor,

1060
01:06:05.340 --> 01:06:08.740
because at the moment, if we're looking at, say, a gas-powered

1061
01:06:09.340 --> 01:06:10.260
power station,

1062
01:06:11.540 --> 01:06:14.180
which generates one gigawatt of electricity, say,

1063
01:06:15.500 --> 01:06:16.820
for the equivalent solar

1064
01:06:18.020 --> 01:06:20.940
backup, we need 10 times that amount.

1065
01:06:22.040 --> 01:06:25.600
So, if we're looking at a 10% efficiency on a solar

1066
01:06:25.700 --> 01:06:29.420
farm, we're still going to need 100 times that to

1067
01:06:29.440 --> 01:06:32.080
get the equivalent of one

1068
01:06:32.920 --> 01:06:36.360
gas-powered power station. So, are we looking at the

1069
01:06:38.000 --> 01:06:41.500
right suitable power generation that we're trying to

1070

01:06:41.540 --> 01:06:45.440

put down on our planet, rather than look for

1071

01:06:45.500 --> 01:06:48.880

alternative types of energy generation, like

1072

01:06:48.920 --> 01:06:50.460

hydrogen and

1073

01:06:51.940 --> 01:06:54.320

new technology rather than rushing into this

1074

01:06:56.440 --> 01:07:00.204

fool's errand, as far as I'm concerned We can't just blot

1075

01:07:00.264 --> 01:07:01.364

our landscape

1076

01:07:02.284 --> 01:07:05.424

with miles and miles of solar

1077

01:07:05.484 --> 01:07:07.864

panels just to try and get the numbers up.

1078

01:07:10.304 --> 01:07:13.764

Thank you. Mr. Trestle or Mr. Gillett to respond, please.

1079

01:07:15.404 --> 01:07:16.924

So Simon Gillett for the applicant.

1080

01:07:18.904 --> 01:07:22.744

The representation talked about a number of megawatt

1081

01:07:22.784 --> 01:07:24.224

hours, a number of houses equivalent.

1082

01:07:24.264 --> 01:07:27.864

That is clearly after the effect of, there's the energy

1083

01:07:27.944 --> 01:07:29.004
generated rather than

1084
01:07:30.764 --> 01:07:33.464
a number which needs to be derated further.

1085
01:07:34.184 --> 01:07:34.424
Sir,

1086
01:07:36.664 --> 01:07:40.084
gas is great but it produces low carbon...

1087
01:07:40.244 --> 01:07:43.404
Sorry, does not produce low carbon. That's its problem, isn't it?

1088
01:07:43.704 --> 01:07:45.354
It produces carbon emissions,

1089
01:07:46.464 --> 01:07:48.764
and therefore for gas

1090
01:07:49.824 --> 01:07:53.344
to be a part of our future energy system, we either need to fuel

1091
01:07:53.384 --> 01:07:57.044
it with low-carbon gas, or we would need

1092
01:07:57.384 --> 01:08:01.284
to capture those emissions and store them underground or use them

1093
01:08:01.304 --> 01:08:02.764
for some other purposes.

1094
01:08:03.924 --> 01:08:04.284
And

1095
01:08:05.364 --> 01:08:07.164
sections

1096
01:08:09.264 --> 01:08:13.074
5.7 and 5.8 of the statement of need,

1097

01:08:13.164 --> 01:08:15.884
that's APP043,

1098

01:08:17.605 --> 01:08:18.485
do talk to

1099

01:08:20.584 --> 01:08:23.905
what government is doing in those areas and the likely

1100

01:08:23.945 --> 01:08:27.744
timeliness of the delivery of sufficient scale

1101

01:08:27.864 --> 01:08:31.384
of CCUS, that's carbon capture, usage, and storage, or

1102

01:08:31.485 --> 01:08:34.824
hydrogen facilities to be able

1103

01:08:34.945 --> 01:08:37.525
to deliver a low-carbon

1104

01:08:38.784 --> 01:08:39.084
scheme.

1105

01:08:40.384 --> 01:08:44.284
That said, government has included those technologies within

1106

01:08:44.364 --> 01:08:44.945
its

1107

01:08:45.884 --> 01:08:47.485
clean power capacity ranges,

1108

01:08:48.844 --> 01:08:52.244
and is progressing moving those forwards.

1109

01:08:53.445 --> 01:08:57.164
But I refer again, sir, to the urgency of

1110

01:08:57.684 --> 01:08:59.384
the need to decarbonize

1111
01:09:00.284 --> 01:09:01.824
and government's

1112
01:09:04.344 --> 01:09:05.644
conservative approach

1113
01:09:06.784 --> 01:09:07.164
to

1114
01:09:08.804 --> 01:09:12.624
delivering its energy objectives, which is not

1115
01:09:12.724 --> 01:09:16.324
waiting for something which has not yet been delivered at

1116
01:09:16.364 --> 01:09:20.184
scale to deliver at scale. The implications being that to do

1117
01:09:20.244 --> 01:09:23.924
so may find that it is too late for us to

1118
01:09:23.964 --> 01:09:25.304
do anything about

1119
01:09:26.424 --> 01:09:28.445
structural global warming, sir.

1120
01:09:32.264 --> 01:09:35.624
Mr. Gillett. I'm going to check now online if there's anyone else
that's got

1121
01:09:35.704 --> 01:09:38.264
any items they wish to raise on

1122
01:09:39.364 --> 01:09:42.004
this section of the agenda. Not seeing any hands up

1123
01:09:42.184 --> 01:09:43.584

immediately.

1124

01:09:43.684 --> 01:09:43.974

Sir, would you-

1125

01:09:44.065 --> 01:09:45.284

Oh, sorry.

1126

01:09:46.364 --> 01:09:47.724

Mr., is it Cherokofsky?

1127

01:09:48.525 --> 01:09:51.924

I note that he raised a couple points about overhead line versus

1128

01:09:51.964 --> 01:09:55.084

undergrounding and fixed versus tracker panels.

1129

01:09:55.634 --> 01:09:59.384

I am happy to respond to those points a little bit now, or we can do so in

1130

01:09:59.404 --> 01:10:02.524

writing. Conscious of time. It's up to how you'd like to progress.

1131

01:10:05.264 --> 01:10:06.524

I don't want those points to have been ignored.

1132

01:10:06.824 --> 01:10:10.004

Could you just perhaps give an overview and then respond in writing?

1133

01:10:10.364 --> 01:10:14.024

Of course. So on the tracker versus fixed panels point, so due to

1134

01:10:14.064 --> 01:10:17.844

the fast evolving pace of solar PV technology, the

1135

01:10:17.884 --> 01:10:21.644

scheme has allowed for flexibility in the design, allowing the opportunity to

1136

01:10:21.724 --> 01:10:25.584

utilize specific technology closer to construction within the

1137

01:10:25.624 --> 01:10:29.553

parameters outlined in Chapter 5 of the environmental statement, which is

1138

01:10:29.704 --> 01:10:33.564

AS014, and the design approach document, which is AS009.

1139

01:10:33.604 --> 01:10:37.144

So for example, both tracker and fixed panels are proposed

1140

01:10:37.644 --> 01:10:41.444

at this stage with the final design being confirmed at detailed design stage.

1141

01:10:41.784 --> 01:10:44.994

And then on overhead lines versus undergrounding,

1142

01:10:45.044 --> 01:10:48.964

connecting to the overhead line point of connection via transmission cables

1143

01:10:49.024 --> 01:10:52.654

overhead was considered by the applicant to be the most effective and least

1144

01:10:52.704 --> 01:10:54.284

disruptive form of connecting to the grid.

