



Event Transcript

Project:	Sea Link
Event:	Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) - Day 3 - Part 3
Date:	30 January 2026

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

It is not a verbatim text of what was said at the above event. 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 event.

File Name: SL_30JAN_ISH2_PART3.mp3

File Length: 01:26:57

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:18:16 - 00:01:06:22

Good afternoon. It's 2 p.m. and the hearing is now resumed. Can I just check with the case team that the live stream is on and that you can hear me? Thank you. So, um, moving now to, um, design, I'd like to first of all, just talk in more general terms about design before then going on to the DCO, although clearly they are very interlinked. Um, I'd just like to start by referring to MPs in one, um, paragraph 5.1.29, which says the Secretary of State should take into consideration the level of detailed design which the applicant has provided and is secured in the Development Consent order and the extent to which design details are subject to future approvals.

00:01:07:16 - 00:01:38:14

Um, the following paragraph says the Secretary of State should be satisfied that local authorities will have sufficient design content secured to ensure future consenting will meet landscape, visual and good design objectives. Um, and then going a bit earlier in MPs in one paragraph 4.7.6 says the design and sensitive use of materials in any associated development, such as electricity substations, will assist in ensuring that such development contributes to the quality of the area.

00:01:38:26 - 00:02:10:20

So first of all, I'd just like to hear the council's views on the level of detailed design which has been provided so far to the examination, and whether there is sufficient design content to ensure that future consenting will meet landscape, visual and good design objectives. If you think that there is not enough detailed design. I just. I would like to hear what you would want to see or what you'd expect to see by the end of the examination as a minimum, in order to ensure that future consent will meet those objectives.

00:02:11:11 - 00:02:18:18

Um, so first of all, um, would anybody like to go? Should we try East Suffolk Council.

00:02:28:27 - 00:03:08:10

And Smith v Suffolk, um, council. I mean, the approach that has been taken is not to offer um, detailed um design and, and and the paragraphs you, um, reference in on one. Um, but the approach taken by the applicant is to offer design principles in app three, six, six And then seek to, um, have those detailed designs approved in the context of the converter station only.

00:03:08:25 - 00:03:47:06

Um, and um, with a more limited ambit for the, um, relevant planning authorities. And whilst we don't have a problem with the approach of um outline details at this stage, and then a detailed design to be approved at a later stage, we do have, uh, concerns in relation to the approach taken by this applicant, which is to seek to minimise the involvement and scope for approval at the later stage.

00:03:47:08 - 00:03:57:26

And that rears its head in two ways. One, the mechanism is drafted at the moment, which seeks only um, confirmation interrupt.

00:03:57:28 - 00:04:10:12

I will come on to the mechanism. At this point, I'd just like to hear whether you would expect more detailed design to be submitted into the examination. I will then come on to requirement three.

00:04:11:04 - 00:04:11:19

I think.

00:04:12:04 - 00:04:12:19

From.

00:04:12:21 - 00:04:36:03

From the perspective of this council, the key issue is a proper discharging process to cover all elements of design, not just the converter station as opposed to the level of detail. Now, because the level of detail now is limited. But we do understand the reasons for that. So that's not our principal concern.

00:04:36:05 - 00:04:50:20

Okay. Thank you. That's helpful. Um, would it district council like to say anything if you're still on the call? With regard to what sort of level of detail of the design of the above ground elements you'd expect to see at this stage?

00:04:51:12 - 00:04:54:14

Good afternoon. Thank you. Helen Johnson, the district Council.

00:04:54:19 - 00:05:28:03

And yeah, I think as I alluded to earlier on, I think it's in terms of the vagueness of the design principles document and what's to be expected. So without touching on regulation three in the wording, I think just referring as it does to general accordance and the requirements within the design Principles document, consistently referring to technical details and documents that could be provided rather than will be provided. I think just adds to that uncertainty in terms of ensuring that we do get, um, you know, a development which meets the good design principles. Um, I think it goes a little bit further than that as well, in terms of the design approach document.

00:05:28:05 - 00:06:07:20

Um, page 48 and the concrete platform, um, that was proposed is now changed from will be used to, may be used. So in terms of a point of clarity as well, I'm not sure whether there's been ongoing, um, engineering investigations, which have meant that either the concrete base may not be needed. Something else will be um, they're looking at, um, ensuring stability of the building in another way. So I think it's just those things that we don't really have any certainty over and which adds to that concern that obviously when everything comes in for determination and the discharge of the condition, whether we have any sort of certainty as to what, what to expect in terms of assessment, I think that's really our issue.

00:06:07:22 - 00:06:12:02

The ability to assess, um, is sort of hampered somewhat. Thank you.

00:06:12:07 - 00:06:17:20

Thank you. That's helpful. Um, I'll Kent County Council on the call.

00:06:20:00 - 00:06:23:14

That doesn't look like it. Uh, Suffolk county council.

00:06:24:07 - 00:07:04:17

Thank you, Madam Michael Bedford, Suffolk county council. We won't surprise you to hear that we share absolutely those concerns by the two district councils. And, um, we accept that at the order consent making stage, it can be acceptable to have only broad parameters and, um, as it were, a concept for a design, and that in principle is not objectionable, provided that there are adequate mechanisms for the subsequent control of design and that its more part two.

00:07:04:19 - 00:07:36:26

That second issue, which I think is where the real debate is. Uh, I think obviously if the applicant were in a position to present into the examination some more information at this stage on what those detailed designs look like, that might very well help us, because it might help us fashion tighter design principles and controls. But we don't say that's absolutely necessary if we get the controls right. Uh, for when the detailed design does come forward.

00:07:37:07 - 00:07:55:12

Um, and I know the point has been touched on by Mr. Westmoreland Smith, but at the moment, the focus only on the converter station and not on the substations or particularly from the county council's point of view, the Frome is crossing what we think is a misstep.

00:07:56:05 - 00:08:01:08

Thank you. Um, would the, um. Mr. Burton.

00:08:02:08 - 00:08:31:17

Thank you, Mr. Thomas. James Burton, on behalf of seas. Um, it probably won't surprise you, but unfortunately, on this point, we do part company with the, uh, with the authorities. Um, we do consider, as you heard from Mr. Bridges, that, um, not only is there no good reason not to provide, um, detailed design now, but we also have real concerns that actually it's not, um.

00:08:33:11 - 00:09:06:24

Oh, it's not something that can be left to the Rochdale envelope, simply presenting essentially massing blobs and trusted that that will represent the worst case because actually, um, as we all know as planners. Experience shows us that details do matter. Um, and a blob might not be the worst case in actual fact. So we have we have that in principal concern quite apart from, as it were, the merits point.

00:09:06:26 - 00:09:17:14

Could I just also say I think we're coming on to it. But Mr. Michael Mahoney had to leave unavoidably, I think, with a perfectly reasonable excuse because the program had said we'd be here only Friday.

00:09:17:16 - 00:09:18:01

Oh, no.

00:09:18:03 - 00:09:23:23

Sorry. He's left me just a flag. He's left me with two points. He would like me to simply speak for him.

00:09:23:25 - 00:09:26:14

Okay, which are they on this matter or.

00:09:26:16 - 00:09:28:25

I believe they're coming to the wording of requirements.

00:09:28:27 - 00:09:29:29

Yeah. Can we I.

00:09:30:01 - 00:09:30:17

Just no, no.

00:09:30:29 - 00:09:54:01

I'm flagging trying to break it down, but thank you. Um, I'm sure the applicant would like to respond. I think I'd like to just ask. Um, Mr. Burson, have you already set out, um, what elements you'd want more detail would expect to see more detail on at this point. I can probably make a good sort of guess, but.

00:09:54:03 - 00:10:06:02

Well, it is, as you won't be surprised here. Um, the converter station, the substation and the Frommer's crossing are the big ticket items for us. Thank you.

00:10:12:23 - 00:10:24:14

So I'd like to hear firstly from the applicant on that level of detail. Um, question. And if that's okay. Thank you.

00:10:24:16 - 00:10:32:21

Thank you ma'am. So for the applicant, Miss Alley Leader is going to assist you with that. And I think she will subsequently be helped by Mr. Buckley.

00:10:34:08 - 00:10:45:24

Thank you, Alley Leader, for the applicant. Um, so I think we've got two broad questions here. So what can be controlled? Um, and how should it be controlled? So I think I think we're just going to the first I just.

