



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Norwich to Tilbury
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) – Part 2
Date:	13 February 2026

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

00:00:05:06 - 00:00:14:04

Okay. Welcome back. Time is now 1140 and it's time to resume this issue specific hearing. And so I'll go straight back to the applicant. Thank you.

00:00:14:27 - 00:00:29:15

Russell Harris Casey, I'm going to ask Mr. Reston to do an orientation of the, uh, of the cable ceiling ends and also illustration of the two main compounds, uh, and their position on the line

00:00:31:05 - 00:00:47:21

for eastern for the applicant. Um, I think as before, we'll try and run through them from north to south just to provide that orientation. If we can go to the first image and we are using the, um, smart Atlas system that we referred to earlier, so we can zoom and just zoom out a little bit. Tom.

00:00:50:18 - 00:01:03:12

Just to make it run a little bit quicker, we've got the, um, just the sort of a very basic, uh, base plan we can put on one 25,000, uh, scale leave us much, but it does run a little slower. Just to do that a bit further.

00:01:06:15 - 00:01:07:26

And a bit further.

00:01:09:20 - 00:01:44:02

So just for orientation. So we started at Bradford and Overhead Line. And this is where we transition to cable. The Dedham Vale National landscape is just off the image to the south. And the we originally looked at locations and to the slightly further south to the, um, just to the west of Great Wenham, um, and not the enterprise area. But in response to feedback, we've moved it a little further to the north, and it's saying just north of Ryde and Airfield and Little Wenham, with a cluster of scheduled monuments, is off to the right hand side.

00:01:44:04 - 00:02:08:21

And Tom, I don't know if you could switch the, uh, some of the constraints on please. Um, and you can see diagonally across the upper left is the existing overhead line, which is the Bradford Twin Stead scheme, where there's an existing one through two that's also being replaced. But, um, that's the, uh, the radon compound. And if you could put on the dead and veil national landscape, Tom, assuming that's on there.

00:02:14:17 - 00:02:42:12

So the various change requests have led to changes here. So the, uh, the cable alignment did come out from the, uh, going out to the west. It now comes out to the, to the east. Um, and then, uh, cuts around as the dead end Vail. So we're set back a bit beyond more than a kilometer and a half in terms of cable distance, but about a kilometer from the closest part of the Vail national landscape. Um, can I just check? Is that sort of the level of detail that you're looking for?

00:02:42:14 - 00:02:45:03

Yeah, that's that's much more useful. Thank you.

00:02:45:19 - 00:03:18:10

Um, so we if we move on to the, um, connection node substation, so we'd say the cable all the way through to there, we did look at the north side of, uh, sorry, to the south side of the Dedham Vale whether there were opportunities to transition to overhead line, but again, partly because of the effects of two overhead lines and difficulties citing a Covid ceiling, and the cable continues through to connection and substation. Just stimulate a little bit further, Tom. Um, again. So it sits to the east of Ardley.

00:03:18:12 - 00:03:57:23

We've got, um, scheduled monument to the left. There are. Um, and so the access road comes in from the east when you if I won't get into it, it'll lose the time. But in a bigger scale, effectively, that location is somewhere between where the transmission system could be and the coast, where the landing points for the customer are coming ashore. So we found a location and say, this is set out in the Design Development report that finds that balance between the effects of the substation, the 400 connections that come to it and go away from it.

00:03:57:25 - 00:04:31:17

And the, um, customer connections, the you can see to the right of the substation there down towards the past, Little Bromley is both the, um, the slightly wider one to the south. Thomas, you could use the curve as a point. Um, is the shared hall road with the two wind farm customers north of five estuaries and then just to the north, which comes off a wide, and Bentley Road, just to the north of which is a permanent private ale route that cuts across fields to the south of Little Bromley.

00:04:31:19 - 00:05:05:28

That's the sort of the permanent condition, with the whole road being taken out after the um, substations and the north and five estuaries have finished with it. Um, other locations further west were considered um, the other side of the A12. The challenge is always the getting the. It's either the 400 comes to the econ or the customer cables come to a relocated ECN. But that's the position that we've. We've settled on and that's in the DDR, the cable alignment that heads away from.

