



Event Transcript

Project:	Sea Link
Event:	Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1 (CAH1) – Part 1
Date:	27 January 2026

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:15 - 00:00:40:26

Before I begin, can I just confirm with the case team that I can be heard clearly and that the live stream of this event has commenced? Thank you. The time is now 10:00, and I'd like to welcome you all to this compulsory acquisition hearing for the application by National Grid Electricity Transmission, an order granting development consent for the sealing project. My name is Sarah Holmes. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered civil engineer, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State with the lead member of the panel to examine this application. I'm now going to ask my fellow panel members who have been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine this project, to introduce themselves.

00:00:42:14 - 00:00:48:08

Good morning. My name is Nancy Thomas. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered town planner.

00:00:49:20 - 00:00:55:03

Good morning. My name is Doctor Richard Hunt. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered environmentalist.

00:00:56:16 - 00:01:33:12

Together with Luke Regan and Stephen when we formed the Examining Authority or the Isa for this application. I can confirm all the members of the Xa have made a formal declaration of interest, and that there are no known conflicts of interest. With regard to examining this application, there were other colleagues from the Planning Inspectorate with us today. For those of you present in this room, you may have already spoken to or heard from Louise Halloway, who is the case manager for this project. This is how I was accompanied by Stella Clark, who was an Nsic casework officer. For those of you who have joined us virtually, you have spoken to Caroline Allan and how to occur our case officers in the joining conference.

00:01:33:21 - 00:02:03:24

Together, they are the case team for this project. And if you have any questions or queries, they should be our first point of contact. Their contact details can be found at the top of any letter you've received from us, or on the project page of the National Infrastructure website. In addition, there are technicians from CVS international who are attending solely for the purposes of managing the recording and livestreaming of the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the application process in general, Could I ask that you please email the case team? Who will be happy to help? I'll now hand it over to Doctor Hunt, who will deal with the arrangements for this meeting.

00:02:06:00 - 00:02:37:13

Before we consider the items on the agenda today, we need to deal with a few housekeeping matters. I'll try to get through these as quickly as possible. For those in the room, please make sure that your phone is switched off or turned silent. No fire test is planned today. Should an alarm sound, it is an

emergency and will need to vacate the building. Emergency exits are located along the sides of the room, and the fire assembly point is at the far end of the building at the western entrance. If anyone needs assistance, can you let the police please let the case team know in advance.

00:02:38:21 - 00:02:47:12

Toilet facilities, including disabled facilities, can be found just down the hall past. Room 20 on the left at the point where you see the brown tiles.

00:02:49:00 - 00:03:22:01

For those attending the satellite venues to minimize background noise, please can you also make sure that your phones are switched off or turn silent. If you want to speak, please raise your hand and a roving mic will be brought to you. Or you can speak from the table at the front of the venue. Similarly, for those attending virtually, can I repeat the request made in the arrangements conference that minimize background noise? You make sure your phone is switched off or turned silent, and that you stay muted with your camera turned off unless you're speaking. I'd also ask that if you want to speak, you switch your camera on and either use the raise hand function in Ms.

00:03:22:03 - 00:03:50:18

teams or ask to speak at the appropriate time. You can also remind people that the chat function on teams will not be monitored, so please don't try to use this to ask any questions or pose any comments. For those people watching the live stream, should we at any point adjourn proceedings today? We'll have to stop the live stream to give us clear recording files. As a result, at the point in which we start the meeting and the live stream again, you'll need to refresh your browser page and we'll remind you of this again when we adjourn.

00:03:52:03 - 00:03:54:21

Do we have any members of the press in attendance today?

00:04:00:21 - 00:04:32:17

Um, as far as I'm aware, no requests be made for any special measures or arrangements to enable participation in this meeting, such as needing to take a break for medical reasons or having to lead the events at a certain time. If anyone does need a break or extra support later on, then please do let the case team know this event is being live streamed and recorded. Our letter of 19th September, which will refer to as the rule six letter, explained that because we retain and publish the digital recordings, they form a public record to which the General Data Protection Regulation, or GDPR, applies.

00:04:33:15 - 00:04:53:12

The Planning Inspectorate publishes and retains recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary of State's decision on the Development Consent Order. So if you participate in this meeting, it's important that you understand that you'll be recorded and that you can sense the retention and publication of the digital recording. Does anyone else intend to film or record this meeting?

00:04:55:24 - 00:05:39:15

Nope. I won't move on. Sorry. Will only ever ask for information to be placed on the public record. That is important and relevant to the planning decision to avoid the need to edit the digital recordings. What we would ask is that you try your best not to add any information to the public record that you

would normally wish to be kept private or confidential, such as your address, details, financial circumstances or details of medical conditions. If you do feel the need to refer to something that's private or confidential, could you please discuss this with Case team first to explore whether it could be submitted in writing and therefore redacted? Does anyone have any questions with regards to this matter, either in the room or online?

00:05:40:04 - 00:05:40:19

I.

00:05:44:21 - 00:06:13:29

Just want to say a little bit about conducting this hearing. We understand that people have strong feelings about the proposed development, but it's important to recognize that we have a process to follow. We therefore ask for good manners and respect to be shown to each other throughout this hearing. We also understand that some people feel nervous when having to speak in public. Please be reassured that we understand and that if you stumble over your words or need to repeat something, this isn't a problem. Are there any comments or questions regarding any of the points that I've just made, either in the room

00:06:15:29 - 00:06:16:29

or online?

00:06:21:11 - 00:06:23:00

We'll move on and.

00:06:25:03 - 00:07:00:00

We'll now talk about the purpose of holding the compulsory acquisition hearing. Today's compulsory acquisition hearing is being held for the examining authority, who wish to explore a number of matters already in respect of compulsory acquisition and temporary possession, and at the request of a number of affected persons who have specifically requested an opportunity to be heard. I'd like to remind you that the examination is a predominantly written process. In addition to today's hearing, you'll have seen from the examination timetable, there are opportunities for the examining authority to ask further written questions and hold further hearings if needed.

00:07:01:00 - 00:07:38:27

The purpose of this examination is for the examining authority to examine the information submitted both by the applicant and also by the affected persons. As a result, I'd like to reassure you that we're familiar with the documents that you've sent in. So when answering a question, you do not need to repeat at length something that's already been submitted. If you want to refer to information already submitted, we'd be very grateful. If you could please use the appropriate pin's examination library reference. Furthermore, can I ask that the first time you use an abbreviation or acronym that you give the full title, as there'll be people here today, or listening to the digital recording that may not be as familiar with the application or the documents as you are.

00:07:40:08 - 00:08:11:28

Whilst we accept that the majority of the discussions will be undertaken by those parties that have requested to speak. This is a public examination. And therefore, if there is a point that you want to

make, please feel free to raise your hand and switch on your camera at the relevant point that you wish to contribute. The hearing today will be a structured, structured discussion which Mrs. Holmes will lead based on the agenda that's already been published. The purpose of this discussion is for us to ask questions and seek clarification on matters related to compulsory acquisition and temporary possession.

00:08:12:04 - 00:08:43:22

I'd therefore like to take this opportunity to reassure you that whilst we may not be asking a specific question that you were expecting, it's not necessarily not necessarily that we view that this matter has been satisfactorily dealt with. It merely indicates that either we consider that we have all the information that we need on this, or that we're proposing to examine it at a later hearing or through further written questions. Finally, I'd like to remind everyone that this is not an inquiry. And therefore, unless the examining authority has specifically requested it or agreed to it, there will be no formal presentation of cases or cross-examination.

00:08:43:24 - 00:09:14:03

As such, any questions that you may have for other parties need to be asked through the examining authority. Rule 14 two of the Examination Procedure Rules requires that at the start of the hearing, the examining authority shall identify matters to be considered at the hearing. These are set out in the agenda for this hearing. Examination library Reference EV 6001, which is available on the Inspector website. And for the sake of expediency, I don't propose to read out all the separate agenda items now, but ask the shed on the screen.

00:09:14:10 - 00:09:17:17

Would the applicant be able to display the agenda, please?

00:09:20:17 - 00:09:23:07

Thank you. Would it be possible to zoom in slightly?