1145

01:10:55.524 --> 01:10:59.504

Undergrounding these cables would lead to a loss of current carrying capacity

1146

01:11:00.284 --> 01:11:03.884

rating of these cables, which could affect the amount of electricity transmitted

1147

01:11:03.924 --> 01:11:07.724

and connecting to the existing transmission line via overhead line

1148

01:11:07.804 --> 01:11:11.744

cables is seen as a common practical method, particularly considering the close

1149

01:11:11.804 --> 01:11:15.303

proximity of the overhead line to the proposed National Grid substation.

1150

01:11:15.313 --> 01:11:19.224

And typically, underground cabling is reserved for much longer distances where it's

1151

01:11:19.243 --> 01:11:20.873

not feasible to run overhead cables.

1152

01:11:21.244 --> 01:11:25.094

And paragraph 2.9.20 of NPS EN5 states that

1153

01:11:25.124 --> 01:11:28.854

it is the government's position that overhead lines should be the strong starting

1154

01:11:28.864 --> 01:11:32.124

presumption for electricity network developments in general.

1155

01:11:32.204 --> 01:11:34.764

That's all I'll say at this point. Happy to expand

1156

01:11:35.604 --> 01:11:38.204

in further writing. I just didn't want those points to go unaddressed.

1157

01:11:40.984 --> 01:11:42.504

Thank you for clarifying that.

1158

01:11:43.524 --> 01:11:47.404

Okay. I'm not seeing any hands up online and no further hands up

1159

01:11:47.784 --> 01:11:50.644

in the room. Oh, Dr. Mark Holmes.

1160

01:11:51.564 --> 01:11:54.054

Thank you. Dr. Mark Holmes, local resident.

1161

01:11:55.164 --> 01:11:58.764

Just to point out that East Anglia has been historically covered with

1162

01:11:58.804 --> 01:12:02.224

windmills. It's obviously a high wind generation area.

1163

01:12:02.554 --> 01:12:05.184

We get the wind all year round and at night.

1164

01:12:06.524 --> 01:12:06.784

And

1165

01:12:07.724 --> 01:12:11.144

Mr. Gillett has kindly pointed out that the moratorium has been lifted on land

1166

01:12:11.224 --> 01:12:12.604

turbines. Land

1167

01:12:14.044 --> 01:12:17.864

wind turbines generate electricity at a cheaper rate than those

1168

01:12:18.184 --> 01:12:21.144

offshore ones that have put up our bills.

1169

01:12:22.684 --> 01:12:26.644

So I would strongly propose that there is a move for a full assessment of

1170

01:12:26.704 --> 01:12:27.784

a wind alternative

1171

01:12:28.764 --> 01:12:29.724

at the Drovers site,

1172

01:12:30.564 --> 01:12:33.994

so that we could still allow for our food security to be met at the same time, and

1173

01:12:34.004 --> 01:12:36.824
we wouldn't be taking all that land out of food production.

1174
01:12:37.664 --> 01:12:38.084
Thank you.

1175
01:12:42.924 --> 01:12:43.584
Thank you.

1176
01:12:44.664 --> 01:12:45.404
Mr. Trestle then.

1177
01:12:46.264 --> 01:12:47.964
I think in the interest of time, we'll

1178
01:12:49.304 --> 01:12:52.424
summarize our position in writing rather than repeating points we've made.

1179
01:12:52.584 --> 01:12:54.804
But the representation is noted, and we're grateful for it.

1180
01:13:07.084 --> 01:13:10.804
Thank you. We'll move on to the next agenda item then, which is

1181
01:13:11.144 --> 01:13:12.084
grid connection.

1182
01:13:17.424 --> 01:13:21.184
So the National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC's

1183
01:13:21.444 --> 01:13:23.644
relevant representation, reference

1184
01:13:24.104 --> 01:13:28.024
RR-036, regarding the grid connection

1185
01:13:28.064 --> 01:13:29.444
arrangements includes,

1186
01:13:32.164 --> 01:13:35.684

National Grid Electricity Transmission wish to note that

1187

01:13:35.984 --> 01:13:39.384

National Grid Electricity Transmission are not currently developing

1188

01:13:39.404 --> 01:13:43.004

proposals to build a new substation within the project order limits.

1189

01:13:43.564 --> 01:13:47.524

The location of the new substation is still to be confirmed with siting studies

1190

01:13:47.624 --> 01:13:51.564

to be reviewed post-connection reform and therefore may be sited

1191

01:13:51.624 --> 01:13:55.384

in a different location. National Grid Electricity Transmission

1192

01:13:55.564 --> 01:13:59.144

PLC is unable to confirm the connection point at this stage.

1193

01:14:00.624 --> 01:14:04.234

Could National Grid provide an update on confirming the location of its

1194

01:14:04.234 --> 01:14:07.873

substation to include timescales for the siting studies?

1195

01:14:10.544 --> 01:14:13.204

Charlotte Jones, are you able to comment on that, please?

1196

01:14:16.024 --> 01:14:19.424

Yes, sir. Charlotte Jones for National Grid Electricity Transmission.

1197

01:14:24.784 --> 01:14:28.204

So National Grid is committed to constructive

1198

01:14:28.244 --> 01:14:30.224

engagement as the project develops.

1199

01:14:31.484 --> 01:14:34.374

However, we want to make sure that the examining authority is aware of National

1200

01:14:34.424 --> 01:14:37.884

Grid's position regarding the grid connection and the siting

1201

01:14:37.984 --> 01:14:40.724

location of the substation,

1202

01:14:41.764 --> 01:14:45.404

and ensure that no statements are made that misrepresent NGET's

1203

01:14:45.424 --> 01:14:48.484

position or implies a commitment that does not yet exist.

1204

01:14:49.624 --> 01:14:53.564

Following the connections reform process, the applicant holds a

1205

01:14:53.604 --> 01:14:57.564

Gate 1 offer. That offer is non-binding and represents an

1206

01:14:57.604 --> 01:15:00.264

early step in the process towards connection.

1207

01:15:01.364 --> 01:15:04.324

It does not constitute a commitment by NGET to deliver a

1208

01:15:04.364 --> 01:15:07.794

substation of this size and design in this location,

1209

01:15:08.404 --> 01:15:11.844

and NGET can only be agnostic on this at this stage.

1210

01:15:12.784 --> 01:15:16.623

This position won't change during the course of the examination or prior to the

1211

01:15:16.644 --> 01:15:18.324

Secretary of State determination.

1212

01:15:19.984 --> 01:15:23.804

Neither does the Gate 1 offer secure a binding connection agreement.

1213

01:15:23.834 --> 01:15:26.864

NGET would expect progression to a binding connection

1214

01:15:26.884 --> 01:15:30.824

agreement and any associated infrastructure delivery to be subject to

1215

01:15:30.864 --> 01:15:31.574

further steps,

1216

01:15:32.784 --> 01:15:35.704

including commercial negotiations with the applicant,

1217

01:15:36.464 --> 01:15:38.384

detailed technical and siting assessments,

1218

01:15:39.184 --> 01:15:42.744

and the relevant planning processes and approvals.

1219

01:15:43.044 --> 01:15:46.924

And overall, NGET have a duty to identify the most efficient and economic

1220

01:15:47.004 --> 01:15:48.824

solution for all customers.

1221

01:15:52.984 --> 01:15:55.784

Thank you. Mr Treseden.

1222

01:15:57.164 --> 01:16:00.344

Thank you, sir. Alex Treseden on behalf of the applicant.

1223

01:16:00.784 --> 01:16:02.224

I think there's a few points to note here.