00:05:06:00 - 00:05:45:15

That then goes on the north side of Ardley, crossing the reservoir across the A12 and then beyond the A12. We see where the line is getting closer to the national landscape there. And we have the, the the first of the, sorry, the second cable section outside the national landscape. But um, because of the impacts on the the setting, we have that section of cable you can zoom in on the eastern cable ceiling end a little bit more on there. Thank you a bit further. Um, again, that's been positioned to benefit, um, to the extent possible from existing woodland plantation to either side.

00:05:45:22 - 00:06:14:13

Um, there's been again, the design development report sets out reasons for not moving it to other locations that people have requested further to the east, and cabling all the way back to the east end. There are technical reasons and, uh, why that's problematic. Um, but that position there so benefits from screening with other potential for planting around that. Um, if you could zoom out a bit, Tom, and then go to the western end.

00:06:17:29 - 00:06:48:20

And again, the western end. Um, various corridor restrictions would go along, but the western end is, um, just to the east of that small water body against, um, with advice from our landscape experts set back from the national landscape, um, recognize that there will still be some potential visibility, but it's not at a level that impacts the special qualities. So that's why it's there. Say the Dr. sets out other reasons why it's been, um, positioned there rather than, um, further south.

00:06:49:00 - 00:06:49:17

Um.

00:06:51:27 - 00:07:25:22

Just to make a bit more Tom, just so we can see the national landscape a bit further. There we are. So say just over a, I think a kilometre just over from the national landscape and say from there the en route heads heads to the south. Um, the next uh, cable ceiling end. So that's one cable ceiling end by radon two there. The next two are actually at, um, first dead. It's not the first dead where we crossed the existing, um, line that goes south from Braintree.

00:07:26:04 - 00:07:57:16

Wait for the map to catch up. We've got zoom in there. Um, again, you can see the existing line from, uh, running from the the R of Tilbury and the heading there running south and then diagonally, uh, turning to the south west. We have to cross that somewhere. Um, we've, uh, we've had a different location in one of the first iterations, slightly to the left. Tom, if you can point to where you. Where that was. Where's I can't see the cursor. Yeah, it was just to the left of there.

00:07:57:18 - 00:08:32:29

Um, which would involved a different use of the to one of the trenches technique techniques we've called um, um, talked about previously. Again, feedback from landowners. Um, and requested that we try and minimise the, the land, take and respond to some of their agricultural constraints. And we've actually got the, um, I think the predominantly in the same field, a pylon just has to be outside, but it's in the same field straddling that, um, 400 kilovolt and benefits again from some existing woodland screening from some of the key receptor locations from first Ed, for example.

00:08:33:01 - 00:08:46:21

And again, proposals in the document to reinforce some of that planting around. Um, there is um, you can go to the next one. So that's another two CCS. So that's five of the six.

00:08:49:03 - 00:08:53:18

Let's go to Tilbury North substation.

00:08:57:27 - 00:09:29:01

Out of the bottom there. So they're running to, um, Tilbury North. They'd say we cross over the, um, domain arterial road there to dual carriageway to the north. Um, there's Buckingham Hall landfill to be negotiated. And then we cross Orsett Golf Course for the, um, the run into the um Tilbury substation. Um, again, discussions on going with Dorset about the exact, uh, crossing arrangements there and, um, solving that arrangement.

00:09:29:03 - 00:09:53:24

The substation itself sits between a, um, a little landfill to the and to the eastern side, and then Orsett Golf Course, um, south of which is the Lower Thames Crossing development area. Um, so what we've got shown on the screen is this scenario A with the overhead line crossing, but effectively where. Tom, if you could zoom in a little.

00:09:56:01 - 00:10:26:02

Uh, yeah. Sort of where the cursor is there and the, uh, existing overhead line, which I think is the green sort of that's where the where the two blue lines cross over. Um, they lower 10th crossing and the existing overhead line, that's where we had to would have two crosses close together breaking into that. Yea. That existing overhead line to provide the connection that the cables go across under Lower Thames and through to the Tilbury substation to the north.

00:10:26:06 - 00:10:44:24

It's south of the overhead lines that the um, I think was the lady on the call from uh, representing Bloor Homes. That's the Bloor Homes Chadwell Saint Mary Airy development that, uh, say one of the driving factors with lower temps crossing about looking at modifying that arrangement to minimize that interface there.

00:10:47:11 - 00:11:05:22

If we could then go back up to. So that's the seven CSK's, The Raid and the two at Great Hawksley, the two at first then, and the two on this line here with the two substations. And if we could go back up to the main construction compounds, um, there's a, there's a.