00:10:45:26 - 00:10:55:17

Want to talk about at the moment the level of detail that we've got and that you're intending or able to supply to the examination before we make a recommendation.

00:10:55:22 - 00:11:53:09

Yes. So we're comfortable with the level of detail that is provided. We do think it is appropriate and proportionate for this this stage of the process. And, and we welcome, um, confirmation from Suffolk on that point as well. I mean, I think in terms of, um, what can be controlled here, I think it is it is really important to also note in one so paragraph 4.7.6 that that states that whilst the applicant may not have have any or very limited choice in the physical appearance of some energy infrastructure, um, and in N5, paragraph 2.4.3, it states that the Secretary of State should bear in mind that a electricity networks infrastructure must, in the first instance, be safe and secure, and that the functional design constraints for safety and security may limit an applicant's ability to implement the aesthetic appearance.

00:11:54:03 - 00:12:24:07

Um, we, um, as an applicant, have spent an extensive amount of time looking at design. We've had an architect involved right from the start, which is very unusual for a project of this, of this nature. And we can come in and talk to that. But we do need to understand which of the elements we can control and which we don't. And if you're just permit me, um, I'd just like to show a diagram of the converter in the substation and just confirm which elements we can control.

00:12:25:16 - 00:12:59:13

Um, so this is, um, this is the layout of the converter station. Um, the illustrative layout that's presented in our design and layout drawings. Um, and I think it's really important to note from this that the, the green, Um, drawings at the top. Those are buildings. Um, and the rest is external equipment. Um, so the the buildings themselves. Um, in terms of the height of the buildings and that's very much determined by the electricity infrastructure within them.

00:12:59:18 - 00:13:48:21

And the space you need between the top of the infrastructure and the roof. Um, but what we can very much think about is color. Um, we can think about roof line. Um, the electrical design and layout of the converter station that needs to be electrically LED, but we can influence that to a certain extent to look at where to put those buildings. And I think what's really important in this, because we were looking at the visualizations yesterday, if we could, um, just put up next to each other the illustrative visualization from viewpoint one a so and what we are showing on the screen here is the.

00:13:48:24 - 00:13:53:29

You might just need to zoom in a little bit so that it's um. If you can.

00:13:57:13 - 00:14:31:00

So what we are looking at on the screen here, so is at the top is the illustrative visualization. We submitted rep 1296. This shows you what actually a converter station would look like based on based on the indicative layouts that we've got. And you'll notice from that that these buildings are shown as

they would be developed in line with the design principles that we have secured in requirement three in terms of colors. And but you'll notice that it's very different from the plan below.

00:14:31:02 - 00:14:35:24

And that's because the plan below is just showing you the limits of deviation.

00:14:35:26 - 00:14:38:17

Yes, we understand that. Yeah. Yeah.

00:14:38:19 - 00:15:12:28

Okay. Great. So the external equipment. We don't have control over in terms of how it looks. So we're really looking at these quite limited parameters in terms of what we can control and can change in terms of the detailed design and how this is taken forward. And we've very much structured our design principles around those elements that can be controlled by the local authority. And in that way, we we think that they are necessary and proportional to meet those tasks.

00:15:13:29 - 00:15:27:05

Okay. Um, and it raised a question about, um, the concrete platform. Is that something that you want to take away and respond to, or are you able to respond to that now?

00:15:27:28 - 00:15:53:24

So the design approach document isn't secured. That's not part of the key design principles. So um, that that document is very much talking about, um, how we've reached our current design. Um, and you know how those design principles might evolve going forward, but those, those details that are in that document are not secured in the same way, and neither should be because it does need to be electrically led.

00:15:54:03 - 00:16:06:27

I think, um, they identified that there's a change from Will to May. Is that just a, a point where you've realized you need to retain the flexibility.

00:16:07:22 - 00:16:36:18

Uh, change on behalf of the applicant? Yes. It's that point in terms of we're doing more ground investigations. We're finding out more about the detailed design of the building with that contractor. Um, we have a Rochdale envelope of 28m in Kent, and we would be within that. But it may mean that we need to increase the height of that, um, platform. It's not all concrete, by the way. It's, it's it's a stone and concrete mix. But, um, effectively that's part of the ongoing design work that we are doing.

00:16:36:21 - 00:16:50:04

It. Okay. So. So that's the reason for the change in wording. Not. Yes. Not not an actual change in in plan. Just a realization that the wording was wrong initially. Right. Okay. Okay Mr. Person.

00:16:50:29 - 00:17:27:11

Thank you. James Burton, on behalf with uh, sees, um, uh, I'm sure you've you've got this, um, madam, but, um, my understanding is that the, uh, the top visualization that we were just shown what I refer to as the kind of blob type massing one. It's not just that. It clearly doesn't show any detail of

the buildings because we don't have that. But I think if we cast our mind back to the, um, the plan, we were shown just a moment before those ancillary items, so far as we can tell, that they're not shown on the, um, on the visualization.

00:17:27:13 - 00:17:31:14

So I may be missing it, but if they are, they're camouflaged in.

00:17:32:03 - 00:17:34:02

Could the applicant just clarify that?

00:17:35:00 - 00:17:52:11

Yes. Sally leader for the applicant. That's right. Because they're not that kind of visualization. They are shown on this top visualization here. So, um, the bottom line is just the limits of deviation of the whole converter station, including the buildings and the, the external equipment.

00:17:52:13 - 00:17:55:10

So are you saying sorry? Yeah. Sorry.

00:17:56:24 - 00:17:57:15

Yes. That is.

00:17:57:26 - 00:18:16:14

Yeah. Yeah. Change can happen. You can clearly see that the other buildings and you can see the white element and the brown element, which also represent some of the switchgear and the equipment outside the building. What isn't shown on here because you wouldn't see it from this distance is the fence line, which will be of a color that blends in with the equipment behind.

00:18:16:18 - 00:18:29:27

Okay, so that is a more representative view and it includes the external. Okay. Thank you. I think at the size that we've got them, when they're not printed out at full size is quite difficult to pick that up.

00:18:31:27 - 00:18:40:28

Um, okay. Thank you. I can't see any hands up on on that, those specific issues. So I'll move on. Um.

00:18:44:15 - 00:18:52:26

Just on the river. Famous bridge. Can I just have an update as to whether the height of that has now been agreed?

00:18:58:16 - 00:19:24:18

To. For the applicant? Um, so we are still in discussions with the Environment Agency over the wording of the requirement, um, around the height and what exactly needs to go in there that's currently with the Environment Agency's legal team. So until we get a response from, from them. Um, we've agreed not to submit that in to you, but we do intend to agree with to deal with the height matter in that requirement.

00:19:24:20 - 00:19:35:04

Okay. So that would have an overall height that then there would be some clarity and certainty within the DCO as to what the overall height would be.

00:19:35:26 - 00:19:41:28

Yes. So, um, yeah, as you're probably aware, the Environment Agency are interested in the minimum height. Yes.

00:19:42:18 - 00:19:46:21

Is that. Yeah. But obviously it has implications for the design.

00:19:47:02 - 00:19:54:12

Yes. And most other parties have an interest in the maximum height. So. So yes, we're considering both the minimum and the maximum height within that parameter.

00:19:54:14 - 00:20:15:00

Thank you. Um, on the pylons, I know you've said there's no, um, sort of latitude in terms of the design. Could you just explain that a bit more? Because obviously there are various pylon designs available. Um.

00:20:15:22 - 00:20:58:09

James Brooke, on behalf of the applicant, um, we looked at two different pylon designs in Kent where majority of the pylons are on this project. Um, in relation to, um, the number and the appearance. Um, and in doing that work, we found that the number you would need for the lower height pylons would be more against less tall ones. Um, we would never introduce T pylons into a line of existing pylons. That's just not appropriate. Um, so we went with the less number of pylons that were higher, um, on the balance of, uh, ecology and visual, uh, as well as engineering and impact on the floodplain.

00:20:58:12 - 00:21:15:08

Um, they need to maintain a height across the railway because we have a specific clearance from railway crossings, and it's a navigable river as well. Um, so that's why we ended up where we are, which is why there's no real work we can do in terms of the design of those pylons, because they are set out by.

00:21:15:25 - 00:21:31:07

Okay, but where? So I've not seen anything in the, in the draft eco or anywhere that actually says what that design would be. So on the, on the face of the DCO, they could be anything at this point.