1224

01:16:02.364 --> 01:16:06.024

Firstly, in relation to engagement with National Grid Electricity

1225

01:16:06.104 --> 01:16:09.664
Transmission PLC, which I'll refer to as NGET for brevity reasons.

1226
01:16:09.844 --> 01:16:13.804
We did have a productive and useful meeting with NGET's
representatives

1227
01:16:13.844 --> 01:16:16.624
and lawyers on Tuesday, which included Ms. Jones.

1228
01:16:16.764 --> 01:16:20.544
And in that meeting, it was agreed that, as has been set out, NGET
have not

1229
01:16:20.604 --> 01:16:24.334
yet undertaken the required site selection analysis for the proposed

1230
01:16:24.364 --> 01:16:28.204
substation location due to their priorities understandably being

1231
01:16:28.264 --> 01:16:31.814
elsewhere at the present time. The applicant has noted that and

1232
01:16:33.404 --> 01:16:36.264
we set out our position to NGET in that meeting, which I'll do so in
a minute,

1233
01:16:36.304 --> 01:16:40.224
which includes pressing on with seeking consent for the National
Grid

1234
01:16:40.284 --> 01:16:42.664
substation as part of this DCU application.

1235
01:16:42.724 --> 01:16:46.704
I think it's helpful if I set out some background on the position,
some of which

1236
01:16:46.764 --> 01:16:50.424
has been included in our response to the procedural

1237
01:16:50.624 --> 01:16:54.614

decision letter, reference AS063, but I will just

1238

01:16:54.614 --> 01:16:58.384

summarize. So the applicant has been working on grid connections with NGET

1239

01:16:58.404 --> 01:17:01.753

since 2018, and whilst in dialogue with NGET in

1240

01:17:01.844 --> 01:17:05.764

2022 regarding the potential to connect into the Kingslyn

1241

01:17:05.824 --> 01:17:06.404

substation,

1242

01:17:07.224 --> 01:17:10.984

IGP, the parent company for the applicant, were advised by NGET to apply for

1243

01:17:11.304 --> 01:17:15.044

and subsequently connect directly into the overhead line running

1244

01:17:15.064 --> 01:17:17.504

between the Walpole and Necton substations.

1245

01:17:17.964 --> 01:17:21.664

The reasoning for this was understood by the applicant to be a lack of

1246

01:17:21.724 --> 01:17:25.604

available space for the infrastructure required to connect into either of

1247

01:17:25.644 --> 01:17:26.904

those existing substations.

1248

01:17:27.984 --> 01:17:31.864

At the pre-application stage of the scheme, however, the applicant was advised by

1249

01:17:31.964 --> 01:17:35.864

NGET that it would be responsible for identifying a site for a new

substation

1250

01:17:35.924 --> 01:17:39.384

for the scheme, i.e. the National Grid substation included in this

1251

01:17:39.444 --> 01:17:43.384

application, alongside obtaining the land rights

1252

01:17:43.444 --> 01:17:46.704

and planning consent for this. And under the terms of the applicant's grid

1253

01:17:46.784 --> 01:17:50.684

connection offer received from NESO, the connection of the scheme to the

1254

01:17:50.744 --> 01:17:54.124

overhead line via the new National Grid substation is identified.

1255

01:17:54.944 --> 01:17:58.804

Appendix I of the construction agreement contained within that grid connection

1256

01:17:58.844 --> 01:18:02.744

offer, as summarized in the grid connection statement, states

1257

01:18:02.784 --> 01:18:06.764

that the applicant has responsibility to obtain land and consent for

1258

01:18:06.784 --> 01:18:10.474

the National Grid substation. Therefore, the applicant has a contractual

1259

01:18:10.604 --> 01:18:14.384

duty to obtain that land and consent at this time for the National Grid

1260

01:18:14.464 --> 01:18:17.254

substation under the terms of that grid connection offer.

1261

01:18:18.064 --> 01:18:21.964

There is no requirement in the grid connection offer for the

applicant to seek

1262

01:18:22.024 --> 01:18:25.624

approval for the location of the National Grid substation from

1263

01:18:25.704 --> 01:18:29.444

NGET, but the documents contained within the grid connection offer

1264

01:18:29.604 --> 01:18:33.244

state that the applicant must apply for planning consent by the 30th of

1265

01:18:33.324 --> 01:18:37.244

March 2027 and inform NGET of the location of the

1266

01:18:37.324 --> 01:18:41.224

substation by the 28th of February 2028, both of which

1267

01:18:41.264 --> 01:18:45.254

the applicant has done. Now, as you noted, NGET stated in their

1268

01:18:45.264 --> 01:18:49.234

relevant representation that they are not currently developing proposals to build a

1269

01:18:49.244 --> 01:18:52.204

new substation within the scheme's order limits. That is correct.

1270

01:18:52.294 --> 01:18:55.904

The applicant agrees with this statement and notes, as stated, that the

1271

01:18:55.944 --> 01:18:59.884

responsibility for developing the proposals for the National Grid substation is

1272

01:18:59.944 --> 01:19:03.876

currently placed upon the applicant. NGET also state in

1273

01:19:03.916 --> 01:19:07.796

their relevant representation that the location of the new substation is still to

1274

01:19:07.836 --> 01:19:11.316

be confirmed, as we've heard, with the siting studies to be reviewed

1275

01:19:11.356 --> 01:19:15.216

post-connection reform. Now, in the opinion of the applicant, that would mean

1276

01:19:15.276 --> 01:19:18.536

that NGET would not be reviewing the proposed location for the National Grid

1277

01:19:18.576 --> 01:19:22.396

substation until mid or late 2027, and possibly

1278

01:19:22.416 --> 01:19:25.756

even later than that, given that most of the key connection reform published

1279

01:19:25.836 --> 01:19:29.776

timelines have not yet been adhered to so far in the

1280

01:19:29.816 --> 01:19:33.796

industry. Now, that timeframe would conflict with the applicant's

1281

01:19:33.836 --> 01:19:36.666

contractual and timestamped obligations that I've stated.

1282

01:19:37.876 --> 01:19:41.416

And therefore, until NGET or NESO confirm otherwise, the contractual

1283

01:19:41.496 --> 01:19:45.336

obligations comprising the applicant's grid connection offer for the scheme remain

1284

01:19:45.416 --> 01:19:49.276

binding, meaning the applicant is contractually obligated to meet the

1285

01:19:49.296 --> 01:19:53.076

milestones within, and therefore, the applicant has included the

1286

01:19:53.116 --> 01:19:56.786

proposed National Grid substation as associated development to the scheme.

1287

01:19:57.156 --> 01:20:00.976

Therefore, if the scheme is approved, the proposed point of connection will also

1288

01:20:01.076 --> 01:20:04.656

be improved, and the applicant is not aware of any reasons as to why this

1289

01:20:04.716 --> 01:20:08.576

substation should be refused as associated development to the scheme.

1290

01:20:09.276 --> 01:20:11.236

The point was also made about

1291

01:20:12.056 --> 01:20:15.656

the fact that the scheme has been reprioritized with a Gate 1

1292

01:20:15.736 --> 01:20:19.536

connection offer. Now, having a Gate 1 connection offer means that there is not

1293

01:20:19.596 --> 01:20:23.356

yet a confirmed grid connection location or date to connect the scheme.