00:11:05:24 - 00:11:15:18

I think we'll leave that. Yeah, yeah. That's fine. Um, so I want to make sure we've got enough time to talk about alternatives, find the next item on the agenda. Thank you.

00:11:15:21 - 00:11:27:23

We will. I'm terribly sorry. For a number of reasons. First, for interrupting and not doing my name. We will put it in the pack. Um, and we've listened carefully to what your concerns were, and we put it in the pack.

00:11:28:19 - 00:11:46:24

Thank you very much. Um, I just want to go to, uh, interested parties in the room and online, um, very briefly, if you can. Um, so we can move on to the next item in the agenda. If anybody in the room first Has got any comments they wish to make on what they've heard.

00:11:48:10 - 00:11:49:04

Mr. banner.

00:11:49:14 - 00:12:22:22

Thank you, Madam Chair. Three comments please. Comments. Quick question please. If I give them all in one go and then allow the applicant to respond. On the issue of alternatives. Um, one thing we would be grateful for clarity on is an answer to the question. Alternatives to what? The ES quite rightly says that alternatives must deliver the project objectives in the chapter concerning alternatives. What it's little less clear about is what the proper characterization of those project objectives is.

00:12:22:24 - 00:13:01:09

And that's fundamental for a number of things, both in terms of EIA consideration, in terms of consultation, if there's a later J.R., and in relation to critical national priority, um, presumptions. So I'd be very grateful to hear the applicant's characterization of what specifically are the project objectives. That's point number one. Point number two relates to the Dedham Vale national landscape and two issues within that. Um, firstly, I thought I heard and I think some of those around me also did, and I maybe that's wrong, but I thought I heard that Mr.

00:13:01:11 - 00:13:35:00

Easton said, uh, earlier today that there would be no harm to the special qualities of the national landscape and ought to be consistent with the special qualities. That's quite different to what the environmental statement says. And I do ask you to note, in that respect, the yes, you may have picked up talks about construction and operation, normally construction effects or temporary effects in a normal way. That's obviously not the case here. The construction element of the ES is the building of the pylons, and operation is the maintenance. And under the construction heading, there are quite a lot of significant effects on the special quality.

00:13:35:02 - 00:14:15:14

So please could the applicant be very clear about what its case is in relation to special qualities. The second sub point on that issue, too, is we heard a few minutes ago that an alternative routing that avoided the dead and bear national landscape was ruled out on the basis of the ECN location being a sort of fixed constraint. That meant that wasn't possible. Um, what alternatives were considered in relation to the location of the ECM and why? Third point is you have shown a slide which, uh, had I couldn't work out the number because it's too far away, but, um, it showed trenching.

00:14:15:16 - 00:14:39:21

Um, and we understand that was trenching of AC cables. We understand that the trenching, uh, requirements of BC cables are significantly narrower. Does the applicant have an equivalent slide showing? Uh, by way of comparison, the, uh, trenching required for DC cables. I think those are the three points to my left. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you.

00:14:40:17 - 00:14:54:29

Okay, thank you. I won't ask the applicant to come back on that now, but in writing, that's okay. Thank you. Is there anyone else in the room that wants to comment on what they've thought they've just heard? Um, in terms of scope of development, Mr. Henderson.

00:14:55:14 - 00:15:08:29

Thank you. Madam. Tom Henderson, uh, Fullerton crossing project. Um, it might be convenient just to make the three fairly brief points that I wanted to make now. They do cross over a number of the agenda items, but, um, they do relate to alternatives and design.

00:15:10:27 - 00:15:15:22

So the first point I just turn to my notes. Bear with me a moment.

00:15:18:17 - 00:15:49:26

The first point that we wanted to make was that in getting to grips with the application documents, we were we were struck by the, um, the general lack of prominence, um, and weight that appears to have been given to the lower terms crossing project generally, at least in the documents that we've we've seen so far. And that's in terms of design development, um, Site selection and assessment alternatives in in the Tilbury area in particular. And that's not just the road itself, but that's related key mitigation and compensation commitments.

00:15:50:08 - 00:16:06:22

And the second point in that context is that the Lower Thames Crossing application, as you may know, was accepted for examination examination in October 2022. So and the proposals in this area haven't changed materially since then. So there's been plenty of time to take to take account of them.