00:21:31:26 - 00:21:40:03

James Buckley, on behalf of the applicant. Take that away and just see how that is. They are intended to be the same types of pylons that are already in that line.

00:21:40:06 - 00:21:53:09

I understand that's the intention, but when you read, you know, the DCO has to sort of stand together with its supporting documents so that there's some clarity and certainty. Um, I see there's a hand up from the Environment Agency.

00:21:57:25 - 00:22:35:19

Morgan. Hangman, on behalf of the Environment Agency. Just to touch back on the point about the river from us requirement. There was some discussion earlier in the examination, I believe, yesterday, um, where we stated that we could provide the current draft of the focus requirement wording and therefore its height. Um, in for deadline for. I just wanted to clarify that still the approach where we're going for, um, as it is taking our legal team a long time to review due to their resourcing issues.

00:22:35:24 - 00:22:46:07

Um, and I think the inspector who was present there stated that it'd be good for you to have sight of the wording as it is already. Rather than waiting further down the line.

00:22:46:19 - 00:22:56:11

Okay. Thank you. Thanks for that. Um, and sorry, just going back to the pylons. We'll provide an update at deadline for on a bit more.

00:22:57:08 - 00:22:59:20

Yeah. Change on behalf of the applicant. Yes we will.

00:22:59:22 - 00:23:00:24

Yeah. Thank you.

00:23:11:09 - 00:23:43:09

So, um, just I'd just like to ask about the lighting. Um, I asked a question at iCSC one and got a we got the lux, um, levels in in response. But in terms of the actual design and measures to avoid, um, light spillage from the source of the light as well. Light pollution from the source of the light. Um, we've not really had any detail at all on that.

00:23:43:14 - 00:23:45:24

Is you able to provide an update?

00:23:49:27 - 00:24:21:01

So are we asking sorry. The theory. So we won't have, uh, full details of the design of the lighting at this stage. But what we do have is in design principle n for, um, we we have a commitment to which states that light spillage will be managed by minimising the provision of lighting, keeping to where it is required for tasks, specifying fittings that avoid avoid light spillage, and so on. And that's secured by by requirement three.

00:24:21:13 - 00:24:42:09

Um so that that secures that obviously um National grid have specifications for lighting that are required for national security purposes and for health and safety that need to be adhered to. But once those are adhered to, then the design principle and make sure that there is no excess lighting and light spillage.

00:24:42:11 - 00:24:51:03

So there'd be no lighting on the access road or around the substation or anywhere else on the on the scheme.

00:24:51:05 - 00:25:17:18

James Buckley, on behalf that there is no intention to light either of the access roads to the converter stations or to the substation. The lighting is purely within the fencing fence compound of the substation, and it will be, uh, exit lighting only once. The sites are, um, unmanned. Um, so there may be lights on in the evening, in the winter during maintenance operations. But as soon as somebody leaves site, um, that they will be all turned off.

00:25:18:00 - 00:25:25:29

Okay, obviously we are coming on to the wording of requirement three, but that doesn't cover the substation at all. So.

00:25:28:19 - 00:25:59:05

Yeah. So the the substation, um, is instead secured um, by commitment G 34 and the risk um which states Friston substation described in what work number one be should be designed and be in general accordance with the key design principles um, for the substation. And we have a similar thing for Kent as well. So I appreciate it can be a bit of a, a bit of a paper chase here and that we are looking at how to simplify this. But the commitment is there. It's just in the reac.

00:25:59:14 - 00:26:35:03

Okay. We will come to that in a minute. Um, to the requirement three in the wording. Um, I've just got a question for um, for the applicant, I think really. But anyone else, you know, like the council's are welcome to answer. Just wondered what to what extent? Um, there's any kind of sense of cohesion between the Suffolk End and the Kent End in terms of design of the design approach for the above ground elements, I realise your design documents are fairly similar, but you're in different contexts.

00:26:35:05 - 00:26:42:01

Is there an intention to have a sense of coherence or identity that's common between the two of them?

00:26:42:23 - 00:27:11:04

James Buckley, on behalf of the applicant. Um, not um, specifically, no. We said the architects went to site with the landscape and visual architects and looked at the character and context of both settings. So the likelihood is there will be different treatments to the buildings to sit within the elements. There will be no branding of something that identifies it as C link to somebody driving up to it. It will be sat within its environment rather than just a this is the way we do it kind of approach.

00:27:11:06 - 00:27:47:21

Okay. Thank you. Um, I would just like to talk about coordination with other projects. So, um, I think section 1.3 First, I'll talk about Kiln Lane Substation section 1.3 of the Suffolk Design Approach document states that the design approach for the Friston Substation Master Plan has been jointly undertaken by National Grid and ScottishPower renewables as a coordinated design approach for all three substations. Can you just explain what that means for the design of the Kiln Lane substation under scenario two?

00:27:49:28 - 00:27:54:10

To the extent that this is a standalone project under scenario two.

00:27:56:05 - 00:28:28:18

Yeah. So we've been extensively coordinating with SPR for many years. Um, I mean, I think what's important to understand is that there isn't two teams working on the design of Kiln Lane substation. There is one team working on it. Um, yeah. It's it's led by James, who is sitting next to me. So, um, and that design is being taken forward through through the SPR consents and the same design is being taken forward through the the comb through this consent.

00:28:28:20 - 00:29:04:22

So the design of the substation itself from an engineering perspective it is exactly the same and there is no intention for that to be different. Um, I think where the where we have challenges is where you, where we do have, uh, well, three projects coming forward several years after each other. So we have elements of the design of the substation, for example, which are quite far progressed, actually, because they're likely to be delivered under the SPR consent, whereas the elements for the rest of C link are at the outline design stage.

00:29:04:24 - 00:29:17:01

And lion link obviously are even further advanced. So when we start looking at detailed matters, we get complexity, but there's no intention for that design to be different.

00:29:19:06 - 00:29:52:24

I'm just struggling really to understand how. Yes, you've got one team, and I'm sure the intention is that for you, it's one substation, but we've got two separate consents. Well, in fact, with SPR three, um, you know, I realise they've got two, but so on the face of the documents that we've got, there's not a lot of detail about the substation design. And theoretically you could come forward with a completely different design for that if as long as it meets your reac.

00:29:54:10 - 00:30:01:11

And so, you know, for me, I just don't really feel like there's any certainty as to what that substation design is.

00:30:02:04 - 00:30:10:01

And Alida, for the applicant, um, I mean, I wonder whether we can put up the layout for substation.

00:30:10:24 - 00:30:26:15

I'm not doubting that you've got those drawings. I'm just saying on the face of the DCO, and we will. Obviously, it's difficult to separate the two things, but do we have that level of detail that would tell us what it's going to be and that it's not going to be a different design?

00:30:26:21 - 00:30:59:12

And so the level of information we've got on Preston substation in this consent is more than SBR had when they were consenting under their DCO. And obviously that higher level of detail was was considered to be sufficient at that stage. But I think in answer to your question, I mean, what we have at the substation is the center of this here is the building, and we've got very significantly more external equipment than we have at the converter and also at the substation.

00:30:59:14 - 00:31:43:09

The building is approximately 16m and the equipment surrounding it is the highest equipment is 14m. So you do have quite a different scenario at the substation because you see effectively you see the external equipment with the building behind, not a significantly greater height than the external equipment, and most of the substation is the external equipment, and there is very little you can do actually with the design of that external equipment. So when we're talking about the design of a substation, what you're really talking about here is an electrical design rather than a kind of you know what I myself as a planner would normally consider to be designed.

00:31:43:11 - 00:32:11:08

So I think we always need to consider in that context. And the electrical design is exactly the same. We are actually happy to adopt the same. For example, cladding as SPR have decided to put on the substation. I mean, I say SPR have decided. Of course, we've been working closely with them and they've agreed it between us anyway. So but we so we are completely happy to commit to that. There's no intention to do anything differently.

00:32:11:10 - 00:32:21:20

I think that would be helpful. If that level of detail is there, then it would. It would change it from being a bit of a sort of question mark to having a bit more certainty.

00:32:22:02 - 00:32:54:05

James Buckley, on behalf of applicant, just to back up what Ali said there in terms of, um, we use the same architect as ScottishPower. We've worked on it. And in terms of, um, I don't want to speak for East Suffolk Council, um, or Suffolk Council in terms of the process that's been gone through. But the design that is there for the three, uh, substations works for one substation, 2 or 3. And in fact, the third substation, which is E, A1, N, is potentially subject to some change as they progress through their project because they're slightly behind A2.