1294

01:20:23.636 --> 01:20:27.096

However, project development will continue, and the applicant can apply again to

1295

01:20:27.136 --> 01:20:30.626

move into Gate 2 in future rounds. Because the government is

1296

01:20:30.676 --> 01:20:34.326

clear that the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan and Connection

1297

01:20:34.396 --> 01:20:37.816

Reform is not about stopping projects, but is about prioritizing

1298

01:20:37.826 --> 01:20:41.716

projects for 2030 while maintaining a robust pipeline

1299

01:20:41.756 --> 01:20:45.486

beyond 2030. So projects which continue to demonstrate they are

1300

01:20:45.516 --> 01:20:49.156

ready are expected to be reprioritized, especially as the government

1301

01:20:49.196 --> 01:20:52.236

continues to refine its criteria for strategic alignment.

1302

01:20:52.546 --> 01:20:56.496

And it's also anticipated that some projects currently in the queue may drop out.

1303

01:20:56.536 --> 01:21:00.496

So the applicant will keep developing the scheme with the aim of securing a Gate

1304

01:21:00.656 --> 01:21:04.396

2 connection in a future round, and the applicant will, of course, keep

1305

01:21:04.436 --> 01:21:08.416

local representatives and communities updated as matters

1306

01:21:08.436 --> 01:21:11.906

progress. The fact that the scheme includes as associated

1307

01:21:11.936 --> 01:21:15.825

development the proposed grid substation for the scheme reduces

1308

01:21:15.856 --> 01:21:19.776

uncertainty around the deliverability of that connection if the scheme is to be

1309

01:21:19.816 --> 01:21:20.976

consented.

1310

01:21:23.316 --> 01:21:25.396
I think we'll leave it for there.

1311
01:21:25.496 --> 01:21:25.776
Thank you.

1312
01:21:33.696 --> 01:21:37.656
So the next question is: Given the situation with NGET's substation

1313
01:21:37.736 --> 01:21:41.316
location, could the applicant justify why

1314
01:21:42.476 --> 01:21:45.276
NGET's substation has been included in the order limits?

1315
01:21:47.576 --> 01:21:51.356
Sir, I believe I've addressed that as part of my previous response.

1316
01:21:51.436 --> 01:21:55.016
If you're referring to site selection, I'm happy to call upon

1317
01:21:55.496 --> 01:21:58.196
Ms. Knowles for the rationale behind that, if that's what you mean.

1318
01:22:02.996 --> 01:22:04.936
Yes. We can hear that, please. Thank you.

1319
01:22:06.416 --> 01:22:09.376
I'll pass over to Ms. Knowles online then about site selection for
the National

1320
01:22:09.396 --> 01:22:13.336
Grid substation and the use of National Grid's methodology as part
of that

1321
01:22:13.376 --> 01:22:13.776
process.

1322
01:22:20.156 --> 01:22:23.096
Thank you. Tabitha Knowles on behalf of the applicant.

1323

01:22:24.176 --> 01:22:26.916
So as mentioned previously,

1324
01:22:27.156 --> 01:22:31.105
the National Grid guidelines on siting and

1325
01:22:31.136 --> 01:22:35.056
design were applied to the site selection exercise, so that's

1326
01:22:35.116 --> 01:22:37.856
the Horlock and Holford Rules.

1327
01:22:39.556 --> 01:22:43.476
And again, importantly, National Grid also use

1328
01:22:43.536 --> 01:22:46.896
this guidance to inform site selection and its assessment

1329
01:22:46.996 --> 01:22:50.416
of alternatives for its own projects coming forward.

1330
01:22:51.916 --> 01:22:53.436
So just to

1331
01:22:54.976 --> 01:22:57.056
provide some examples around

1332
01:22:57.936 --> 01:23:00.356
the applying of the Horlock rules,

1333
01:23:01.656 --> 01:23:02.756
and how

1334
01:23:03.996 --> 01:23:05.976
Field 27, which is where

1335
01:23:06.896 --> 01:23:10.676
the grid station is proposed to be located,

1336
01:23:12.876 --> 01:23:14.056
was identified.

1337

01:23:14.896 --> 01:23:15.736

And there was a number of

1338

01:23:16.956 --> 01:23:20.816

factors that informed that, which are aligned, again,

1339

01:23:20.896 --> 01:23:22.096

with those Horlock rules.

1340

01:23:22.996 --> 01:23:26.536

So the first one's land, the potential to use the land within the

1341

01:23:26.556 --> 01:23:30.376

control of the applicant and reduce any reliance

1342

01:23:30.456 --> 01:23:32.116

on compulsory purchase powers.

1343

01:23:33.256 --> 01:23:37.186

The size, there was potential to accommodate the footprint of the substation,

1344

01:23:38.056 --> 01:23:41.566

avoiding the removal of existing vegetation and allowing for

1345

01:23:41.656 --> 01:23:45.136

potential for screening of views by mounding or planting.

1346

01:23:46.276 --> 01:23:49.776

Proximity to the existing overhead line, so that's the

1347

01:23:49.796 --> 01:23:53.776

potential to reduce the need for additional electrical infrastructure

1348

01:23:53.856 --> 01:23:54.756

to connect into

1349

01:23:55.656 --> 01:23:58.396

and/or divert the existing overhead lines.

1350

01:23:59.156 --> 01:24:02.996

Proximity to the A1065, so that's the

1351

01:24:03.056 --> 01:24:03.656

potential to

1352

01:24:04.476 --> 01:24:08.296

avoid rural roads, and minimize the

1353

01:24:08.336 --> 01:24:11.796

length of new access roads required to construct and operate the

1354

01:24:11.896 --> 01:24:12.716

substation.

1355

01:24:13.596 --> 01:24:17.496

Environmental constraints, the potential to avoid and minimize direct

1356

01:24:17.536 --> 01:24:21.196

impacts to environmental and cultural designations and flood risk

1357

01:24:21.316 --> 01:24:25.016

zones. Topography, the potential to construct

1358

01:24:25.436 --> 01:24:29.316

a level development platform whilst reducing the need for cut and fill.

1359

01:24:30.576 --> 01:24:34.306

Residential receptors, the potential to minimize visual and noise

1360

01:24:34.356 --> 01:24:36.976

effects on residential receptors.

1361

01:24:37.556 --> 01:24:41.256

And finally, agricultural land classification, the

1362

01:24:41.296 --> 01:24:44.836

potential to minimize loss of best and most versatile

1363
01:24:45.276 --> 01:24:46.576
agricultural land.

1364
01:24:47.696 --> 01:24:48.036
Thank you.

1365
01:24:49.656 --> 01:24:50.036
Knowles.

1366
01:24:52.256 --> 01:24:55.676
Sir, I know you raised questions about the

1367
01:24:55.916 --> 01:24:59.556
inclusion of the substation in the DC application.

1368
01:25:00.156 --> 01:25:03.796
Having noted that I responded to that as part of my previous answer,
I do have some

1369
01:25:03.836 --> 01:25:05.296
more on that if you'd like to hear that now.

1370
01:25:05.756 --> 01:25:06.456
Yes, please. Yeah.

1371
01:25:07.016 --> 01:25:10.736
Thank you. So the applicant's position is that the approach

1372
01:25:10.745 --> 01:25:14.576
taken is recognized and provided for within

1373
01:25:14.636 --> 01:25:17.976
section 4.11 of NPS EN1

1374
01:25:18.016 --> 01:25:18.886
2023,

1375
01:25:20.096 --> 01:25:24.036
which at paragraph 4.11.7 encourages

1376

01:25:24.116 --> 01:25:27.716

applications for new generating stations and related

1377

01:25:27.756 --> 01:25:30.916

infrastructure to be contained in a single application.