00:16:08:21 - 00:16:56:19

Um, and as has been outlined earlier in hearings this week, it's those design decisions that have, um, given rise to significant interface issues with lowest terms crossing that are currently unresolved and in some cases put the project in breach of its own development consent order. We won't set those out in more detail now, noting that those are matters for later in the process. Um, then thirdly, in the context of this, uh, hearing, what is it that we're seeking? We are seeking, um, more information about how the Lower Thames Crossing project and its design has been taken into account in the site selection process for Norwich to Tilbury, including the substation and related works, so that we can we can fully assess and understand that and get to grips with the proposals and hopefully identify mutually compatible solutions.

00:16:57:26 - 00:17:32:20

Um, amongst other things that we need that to address is the site selection process in relation to compensatory woodland that's necessitated by, um, the chosen location of the Tilbury North substation and the apparent inclusion of um works which conflicts with the Lower Thames crossing relocated travellers site. Um. We'd also like consideration to be given to, or at least assessment of why, um, the substation wasn't considered north of its current location, which, um, in our observation, would avoided a number of these these key interfaces.

00:17:33:00 - 00:17:46:04

Um, we're content for all of these matters to be dealt with via the interrelationship document or an appendix to that at deadline one. But we do need that information to fully understand and get to grips with the the interfaces. Thank you.

00:17:48:16 - 00:17:54:06

Thank you. And that's straying into the other item on the agenda there. But that's fine. Preempt it.

00:17:57:27 - 00:18:29:15

Morning, Rosie Pearson of East Anglia. Um, first is a little request whether anyone mentioning types of transmission could always use AC or DC when describing underground or other, because it makes it a lot easier to know what's going on. Um, the other, in relation to the 12 converter stations mentioned earlier, it's only the case you need 12 if you break in the middle of the line. So one of the check options is called offshore one. There's no break in that. So they're going to be six converter

stations. Um, and we're assuming in this discussion that ECN is required. But arguably lots of variables of this.

00:18:29:17 - 00:18:35:18

It's not needed. In which case there would only be six converter stations needed. So just to clarify the number of converter stations. Thank you.

00:18:37:04 - 00:18:38:15

Thank you, Mr. Bell.

00:18:39:20 - 00:19:07:15

Thank you. Um, just, uh, Simon Bell, on behalf of Ardley Parish Council and Little Bromley Parish Council. We just want to go on record as some of my thunder has been stolen by some of the comments made to my left, but we would be very interested in seeing the slide demonstrating the comparison between AC trenching and DC trenching. We do have some kind of more Ardley and Little Bromley specific points, but they're probably better off reduced to writing to save time today, so we'll be raising those later.

00:19:09:24 - 00:19:15:26

Okay. Thank you. Anyone else in the room or online? Before we move on to alternatives.

00:19:16:03 - 00:19:17:11

Point on process. Obviously very.

00:19:17:13 - 00:19:17:28

Happy.

00:19:18:05 - 00:19:33:00

Very happy to Mr. Harris and his team to reply to our points in writing. Will we get an opportunity to apply there? Because they're quite fundamental issues for us, and obviously we won't be able to predict what they will say by deadline one. So will there be an opportunity to comment on that? Yeah, of course.

00:19:33:13 - 00:19:38:14

The following deadline. Thank you. Deadline to what you say at deadline one you can comment on at deadline two.

00:19:42:09 - 00:19:49:25

I can't see any hands up in the room online. Was Curtis

00:19:51:16 - 00:19:52:20

on Curtis? Yeah.

00:19:52:22 - 00:20:33:14

Thank you on Curtis for baby district council and Mid Suffolk district for noting the high level of today's hearing and not wanting to go over again the issues that have already been raised by the

people in the room, just because you have seen some slides depicting econ, also the cable ceiling income down near Wenham. Um, and there's been some discussion about alternative technologies. I just would like to make it clear about the, um, representations from Baby District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council, a number of our parish councils and other individual interested parties in respect of alternatives and the clarity that we would seek in terms of what the increased capacity measures might do.

00:20:33:16 - 00:20:50:13

Making sure that that does address alternative technologies like HVDC. Um, and just to to flag the concerns that we've raised about the impacts on the second of the national landscape and alternatives that, um, hopefully get to it. A further issue specific has been requested early in the week.

00:20:53:13 - 00:20:54:19

Okay. Thank you.