00:32:54:07 - 00:33:05:09

So the way the design has been done and the process that we've gone through with them allows for those changes to happen without affecting the overall master plan of the site.

00:33:05:11 - 00:33:23:17

Okay. So if that's an action point, then for you to provide that that level of detail. Thank you. Um, I'd just like to, um, move on to line link and the converter stations. Um, so

00:33:25:10 - 00:34:01:14

just sort of looking ahead. We obviously do know, don't know where the line would actually come forward, but see, link may well end up forming the baseline for future development on that site. Um, so how would one respond to the other in terms of design? Would there should there be a joint design approach to that site for some sort of coherence? And if so, how would that be secured? Um, and I think there is precedent for this with other dsos, obviously.

00:34:02:02 - 00:34:32:21

Uh, James Buckley, on behalf of the applicant, I can't speak to the, um, point about how it's secured. I'll come onto that with some colleagues. But in terms of the joint design approach, again, we have

employed an architect at an early stage who has now been employed by Lion Link. A lot of the work we did in terms of characterizing the landscape at Saxmundham has been used in their design, and the master plan that we have put forward as part of the um in our documents has now been taken up and built upon by the Lion Link consultation documents.

00:34:32:23 - 00:35:14:06

So it's very much a conversation around if Sealink are the only project, this is how the landscapes works. And then moving forward. And as people have pointed out at the point that we submitted our documents, Nautilus was in there as well to look at how we could work with one, two and three. And within that masterplan document, there is also looking at how the compounds would work and how everything interacts in terms of the staged outbuildings. Three projects. So we're comfortable that we've got that, um, approach. And we passed the baton on to Lion Link to look at how they now work with their design in terms of incorporating it within our design, in terms of how that's committed to that's that's not my expertise.

00:35:14:08 - 00:35:16:28

So I'll pass it to the rest of the team. Or maybe we just take that away and have to think.

00:35:17:00 - 00:35:36:25

About it, I think. And I haven't involved the councils yet, but if you want to say something, please do. But I'd be interested to hear views on whether a joint design guide kind of approach might be useful to setting out some, uh, some key principles. Would Suffolk County Council like to say something?

00:35:37:09 - 00:35:45:03

Thank thank you, madam. Michael Bedford, Suffolk County Council um, yes. We.

00:35:45:13 - 00:35:47:19

Um, um, design principles?

00:35:48:01 - 00:35:48:16

Nope.

00:35:51:10 - 00:36:29:18

I don't know where that came from. That wasn't me. But, um, we clearly want to see coordination on the design, uh, front, uh, including not only coordination so far as any built elements are concerned, but in particular Coordination so far as a landscape treatment is concerned for the locations, particularly in the vicinity of the Saxmundham converter station, and we don't see it as being unachievable and it's capable of being expressed through design principles.

00:36:30:07 - 00:36:52:02

We don't think at the moment that the documentation does sufficient in that regard. And we certainly when we get on to talking about the wording of the DCO, we don't think it's properly secured, but we don't see that these things are, as it were, outwith, um, the, the world of utilities design, planning and therefore achievable. It's just a question of getting it right.

00:36:52:25 - 00:37:03:13

Thank you. Does anybody else want to say anything about that? Um, question of a joint design approach with potential future development on that site.

00:37:05:00 - 00:37:10:01

Um, I can see a hand up. Is that Mrs. Cutting. Yes. Good afternoon.

00:37:10:12 - 00:37:45:10

Cutting for Suffolk County Council. I'm just just trying to add a tiny, tiny bit. Um, one gentleman from the applicant just said, um, you know, we get one scenario that shows how the landscape works, where if seedling is on its own. I have to say to that that for me, at the moment, it doesn't work particularly well in either location, whether that's Saxmundham or Friston. And I think that the design principles, um, that are supposed to be secured, um, in ah for, for Friston substation are insufficient and don't really cover landscape very well.

00:37:45:19 - 00:38:35:24

The plans that we've seen for for scenario two, where it's only um, uh, seedling substation being built out, seem inferior to what is proposed by SPR. And the same situation, I think is can be observed with, um, initial design proposals from from lion link in comparison with Sealink. And the other thing is that just going forward, it would be important that when we have clauses like a substantial, substantially in accordance with outline plans, that doesn't this doesn't preclude a seamless connection between the two converter station designs, for example, the location of new rights of way and other other planting elements that you know that doesn't isn't prohibited because something else has been approved.

00:38:35:26 - 00:38:39:15

Um, DCR consent stage. Thank you. Thank you.

00:38:39:27 - 00:38:42:00

Would the applicant like to respond on that?

00:38:43:21 - 00:39:23:20

Thank you. Early leader for the applicant. Um, so a couple of points. Um, I'll take them in terms of the the most recent one made first. So I think on on landscaping. Um, so the main place we're securing our landscaping is in the Olymp, and with the final lamp to be approved by the local planning authority. So landscaping is as a design matter isn't really dealt with in the same way. And the key design principles, although there are key design principles on on landscaping. But we do have that greater level of control for local authorities over landscaping in terms of how our landscaping works with SPR.

00:39:23:22 - 00:39:59:01

Obviously, we've had had a lot of back and forth on this. Um, but yeah, essentially, again, you know, we're working very closely together within the confines of a project where one is working through the detail and one is working through the outline. Um, and that is even more difficult, of course, with Lion Link. Um, I think with, with Lion Link, we are we're working very closely with NGV. We've had meetings with SPR and and NGV all together talking about the designs of both these locations, those, those face to face meetings have happened.

00:39:59:03 - 00:40:16:02

But the um, the challenge we of course would have is that the Sealink DCO cannot impose requirements on lion length, particularly as we know within our order limits. We don't have the areas for for landing, so they would only ever be.

00:40:16:04 - 00:40:24:17

I think I think Mrs. Cousins point was that the the landscaping appears inferior for Sealink compared to line link.

00:40:27:11 - 00:40:34:17

I'm I'm afraid we haven't reviewed the lion link landscaping proposals in sufficient detail to to respond to that now. Okay.

00:40:34:20 - 00:40:39:01

Thank you. Um, and I can see there's a hand up from Mr. Atkinson.

00:40:39:12 - 00:41:13:03

Uh, hello. Um, I'm Paul Atkinson, a Saxmundham resident. Um, I'm a bit confused, really, about when we were presented with. There were six options of design for the converter station. Um, agricultural barns, green roof colour and curve. Um, various ideas. Why haven't we moved on and narrowed this down? Um, it's a bit like me planning an extension for my house. I just hand over six drawings and six different ideas, um, for my extension, and I could pick either one of them.

00:41:13:17 - 00:41:15:18

Um, my concern is obviously

00:41:17:08 - 00:41:52:00

the cheapest option is just to build a shed and to paint it, um, you know, in stripes. Um, obviously the green roof curved option is more expensive, so I fear that, um, they're just that the applicant seems to be just having a how do I say it a broad scope. Um, and with no commitment really, at this stage, which I think considering they've built quite a few converter stations in their time, they should be able to narrow it down with what the scale and bulk of these buildings are.

00:41:53:07 - 00:41:54:02

Thank you.

00:41:54:21 - 00:41:59:19

Thank you. Does the applicant just want to respond to on that?

00:42:04:12 - 00:42:36:22

For the applicants. Uh, I mean, I think we're not at the detailed design stage, and, and, um, Dsos are quite different from applications under the Town and Country Planning Act regime, where you would have that kind of detail and that kind of detail does come at a later stage. Um, my sort of idea with showing those two visualizations was to try and help those that are are joining remotely to understand that there is no intention to build a gray shared, as is shown on those visualizations.

00:42:36:24 - 00:42:55:23

That is just showing the limit of deviation and that that doesn't look like a converter station. What you get, you get a much better idea of what is involved in a converter station by looking at the layouts that are there in the design and layout drawings, and also at those illustrative visualizations that we've provided.

00:42:55:25 - 00:43:05:12

Have you narrowed down from the six original schemes I think you've got for in your design approach documents. Now is that right?

00:43:05:23 - 00:43:11:06

So they they are detailed design matters that we we wouldn't determine at this stage. Okay.

00:43:12:19 - 00:43:24:11

Um, I'll take one more, um, speaker. But I do want to move on to the DCO controls very soon. Um, I see Geraldine Barker has her hand up.