1378

01:25:31.756 --> 01:25:35.096

As I've touched upon, the applicant has a grid connection

1379

01:25:35.136 --> 01:25:38.806

offer for the scheme, which requires it to secure consent and

1380

01:25:38.856 --> 01:25:42.316

land for the point of connection, and the applicant's approach and

1381

01:25:42.356 --> 01:25:46.236

methodology is therefore sound. Consent is being sought

1382

01:25:46.316 --> 01:25:50.256

for the National Grid substation in a location that the applicant considers

1383

01:25:50.316 --> 01:25:54.256

suitable based on National Grid Electricity Transmission's criteria,

1384

01:25:54.756 --> 01:25:58.516

and consent for the potential National Grid substation in this location should

1385

01:25:58.536 --> 01:26:02.436

therefore be fully examined, and NGET will have the option to carry out the works

1386

01:26:02.596 --> 01:26:06.556

should they determine that the proposed site for the substation is suitable.

1387

01:26:06.616 --> 01:26:10.136

In the event that NGET indicates a preference for an alternative

1388

01:26:10.196 --> 01:26:14.096

location at whatever stage in the process, the applicant

1389

01:26:14.136 --> 01:26:17.636

retains the ability to seek a separate consent, as set out in

1390

01:26:17.656 --> 01:26:21.156

our procedural decision response, with updated environmental

1391

01:26:21.216 --> 01:26:25.056

information and assessment as required for the connection to the

1392

01:26:25.096 --> 01:26:26.136

National Grid substation

1393

01:26:26.976 --> 01:26:30.436

as a result. And I also refer to the similar set of

1394

01:26:30.576 --> 01:26:34.496

circumstances that arose during the examination of the Botley West DCO,

1395

01:26:34.916 --> 01:26:38.716

where examination proceeded with the substation within the order limits,

1396

01:26:38.816 --> 01:26:42.596

despite NGET noting in their relevant representation for

1397

01:26:42.656 --> 01:26:46.376

that matter that the project has allowed for the former substation in its

1398

01:26:46.386 --> 01:26:49.416

proposals within work number one and parcel 1304.

1399

01:26:49.656 --> 01:26:52.836

However, this is not the NGET preferred location for this substation.

1400

01:26:53.356 --> 01:26:57.276

So in that examination, and similarly in this one, the applicant

1401

01:26:57.336 --> 01:27:01.116

is seeking a comprehensive consenting package that ensures both the

1402

01:27:01.136 --> 01:27:04.926

delivery of the scheme and its connection via the substation in

1403

01:27:04.956 --> 01:27:08.016

accordance with the contractual obligations.

1404

01:27:09.096 --> 01:27:12.616

As I've said, the DCO application is seeking consent for, but not an

1405

01:27:12.676 --> 01:27:16.516

obligation on NGET to deliver, the National Grid substation in the

1406

01:27:16.576 --> 01:27:20.376

proposed location. The fact that this location has not

1407

01:27:20.436 --> 01:27:24.276

yet been confirmed by NGET does not prevent the applicant from

1408

01:27:24.436 --> 01:27:27.376

seeking development consent for it as an

1409

01:27:27.436 --> 01:27:31.426

option. As I've said, if NGET decides to locate the substation in

1410

01:27:31.456 --> 01:27:35.056

another location at whatever stage in the process, then consent can be

1411

01:27:35.076 --> 01:27:38.256

obtained in the appropriate manner for the connection works

1412

01:27:38.616 --> 01:27:42.186

separately. And also, I note that any powers of

1413

01:27:42.256 --> 01:27:46.105

compulsory acquisition under the DCO can only be exercised for the

1414

01:27:46.196 --> 01:27:46.656
purpose

1415
01:27:47.596 --> 01:27:49.396
for which they are originally sought.

1416
01:27:49.616 --> 01:27:53.356
Therefore, if NGET decides to locate the substation at an

1417
01:27:53.396 --> 01:27:57.096
alternative location to the land over which the applicant has sought

1418
01:27:57.176 --> 01:28:00.836
the necessary compulsory acquisition powers in relation to it, the

1419
01:28:00.896 --> 01:28:04.316
applicant couldn't lawfully exercise those powers over the land.

1420
01:28:04.376 --> 01:28:07.676
So I hope that provides some further substance on why we're
including the

1421
01:28:07.716 --> 01:28:09.676
substation as part of the application.

1422
01:28:18.156 --> 01:28:21.876
Thank you, Mr. Tresseden. I'd just like to go to National Grid,

1423
01:28:21.936 --> 01:28:22.856
Charlotte Jones

1424
01:28:24.056 --> 01:28:24.896
online.

1425
01:28:26.176 --> 01:28:26.896
Do you have any

1426
01:28:28.396 --> 01:28:32.276
comment on the applicant's approach to include a National Grid

1427
01:28:32.976 --> 01:28:34.776

substation within the order limits?

1428

01:28:37.596 --> 01:28:39.056

Charlotte Jones for National Grid.

1429

01:28:40.576 --> 01:28:40.936

It's

1430

01:28:41.976 --> 01:28:45.646

NGET's position that the existing connection agreement is non-binding in

1431

01:28:45.696 --> 01:28:48.716

nature due to the connections reform process.

1432

01:28:49.696 --> 01:28:52.936

The agreement provides reference to a node, but this is

1433

01:28:52.976 --> 01:28:56.286

indicative. And as previously stated,

1434

01:28:56.896 --> 01:29:00.256

the connections agreement is linked to further studies being undertaken,

1435

01:29:00.896 --> 01:29:04.776

the project's position in the queue following the connections reform process, and

1436

01:29:04.816 --> 01:29:08.686

their receipt of a gate one offer, and NGET's overall

1437

01:29:08.736 --> 01:29:12.436

duty to identify economic and efficient solutions for all

1438

01:29:12.496 --> 01:29:12.956

customers.

1439

01:29:18.716 --> 01:29:19.056

Thank you.

1440

01:29:25.596 --> 01:29:26.696
Are there any other comments

1441
01:29:27.496 --> 01:29:29.676
in the room regarding the grid connection?

1442
01:29:30.836 --> 01:29:31.616
I'll start with

1443
01:29:32.836 --> 01:29:35.016
James Wilde. I think your hand was first.

1444
01:29:35.696 --> 01:29:39.036
Sorry, it's harder to see up here. It strikes me that this is a pretty

1445
01:29:39.136 --> 01:29:42.196
material issue, which you rightly alighted on, sir,

1446
01:29:42.736 --> 01:29:44.376
in the letter that you sent

1447
01:29:45.856 --> 01:29:47.416
earlier in March.

1448
01:29:48.316 --> 01:29:52.266
I think I heard from Charlotte Jones that this issue would not

1449
01:29:52.296 --> 01:29:55.516
be resolved during the period of the examination inquiry,

1450
01:29:56.076 --> 01:30:00.046
nor before the Secretary of State would take a decision on

1451
01:30:00.076 --> 01:30:03.736
it. So it therefore strikes me that it's premature to bring forward an

1452
01:30:03.776 --> 01:30:07.586
application of this nature, particularly as NGET just

1453

01:30:07.616 --> 01:30:10.636
said, contrary, I think, to what the applicant had said, that this
was a

1454
01:30:10.676 --> 01:30:12.976
non-binding offer that had been made.

1455
01:30:13.056 --> 01:30:16.796
And clearly the big reforms that have been made to the grid
connection

1456
01:30:16.956 --> 01:30:19.756
system have changed things materially.

1457
01:30:20.456 --> 01:30:23.636
So I'd just welcome clarity from NGET that it was,

1458
01:30:24.796 --> 01:30:28.676
what I thought I heard said, was that this issue would not be
resolved before

1459
01:30:28.716 --> 01:30:30.656
this got to the Secretary of State for a decision.