00:20:56:05 - 00:21:00:11

And the initials S.H., I'm afraid.

00:21:03:05 - 00:21:05:00

I'll put the camera. Sorry, Mark. Yes. Steven.

00:21:05:03 - 00:21:06:14

Steven. Humphreys. Thank you.

00:21:06:16 - 00:21:51:23

Uh, Steven Humphreys, on behalf of Innova Renewables, uh, limited. It was just an observation and conscious that we've we're sort of addressing points that have been discussed. I won't cover items five and six. I think others have sort of touched on them, um, in the interest of time. But in terms of, um, it was an observation in terms of the limits of the deviation point and around shortening those areas? Um, I'd be asked. I'd be very grateful if the applicant could give that some consideration into, in respect to my clients sites, particularly, um, Hall Farm, where an area is included within the not only the order limits but also within the limits of deviation, there's an eastern swathe of land that at the moment, there's no proposal to put any infrastructure on that area.

00:21:51:25 - 00:22:08:13

And that is the location of my client's, um, consented development. So I would I would be I would be grateful if the applicant could consider that. But also we will, uh, wait with interest to see how the applicant addresses that in writing in due course. Thank you.

00:22:10:06 - 00:22:13:17

Okay. Thank you. There's a mr. Owen online.

00:22:15:12 - 00:22:21:27

Is there anything you'd like to raise from from what you've heard in the previous presentation? We'll move on to alternatives next.

00:22:22:13 - 00:22:22:28

Yeah.

00:22:23:00 - 00:22:57:00

Just very briefly, um, can I just point out that, uh, in return, In regards of the ancient woodlands where there was mitigating circumstances, it was moved away. Um, where I am at RG 140 RG. 141 it goes right up to an ancient woodland. Um, and that's not been taken into account. And I don't understand why it's mitigated down in Essex but not up in, uh, Mid Suffolk if that could be looked into.

00:22:58:10 - 00:22:58:25

Okay.

00:22:58:27 - 00:23:00:10

Thank you. Thank you.

00:23:02:26 - 00:23:11:20

Can't see any other. Hands up. So the applicant, I presume you're able to respond in writing to all of those points made?

00:23:11:22 - 00:23:12:07

Yes.

00:23:12:09 - 00:23:13:20

Thank you. And that's the way we do it.

00:23:14:00 - 00:23:15:10

All right. Thank you very much.

00:23:20:14 - 00:23:55:18

So moving on to item five. Um, so I've stated earlier and in the agenda this is a high level hearing, and we're expecting the applicant to explain their proposals and approach to alternatives. And it's largely to aid our understanding of the proposed development at an early stage of the examination. And as we know, a large proportion of interested parties have made submissions regarding alternatives, both at the this week's open floor hearings, all three of them and, um, in writing in the relevant representations.

00:23:56:25 - 00:24:31:17

Um, so we're going to we're going to allow the applicants as essentially to present their case and explain, um, their approach. And then at the end of that, we will allow interested parties to respond briefly to what the applicant says at the at the end of this agenda item. But as already explained, we are short of time. Um, so it's to today is to aid our understanding. And if there's anything else that's outstanding, or for specific locations that will be for deadline.

00:24:31:19 - 00:24:37:26

Deadline one and we will ask more questions as time goes on. We're only at the beginning of the examination.

00:24:40:13 - 00:24:41:02

So.

00:24:43:13 - 00:24:57:25

Detailed comments that interested parties have already made in relation to alternatives and related matters should be made in writing at deadline one. We expect that anyway, um, in the applicant's response to relevant representations and.

00:25:00:13 - 00:25:33:25

So for for interested parties, what you submit at deadline one in writing will inform along with your relevant representations will inform our written questions which come I can't remember what day in March we've got down in our examination times, however, towards the end of March. So we will. We will be sending a lot of room questions to the applicant on on the matter of alternatives and a whole host of other environmental issues as well.

00:25:34:15 - 00:25:40:16

Um, so so that's to come. So if we're not asking questions today, that's why we prefer to do it in writing.

00:25:44:04 - 00:25:46:12

So to the applicant,

00:25:48:06 - 00:25:58:04

could you now present an overview of your approach to alternative methods of electricity transmission during all pre-application stages of project design development?