00:43:25:03 - 00:43:28:17

Yes. Thank you. Thank you very much. Yes, I.

00:43:28:19 - 00:43:53:01

I concur with Miss Cutting from Suffolk County Council. Um, line links, uh, visualizations for the visual impact mitigation so far superior to ceilings. Moreover, they've proposed various different, um, aspects and the.

00:43:53:03 - 00:44:32:11

For the exterior of the building. Now, I'm just wondering who is going to lead this? Because the concepts that we've seen and there are only concepts at the moment from Blind Link and they've got a long way to go, seem to be far superior than ceilings. So, um, I, I'm very concerned that, um, following on from Mr. Atkinson's views, that we're not hearing anything and it is so important for Saxmundham, for the villages, but Stanfill and Pennell that we get the best possible exterior design.

00:44:32:17 - 00:44:35:01

Um, and thank you very much for hearing me.

00:44:35:12 - 00:44:38:07

Thank you. Um, councillor Becky Wing.

00:44:38:27 - 00:44:42:07

Uh, am I able to comment on the Kent end? Is that okay?

00:44:42:09 - 00:44:43:15

Of course, of course.

00:44:43:17 - 00:44:44:22

Uh, well, I mean.

00:44:44:24 - 00:44:45:09

We.

00:44:45:11 - 00:44:46:20

Too were faced with 6.

00:44:46:22 - 00:44:47:07

Or.

00:44:47:09 - 00:44:47:27

7 designs.

00:44:47:29 - 00:44:48:14

Uh.

00:44:48:23 - 00:44:50:23

Very early on, which confused.

00:44:50:25 - 00:44:51:28

Everybody because.

00:44:52:00 - 00:45:29:24

You know, there hasn't even been any approval that the the scheme would go ahead. But not only are we now faced with, uh, a design that basically will sit within open countryside on, on on Minster Marshes and not really be part of the Richborough Energy Park where there is the brownfield site. But we're now faced with a site that needs to be raised by up to two meters across the whole site, 13 football pitches, making it possibly 30m high. So we're now faced with the complication of the gravel, the aggregate that's got to come in actually impacting at ground level as well.

00:45:29:28 - 00:45:36:05

When it comes to the hover pool, we still have no firm idea around what is happening at the hover port.

00:45:36:24 - 00:45:51:29

But I'm sorry, I don't want to really interrupt you, but the hover pool isn't part of I'm considering at the moment the sort of above ground elements of the proposed development. So the converter stations and the substations.

00:45:52:05 - 00:46:25:22

There's obviously going to be an above ground part of the hover port. Because we've got lorries, we've got a construction site, we've got a we've got a pop, we've got a cable coming in and we've also got four possible hovercrafts coming in, all of which are going to need their own building structures on a presently on a piece of land that has nothing on it apart from wildlife and, and vegetation. So there is a

concern there that we haven't seen what construction, what buildings are going to sit on the hover pools. And I am talking about the above ground aspect of the hover pool.

00:46:26:05 - 00:46:31:15

I don't think there's any buildings proposed on the hover pool that might want to clarify that.

00:46:31:17 - 00:46:36:20

James Butler, on behalf the applicant, there is no intended temporary or permanent buildings on the hover board.

00:46:38:18 - 00:46:46:08

Thank you. Councillor Becky Wing, can I just hear from Mrs. Cutting, please? And I have seen your hand, Mr. Burton.

00:46:47:06 - 00:47:18:04

Only very briefly in relation to what Mr. Atkinson said. Um, with the, with the various designs that we have been seen and in the in the project level design principles, which are a guiding document. Um PE point two responding to design feedback, it states that, uh, clearly the the curved green blue roofs were the primary, uh, we were the favourite favoured solution, uh, by responding by from feedback.

00:47:18:06 - 00:47:48:11

And um, and then this next sentence reads in acknowledgement of this, National Grid will commit, uh, to working with the supply chain to explore the feasibility of using planted systems within the converter station compounds, taking into, you know, into into consideration constraints. So basically, it doesn't give us anything because all it says, we know what your favorite option would have been, but we'll we'll explore it. But we commit to nothing.

00:47:48:13 - 00:47:52:20

That's the state that we're at at the moment. I just wanted to have that noted. Thank you.

00:47:52:29 - 00:47:55:15

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Burton.

00:47:56:06 - 00:48:31:02

Thank you, Miss Thomas. James Burton, on behalf of Seas. Um, it seems that the panel is, um, actually being potentially presented with, um, very different, um, situations as regards to the, um, substation at Friston and the Saxmundham converter station. As regards Friston, based on what we've just heard, um, this afternoon from the applicant, it sounds as if the applicant has actually settled on a vast amount of detail, in which case it's the question.

00:48:31:04 - 00:49:02:20

Well, why not present on on that basis, surely and indeed present type four visualizations on that basis? Whereas when we swing to Saxmundham and this is my earlier point regarding the Rochdale envelope, but it's actually really neatly illustrated by what Miss Leader has said and what Miss Cutting has just picked up. They're giving you nothing. It could be anything. And there is a very live question. Can you safely say there's a there's a Rochdale envelope.

00:49:02:22 - 00:49:08:06

Maximum ceiling. Given that vast. Whatever it is. Range of options. Thank you.

00:49:08:26 - 00:49:09:18

Thank you.

00:49:11:12 - 00:49:24:18

So I think on, um, on the substation, I think you have committed now to providing a greater level of detail that is already, um, available for in relation to the SPR consent.

00:49:25:27 - 00:50:01:28

Leader for the applicant. I mean, what we wouldn't want to do at this stage is commit to in the DCO detailed design where details have not yet been discharged by SPR, because that puts us in the whole situation that we don't want to get into, where we have article, article ten and how that comes into play. So the appropriate level of detail to be secured, we think, is the is the document before you. I think what we are, what we have been considering, is where there is information that is discharged and whether or not we can then commit to doing the same thing.

00:50:02:00 - 00:50:31:21

And we're thinking particularly to be honest, around the cladding of the substation, because there isn't a lot of design that goes into a substation, but the cladding and and the roof line and how that works, we could commit to and we obviously need to think about that very carefully because of how challenging it is to amend the Cos and how we're securing an element of detailed design in a project that is mostly outlined design. But we can take that away and think about how to do that.

00:50:32:08 - 00:50:46:28

Okay. Thank you. I'd just like to move on to the actual DCO controls now. Um, so can the applicant display the draft DCO requirement? Three. So it's rep 306.

00:51:07:28 - 00:51:37:15

Well, we're waiting for that to come up. Could the applicant just briefly explain how you envisage such details being discharged and what documentation you would envisage supplying? Um, also picking up on the point that, um, that the key design principles do allude to other technical documents maybe being provided, but it's not clear. Could you zoom in on, um, the actual requirement? Thank you.

00:51:38:03 - 00:52:16:26

Uh, alley leader for the applicant. Um, so, yes, this this design commitment, which isn't in other National Grid dsos. It's an additional requirement we have in infancy. Link. Um, it ties us to those key design principles and design principles document, which looks at matters such as reducing, um, massing where possible and lighting and so on. And our proposal is that that those details, insofar as they can be influenced by the local authority, are are submitted for them to approve that we have indeed followed those design principles.

00:52:17:06 - 00:52:51:02

And what we are acknowledging in the wording of this requirement is that this is very much a electrically designed converter station, and so we do need to to limit that to being the approval of details in line with those commitments. What, what we what we can't have as a suggestion that we need to move out of our DC holes next to to somewhere else, because there is a way that it all works together as a whole. So that's why we we've worked it in the way we have that there is approval to make sure that those important details are met.

00:52:51:15 - 00:53:00:09

But without suggesting that the local authorities can approve an electrical design, because we don't think that's quite the area of expertise.

00:53:02:06 - 00:53:28:06

Okay. Um, could you just explain to me why the wording is quite different to, um, so East Anglia one North, um, for example, which is a more straightforward wording in my view, more traditional wording of details of the layout, scale and external appearance, um, shall be submitted and approved in writing.

00:53:30:12 - 00:53:41:14

A letter for the applicant. Uh, I mean, I can't answer for why SPR, or indeed any other applicant has worded the requirements that they write in the way that they have.

00:53:41:16 - 00:53:54:29

But I want to know why you've chosen a quite different approach where you're not really giving a lot of control to the relevant planning authorities on the actual layout, scale and external appearance.