00:09:25:06 - 00:09:31:07

It's great. Thank you. And, um, if you could just slowly scroll down so that people can see.

00:09:33:09 - 00:09:59:00

Thank you. Please note that today's agenda is for guidance only. We may choose to move items around the agenda or add other issues for consideration. As we progress, we'll seek to allocate sufficient time to each issue to allow for proper consideration. Finally, it's important that we get the right answers to the questions that we ask. I reiterate that this is predominantly a written process. Therefore, if you cannot answer the questions that are being asked or require time to get the information requested,

00:10:00:20 - 00:10:23:13

rather than giving a restricted or potentially incorrect answer, can you please indicate that you need to respond in writing and follow up? We can then defer the response either to an action point to be submitted at deadline for which is the 10th of February, 2026, or to the second written questions or to a later hearing. So before we move on, are there any more questions at this stage about the procedural side of today's hearing or the agenda?

00:10:32:05 - 00:10:49:02

The case team have provided me with a list of those interested parties who have expressed a wish to be heard today. When I say your name, please switch on your camera and microphone. Introduce yourself stating your name, your title and who it is you represent. First, can I ask the applicant to introduce themselves?

00:10:49:25 - 00:11:19:07

Sir. Thank you. My name is Sarah Kobayashi, King's counsel. I am instructed by BCP on behalf of the applicant. Um, predominantly by Mr. James Parker, who's sitting behind. Um, I have with me a number of members of the team who will be assisting. I will only introduce at this time, uh, Miss Jackie Stoddart, who's sitting to my left. Um, that is, uh, the senior surveyor on behalf of the applicant, who I anticipate will be assisting you the most. There are other members of the team to my left, but they'll introduce themselves as and when necessary.

00:11:21:27 - 00:11:28:21

Uh, can I now ask the local authorities and councils to introduce themselves, uh, so we can start with Suffolk County Council.

00:11:31:18 - 00:11:47:17

Thank you. Sir. Um, my name is Michael Bedford, King's counsel. Um, and I'm instructed on behalf of Suffolk County Council. I do have one of the offices of the county council with me, but I expect to be doing the speaking so I won't introduce him at this stage unless you wish it.

00:11:48:29 - 00:11:54:02

No, that's fine, thank you. Uh, if we then move on to East Suffolk Council.

00:11:57:03 - 00:12:32:21

Good morning sir. My name is Mark Westmoreland Smith, King's Counsel. I'm a peer for East Suffolk Council, and I'm instructed by Brian Greenwood. He's a partner at Clyde and Co. Um, and I have Graham Studley, who's a principal planner and solar lead at East Suffolk Council in the room, as well as Nigel Billingsley, who's a partner at Bruton Knowles and is conducting the land negotiations on behalf of the council. Um, we propose only to speak to item 2.4 today.

00:12:33:05 - 00:12:38:10

Uh, just by way of giving a brief update to the examining authority as to where we are.

00:12:40:23 - 00:12:41:17

Thank you.

00:12:43:17 - 00:12:46:04

Next, if we can turn to District council.

00:12:50:28 - 00:12:51:24

Good morning.

00:12:52:04 - 00:12:54:06

Oh, good. Oh, sorry.

00:12:54:08 - 00:13:10:25

Thank you. Please go ahead. Thank you. Pleasure. Good morning. My name is Vicki Hutton Squier, chartered surveyor and director at Hobbs Parker Property Consultants and acting on behalf of Thanet District Council. And we proposed speaking at point number 2.4 of the agenda.

00:13:12:17 - 00:13:13:12

Thank you.

00:13:21:19 - 00:13:43:06

Good morning. My name's Abby, councillor Abby Smith. I'm a councillor with Senate District Council for the Senate villages in which this development will be local would be located. Um, but I'm speaking in general terms on behalf of my residents.

00:13:44:10 - 00:13:48:12

Can I ask if you're speaking in relation to a particular point on the agenda?

00:13:49:01 - 00:13:55:21

Uh, just in general to the the question of compulsory acquisition.

00:13:59:04 - 00:14:01:19

And there's no specific plot just to confirm.

00:14:02:15 - 00:14:10:06

Uh, no, it's, um, in relation to the Kent, um, location of Minster Marshes. Thank you.

00:14:10:08 - 00:14:11:08

Okay. Thank you.

00:14:14:24 - 00:14:17:09

And next we have Ian Brown.

00:14:20:13 - 00:14:22:08

Yes. Hello.

00:14:23:26 - 00:14:27:14

Uh, Mr. Brown, are you speaking in relation to a particular plot?

00:14:28:04 - 00:14:44:28

Um, it's not a specific plot. It's a general inquiry regarding recent reports regarding Nestle shareholdings from National Grid that relate to future acquisitions.

00:14:46:00 - 00:14:50:05

Okay. Thank you. Next we have Anthony Fincham.

00:14:55:29 - 00:14:57:03

Louise Fincham.

00:15:02:05 - 00:15:03:11

Colin Innes.

00:15:08:21 - 00:15:31:06

Good morning sir. My name is Colin. I'm a partner in the law firm of Shepherd of Wedderburn, and I'm instructed by Alan Stewart of ScottishPower Renewables Legal to represent ScottishPower renewables UK limited, East Anglia two Limited and East Anglia One North Limited, who all have both land ownership and interests within the order limits.

00:15:32:11 - 00:15:33:01

Thank you.

00:15:35:11 - 00:15:37:13

Next we have David Ricks.

00:15:40:22 - 00:16:09:28

Hello. Good morning. Hi. Good morning. Yeah. No, I was here. I was hoping to, um. Yeah. My name is David Ricks. I was hoping to speak, um, about plots two seven, 220. Um, 193 194199. Um one 100. Um, I'm here to represent my family and my family business as we run the farm, which, uh, cable roots are going to be crossing, um, in between the frist and substation and ceiling.

00:16:10:29 - 00:16:19:01

Thanks. Can I just confirm on the book of reference the name is Ian Ricks. So you're just representing a family member, is that correct?

00:16:19:03 - 00:16:23:16

Yes. So in Rick's. So I run the family business now, but Ian is still a landowner.

00:16:24:04 - 00:16:25:16

Yep. Okay. Thank you.

00:16:27:20 - 00:16:29:08

Next we have Adrian Smith.

00:16:34:20 - 00:16:52:25

Yeah. Good morning. Uh, my name is Adrian Smith. I live in Minster, and I want to really just make the point that there is a total lack of transparency within this massive system of yours. Uh, I've heard about Mr. Smith.

00:16:52:27 - 00:16:58:03

Sorry. We're not at this point. We're just talking about introductions. This is not a general.

00:16:58:14 - 00:16:59:17

Uh, right. Okay.

00:16:59:25 - 00:17:04:00

Make your points right. Can I just ask, are you speaking relation to a particular part?

00:17:04:15 - 00:17:07:28

Minster. Minster. Master general.

00:17:07:29 - 00:17:10:19

It's a general point about Minster rather than the specific.

00:17:10:21 - 00:17:14:07

Minster marshes and the acquisition of Penguin Bay. Poole.

00:17:17:03 - 00:17:20:08

Okay. Thank you. Um,

00:17:21:24 - 00:17:25:00

and, uh, finally, we have, uh, Councillor Rebecca Wing.

00:17:38:16 - 00:18:02:13

We don't have a counselor wing. So there are a number of people who obviously haven't joined us at the moment. We'll check with the case team to see whether they are due to join us at a later time within the agenda. Um, can I just confirm that I've heard from everyone listed, uh, who wishes to speak about affected land parcels at today's event?

00:18:05:18 - 00:18:06:24

Sorry, Mr. Smith.

00:18:09:10 - 00:18:10:00

You had.

00:18:10:13 - 00:18:22:26

Just. Yeah, just a point. People may not have joined you because, for example, I received my email to join at 946 this morning. Uh, so there may well be others who received it later. Just to let you know. Thank you.

00:18:23:22 - 00:18:30:27

Okay. My apologies, Miss Smith, for the late notification. Um, and we'll follow that up with our case team. Thank you.

00:18:33:28 - 00:18:42:14

So, can I just check that there's no one else who wishes wishes to speak about a particular land parcel or a particular point on the agenda.