00:26:00:13 - 00:26:06:00

Reasons for discounting them. Signposting to the relevant documents. And

00:26:07:18 - 00:26:12:01

I'll, I'll I'll let you lead and then if if we need to interject Russell Harris will do.

00:26:12:03 - 00:26:51:16

Thank you very much. Russell Harris. Katie, uh, my job here will be to provide a very sharp, uh, summary of national policy and requirements, which are referred to in the question. And then I'll pass on to the technical team to explain their choice of and rejection of high level options, starting with, therefore N1 and its relevant guidance on alternatives. You know already that N1 identifies an urgent national need for electricity infrastructure of this nature, which is required in the national interest to be delivered as soon as possible, as quickly as possible, and at speed and scale.

00:26:51:18 - 00:27:24:12

And that is one of the key objectives to answer Mr. Bonner's question of the project. It's to meet that N1 identified need next, in terms of the consideration of alternatives as part of the examination of substantive case, N1 indicates first that the consideration of alternatives by us and by you, and by the

Secretary of State should be carried out in a proportionate manner. And second, that only alternatives that can meet the objectives of the proposed development.

00:27:24:14 - 00:28:01:21

Mr. Banner's point needs to be considered so alternatives that can't address the objectives are not truly alternatives. Ian 14322 explains that the Secretary of State will be guided by whether there's a realistic prospect of the suggested alternative delivering the same infrastructure capacity, the same energy security, the same climate change and the same environmental benefits as the proposal in the same timescale as the proposed development.

00:28:02:26 - 00:28:41:15

N5 and its relevant guidance to alternatives says this N5 requires the grid. The applicant in this case to operate in an efficient, coordinated and economical way. It also says in order to do that Overhead line is the strong starting presumption for electricity network developments in general. Having regard to that duty. That strong starting position is reversed, but it's only reversed in one instance, which is for nationally designated landscapes.

00:28:41:23 - 00:29:15:20

The strong starting presumption in favor of overhead lines is not displaced, and it's not even displaced, where there is a high potential for widespread and significant adverse effects. In those circumstances, the Secretary of State should only prefer underground or subsea, where their benefits clearly outweigh any extra economic, social or environmental impacts. Applying the test set out in N5, this project, and in a very brief outline we believe has complied at the highest level.

00:29:15:22 - 00:29:49:19

With that guidance, we have applied the presumption and the strong presentation of overhead lines in the correct places, and we have reversed that presumption in the circumstances of national landscapes. As for Niso guidance, Niso is publicly owned, part of Disney's, uh, it's independent. It's an independent body responsible for planning the GB energy system and for providing advice and guidance to decision makers and applicants.

00:29:50:06 - 00:30:32:05

It identifies this project as part of our objective. Part of what Mr. Barnett was asking about split into two, the northern and the southern as two of the three critical energy projects critical to delivering a network which supports clean power Airways, uh, pathways. This is in the context of electricity demand, which is going to double, including in East Anglia by 2050 or so, which we are asked about, identifies that support is necessary for our proposal, if possible, to bring the project forward to 2030 as opposed to 2031.

00:30:32:14 - 00:31:07:26

In any event, delay is not seen as doing anything other than creating constraint costs and impacts on zero delivery. That's Nico's position. In addition, since we've asked about them, it's published draft guidance, which are presently out for consultation, which seek to modernize the Holford and Horlock rules, which we have applied. Strictly speaking, these modernizations are said by the consultation draft not to apply to in-flight projects, but we accept that they are a material consideration.

00:31:08:00 - 00:31:39:27

Even then, that draft continues to assert the default position for the transmission of electricity in GB to be by overhead line and less in the same way as the N5. Those are the issues that we draw to your attention in relation to those documents referred to in the question I'm now going to pass on to Mr. Easton and Mr. Carter, who are going to explain the strategic options that have been chosen in the circumstances of this case, again, at a very high level.

00:31:42:06 - 00:31:46:22

So Neil Carter, on behalf of the applicant, have the first slide, please.

00:31:48:07 - 00:32:21:05

So to help people understand the context of alternatives, I think it's important to set out initially why transmission or transmission alternatives are required at all. Um, we have um a wide need in terms of our requirements, um, to meet government targets and to deliver affordable and secure energy, as well as the electrical capacity needs of the network itself. We set out in our needs case section of the Strategic Options Report app.