00:53:56:03 - 00:54:33:19

Yes, I'm in. The design principles are quite detailed. Um, and there is a lot of material in there, such as the consideration of, of, of blue roofs and, and so on, that we would need to to adhere with that requirement. We would need to be submitting information to the local authorities for them to approve that. We are in line with that. And similarly with the lighting, what we're doing here is we're securing the outcome. We're securing the fact that we will be minimising light spill, but we're not securing how we do that, which we see very much as being an engineering led exercise.

00:54:33:21 - 00:54:44:06

We can give the engineering team the instruction to minimise light to bill. But how that happens is a is a matter for the for the engineers to be leading in this instance.

00:54:45:20 - 00:54:52:17

But the local authorities like to come in at this point with any comments on the wording of requirement three.

00:54:53:26 - 00:55:03:20

Madam Suffolk County Council, I certainly would and will, but I think it may be best to hear from the district first, because they are perhaps more in the hot seat.

00:55:03:23 - 00:55:07:11

Yeah. Um, East Suffolk District Council, I can see your hands up.

00:55:09:13 - 00:55:52:03

Thank you. Mark Westman and Smith for East Suffolk Council. Um, can I just go back to the substation details as a preliminary point. And Miss Lida said that the applicant couldn't commit to details prior to the SPR discharge on the substation. And just for your information, there is an application to discharge what is requirement 12 on the EA two consent, which addresses the details for the substation and the 56 day period for, um, uh, addressing those at that application expires on the 19th of February.

00:55:52:05 - 00:56:03:29

So either by that date or before that date. Um, details for the substation will have been discharged under the SPR two application.

00:56:04:06 - 00:56:11:14

Thank you. That's that's helpful. Have you got other points that you'd like to make about the wording of requirement throwing?

00:56:11:19 - 00:56:50:18

Uh, yes. Um, we've set this out in detail in written submission, so I'll be short now. But the details in our response to your question one Jen, 47 and is in rep 3085 on page um 11. Um, and in response to that, the applicant has said essentially that giving the planning authorities. The ability to control layout, design and scale of the converter station would be, in their words, appropriate or productive.

00:56:50:20 - 00:57:40:24

And the reason behind that is because of the limited, uh, ability to influence those elements of design. But we've already seen this morning about the different potential designs heard, for example, about six various options presented earlier on. Um, it's a surprising position to take, given the role of relevant planning authorities in the framework of the Planning Act 2008 and the established role of relevant planning authorities in discharging at requirements and further stepping back, um, from the Planning Act 2008, the obvious skill and knowledge of relevant planning authorities in planning matters.

00:57:41:13 - 00:58:19:10

Generally, I made the point earlier about the importance of detail, and that importance is only heightened in situations as here, where the amount of detail provided at this stage is limited, and that only points towards what is the ordinary course in this regime, which is to have requirements drafted as per EA two, which is um, the requirement to submit details for um approval.

00:58:19:19 - 00:59:04:21

And you can see examples of that in numerous development consents orders. And here it's in the A1, A1 North, A2, A3 and the five S threes offshore wind farm. And so we would advocate for that ordinary, um, approach to be dealt. To be applied here. And when you go and look at the design principles document AB 366, although it refers to, uh, critical design principles and parameters, it also repeatedly refers to flexibility.

00:59:05:01 - 00:59:38:00

And one of the purposes of having principles is to allow for some flexibility. It's only right in those circumstances that, um, the relevant planning authorities have the opportunity to, um, approve, um, the choices made within those within that flexibility. So I think all we're advocating for is the normal approach. Um, in particular, because here we've got very limited details at this stage, in particular in relation to the converter station.

00:59:38:02 - 00:59:48:29

But we also need to see express approval mechanisms for the substation and the river. Famous bridge.

00:59:49:27 - 00:59:54:06

Thank you. Thank you. I think I understand your your stance on that.

00:59:56:19 - 01:00:02:05

But Thanet District Council would like to comment on the wording of requirement three.

01:00:03:25 - 01:00:34:01

Helen Johnson District Council, thank you. And just say we agree with the approach that just been set out by Suffolk and District Council. And just to say that, um, with regards to the wording, I spoke about it earlier on about the vagueness of the design principles document, but we think that continues into the wording, um, requirement three with the generally general accordence, uh, wording that's included in there, which won't obviously be said, assist with the assessment and decision making. And another point that I just wondered whether it would be possible as a consideration.

01:00:34:06 - 01:01:03:13

and the applicant worked with the Design Review Panel in the earlier stages of the application. I believe it was, um, frame, and they did so with Suffolk, and we wondered whether there would be a possibility for it to be considered that further engagement with the Design Review panel, once the applicant is working to finalize the design for the converted and substation buildings, whether there's a possibility for that to be written into requirement three. Just so there's a little bit more certainty in terms of final design. Thank you, thank you.

01:01:10:13 - 01:01:30:09

And I think there is some commitment in the, um, design principles to go back to the design review panel. But as you say, it's not secured. And I think they do just say that that might just be with the chair rather than the, the panel as a whole. Um, Suffolk County Council, would you like to say something?

01:01:30:11 - 01:01:30:27

Thank you madam.

01:01:30:29 - 01:01:33:05

We'll go back to the applicant Afterwards.

01:01:33:07 - 01:02:03:15

Thank you madam. Mike Bedford, Suffolk County Council. We endorse the points that have just been made to you by East Suffolk Council and by the District Council, and we march in the same direction. Um, just 1 or 2 additional points. Um, on the same theme. At first we think that the applicants approach, uh, with, with respect is disregarding, um, the experience of discharging authorities, particularly in Suffolk, in dealing with energy infrastructure.

01:02:03:17 - 01:02:50:28

And so the suggestion that the local authorities will want to interfere with something which effectively is, in engineering terms, not practicable, that's not going to happen because they understand how energy infrastructure works. Secondly, even if that were a concern, it's capable of being addressed through the way that the, uh, design principles work. Uh, there is already a suggestion in the design principles that there are critical design constraints, and therefore it's not beyond the ability of drafting to ensure that any withholding of consent for the discharge of a requirement cannot transgress a critical design constraint.

01:02:51:00 - 01:03:22:27

So, for example, if one says, well, it needs to be x meters high, it wouldn't be a good ground of objection that it's six meters high so that that can be dealt with. There is also a point partly made in the applicant's response to your question. One Jen 47. Just checking my note where they draw attention to the Bramford to twin stead DCO and they say, well, we didn't have those controls there. So effectively that gives us a precedent.

01:03:23:16 - 01:04:01:15

Madam, you and the panel I think have been to Bramford and you don't need, I think, to be overly concerned about differences, but it is a world of difference. As an established infrastructure hub, if I can call it that, at Bramford, to which they are adding further infrastructure, and then you translate that to the position at Saxmundham, where so far as the converter station is concerned, it is effectively a large greenfield site without energy infrastructure and even Britain, albeit that there is the SPR proposals.

01:04:01:17 - 01:04:21:06

Again, it is largely a greenfield location from us, again very different. So we think that the Bramford example is not really a good precedent for the circumstances here. And Mr. Westmorland Smith has already outlined the better precedents. We think that you should be swayed by.

01:04:22:27 - 01:05:08:16

Thanet very strongly made the point which we echo that in any event, even if you were to adopt the applicant's approach, you should certainly get rid of the in general accordance provision, because that is a massive, um, as it were, loophole in the degree of any control. Uh, and then I think, just lastly, well, we've already talked about needing to bring, uh, the substations and the framers crossing into these controls and the design principles, as they currently are worded, fall a long way short of the equivalent principles in the approved documents for A1, A2, um, and we think that there's therefore a lot a need for a lot tighter control.

01:05:08:18 - 01:05:09:08

Thank you madam.

01:05:09:20 - 01:05:23:23

Thank you. Sorry. Can I just go back to Thonet and ask, um, what elements of the above groundworks would you, um, be seeking to have some, um, additional control over in terms of design?

01:05:30:10 - 01:05:44:10

Helen Johnson District Council. Thank you everybody. The converter station and I do the substation. But we do obviously understand the logistical constraints of that. But yeah, as much as possible. And we would like to be involved in that. Thank you.

01:05:44:16 - 01:05:46:22

Thank you. Um,

01:05:48:21 - 01:05:52:20

so going back to the. Oh, Mr. Burton, I see your hands up.