00:18:46:22 - 00:18:52:23

Okay. Thank you. Um, in that case, I'll now pass over to Miss Holmes. Take us through the next items on the agenda.

00:18:54:22 - 00:19:28:16

Thank you. So there were a number of key documents that were going to be referred to throughout this hearing. So preventing things can be a bit repetitive. And so time I'm going to set these out in detail now along with the relevant examination library reference. I then don't need to keep repeating the examination every reference all the way through, unless I refer to a different or new document. So the book of reference is the version that was submitted at deadline three, which is an examination library at 018. The statement of reasons, also submitted at deadline three is rep 3012.

00:19:29:21 - 00:20:03:29

The current land plans also submitted. Deadline three can be found in the examination library at rep 302 to rep 305. The latest version of the works plans were submitted with the change application and an examination library at CR 107 to CR 109, a deadline three. The applicant's updates included the schedule of negotiations of compulsory acquisition with land interests as appendix B to the stem of reasons, and this is Rep 3-16.

00:20:04:01 - 00:20:51:11

And also the Land Rights tracker was issued and that's Rep three oh 59 so finally, while I will try and minimize the use of abbreviations, I may occasionally lapse. So when I say CA, I mean compulsory acquisition and TPI means temporary possession. So moving on to item two on the agenda covering sections one, two, two and 123. The Planning Act 2008. So to provide some context for today's discussion, can I start by asking the applicant to take no more than, say, five minutes to briefly set out the case for compulsory acquisition and temporary possession against the test and the Planning Act 2008, including whether all reasonable alternatives have been considered, whether the rights to be acquired are reasonably necessary and proportionate, and whether there's a compelling case in the public interest for the land to be required.

00:20:51:13 - 00:20:52:05

Acquired.

00:20:54:19 - 00:21:04:06

Sara King's, counsel for the applicant. I'm going to ask now, Miss Stoddard, senior surveyor, to address those points for you in outline form, as you indicated.

00:21:06:18 - 00:21:37:20

Jackie stood up on behalf of the applicant. The applicant has explained why the land included in the compulsory acquisition is required, how it's proportionate and necessary, and also that the applicant has the necessary resources to deliver the project. The Statement of Reasons outlines the rationale for the application for compulsory acquisition of land. It summarizes the need for the project and how the

application believes it has met the necessary tests, including the consideration of reasonable alternatives, and that the right sought are necessary, reasonable and proportionate.

00:21:38:14 - 00:22:08:22

The strategic options backed check report addresses in detail the need for the proposed project and the alternative strategic options considered, including the reason for the selection of the HVDC. That's high voltage direct current link between the Sizewell area in Suffolk and the Richborough area in Kent is the preferred option. Looking in more detail at reasonable alternatives, the Environmental Statement chapter three main Alternatives Considered, provides further details on the alternatives throughout the development process.

00:22:09:18 - 00:22:56:06

The Corridor Preliminary Routing and Siting Study is a process used to develop preferred routes and sites for infrastructure. The study involves assessing various factors to ensure effective planning and consenting for projects, and delves far deeper into the granular detail of the preferred route. To narrow the selection down further. This report presents the outputs of the Routing and Siting Study following the identification of the preferred strategic option, including alternative landfall areas, converter station sites, HVAC, which is high voltage alternating current route corridors, and onshore and offshore HVDC cable routes that were all considered, and also sets out the reasons for the selection of the emerging preference options.

00:22:57:18 - 00:23:31:21

The Design Development Report and the planning statement further explain how the evolution of the proposed project has followed an iterative design process. The alternatives in terms of the route and construction were considered throughout the process, including taking into account responses received during responses to feedback received during consultation. The options analysis ensures all reasonable alternatives were considered and goes on to justify the siting of the infrastructure. The applicant is confident it has applied a robust assessment of the options with appropriate backed checks throughout.

00:23:33:28 - 00:24:05:13

If we turn to the compelling case, excuse me, the compelling case in the public interest is set out in the planning statement. The case for the project is urgent and is important, and is needed to accommodate additional power flows generated from renewable and low carbon energy, as well as accommodating additional new interconnection from mainland Europe. The proposed project is required to support offshore wind projects, which in turn are required to meet the government's targets of connection of up to 50GW of offshore wind by 2030.

00:24:07:01 - 00:24:13:06

This offshore generation is a key part of strategy for secure, clean and affordable British energy for the long term.

00:24:15:26 - 00:24:55:23

The provisions in the National Policy Statement for energy recognised that compulsory acquisition of land may be needed for onshore electrical infrastructure, such as new substations, and for associated mitigation effects such as for landscape enhancement. It acknowledges where rights in land cannot be

acquired by agreement. The developer may seek to acquire necessary rights through a DCO or CPO, and that permanent rights are preferable to voluntary wellies. It's in the public interest to obtain the appropriate security for the electricity supply network through the grant of permanent land rights for major infrastructure projects undertaken by National Grid.

00:24:55:27 - 00:25:07:26

Longevity and security of rights is essential to ensure that National Grid can create new and upgrade existing infrastructure network networks to support major power generation of infrastructure projects.

00:25:10:01 - 00:25:18:19

Therefore, the applicant considers it's essential to secure the grant of permanent easements rather than where leaves, whether by negotiation or through compulsory acquisition.

00:25:21:26 - 00:25:54:14

If we look now at the necessary test, the land required for the project is shown in the land plans and has been split into individual plots based on ownership and the works required, each with its own reference number, which is indexed in the Book of Reference. Book of reference also shows the relevant powers sought against each plot. To provide clarity, the land plans have applied a different colour to each right, with the highest right in the hierarchy displayed on the plan according can be seen on the land plans and also in the front set of the front end of the book of reference.

00:25:56:28 - 00:26:33:26

We've addressed the issue of being proportionate and balanced in the private loss, in terms of the classes of rights that have been developed, in order that we can seek to take the lowest class of right needed to deliver the actual works. In broad terms, we have applied for either acquisition one of six classes of rights or two classes of temporary possession. The areas of permanent acquisition are limited to converter stations, substations with associated accesses, and areas of landscaping and ecological mitigation, where the nature and the current use of the land is changed and will not be returned to its previous use.

00:26:34:22 - 00:27:06:24

In the case of temporary possession and the permanent right sort. The intention of the applicant is, in the vast majority of cases, the land can be returned to its former use post construction with as minimal a restriction as possible. The applicants have applied a strategy during the development of the proposed project to ensure the right sort are the minimum necessary to limit, insofar as possible, the interference with private rights, whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to ensure the proposed project can be delivered to meet the need case.

00:27:09:04 - 00:27:17:13

This strategy also encompasses the statutory duty upon the applicant to be economic and efficient, and have regard to any potential environmental impacts.

00:27:19:04 - 00:27:33:11

The applicant is seeking to employ a two stage or sequential approach to the construction of the project, using temporary possession first, and then drawing down the smallest possible area for permanent rights, which match the final footprint of the proposed project.

00:27:36:12 - 00:28:07:17

This approach is to minimize the extent of interference with private interests of others, and will be achieved by seeking temporary powers over the majority of the order land, in order to undertake the construction of areas of pure, purely temporary possession can then be reinstated and handed back, with no long term restrictions or rights being retained by the applicant. This provides flexibility to the applicant and, for the landowner, minimises the area of land required for the compulsory acquisition of land or rights, which has a much lesser impact.

00:28:08:07 - 00:28:53:24

The alternative to the above would be to exercise compulsory purchase powers before commencing construction, which would then either constrain the flexibility allowed for in the draft DCO, or would mean the applicant would have to take a larger area of land in the first instance. There may then be the need to offer land back where critical dam rules apply, and create further unnecessary negative impacts on landowners, giving rise to increased levels of compensation. This type of two stage or sequential approach has been adopted by the applicant on previous DCO project, including the Richborough Connection Project and the Bramford to Twin Stud project, and indeed by other DC undertakers, including Thames Water in respect of Thames Tideway, and also finds precedent in Transport and Works Act orders.

00:28:55:03 - 00:29:15:12

In conclusion, the applicant considers and met the tests of the Planning Act in that the land within the order limits is required for the development, and that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the land to be acquired. It confirms that the compulsory acquisition of land and rights is reasonable, proportionate and necessary to deliver the proposed development.