1460
01:30:32.576 --> 01:30:35.956
Charlotte Jones, are you able to come back on that point, please?

1461
01:30:38.256 --> 01:30:39.376
That is NGET's position.

1462
01:30:43.006 --> 01:30:44.676
Thank you. And Mr. Tresseden?

1463
01:30:45.496 --> 01:30:49.326
Thank you, sir. I'll pass over to Dave Elvin in a moment from the
applicant

1464
01:30:49.436 --> 01:30:52.996
side. I would just note, as I've set out, that the reasons for

1465
01:30:53.056 --> 01:30:56.776
including the substation in the DCO application are to

1466

01:30:56.816 --> 01:31:00.756

retain that optionality, and that's the reason we've done it, as set out

1467

01:31:00.816 --> 01:31:04.356

in our procedural decision response, AS063, and by

1468

01:31:04.396 --> 01:31:07.056

myself over the course of the last 20 minutes or so.

1469

01:31:07.116 --> 01:31:09.476

But I'll pass over to Dave Elvin on the contractual elements

1470

01:31:11.540 --> 01:31:14.500

Good morning, sir. Dave Elvin from Island Green Power, on behalf of the applicant.

1471

01:31:15.460 --> 01:31:16.980

So just to clarify,

1472

01:31:17.940 --> 01:31:20.820

as yet, we're not in receipt of a gate one offer.

1473

01:31:22.200 --> 01:31:24.500

We are expecting it, so we're not disputing that will come.

1474

01:31:24.980 --> 01:31:28.580

So currently, the contract is binding, just

1475

01:31:28.620 --> 01:31:29.940

for clarity on that.

1476

01:31:31.860 --> 01:31:33.040

In respect of

1477

01:31:34.260 --> 01:31:38.160

a slightly wider point around the gate one and gate two positions, this is where

1478

01:31:38.200 --> 01:31:40.280

the status of your grid offer.

1479

01:31:42.080 --> 01:31:45.960

When you go to gate one, that's still a contracted position with

1480

01:31:46.140 --> 01:31:47.700

NISO for the connection,

1481

01:31:48.540 --> 01:31:48.860

and

1482

01:31:49.780 --> 01:31:53.650

the gates are processed, as the name says, in

1483

01:31:53.800 --> 01:31:55.740

a gate. So there'll be another gate

1484

01:31:56.580 --> 01:31:57.000

window,

1485

01:31:58.220 --> 01:32:02.000

not sooner than Q3 2026 is the latest we've

1486

01:32:02.040 --> 01:32:05.140

heard on it, but it could be later than that, certainly won't be earlier.

1487

01:32:05.860 --> 01:32:09.600

And the methodology for that, that NISO have published, is to

1488

01:32:09.640 --> 01:32:10.480

prioritize

1489

01:32:11.280 --> 01:32:14.520

projects that have submitted planning over those that have not.

1490

01:32:15.040 --> 01:32:18.300

So there's a clear expectation between NISO and NGET

1491

01:32:18.840 --> 01:32:22.240

that you should be progressing your projects because they want to

ultimately take

1492

01:32:22.300 --> 01:32:26.040

forward projects that are more real than those that are not so real.

1493

01:32:29.200 --> 01:32:32.120

Thank you, Mr. Elvin. I'll go to Mr.

1494

01:32:32.340 --> 01:32:33.340

Szurkowski.

1495

01:32:34.340 --> 01:32:36.860

Thank you, sir. Andrew Szurkowski for Norfolk County Council.

1496

01:32:37.100 --> 01:32:40.640

The response there may slightly preempted the point I was just about to make.

1497

01:32:42.600 --> 01:32:46.260

I understand that the applicant is going to be making an additional submission, I

1498

01:32:46.300 --> 01:32:49.500

think, really to update the position in relation to the grid

1499

01:32:49.540 --> 01:32:50.600

connection.

1500

01:32:52.100 --> 01:32:55.380

I suppose what's going through my mind, particularly given the comments from the

1501

01:32:55.420 --> 01:32:57.920

last speaker and the fact that I think you meant

1502

01:32:58.720 --> 01:33:02.340

to say you haven't got a gate two connection offer yet,

1503

01:33:03.180 --> 01:33:06.360

because you actually just said you don't have gate one, but I think you meant gate

1504
01:33:06.400 --> 01:33:07.000
two, presumably.

1505
01:33:09.520 --> 01:33:09.680
But

1506
01:33:11.880 --> 01:33:15.090
I suppose what would be interesting to know, and you may want to put this if you do

1507
01:33:15.120 --> 01:33:19.040
into your revised position statement, is I don't know whether you get

1508
01:33:19.080 --> 01:33:22.840
any advice from NISO in terms of going forward to making a

1509
01:33:22.960 --> 01:33:24.260
new gate two submission,

1510
01:33:25.240 --> 01:33:29.000
in terms of what you need to do, maybe why you haven't got one to date.

1511
01:33:29.320 --> 01:33:32.340
I'm not familiar with the process at all, so I speak slightly out of ignorance

1512
01:33:32.380 --> 01:33:35.560
here, but it'd just be interesting to know whether you do get any kind of feedback

1513
01:33:35.600 --> 01:33:36.140
in terms of

1514
01:33:37.160 --> 01:33:41.060
where that process is going to go or what you need to do

1515
01:33:41.100 --> 01:33:41.760
to get gate two.

1516

01:33:43.480 --> 01:33:46.020

Sorry, I know, I appreciate I shouldn't be asking questions directly of the

1517

01:33:46.040 --> 01:33:49.060

applicant. It's just to raise a point for them to consider in the submission they

1518

01:33:49.100 --> 01:33:49.820

make.

1519

01:33:49.860 --> 01:33:50.980

Thank you. Mr. Trestle.

1520

01:33:51.020 --> 01:33:53.960

That's okay. Yeah, we're happy to receive questions, and Mr. Elvin will respond.

1521

01:33:54.760 --> 01:33:56.740

Yeah, more than happy to talk to that point.

1522

01:33:56.820 --> 01:33:56.980

So,

1523

01:33:58.140 --> 01:33:59.220

yeah, Dave Elvin from the applicant.

1524

01:33:59.680 --> 01:33:59.900

So,

1525

01:34:01.020 --> 01:34:04.860

to be correct, we are not in receipt of a gate one or a gate two

1526

01:34:04.940 --> 01:34:06.480

offer at this point in time.

1527

01:34:07.480 --> 01:34:11.420

What happens in the process, it is wonderfully complex, as I'm sure many people are

1528

01:34:11.440 --> 01:34:15.140

aware, is that in December, the outcome of the

1529

01:34:15.240 --> 01:34:19.040

first gate window was produced, which basically said what you

1530

01:34:19.160 --> 01:34:23.000

would get at a future point in time in terms of gate one or gate two.

1531

01:34:24.560 --> 01:34:28.550

We have been notified, is the term used by NISO, that we will be getting

1532

01:34:28.600 --> 01:34:32.360

a gate one offer. So NGET were earlier saying that we

1533

01:34:32.460 --> 01:34:36.400

have got that offer. We've got the notification, not the offer, just

1534

01:34:36.460 --> 01:34:40.000

it's a bit pedantic point, but that does mean the contract has not been

1535

01:34:40.060 --> 01:34:44.040

updated to this point in time to either gate one or gate two, just

1536

01:34:44.360 --> 01:34:45.480

to clarify on that point.