01:05:52:22 - 01:06:23:01

Thank you, madam James Burton, on behalf of Seas. Uh, firstly, um, we agree and endorse with everything that said by the local authorities. This is also, I think, the moment, if you might indulge me just to say what Mr. Mahoney left me, um, with his, um, please, that I do say on his behalf, which I agreed to do. Clearly, I have to literally read the words. That's fine. Um, so this is on behalf of Mr. Mahoney, uh, speaking as well, on behalf of Friston Parish Council.

01:06:23:08 - 01:06:56:16

And the point that has already been made. Um, They too are very keen to see explicit control for the substation. On the face of the DCO. Um, of course, that's consistent with what you've heard. Um, and um, also point out that again, falling back on our old comparative friend, the um, SPR consent lighting is explicitly controlled by um requirement 22 J at construction stage, and requirement 25 are operational.

01:06:56:22 - 01:07:01:12

And and there's no reason that shouldn't be the same here. Thank you.

01:07:01:20 - 01:07:02:20

Thank you.

01:07:05:24 - 01:07:49:19

So I would like to hear from the applicant on, um, including the converter station having a more traditional wording. Um, and I'm happy for you to do this. Um, as an action point. Um, so having a more Conventional wording if you like, just asking for details to be submitted and then approved without reference to the with or without reference to the design principles. But um, a sort of tighter wording in terms of control by the relevant planning authorities to cover the converter stations, the substations and the river framers, bridge and lighting.

01:07:50:04 - 01:08:18:00

And um, so I just like your views on that. Um, and whether a stronger requirement for an independent design review panel to, um, post consent, look at the designs before they then are submitted. I'm happy for you to respond to that later on if you want to, because I realize there's quite a lot of things in there.

01:08:18:02 - 01:08:29:02

Um, that's okay. I've got the for the applicant. Um, that's okay. I've got. I've got the list. I can run through them. Okay. Now, if that would be helpful. Um, so

01:08:31:00 - 01:09:03:27

in terms of Kent, um, I think one thing we have been considering and can commit to is we're very aware that in Kent, the converter and the substation are one site which is quite different to Suffolk. And actually all of our design approach documents and all the work we've done with the design panels and landscape and the multidisciplinary design work that we've done, which kindly third parties did earlier in the week, sort of concede there was was pretty good work and was always intended to be that designed as a single site.

01:09:03:29 - 01:09:34:25

So, um, I think we can reflect that in the wording for Kent, because we don't have the same situation, actually. The converter station and substation are a single site. Um, so I think we we can do that for sure. Um, I think in terms of the approach taken to Brantford to instead comment. We haven't taken the same approach to Bradford, so instead at all. We've done extensive design work on Sealink. We didn't do that on Bramford today.

01:09:34:27 - 01:10:06:19

Instead, we have taken a different approach and we've taken it in recognition that, yes, the projects are quite different. So we haven't pleaded the precedent in the design case. We've taken a different approach and we have got design principles and design requirements. Um, here, I think in terms of changing the wording for how it is approved, um, I think I probably just draw the attention back to paragraph 4.1.

01:10:06:21 - 01:10:44:06

17, which we did obviously refer to at the beginning of this hearing, that the Secretary of State should only impose requirements that are necessary, um, relevant to to planning enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. and we are. Those tests are not necessarily met for Sealink because another developer decided to include them in their DCO. They are very with respect. They're very different projects. I know we've talked a lot about the criticality and the urgency of this project, but having worked on a lot of different DCO projects, I haven't worked on a project that's quite this critical and urgent.

01:10:44:08 - 01:11:15:21

It really is very critical to our network, and it really is very urgent. And in that context, I'd really just urge the panel to to make sure that any additional requirements for things like a design panel, which can increase the timescale that we that we would take to get this approval of the design, if the outcome will be a good design, can we can we stick with this process? Because actually we think this will result in a good design. The principles are sufficient.

01:11:15:23 - 01:11:23:17

Enough work has been done to date that we can secure that design without elongating our requirements. Discharge process.

01:11:24:13 - 01:11:26:20

Okay. Thank you. Comments.

01:11:27:08 - 01:12:18:00

Sorry. Michael, Bedfordshire County council. I'm sure you don't really want to get into tit for tat sort of thing, but can I just draw to your attention? Page 21 of rat 3069. Which was the applicant's answer to your question one Jen 47. And in page 21, the penultimate paragraph states. Generally, it is noted that requiring details of the layout, scale, and design of utilitarian infrastructure, such as substations to be approved by the relevant planning authority is not a consistently applied requirement in energy Ecos, whilst recognizing that this is required by East Anglia one North and two DCS, there is, for example, no equivalent requirement relating to the substation element of the National Grid.

01:12:18:02 - 01:12:37:09

Branford to Insert Reinforcement Order 2024. A recent DCO secured by the applicant in Suffolk. That was the basis of my comment. And so whilst I hear what this leader said, I think there is a possibly a different emphasis being given by the applicant and the written material.

01:12:37:19 - 01:12:38:06

Thank you.

01:12:38:08 - 01:12:48:04

Sorry. Just come back on that point in relation to Bty and that is to is the Winstead Substation, not the Bramford substation, which is a rural substation in Essex.

01:12:49:01 - 01:12:50:24

Okay, Mr. Burton.

01:12:51:09 - 01:13:24:29

Thank you. James Burton, on behalf of Cees. Um, could I just draw the panel's attention to 2 to 2 points? Um, the first is that the, um, one of the reasons that the, um, your colleagues on the E1 and E2 um, examination, um, arrived at what they did was surely because of the context they were working in and i.e. the land they were working in. And that's, that's what that's what your context is here today.

01:13:25:01 - 01:14:08:16

So in terms of consistency of decision making. What a what a wonderful thing to be able to draw on. Um, the second point is we've heard again, and it seems to crop up in so many different ways. The applicant, relying upon what they say is critical and urgent about this project to justify any number of things that they want, that that are very difficult for the local community to accept. Um, and I'm, I'm a broken record on this, but that issue of need and economy and efficiency is just coming up again and again at the moment, without a proper forum exploration of what is a difficult topic because we don't accept what they say.

01:14:08:27 - 01:14:09:18

Thank you.

01:14:10:16 - 01:14:31:29

Thank you. Um, could I, I will ask you to respond on that. But also, um, have you given consideration to including river? The river from this bridge in, um, a requirement with or without reference to the design principles document.

01:14:35:19 - 01:14:56:04

And in order for the applicant, I shall definitely need, uh, leave the need point to, uh, to James to cover him in terms of the river famous crossing. Again, I think this is partially the paper chase problem, but we we do have, um, react commitments, um, around the river famous. So. And, uh, commitment.

01:14:56:06 - 01:15:14:01

LV I'm aware of the react commitment, but, um, I'm talking about having a requirement in the actual DCI for details to be submitted to the local authority because, you know, the consent is the DCO, not Not the.

01:15:16:04 - 01:15:22:16

Commitments. You know. The DCO sets out the formal process by by. Details are approved.

01:15:24:04 - 01:15:42:00

So at the moment we do have we do have it in the react commitment, the requirement to submit those details to the local authority. And those are tied in through requirement three. If what you're asking is can we take this wording and put it in the requirements? Yes. Yes, we can do that. Thank you.

01:15:42:18 - 01:16:02:22

Um, Mr. Burton just raised the point. I don't want to talk about need, obviously, but about the consistency of decision making where SPR have got a requirement in relation to the substation design. So in terms of consistency.

01:16:05:05 - 01:16:08:18

If it was needed for that, why why is it not needed for this.

01:16:12:05 - 01:16:29:07

A leader for the applicant. I mean, including if I have included details with respect, that doesn't necessarily mean that it was necessary. It it means that they were able to accept commitments and and what you can accept on one project and another does differ.

01:16:30:12 - 01:16:31:04

Thank you.

01:16:36:12 - 01:16:37:11

Mr. Burton.

01:16:37:21 - 01:16:38:11

You know

01:16:40:09 - 01:16:43:11

what I'm going to say, madam? It had to meet the tests.

01:16:44:03 - 01:16:47:03

That's. I think we all understand. You wanted to know. Coming.

01:16:47:05 - 01:16:49:00

I'm not sure that it's understood on that.

01:16:50:24 - 01:17:09:00

Um, I wonder whether, um, it might be helpful if the planning authorities could, um, work on some alternative wording for, um, your requested approach in terms of requirement three?