00:29:18:16 - 00:29:49:10

Thank you very much. It'd be really helpful if you could supply that submission in writing as part of your post hearing submission. Thank you. Um, in relation to whether all reasonable alternatives have been considered, and we're thinking about in terms of CA, so we're only considering local alternatives related to specific land plots rather than strategic alternatives. In the essay question one Gen 70, we asked the councils in their roles as local planning and highway authorities, where they were of any reasonable alternatives to C0 and TP.

00:29:49:12 - 00:30:14:08

So by the applicant, only Suffolk County Council provided any specific response, stating that it was not persuaded, as a local highway authority, that there had been adequate investigation or alternative access routes for the Saxon London Comfort Station. So I also know that this was covered in Suffolk County Council's Local Impact report. So can I firstly ask Suffolk County Council to provide some detail in relation to this issue and then ask the applicant to respond.

00:30:18:26 - 00:31:13:01

Thank you madam. Michael Bedford um, Suffolk County Council uh, madam. Yes. On this issue of, um, adequate consideration of reasonable alternatives to matters of access. Madam, just by way of background, you will have obviously seen that we had raised this point in our relevant representation that our dash 5209 at paragraph 12, specifically in relation to the Frommer's crossing, which

obviously is part of the Southern Access Corridor to the Saxmundham converter station, and we had also raised it in the Local Impact report, in particular at paragraphs 11.225 to 11.227.

00:31:13:05 - 00:31:43:28

That's rep one sorry rep one dash 30. In relation to access routes to the Saxmundham converter station, in particular, the issue of the Ben Hall Rail Bridge and the use of the B11 21 those positions. Madam, you will know, have been maintained as outstanding areas of disagreement in the latest version of the Suffolk County Council.

00:31:44:13 - 00:32:23:15

Principal areas of disagreement. Summary statement. That's Rep 3081 and that's item 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. And, madam, I appreciate that we are not here dealing with the issue specific hearing to and I'm therefore not going to, I hope, but go into any of the kind of substantive detail as to why we consider that there's been an inadequate consideration of the alternatives in terms of the the technical issues on the highways access and the impacts on the frames crossing.

00:32:23:17 - 00:32:58:03

But that's the context, the points that I wanted to stress this morning in a compulsory acquisition context. Obviously, the acquisition of land or rights to provide an access route to the development, whether as a construction access route or as an operational access route for the future operation and maintenance of the project would be certainly capable of being the acquisition of land or rights required to facilitate the development.

00:32:58:05 - 00:33:28:27

And so. Meet the test in section one, two, two, subsection two of the 2008. The issue as to whether there is then a compelling case in the public interest, so as to meet the test in section one, two, two. Subsection three of the 2008 act would obviously depend on a range of matters, including the question of whether there are reasonable alternatives to what is proposed by the applicant.

00:33:30:02 - 00:34:07:23

Now, if the examining authority were to conclude that what is currently proposed by the applicant would cause either undue harm or would not be demonstrably deliverable, and I, as it will highlight those two alternatives, because in relation to the from s crossing, I think our concern is, uh, of a nature of causing undue harm in relation to the Ben Hall Bridge. Although there are clearly, ah, issues of harm, there are also key issues as to whether it is demonstrably deliverable.

00:34:08:05 - 00:34:32:29

And so that's why I say I highlighted those two permutations. But obviously if the Xa, having listened obviously carefully to all of our concerns, were to conclude that the issues raised by us, either at the framers crossing and or at the Ben Hall Rail Bridge, uh, preclude uh, the um, um,

00:34:34:25 - 00:35:17:23

present access arrangements, which are proposed for the SECs funding converter station. It would, of course, then be legitimate to consider the alternative access, uh, uh, routes that could be provided to the Saxmundham converter station, and we have set out in both the Local Impact Report and in our subsequent representations, our views on a northern access route and our view that the applicant has

not given adequate consideration to the ability of that route as a means of resolving the shortcomings and problems we find with the applicant's currently proposed, um, route.

00:35:17:29 - 00:36:13:00

Now, I say, I don't want to go too much into the detail of, you know, the merits of those arguments because I'm trying to keep it to CA matters. But the point which I do want to emphasize, and obviously you'll be very alive to if you were persuaded of the Suffolk County Council concerns, then something would need to happen to the project to enable it to address those concerns, and that would be effectively for the applicant to have to consider how it would deliver an alternative access route, and that is likely to require the applicant, the applicant, to consider the acquisition of additional land and or rights, whether on a permanent or on a temporary basis, in order to undertake works to provide such an alternative access route.

00:36:14:02 - 00:36:51:07

That, of course, has timescale implications given where we are in the examination, and it also is an issue that cannot, in a sense be left to lie to your final report. Because if your final report were simply to conclude that there was substance in the county council's concerns, it would then in practice, be too late for those concerns to be addressed by the applicant through this project, which obviously would then engender practical difficulties in terms of what your recommendation could be.

00:36:51:09 - 00:37:29:26

What the Secretary of State should do, and so on. So the point we would want to emphasize is that really obviously, we've made this point of these points throughout the examination and indeed in pre examination engagement with the applicant. Thus far, the applicant has not been prepared to move from its present position. And I suppose if one's being brutally honest, unless there is a hint, steer or other indication for a visit from the examining authority to the applicant, it's unlikely that the applicant would be minded of its own volition to change its position.

00:37:31:24 - 00:38:15:17

Obviously, it is within your power to give the applicant the benefit of your provisional views on matters as the examination unfolds, and also to indicate where you're not satisfied with explanations that the applicant has provided thus far. Obviously, you do have an opportunity. Uh, at, uh, the, um, the next stage for your second round of written questions, uh, to indicate those concerns. But you also have opportunities procedurally to issue a request to the applicant before that date, because I think that date is day 23rd of February, that you could take action after the CAA and Ish hearings, if you wish to do so.

00:38:16:11 - 00:38:59:13

What we would ask you to consider and obviously consider carefully as part of your deliberations at this stage of the examination, is that if you do share the County Council's concerns about the adequacy of the access arrangements to the Saxmundham converter station, then we would very much invite you, uh, to, um, uh, seek, uh, a response from the applicant that was moving to addressing those concerns by means of proposing measures that could provide an alternative route.

00:38:59:16 - 00:39:36:12

And that would mean engaging the applicant, engaging with the, um, compulsory acquisition and or rights implications of doing that. So that's the main point that I do want to emphasize on this issue. There is a small related point. If I can just, um, raise in relation to that. It's on a narrower point, if I can put it that way in relation to public rights of way, uh, enhancements. Uh, and whilst again, I'm conscious that this is not issue two, this is the compulsory acquisition hearing.

00:39:36:14 - 00:39:59:09

I wanted to raise it because again, it has a similar timescale. implication. Madam, you will have seen that we have been raising issues about the impacts of the project on the public rights of way network, in particular in the vicinity of Saxmundham, but it's not exclusively in the vicinity of Saxmundham.

00:39:59:12 - 00:40:11:00

We just have, just as part of that public rights of way, are covered in issue specific hearing to be covered in more detail by my colleague Mr. Rennie. So maybe maybe hold. Hold that until then.

00:40:11:02 - 00:40:58:17

Well, well, accept. The reason why I'm raising it now is because you did ask a question of the applicant in your first written questions. In your question. It's one TT 16. To which the applicant replied in rep 3069. And effectively. And I say I am conscious that this is the seea hearing, but effectively the applicant's response was it could not go down the route of offering enhancements to the public right of way network, because were it to do so, it would have to take land, and its view was that it wasn't able to take that land because it would not be essential.

00:40:58:19 - 00:41:54:10

Mitigation was its phraseology, and therefore it could not exercise compulsory acquisition powers in relation to that. So that's the key point I wanted to try to link. And if I could just briefly say on that, we do not think that the applicant's response in one RTE 16 that anything which is not essential mitigation for a significant effect. We do not think that proposition is correct in terms of limiting the powers of what can be the subject of compulsory acquisition, we don't consider it reflects the guidance in in one particularly paragraph 4.1.8 or in N5, particularly paragraph 2.6.6, both of which, in our view, take a wider view of the scope of matters that can be the subject of compulsory acquisition.