1537

01:34:46.540 --> 01:34:48.640

In terms of future gate rounds,

1538

01:34:49.480 --> 01:34:53.360

and how that gate window was processed, I will try to

1539

01:34:53.400 --> 01:34:57.160

summarize. As I said, it's a new process that's come in the last sort of

1540

01:34:57.200 --> 01:35:00.719

18 months, and I think everybody's still trying to understand it fully.

1541

01:35:02.280 --> 01:35:03.240

So in essence,

1542

01:35:04.060 --> 01:35:07.960

a snapshot is taken in time, and that was done last summer for

1543

01:35:08.020 --> 01:35:11.960

this first gate window that produced the notifications I just referred to in

1544

01:35:12.180 --> 01:35:16.020

December. The next gate window, as I said earlier, won't be before

1545

01:35:16.260 --> 01:35:18.810

Q3 this year, is the latest we've heard.

1546

01:35:19.320 --> 01:35:23.300

At that point in time, they will reassess whenever that next gate

1547

01:35:23.320 --> 01:35:26.920

window is, who's accepted gate two offers that

1548

01:35:26.940 --> 01:35:29.860

they've had at that time, because potentially not everybody would.

1549

01:35:30.360 --> 01:35:33.570

They will review if there's any change in need, as Mr.

1550

01:35:33.780 --> 01:35:37.700

Gillett referred to earlier. Part of the process is if

1551

01:35:37.740 --> 01:35:41.480

they find one technology is undersubscribed, they might then change the

1552

01:35:41.520 --> 01:35:42.880

limits and therefore look for more.

1553

01:35:42.920 --> 01:35:46.160

So for example, if there was a shortfall in offshore wind

1554

01:35:47.380 --> 01:35:50.140

that's coming forward in the timeframe they're looking for, they could look for

1555

01:35:50.180 --> 01:35:52.860

more solar or for more any other type of generation.

1556

01:35:53.440 --> 01:35:56.710

So there are reasons those capacities might change in future,

1557

01:35:57.800 --> 01:36:01.280

either from effectively a lack of demand or an increase of supply.

1558

01:36:01.820 --> 01:36:02.080

So

1559

01:36:03.440 --> 01:36:07.310

that's also why they run the next gate windows, because it's not a one shot that's

1560

01:36:07.340 --> 01:36:11.320

covered everything, everything's kind of fixed, if that makes sense.

1561

01:36:12.840 --> 01:36:16.740

We believe from the information we have had from NISO that in the sort of

1562

01:36:16.820 --> 01:36:20.620

queue order that exists, it's not a published queue order, but from what we

1563

01:36:20.660 --> 01:36:24.320

understand of it, we believe this connection is almost certainly the

1564

01:36:24.440 --> 01:36:27.940

next in line to get a gate two. So if anything

1565

01:36:27.980 --> 01:36:31.920

changes, it gets gate two. So we're rather optimistic that

1566

01:36:31.960 --> 01:36:32.860

will be the case.

1567

01:36:35.040 --> 01:36:36.980

And if I could just come in then, sir.

1568

01:36:37.520 --> 01:36:39.800

Engagement with NISO was referenced as well.

1569

01:36:40.220 --> 01:36:42.230

As set out in the rule six letter,

1570

01:36:43.380 --> 01:36:45.620

a statement of common ground, as requested, is being prepared,

1571

01:36:46.440 --> 01:36:49.160

and is in the process of being sent to NISO.

1572

01:36:50.200 --> 01:36:53.420

So we hope we'll be able to get some engagement with them in respect of that.

1573

01:36:53.440 --> 01:36:56.900

And I believe Mr. Gillett just wanted to make a policy point, if that would be

1574

01:36:56.940 --> 01:36:57.380

acceptable.

1575

01:36:57.880 --> 01:36:58.540

Yes, go ahead.

1576

01:36:59.480 --> 01:37:02.900

Thank you, sir. Simon Gillett for the applicant. As my colleague Mr.

1577

01:37:03.040 --> 01:37:06.420

Elvin has said, this is wonderfully complicated, and it does sort of

1578

01:37:06.460 --> 01:37:10.360

rather change the order of how schemes have

1579

01:37:10.400 --> 01:37:12.900

come forward for consent in the past.

1580

01:37:12.940 --> 01:37:15.812

But I just wanted to read out, if I may Paragraph

1581

01:37:15.912 --> 01:37:19.652

3.2.6, not all of it, it's a long one, but the first part of

1582

01:37:19.692 --> 01:37:23.122

paragraph 3.2.6 of the newly

1583

01:37:23.212 --> 01:37:27.152

designated national policy statement EN-1 which

1584

01:37:27.192 --> 01:37:31.132

says, and I quote, "It is not the government's intention in presenting any

1585

01:37:31.172 --> 01:37:34.732

of the figures or targets in this national policy statement

1586

01:37:35.212 --> 01:37:38.592

to propose limits on any new infrastructure that can be

1587

01:37:38.632 --> 01:37:41.812

consented in accordance with the NPSs.

1588

01:37:42.552 --> 01:37:46.022

A large number of consented projects can help deliver an affordable

1589

01:37:46.152 --> 01:37:50.132

electricity system by driving competition, reducing costs,

1590

01:37:50.152 --> 01:37:53.232

and amongst different technology and infrastructure

1591

01:37:53.312 --> 01:37:57.252

types." The point being, sir, that the figures or

1592

01:37:57.372 --> 01:38:01.192

targets presented in the NPS, in the national policy statement,

1593

01:38:01.372 --> 01:38:04.572

are the Clean Power 2030 capacity ranges.

1594

01:38:05.052 --> 01:38:08.592

And our view of what that paragraph is saying, sir,

1595

01:38:09.032 --> 01:38:10.152

is that the need for the

1596

01:38:10.252 --> 01:38:14.032

scheme, as

1597

01:38:14.252 --> 01:38:18.192

set out in paragraphs 3.2.8 to

1598

01:38:18.332 --> 01:38:21.872

3.2.10 of the new national

1599

01:38:21.972 --> 01:38:25.732

policy statement, the newly designated statement, that need does

1600

01:38:25.772 --> 01:38:29.112

apply to the scheme. And therefore,

1601

01:38:29.792 --> 01:38:31.372

the weights that should be

1602

01:38:32.412 --> 01:38:36.132

attached to that need does continue to

1603

01:38:37.072 --> 01:38:37.512

apply.

1604

01:38:39.192 --> 01:38:42.652

And in that regard, sir, the timing points and the

1605

01:38:42.692 --> 01:38:44.352

prioritization as a gate one

1606

01:38:45.992 --> 01:38:46.472
does not

1607
01:38:47.972 --> 01:38:51.852
degrade in any way the need for the scheme as established in that
policy

1608
01:38:51.872 --> 01:38:53.112
position, sir.

1609
01:38:53.372 --> 01:38:56.692
And I think it's worth noting as well, Sir Alex Treston for the
applicant, that

1610
01:38:56.732 --> 01:39:00.622
whilst we are here to discuss the DC0 application and the inclusion

1611
01:39:00.652 --> 01:39:04.552
of the substation within the nature of the process and the time

1612
01:39:04.612 --> 01:39:06.332
taken, i.e. the delay,

1613
01:39:07.392 --> 01:39:11.142
as a result of the process, shouldn't preclude schemes from seeking
consent,

1614
01:39:11.192 --> 01:39:14.872
because if we all waited for NES0's next steps, then

1615
01:39:14.912 --> 01:39:18.692
nothing would come forward and address that urgent and critical
national need

1616
01:39:18.772 --> 01:39:19.752
for renewable energy.

1617
01:39:23.932 --> 01:39:25.191
Thank you, Mr. Treston.