01:17:09:15 - 01:17:29:06

Certainly. Michael Bedford, Suffolk County Council. We're very happy to liaise with East Suffolk Council and with Senate District Council and if they wish to get engaged, Kent County Council, to see whether or not we can put forward a suggestion of something that we think would be more workable. Thank you for purpose. Thank you madam.

01:17:29:23 - 01:17:35:24

For deadline for all. Or would you put that direct to the applicant?

01:17:35:26 - 01:17:57:12

I it may be that it would be more productive to you for us to engage, having had that, as it were, into local authority discussion for us to engage with the applicant. And if it's acceptable to you simply to report you on progress at deadline for rather than necessarily provide you with the wording at that stage, because it may be still in flux.

01:17:57:14 - 01:18:00:15

Thank you. That would be helpful. Thank you.

01:18:02:06 - 01:18:06:24

Um, so I just need to see what else I need to cover. Um.

01:18:19:09 - 01:18:59:20

Sorry. I know we've gone on for a little while. I'm hoping the next item won't take too long. And we are then at the end of the agenda. Apart from any other. Any other business. So if we can push on. If that's okay with everyone. Um, so this is requirement nine, schedule three, requirement nine, part two. And there was a question in first written questions about this. Uh, one Jen 52. So requirement nine, um, or part two of that requirement applies the requirement to restore land to a condition suitable for its former use, um, to land above or within ten meters of underground cables.

01:19:00:24 - 01:19:31:09

The excise is concerned, maybe that this could have wide ranging implications for the likely significant effect. And that's the point that was raised in the questions. Um, and I understand the in the applicant's response that it's concerns about having to maybe reinstate buildings that might have been taken down or replant trees. However, article 27 five does say that replacement buildings won't be required.

01:19:31:24 - 01:19:43:06

Um, and I wonder whether there's a way of adding wording in relation to trees rather than this rather sort of clumsy way of saying it will be reinstated, except for quite a big strip.

01:19:45:05 - 01:19:57:15

And for the applicant, we agree with you. Um, it is clumsy wording and it's not intended in the way it's. And now being read. Um, yes. So we'll take that away.

01:19:57:17 - 01:20:00:08

Thank you. Thank you. Um,

01:20:01:27 - 01:20:05:03

has anybody got anything else they want to say on that?

01:20:06:04 - 01:20:10:16

If it's going to be reworded, then no. We'll wait until it gets reworded. I think it's better.

01:20:10:18 - 01:20:15:17

Thank you. Well, thank you everyone for your contributions. I will hand over to Miss Holmes.

01:20:18:03 - 01:20:18:18

Thank you.

01:20:18:20 - 01:20:21:26

So moving on to item 22. Any other business?

01:20:22:00 - 01:20:33:03

We've not been notified that anyone wishes to raise any other business that's relevant to this hearing. But before I close, can I ask if there are any other matters that any party wishes to raise? Yes. Mr. Mackey.

01:20:33:27 - 01:21:10:00

In breach of the promise I made this morning, I intervene again just to say this. I just like to thank the panel for the fair, efficient and courteous conduct of this hearing. This is one area where I'm at a better position and a more authoritative position than the brilliant youngsters from the legal profession who I see surrounding me on the table. Because the first public inquiry like this, which I was involved with, was that of the third London airport that was to be in 1969.

01:21:10:02 - 01:21:30:07

So I had some real authority in thanking you for your help and also your backup, your administrative support for the way in which they have helped those of us who are not part of the large groups. So back in 1969, they weren't as courteous or kind as you were. So thank you very much.

01:21:31:08 - 01:21:35:10

Thank you very much, Mr. Mackey. Um, in the room, Mr. Burton.

01:21:35:28 - 01:22:16:07

Thank you, Miss Holmes. Um, James Burton, on behalf of seas. Yes, of course. We wholeheartedly echo Mr. Mackey's comments. And our thanks to you, too. Um, I'll be very, very brief, um, on this. You know, I'm a broken record, and I do come back to the issue of need and economy and efficiency. Um, it is terribly important. I'm sure the panel are not falling into this trap, but not falling into the trap of thinking that because the MPs require essentially an assumption of need for all national energy infrastructure, therefore they should not be an inquiry into need.

01:22:16:14 - 01:22:47:18

And that is for obvious reasons, because one goes to the balance, one goes to questions of compelling case and compulsory purchase and so on and so forth. And that's, of course, why the applicant has set out, um, over many, many pages what it considers is a need case and, and a case that has a need and a criticality and urgency to it. And, um, and it's technical. It's difficult. We've pulled it apart on paper.

01:22:47:20 - 01:22:59:18

But we are concerned that without an airing at a hearing, it may be despite your great competence, you might miss a nuance. So I repeat the request for that.

01:22:59:20 - 01:23:36:15

I think it's just a just to, Um, so that you understand, obviously, with this hearing is predominantly, um, that the process of the examination is predominately written process. And when there are issues such as need that are highly technical, that's actually easier for us to work through as a written process rather than hearing it all orally. And it's easier for both parties to come up with their responses. So I have seen the latest response at deadline three from Sees. The applicant will respond. The deadline for will take into consideration, but if you have other things to add technical issues, please do submit them for deadline for and they will all be taken into account.

01:23:36:17 - 01:23:37:02

We will.

01:23:37:04 - 01:23:37:19

Thank you.

01:23:37:21 - 01:24:12:09

Thank you. Um, anyone else in the room before I move online? Thank you. Ma'am, just a very brief point. I just wanted to pick up a point. I think maybe just got left a little bit. Um, the question of requirement three, and it's rewording that Mr.. Um, Bedford is going to be liaising with us on. Um, I

just wanted to pick up one point. We'll obviously see what Mr. Bedford has to say, but you've got leaders position on that, which is that we consider it to be inadequate, um, control. Um, just to add one point, which is although consistency in decision making is obviously a material and important concept.

01:24:12:12 - 01:24:28:18

Um, it's not the case that you cannot depart from other decision making as long as you have reasons. So in our response once, of course, we see what Mr. Bedford says with an open mind, and we will add in our response the reasons that we say, um, you can depart from that.

01:24:30:07 - 01:24:32:21

Thank you. Thank you for that. Um, I've got Councillor.

01:24:32:23 - 01:24:33:26

Becky Wing online.

01:24:33:28 - 01:24:34:20

Please.

01:24:34:22 - 01:25:08:29

Thank you. Obviously the Kent end. Uh thanks again. It's been a well-organised four days. It's been exhausting for all of us. I think I just wanted to make one comment. I mean, we've been, uh, represented by district council and local councillors, including myself. But as a resident and a councillor, I've been hugely disappointed and frustrated by the lack of representation from county from our county council. I've already fired off an email as I as I know quite a few other people have. And I'm really hoping that this doesn't leave us disadvantaged, because it's been amazing to see the way Suffolk have obviously presented themselves.

01:25:09:01 - 01:25:40:27

The county council presented themselves and and everybody involved in Suffolk, including ourselves who have been here, have presented, you know, concerns and issues that need addressing. And I know all of the planning inspectors have constantly said that's an action point. So I hope you will follow through with those and insist that that KCC do respond to concerns that we've raised here, that they have a statutory duty to cover, particularly around flooding and highways. But thank you very much for your time and patience during the four days.

01:25:41:25 - 01:25:43:25

Thank you very much. And just to let.

01:25:43:27 - 01:25:44:12

You know.

01:25:44:14 - 01:25:48:01

We do understand that Kent County Council have watched some.

01:25:48:03 - 01:25:48:18

Of these.

01:25:48:20 - 01:25:50:20

Hearings, um, online.

01:25:51:00 - 01:25:52:20

Um, and they are aware that we're going to give them.

01:25:52:22 - 01:26:06:11

A number of action points to contribute for the questions that they couldn't answer in the hearing. So we will be getting contribution from Kent County Council. Is there anybody else online or in the room that would like to comment before we move on?

01:26:08:19 - 01:26:44:14

I see no hands. Um, okay. I will move on to closing the hearing. So can I remind you that the timetable for the examination requires that parties provide any post hearing documents on or before our deadline, for which is Tuesday the 10th of February. And can I also remind you that the recording of this hearing will be placed on the inspector website as soon as practicable after the hearing? And before we close, I'd like to thank all today's participants for their time and assistance. But today and for the rest of the whole week, um, we will consider all your responses carefully and they will inform our decision as to whether we need further questions and further hearings.

01:26:44:23 - 01:26:51:03

The time is now. 326 and this issues specific hearing for the proposed Sealink project is now closed.