00:41:54:18 - 00:43:15:06

We consider that guidance when it's using the word mitigation, is using it in what I might call a portmanteau sense, to embrace all elements of the mitigation hierarchy. That's to say, not just as it were, purely narrowly things which mitigate an impact, but also where mitigation isn't possible, things which might offset or compensate for an impact. And we think that that is certainly a legitimate role for compulsory acquisition. If you find that that offsetting or compensation to be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, and we would Suggest that that can include as offsetting or compensation enhancements to the public right of way network, in the sense that if there are impacts on one part of the public right of network way network by reason of the works, which you can't avoid because that's where the works have to be, we see a form of offsetting or compensation could be the enhancement of some other part of the rights of way network, obviously within a reasonable geographic proximity, that you could say that there was a nexus between what is the impact and what is the offsetting.

00:43:15:12 - 00:43:47:20

But in principle, that's the point and the point that I say I bring it back to this timescale point. If the x ray was of the view that there was force in what the county council is saying about that, and I do instance the from s crossing as as. As an instance that is one of the locations, not the only location. One of the locations where we have said the applicant should be looking to provide a public right of way over the promise and along the route, etc.

00:43:47:24 - 00:44:35:11

that obviously does have then implications. Were that to be taken up by the applicant, there would be rights issues and possibly land issues to have to be addressed if they're being done by compulsory acquisition. Again, it's that timescale point. Will when can that be done? In the course of the examination, which I say I bring it back to this point. It would be very helpful if the examination authority, having considered our concerns, were in early course, I certainly no later than the second round of written questions to put those points to the applicant to get them to address, because I can see practically it would be possible for them to be addressed in the remainder of the examination if they grapple with now, but in a sense, we lose the window and we get timed out if they're not.

00:44:35:13 - 00:44:52:12

So I apologize for taking rather a long time to explain those points, but that's why both in relation to the the alternative access routes more generally, but also in relation to public right of way enhancements. We think there is a CA issue which we've invited you to consider. Thank you.

00:44:52:14 - 00:45:11:04

Thank you. Thank you I get that. The in terms of just going back to the alternative in terms of a different route to the converter station, the view. I haven't seen it anywhere. If you actually put forward a proposal of what the alternative route Suffolk County Council would want is what it looks like. So the applicant can review that and assess that.

00:45:11:11 - 00:46:07:23

We we have certainly discussed that outside of the examination with the applicant, so that the applicant is aware of our concerns and we have identified in the written material, and we'll give you the references in the post hearing submission to where we've done that. I have to say, we haven't been prescriptive in terms of it must be along alignment X or alignment Y. We have encouraged the applicant in particular, to be considering a route which comes from the A12 north of Sachs, London, potentially utilising the Sizewell link road, which is part of obviously the Sizewell work, which is uh, um, uh, in train uh, and then potentially using partly existing highway, partly haul roads over other land in order to then connect in from the north.

00:46:07:25 - 00:46:31:06

So we've, we have provided that. But I say we haven't said it must be along a particular prescribed alignment. And we have had discussions with the applicant about that. So the applicant I think, is aware of the corridor that we're talking about and therefore has had the opportunity to engage with that, and no doubt will have the further opportunity to engage with that if it wishes.

00:46:32:29 - 00:46:54:07

Okay. Thank you. Well, I'll turn to the applicant now, but obviously I am conscious that, um, it's not the applicant has come up with the not with a route. And really to look at other alternatives, we'd sort of expect other people with those alternatives to supply a bit of detail and to what, what this is so the applicant can assess it. But I'll pass over to the applicant for a response first. Thank you.

00:46:54:18 - 00:47:10:25

Thank you ma'am. Yes, we can deal with the the issue that you've raised about alternatives and respond broadly to that point. Mr. Park, Mr.. Buckley, James Buckley, who's sitting to my left, um, can address that point. He is the expert with onshore engineering.

00:47:12:20 - 00:47:24:03

James Buckley, senior project manager, looking after the onshore engineering on behalf of the applicant. Um, during the uh, development phase of the project and at consultation, we did offer alternative.

00:47:25:21 - 00:47:58:24

access routes to the converter site, which included one to the north of Saxmundham. The one that we currently have and one to the east of Saxmundham. We did a back check, then on one to further to the east and the route proposed by Suffolk County Council, which included either the B11 22 through Thebarton to to Leiston, across the Leiston airfield and back down the B 1119 or the Sizewell Link road, which we cannot rely on because it's not part of this application and the current indications is that won't be available until late 27.

00:47:59:08 - 00:48:41:24

In doing that, backtrack and that work, um, we looked at all of the different impacts on land so there'd be more impact on land if we went around the longer routes to the north. It's about a 22 kilometre longer route, and it also increases all of the travel time to site by at least between 30 and 40 minutes, depending on the traffic. Um, so over the life of the project. That alternative route which or corridor that was put forward by Suffolk Council. Depending on which scenario you took in terms of 5050 on traffic from the north or south or A20 on the A12, that would increase the project by around 22 to 44,000 hours.

00:48:42:05 - 00:49:21:11

In terms of the impact on the project, the chosen route, which we believe is deliverable. And I'll come on to the general bridge conversation in issue specific hearing two, um, is perfectly achievable. It's it's around a, uh, a mile, uh, off the A12, and it's the shortest route to site and enables us to have full control over, um, our construction traffic through the shortest route. It doesn't interact with the Sizewell link road and the Sizewell traffic. Using the link road in the 1122 and the B11 19 is currently unsuitable for um, heavy goods vehicles in large quantities.

00:49:21:13 - 00:49:56:15

In fact, in the SVR examination it was said that it wasn't suitable. Um, and it's also currently the um proposed emergency route for the sites will be during their emergency evacuation plan. It would need considerable improvements along the route, including the straightening of the junction with the um Grove Road at Friston, which would also then impact further landowners. So in terms of the overall

impact on landowners, uh, as we are talking, see here in the route we're proposed has the least impact out of all of the routes that we considered.

00:49:57:27 - 00:50:29:29

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, I think in order to try and resolve this issue, it would be helpful. Um, it will probably get discussed tomorrow in its specific hearing, too. But if Suffolk County Council could provide in writing a bit as much detail as you can in terms of what you think the alternative route should be, um, for our deadline for and then maybe the applicant could also supply, um, the reasons why you consider what you've got is the is the optimal route. Um, that have been really helpful. But I do think it's going to get discussed tomorrow as well.

00:50:30:23 - 00:50:35:12

Okay. Thank you. Do any of the other councils wish to comment at this point?

00:50:39:02 - 00:50:40:18

Don't see any hands up.

00:50:42:17 - 00:50:46:05

Okay. In that case, um, we will move on.

00:50:49:00 - 00:51:19:16

So moving on to item 2.2. So I've got some specific questions regarding, but we're not limited to one registered land and plots, um, and other individual plots. So I just first want to talk about where ownership is unknown. So thank you for your response to its Q1 question one Gen 71 and for adding the additional tabs that arise tracker for the unknown, category one and category two land in Suffolk and Kent in the landmines tracker. Now we've got these two new tabs.

00:51:19:18 - 00:51:52:04

The one from cap one is over 500 rows. The one for cap two is 300 rows. Um, I appreciate that. What has happened is you've just put every plot in where something is unknown. Maybe. Maybe the interest, not necessarily the the actual ownership of the land. Um, it's not really helping me get the information that I need. So what I really need to know is how many plots are genuinely unknown plots. So you don't know information about the ownership or the use of the plots or interest in the plots? Um, do you know how many plots that is.

00:51:53:25 - 00:51:58:19

For the applicant? Yes, I think we can help with that. Miss Stoddard will be able to assist.

00:52:00:02 - 00:52:32:06

On behalf of the applicant. Um, the total unknown unregistered freehold area is less than 2%. And I appreciate your comments about all of the interests in the land rights tracker showing where there is a query about either registered ownership or interest. I don't have the number off the top of my head, but we have noted that as a team and are intending to change that tab on the land rights tracker to just unknown unregistered to really narrow it down. Everything else is detailed as reputed or unknown in the category one section of the Book of Reference.