1618
01:39:27.632 --> 01:39:31.252
Are there any other comments in the room on this subject?

1619

01:39:33.192 --> 01:39:36.832

Okay. Could I just come to, is it

1620

01:39:36.932 --> 01:39:38.612

Julie Barrow first?

1621

01:39:39.992 --> 01:39:43.052

Thank you, sir. Mrs. Julie Barrow for the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West

1622

01:39:43.132 --> 01:39:45.732

Norfolk. Just wanted to make a couple of points.

1623

01:39:46.932 --> 01:39:50.372

I think we agree as an adjoining local authority, but

1624

01:39:50.712 --> 01:39:54.512

quite affected by this development, given the heritage assets that we have

1625

01:39:54.532 --> 01:39:57.452

within our borough, that this is an important part of the scheme.

1626

01:39:57.892 --> 01:40:01.632

We've worked with the applicant throughout the pre-application stage in

1627

01:40:01.652 --> 01:40:04.152

relation to the substation location.

1628

01:40:04.752 --> 01:40:08.672

So any changes to that could have significant consequences for the

1629

01:40:08.712 --> 01:40:10.652

way in which the Borough Council view the scheme.

1630

01:40:11.632 --> 01:40:15.332

The applicant's quite right that they could make a separate application for consent

1631

01:40:15.372 --> 01:40:17.312
for that substation should it be needed.

1632
01:40:18.152 --> 01:40:20.852
But obviously, we would like to point out there's by no means any
guarantee that

1633
01:40:20.892 --> 01:40:22.692
consent would be granted for that.

1634
01:40:23.252 --> 01:40:26.952
Any movement of the substation towards Kings Lynn and West

1635
01:40:27.032 --> 01:40:30.612
Norfolk will have a significant impact on those heritage assets,

1636
01:40:31.272 --> 01:40:33.552
and that would obviously need to be fully considered.

1637
01:40:34.321 --> 01:40:37.602
Notwithstanding that, as I say, I think we are in agreement that

1638
01:40:37.672 --> 01:40:41.192
the substation should be included as part of the application.

1639
01:40:41.252 --> 01:40:45.032
We need to assess what we have in front of us with the current
application,

1640
01:40:45.772 --> 01:40:49.392
which is what we have done, and we'll come onto heritage matters no
doubt

1641
01:40:49.952 --> 01:40:51.712
later on this afternoon. Thank you.

1642
01:40:56.712 --> 01:40:57.412
Thank you.

1643
01:40:58.332 --> 01:40:59.172
Mr. Treston.

1644

01:41:00.592 --> 01:41:01.212

Just to

1645

01:41:02.612 --> 01:41:03.572

echo the position

1646

01:41:04.672 --> 01:41:07.832

stated, which is that if a separate application came forward, that would obviously

1647

01:41:07.852 --> 01:41:11.712

be subject to a completely full, robust, and comprehensive

1648

01:41:11.752 --> 01:41:15.492

environmental assessment for that different location if required.

1649

01:41:15.632 --> 01:41:19.422

And the scheme has assessed in full, and again, in a robust manner,

1650

01:41:19.512 --> 01:41:23.332

the DCO application as a whole, including the substation at its

1651

01:41:23.372 --> 01:41:27.282

location. So I completely agree that we should be looking at the position as is

1652

01:41:27.332 --> 01:41:31.142

in front of us at this time. But any separate application would be subject, as is

1653

01:41:31.152 --> 01:41:33.822

rightly pointed out, to a full and comprehensive assessment.

1654

01:41:35.722 --> 01:41:38.962

Thank you. And I'll just go, was it Mr. Morgan at the back?

1655

01:41:39.512 --> 01:41:41.712

If you could just wait for the... We've got the microphone.

1656

01:41:45.872 --> 01:41:46.732

Are we okay? Yeah.

1657

01:41:47.112 --> 01:41:47.272

Yes.

1658

01:41:48.132 --> 01:41:50.832

Yeah. So I just want to talk about the grid connection

1659

01:41:51.672 --> 01:41:55.332

and basically suitability for grade one, grade two.

1660

01:41:55.992 --> 01:41:59.792

Now, according to NESO Data Portal, it said at the

1661

01:41:59.852 --> 01:42:03.572

moment that there are 738 gigawatts of

1662

01:42:03.712 --> 01:42:04.102

queue,

1663

01:42:06.352 --> 01:42:10.332

which is far exceeding the 200 gigawatts of clean

1664

01:42:10.392 --> 01:42:13.492

generation capacity required by 2030.

1665

01:42:13.612 --> 01:42:16.522

So I'm just wondering why we're looking at your

1666

01:42:16.552 --> 01:42:20.492

project and saying yours has got a greater need than anybody else's?

1667

01:42:27.192 --> 01:42:28.992

Sorry, yes, go ahead, Mr. Treston.

1668

01:42:29.412 --> 01:42:31.192

I'll go straight to Mr. Gillett, if that's all right, sir.

1669

01:42:31.512 --> 01:42:31.712

Okay.

1670

01:42:32.712 --> 01:42:34.132
So, Simon Gillett for the applicant.

1671
01:42:35.992 --> 01:42:39.972
I'm not sure that we are saying that our project is needed more than all of

1672
01:42:40.032 --> 01:42:42.472
those. I think we are saying that all projects are needed.

1673
01:42:45.172 --> 01:42:47.012
I'm just looking at the

1674
01:42:49.912 --> 01:42:53.632
National Grid's connection reform results where they did indeed

1675
01:42:53.672 --> 01:42:55.572
confirm that prior to

1676
01:42:57.412 --> 01:43:01.342
the reprioritization process, there were over 700 gigawatts in

1677
01:43:01.372 --> 01:43:04.632
the queue, and the purpose of the reprioritization

1678
01:43:04.732 --> 01:43:08.592
process is to trim that queue to projects which are ready

1679
01:43:08.652 --> 01:43:11.052
and projects which are strategically aligned.

1680
01:43:11.152 --> 01:43:13.952
So some of those projects have left the queue.

1681
01:43:14.512 --> 01:43:18.202
We don't know yet how many of those projects have left the queue because that

1682
01:43:18.232 --> 01:43:21.642
process is ongoing. But the purpose of NESO's

1683

01:43:21.852 --> 01:43:25.772
reprioritization process was to reduce the queue, and that

1684
01:43:25.812 --> 01:43:29.762
is what is happening. But this project is still in

1685
01:43:29.792 --> 01:43:30.142
the queue,

1686
01:43:31.192 --> 01:43:34.832
and has been told that it will receive a gate one

1687
01:43:37.092 --> 01:43:40.552
contract in due course. Thank you, sir.

1688
01:43:45.012 --> 01:43:48.872
Okay. I'm not seeing any further hands up in the room and no

1689
01:43:48.952 --> 01:43:49.352
hands

1690
01:43:50.972 --> 01:43:51.532
online.

1691
01:43:52.372 --> 01:43:52.992
Okay, so

1692
01:43:54.232 --> 01:43:57.992
we're going to adjourn for a 15-minute break now.

1693
01:43:58.812 --> 01:43:59.572
So if we come back,

1694
01:44:00.732 --> 01:44:04.552
might as well say midday, and then when we start back,

1695
01:44:04.652 --> 01:44:08.252
we'll be on agenda item 3.3, cumulative effects.

1696
01:44:08.332 --> 01:44:08.512
So

1697

01:44:09.712 --> 01:44:13.412

going to adjourn the meeting now and see everybody back at 12

1698

01:44:13.432 --> 01:44:13.732

o'clock