00:52:32:08 - 00:52:36:24

So I think there is a point there. You write about duplication and lack of clarity.

00:52:37:06 - 00:53:15:13

No, I appreciate you probably just in the initial shake down to try and work out what you've got. But, um, at the end, I need to look through all these unknown plots and determine whether they should be compulsory required. So I just need a bit more information. Um, and also when you're, when you're doing that work at the moment. Column Y of the land rights Tracker. Um, for the unknown. Um, tabs is for the summary of negotiation is just sort of saying the same text for every, every row, which doesn't really help me either. Um, I understand it's difficult to determine the ownership of unknown plots, but I need to be convinced that you have done and you are doing all that you can to determine the ownership of the plots.

00:53:15:15 - 00:53:32:05

So when you do produce this new list, can you supply sort of a bit more detail on the work that you've done to date? And can you tell me now on what techniques you're, you're, um, action in, in terms of trying to determine the unknown, the unknown plots and how successful have you been?

00:53:33:27 - 00:54:17:06

Jackie stood up on behalf of the applicant. Yes. Of course. Um, the applicant, uh, and their suppliers have employed a land reference in methodology, which is a fairly standard thing across projects like this. And what that does is set out a series of criteria that we go through to try and identify interest in land. So you would start normally with desktop reference into everything that's registered through Land Registry, through other online sources like electoral rolls, etcetera, etcetera. Um, the next step that we do is what we call contact referencing, and that is contacting the people that we know and asking them directly through a land interest questionnaire if they're aware of who the owners of the unregistered plots are.

00:54:17:24 - 00:54:48:26

And that has picked up quite a lot of these discrepancies. They're still listed in the book of references, reputed because until we get into legal instruction, that interest isn't confirmed. But yes, that that process has picked up a lot. That process continues. We've just done a land registry data fresh ahead of deadline three, which has obviously brought forward a lot more of the interest, especially as Land Registry are catching up with registrations as well. So there is a time lag there that we do try and account for. And that process, again, is ongoing.

00:54:48:28 - 00:55:18:28

So every time we meet with landowners, we're taking plans out. We're asking them for confirmation whether they have occupied that. You know, could they prove title to it? Could they claim title to it to try and keep that process going? And in addition, we also continue to do the unregistered site notices. So they're put up at different intervals, particularly when we do a data refresh or there's a noticing requirement, they go up for a period of weeks and are monitored, and they've got all of the contact details on. So occasionally there's 1 or 2 more picked up through that process.

00:55:19:24 - 00:55:31:03

Thank you. So, um, as an action point, are you going to change the tab in the landmarks tracker or just add a tab that's going to be explaining what they sort of genuine unknown plots are?

00:55:32:01 - 00:55:40:27

On behalf of the applicant, I think the best thing to do would be for us to just list out the unknown unregistered plots rather than the specific interest. So we'll take an action to do that.

00:55:40:29 - 00:56:04:16

Yes, and I don't you don't need to sort of split them into sort of categories. Just, just the plot for, for Suffolk County of Suffolk and for Kent. I'll put them all on one thing I don't mind. And in that if then over time I can see that some of these plots are dropping off that list. That helps me to demonstrate that you are doing everything you can to to determine the plots. So it helps me later when I have to write my reports. The secretary state.

00:56:15:14 - 00:56:29:18

Okay, so just moving on to some questions I've got on some of the specific plots. So first looking at Suffolk plots one nine so can the applicant display the land plan showing this plot and also the corresponding works plan for that location.

00:56:31:09 - 00:56:35:09

So we can show them both next to each other. So I'm testing now what we can do.

00:56:39:26 - 00:57:18:06

While that's coming up I'll carry on. Um, so in response to ask one question, one Jen, 78, the applicant stated that a decision was taken to retain Suffolk, the Suffolk compounds. So plot one nine as a permanent compound, right. The applicant states that the DCO is intended to consent the life of the project, and therefore there's a need to provide future compound for large scale maintenance works during the operational life of the converter station and decommissioning. So just have a couple of questions. What's the anticipated frequency of these large scale maintenance works that you talk about? And can you supply a bit of detail as to how this land would be used for them?

00:57:20:19 - 00:57:53:05

James Buckley, on behalf of the applicant, um, the frequency of the works associated with major scale where this plant planned that this plot would be used is probably around every 20 to 30 years when we need to change major equipment on site so we can maintain the site on the annual, bi annual, five yearly, ten yearly from within the site itself at the converter station. Um, but if we needed to replace a transformer, we have a spare on site, a second transformer, we would need some additional area for accommodation and storage.

00:57:53:07 - 00:58:28:09

So probably 20 to 25 years. So the idea of this plot would be we'll use it for setup to build the bridge as temporary use. Um, at the end of the project. We'll return it back to the landowner to be used back as the original use that they want to use it for arable field. I know there's a planning application in that area for a dog walking field. Um, and then we would come back at a later date and use that, um, maybe 20, 25 years with a notice period to the landowner to let him know that we needed to come

back in. Um, and then the only other time that we would potentially use that would be decommissioning of the project.

00:58:28:11 - 00:58:42:14

So we again, we would set up site yard there. It would be for accommodation and parking going to the site, start decommissioning the site as soon as we've got enough space decommissioned in the site. We would then move to that up to the site to continue the decommissioning.

00:58:42:23 - 00:58:51:27

Okay, so if you didn't get the rights to this land, how would that affect, um, the project and how you can operate and maintain it?

00:58:52:15 - 00:59:12:04

James Barclay on behalf of the applicant. So in other projects where we haven't, uh, retained a right to a compound, we've been held to ransom by landowners and had to pay more for plots of land, or in plots of land that aren't suitable or aren't near enough to the site. So that's why we've chosen to go for a permanent right here.

00:59:13:09 - 00:59:28:14

Okay. Um, so the owner of this plot is William Lockwood Estates, and I know they've currently got an objection to the rights of the land. Um, is there anyone here representing the landowner who'd like to comment? Not sure if they joined earlier.

00:59:32:07 - 00:59:34:06

I'm not seeing any hands up.

00:59:36:20 - 00:59:38:10

Okay, we'll move on.

00:59:41:08 - 00:59:49:09

Thank you for your, um, for the information on that one. I'd now like to look at Suffolk Plot 111, which is on screen at the moment already.

00:59:53:16 - 01:00:26:21

So in one 1080, we explore the need for permanent acquisition of the entirety of the Suffolk plot. 111 it's noted that the applicant states that plot 111 is for work three A, which is access and environmental mitigation, planting and screening. So we noted that there's that considering the planting shown on figure three of the Olymp. Um, and I wonder whether you could bring that up as well somehow. Um, there's still going to be a considerable area of plot 111 with no apparent works or mitigation planting proposed.

01:00:27:15 - 01:00:37:22

Um, the applicant did respond to this in rep three oh 69, stating that the mitigation works could broadly be summarized as a change in farming practice and creation of skylark plots.

01:00:40:06 - 01:00:43:24

Um, and if it helps 1045.

01:00:45:27 - 01:00:55:03

So if first if the applicant could just talk us through that plot and explain, um, what environmental mitigation is required and how it would work.

01:00:59:06 - 01:01:31:21

Jackie stood out on behalf of the applicant? Yes, absolutely. Um, so the entirety of plot 11 is split into various different elements of work. We've got a significant area of, of, um, mitigation land that is effectively for replacing skylark habitat, which would be lost as part of the converter station. And that's the section that you can see on the works plans that's listed as management of 12 hectares. What that effectively needs is a change in the farming practice. So what we need to do there is contrary to the current use of that land.

01:01:31:23 - 01:02:03:18

And you know, if we didn't have absolute control, you could effectively have the landowner wanting to grow one type of crop, also needing to implement other habitat measures or other cropping regimes to deliver that mitigation. So we've taken the view that actually having control of it is the better way to deliver that mitigation. Um, the area to the west is the long sort of sliver, if you like, is associated with mitigation around the Promise Bridge. So that's a separate element of mitigation in its own right.

01:02:03:20 - 01:02:34:00

And it's part of the same plot because it's the same ownership but a separate detailed area of work. And that's for hedgerow and tree planting along the access and establishment of some native woodland. Again, it changes the nature and current use of the land. And so it's felt that acquisition is the best way to be able to deliver that. And then mixed in with that, we've obviously got the permanent access road to the converter station and some permanent elements of drainage, which again, we've already explored that we need to have control to be able to deliver.

01:02:35:07 - 01:02:56:21

So I think we're going to try and get the Olympics in here. Thank you. Um, in terms of the crop rotation, I understand what you're saying there. Um, and which is why you need the you can't just deliver it with the acquisition of rights alone. Um, but do you know of any schemes where it has been possible to still achieve what you need and only take rights.

01:02:57:25 - 01:03:29:20

Jackie stood up on behalf of the applicant. I don't, but what I am aware of is, is where that acquisition in respect of compulsory powers, because that's the most appropriate level, is mirrored with like a leasehold type arrangement through the voluntary process, where you can actually engage the current landowner to deliver that work on your behalf. That is possible, but that's obviously part of the private treaty negotiations rather than the compulsory acquisition. Compulsory acquisition, as we all know, is quite weedy, and it doesn't necessarily allow us to deliver exactly what we need.

01:03:29:22 - 01:03:45:09

So we've got to take the next best thing and then work with the landowner privately to try and get something that's a bit more suitable. But I firmly believe rights alone wouldn't let us do it, because it's contrary to what we actually need to achieve. You've got conflicting uses at the same time.

01:03:45:18 - 01:04:16:18

Okay. Um, thank you for showing the overlap on the screen. Obviously, in terms of the CA and the tests, I have to look at, the applicant has to have a clear idea how they intend to use the land. At the moment, it's not clear from the works plans and looking at the Olymp, but what you've described is why you need the whole extent of the land in terms of someone just looking at that area. So on the Olymp, that sort of most of the field to the east is blank and on the works plans it just says 12 hectares.

01:04:16:20 - 01:04:31:17

I think for, for skylights it's not. It's not giving me the evidence to say why you need the entirety of the land. Could you consider how you could, uh, amend the works plans or add something to it to explain why you need the extent that you need? So it's all in one location?

01:04:33:22 - 01:04:44:09

Yes. Um, so it could be a shape for the applicant. Um, I'm going to ask Miss Leader, who is the, uh, manager relating to her? Um, consents.

01:04:45:22 - 01:05:18:07

Mining Alida for the applicant. Um, yes, So I think, um, what we have so we have the commitment in the back for the Skylark plots and yes, this isn't shown on the landscaping that's shown on screen at the moment. I think perhaps the best way for us to address this and give you the clarity you need is perhaps to amend the Olymp, to also have that on there, because we do have that obviously labeled in the works plans, but it's not split into the different uses. So I think we can take that away and hopefully give it.

01:05:18:21 - 01:05:39:09

All or possibly sort of add to the labor you've already got on the works. Plans that talk about the management of the 12 hectares had something to say, and we need the rest of it because, um, it just needs to be something really simple and obvious so that anyone looking at those plots can clearly identify, why do you need that whole package of land?

01:05:40:25 - 01:05:44:22

So if you could take that as well as an action point for deadline for that would be appreciated.

01:05:44:24 - 01:05:45:27

Guys thank you.

01:05:50:02 - 01:05:57:03

So following on from this, can we now look at Suffolk plots to 58 and to 72?

01:06:05:08 - 01:06:08:06

Again, if you could share the land plans and the works plans.

01:06:24:05 - 01:06:41:23

Thank you. So I appreciate that you've added more information to the works plans to help us understand why you need the land, um, in this location. Um, it is still quite complicated. Um, could you just talk me through this area, please? In terms of what's required?

01:06:46:19 - 01:06:49:14

I'm going to ask Miss Leader again to pick that up.

01:06:50:02 - 01:06:59:24

And the leader for the applicant. And just to clarify, are we talking specifically about plot 258? Um, and around to the south of Friston substation or it's.

01:06:59:26 - 01:07:14:09

About the whole sort of area. 255 to 285 that I mean, kind of what what's done and maybe just a little bit, a little bit to the north, particularly the areas, um, that you're looking to compulsorily acquire the land. Um, is what I'm interested in.

01:07:19:21 - 01:07:51:16

On behalf of the applicant. Um, so the area around um, Christian Substation is included within the drawings, largely because if under the scenario two, we would need to construct, um, Friston substation, we would need to mitigate its effects. So all of the areas shown in the works plans and on the drawing are essential mitigation Areas to provide landscape enhancement, mitigation, footpath diversions, access roads and drainage.

01:07:52:00 - 01:08:26:09

Around there. So that's why it's extensive. It is based largely around the submitted um DCO by SBF, A1 and A2, but it has been assessed by our landscape and visual team as what we would need if to still allow A1 and A2 to come at a later date. If they weren't coming ever, we wouldn't leave that white space. We would move everything up and mitigate. But because we're aware they've got their consent and they are, they are building we under scenario T, we would then, um, leave that space for them to come and build.

01:08:27:18 - 01:08:58:23

Thank you. In terms of just for clarity, do you think there's a way of, I don't know, doing an insert onto that works plan just to sort of take some of the elements, maybe just show some of them to sort of make it a bit simpler, because at the moment, it's very complicated to work out. Exactly. I mean, I do appreciate you trying to show everything, but if you could maybe have a think about how you could give it a bit more clarity, that would be really helpful. Um, I will give you that as an action point. So your challenge to try and make that a bit simpler.

01:08:58:29 - 01:09:09:18

Um, can we also just, um, go up to the north to see the full extent of plot to 20? And also, can you show the same area on that shown on the map as well?

01:09:21:13 - 01:09:53:03

So the the spur that comes off on the for plot to 20, that comes off to the, to the north. Um, hopefully when you show the Olymp it's only showing sort of. Yeah. When you zoom in you can see there's um, show mitigation to the sort of the top spur gun across, but not the the one coming up to the north. Um, so doesn't realise any mitigation pose in terms of the lamp, but it's covered as all green in the works plans. Can you just explain what's happening there?

01:09:54:15 - 01:10:00:16

James Booker, on behalf of the applicant, I would need to take that away and just speak with our landscape team just on that exact letter.

01:10:01:12 - 01:10:15:15

Okay. So, yeah, if you if you could. So as an action point, if you just have a look at that, that location, um, because again, I need to be able to demonstrate that you have a clear idea of why you need all the plots. And that appears to be a bit of land that you don't need.

01:10:18:26 - 01:10:29:09

Um, now, I understand the owner of this plot is in Wix, and I think we have Mr. Databricks online. Um, at the moment, would you like to make any comments on these plots?

01:10:33:04 - 01:11:03:16

Yeah, I'd like to make a comment on, um, plot 220 um, our main concern with it is, um, uh, where is it our main concern with plot 220? Um, we've not been given an explanation to why they need all the land. Um, in plot 220. Um, as I'm sure you guys will be aware, SPR have already got or are going to be constructing a haul road all the way through there.

01:11:03:21 - 01:11:32:21

Yeah, without any explanation. See, link have come to us and said that they need they need to have a section. I think it's 48m wider than what has already been proposed, and has been accepted by ScottishPower to build one project, A1, A2. So why does Sealink need to have this huge extra space? But that's not been answered to us and no one's told us why. Um, if there is any sort of explanation, that'd be much appreciated.

01:11:34:16 - 01:11:37:03

Um, with the applicant be able to respond to that comment now.

01:11:37:05 - 01:11:40:19

Yes. Yes, ma'am. I'm going to ask Mr. Buckley to deal with that.

01:11:42:13 - 01:12:16:06

Change quickly on behalf of the applicant. Um, the reason we have a wider area through there than, um, Scottish Power is so that we can route our cables suitably around the Scottish power landscape and mitigation. Um, so we took a wider area to allow us to, because at the time we put the red line together, um, we were aware of the outline, uh, mitigation plan within the Scottish Power DCO, and we gave ourselves the space because we knew they were developing the, uh, the actual mitigation plan that they've now submitted as part of their study.

01:12:16:16 - 01:12:24:22

So we have, uh, routed our DC cable, uh, in a way that, um, limits the impact on the mitigation that they're proposing.

01:12:26:16 - 01:12:56:23

Um, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I was talking about the whole road coming off the B1. Uh, the opposite one. Um, that cuts through our neighbors. It's. We're talking about a separate one to the left hand side. Yeah. Where you're where you're showing. Now, this all right. Here. So the land's already gone. That whole road set to be constructed. Our point is, why is. Why is it good enough? The land has been taken already from us. It's going to be acceptable for ScottishPower to build A1, A2.

01:12:56:25 - 01:13:08:05

And then you need to. You require up to. Well, it's 48m rather than 18 or whatever's been taken. And that's the explanation we're seeking for. Not the opposite way. This whole road here.

01:13:09:02 - 01:13:12:23

Are you talking about is it works number. I think that's A2.

01:13:13:19 - 01:13:40:06

There's 2722. Well two two slash 20 is on our land and 2/7. And then it also goes through Hanscom Land as well. But this one the sea link requirement is vastly wider um, than SBS basically. Um what's the need for that? If it's good enough for the SBR project, why does it need to be so much wider, so much more impactful on us as a family and our business?

01:13:40:22 - 01:13:47:16

Can you just just because it's hard for me to say here, can you just remind me of the plot numbers? I assume it's the the brown spur that's coming across.

01:13:47:18 - 01:14:02:27

Yeah it is. It's two. Two slash 20 there. And then the other one is two slash um 2/7. But they're not widening that one too much. But um it's 2/7 but two slash 20 is the most, most impactful one.

01:14:04:20 - 01:14:07:10

Thank you. Um, can the applicant respond? Thank you.

01:14:07:19 - 01:14:42:14

James Buckley, on behalf of the applicant. Um, yeah. We put a slightly wider red line in here for two reasons. One, um, the pink line to the north, which is a 33 kV line which needs to be diverted. Um, we've worked with UK Power Networks to look at where that would be, and that would run alongside the access road. So we were giving ourselves a little bit more space in there to to put in the UK power networks diversion alongside the mitigation that is required by the access road. And also there is a some trees in there which we were giving ourselves the space to avoid.

01:14:42:16 - 01:14:58:15

Um, some mature trees that and go around. We are working with ScottishPower on their design of their access road, and obviously they've exercised their powers, um, for, for that and they're working forward with the design on that access road at the moment.

01:14:59:26 - 01:15:05:14

Yeah. But there's a little bit, there's a little bit more five times the distance. That's what my question is.

01:15:09:03 - 01:15:21:02

Going to put you on behalf of the applicant. It was to give us that flexibility to move the road around. The vegetation that was in there include the drainage that was needed and the utility diversion. That's why we had a wider space.

01:15:21:18 - 01:15:31:04

Is there um, is there going to be the opportunity that maybe when you know more about what the Scottish Power, um, renewables are doing that. You'll be able to narrow that that strip down.

01:15:31:15 - 01:15:32:01

Yeah.

01:15:32:23 - 01:15:36:24

And what I mean, what point during this examination or.

01:15:38:10 - 01:15:48:05

I would have to check with ScottishPower on where they are with their design of the access road. I know it's part of their requirements to discharge that. They put in a design for that. Um, but we'll take that away.

01:15:48:07 - 01:15:55:27

Yeah. If you could take that away as an action point, just to consider, you know, if you can reduce the width of that, that would be appreciated. Um.

01:16:06:25 - 01:16:07:13

I'm sorry.

01:16:07:15 - 01:16:16:13

Just my recollection is there's a veteran trees that the vegetation you're seeking to avoid. So obviously we would still want that to be avoided if possible.

01:16:17:01 - 01:16:50:20

Yes. Um, we've identified it as a veteran tree. Uh, Scottish power, um, at an earlier stage in their land take. I didn't identify it as a veteran tree, so we'd had long discussions with them over that tree and that vegetation, and that's why we increased our limits. Obviously, looking at trees and deciding whether it's veteran or not, it's largely down to the person doing it. So there was a long discussion with them, and their design has evolved in moving the bell mouth around and moving the curve of the road around within their limits.

01:16:51:00 - 01:16:57:00

I do know that much, but we will take it away and discuss with where they are with their actual design.

01:16:57:17 - 01:16:58:05

Thanks.

01:17:05:15 - 01:17:08:23

Mr.. Have you got anything else you'd like to add on this issue?

01:17:10:11 - 01:17:50:00

Um, not on not. Oh. The second point, um, is also on the block 220, but it's up the other side. Um, near the pylon is, um, next to the campsite. Um, yeah. Stop, stop. So you see where that pond is? We had an agreement with. We've also asked plenty of times for an explanation of, um, for this through this, um, surveyor, uh, through the, um, agents that we meet, etc.. And we still had no response. So in the agreement we had with SBR, we were allowed an access to get effectively where to dash three sixes into where to three seven so that we can move our agricultural machinery between the two fields.

01:17:50:03 - 01:18:15:14

See, we have mentioned this to Sealink multiple times and the representatives we have met, but yet this has been overlooked. Um, why has it been overlooked? Why? We basically we would like to maintain access through this. Why do they need to take that section, small section of land? I think it's that it's effectively a 12 40 meter strip, just so that we can move equipment safely between the two, between the two fields.

01:18:17:18 - 01:18:20:22

Okay. Thank you. Can the applicant respond to that.

01:18:21:24 - 01:18:27:08

On behalf of the applicant. Can I just confirm the plot number that we're talking about there?

01:18:27:17 - 01:18:58:15

Basically, we we had in between. I'm sorry. It's gone on the screen. Yeah. So, um, where those pylons are? We were in the agreement that was had was SPR. We were able to maintain an access between the two fields. Because we're still in ownership. Because obviously what has happened is split up to the fields in half. But we were allowed and we well, we maintained ownership of an access in between the two. Um, but you seek to take that. That's why there is a small sliver there.

01:18:58:17 - 01:19:04:00

Um, and that was for us to maintain access. And we had a gateway between the two fields and we maintained ownership.

01:19:06:08 - 01:19:09:24

But why? Why does Sealink need to remove that from us?

01:19:11:04 - 01:19:17:03

So are you talking about access between sort of moving between plot 236 to 230 702.

01:19:17:17 - 01:19:18:23

Yeah, basically. Yeah.

01:19:18:25 - 01:19:20:07

Three Two. 20.

01:19:20:23 - 01:19:39:25

Yeah. Basically, we had us. Yeah. We have, uh, we have we've maintained ownership of the access in between the two fields, but it's such a small area of land. I don't see why you need to take that off us. What? What's the necessity for it? And the whole point was so that we could safely move machinery, um, between the two fields. Yeah.

01:19:39:28 - 01:19:42:25

Yeah. No, I understand. Uh, the applicant respond.

01:19:43:06 - 01:20:07:28

Uh, Jackie stood up on behalf of the applicant. I think the first thing to confirm there is plot 237 to temporary possession. We wouldn't look to be taken. Exclusive possession of that. The only area that we've got down for acquisition, as we can see, is 220. I don't see any problem in granting a right of access through that area. I don't think that would be contrary to the use that we've identified. And it's something we're more than happy to take offline in the discussions with Mr. Ricks.

01:20:09:06 - 01:20:22:14

I suppose what I'd ask is if you can just give rights back. Do you need to take the whole of that 220 or do you actually think could you actually reduce that down so that it's temporary through the top?

01:20:24:09 - 01:20:27:24

Jackie stood up. On behalf of the applicant. We can take that away and have a look at it.

01:20:27:26 - 01:20:34:11

Okay. Thank you. And thank you, Mr.. Mr.. VIX, is there anything else you need to raise while you're here?

01:20:34:23 - 01:20:39:20

Um, not on not on this plot, but thank you. Thank you very much.

01:20:40:01 - 01:20:40:26

Thanks.

01:20:48:15 - 01:21:09:24

So I think looking at the time, I think we'll take a short break now. Um, for those of you watching on the live stream, in order to give us clear recording files, you'll need. We'll need to stop the live stream.

So when you come back on to come back to the hearing again, you need to refresh your browser page so that it'll resume working and we'll have a break now for 15 minutes. Thank you.