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

Uh 355 um, clearly the existing system capabilities and the amount of energy we're expected to transfer across system boundaries and to to make it clear about what system boundaries are. Um, they are shown on the diagram. They are lines which cut across circuits, specific circuits on our network and define how much capacity can be crossed by those specific circuits. It's also important to to for people to understand the context of electricity.

00:32:57:23 - 00:33:29:00

There are limitations as to what a circuit can carry. And these are defined by the um International Electromechanical um Commission who set ratings worldwide. This is 120 kV transmission, which is the worldwide voltage transmission on this side of a 5000A, being the highest available equipment, which equates to a capacity on a single circuit.

00:33:29:02 - 00:34:01:15

345 A double circuit of six 930 and where there are four circuits remaining, crossing a boundary after a fault. 13 860 so I draw the attention to the fact that those current post fault capacities are operating within 300MW of the maximum capability, and therefore new infrastructure would always be required to meet those deficits which are set out. I'll hand to a poor reason to go through the next slide.

00:34:02:27 - 00:34:03:17

Thank you.

00:34:03:22 - 00:34:04:12

Paul Richardson.

00:34:04:14 - 00:34:06:09

For the applicant. Um, the.

00:34:06:11 - 00:34:08:24

Image if we go to the next image please.

00:34:13:14 - 00:34:15:05

The image on the right.

00:34:15:12 - 00:34:15:29

Shows.

00:34:16:01 - 00:34:16:21

Them different.

00:34:16:23 - 00:34:17:23

Combinations.

00:34:17:25 - 00:34:19:11

Of alternative, strategic.

00:34:19:26 - 00:34:21:02

Alternative, strategic.

00:34:21:04 - 00:35:04:05

Options to meet the need that are combined to provide different solutions. Mr. Carter will come on to those in a moment, but just touching on the fact that at the strategic option stage, the appraisal has considered the environmental effects, albeit at a relatively more strategic level. It covers topics such as environmental constraints and having regard to international and nationally important receptors covered socio economic topics. And I think the general conclusion at the strategic level was there are effects that apply to and impinge on all of them, but none of those effects were insurmountable.

00:35:04:07 - 00:36:09:23

So in theory, all options were deliverable and in certain combinations that Mr. Carter will come to. I think also worth saying that touching on that there are a whole range of different alternatives that we have considered through the project and some more theoretical and conceptual reported in things such as the consultation report and also addressed in the sober. And we'll come to those in a moment. The reference numbers are on the slide and there are strategic options, again covering the PSBR, that are also then reported in the chapter three as alternatives and in the Design Development report and reasonable alternatives as we then get into a more focused detail covered in chapter three of the ES in the alternatives section and the explanations of that selection also in the DDR, and then down to very fine detail, individual pilot movements, individual small adjustments, which we've termed design variants that are substantially reported in the consultation report and I think handing back to Neil.

00:36:12:00 - 00:36:43:03

Neil Carter for the applicant. We move to the next slide, please. Um, so hopefully be helpful. Um, within app 357. Um, which is the strategic options backtrack and review. There are a set of appendices. Appendix C and appendix D, which talk about transmission technologies of all types and also provide a transparent economic appraisal of our cost methodologies.

00:36:44:02 - 00:37:18:18

And I just wanted to touch on those technologies that we do consider. And we do, um, assess in all our strategic options nationally in all projects like this. For onshore transmission, we consider AC overhead lines, AC gas insulated line AC cable and onshore HVDC converters and cable for any offshore considerations. We pull that back to AC cable and offshore HVDC and considerations.

00:37:19:17 - 00:37:50:16

And when you're connecting between two substation locations for overhead lines, the lengths that we use in this country, the length, the spans of lines and the hundreds of kilometers, there are no technical limitations to what we can achieve with those connections. Um, on AC gas insulated line, this is a technology that uses a tube, but in insulating it and gas surrounding it as the insulation material. Um, and needs to be constructed in a clean environment.

00:37:50:25 - 00:38:27:26

Um, none of those have been built anywhere in the world above ten kilometers and directly buried underground. Um, and it's not a technology that has reached a maturity at transmission level. Um, for this proposal, AC Cables. When we install AC cables along the whole length of a route, we have to come above ground every 20 to 30km into the cable Sealion type substations that Mr. Riesen has already shown today to have a set of reactors and switching stations.

00:38:27:28 - 00:39:03:05

And this is to manage some technical limitations on the way that cables work, because you're going from 400,000V to 0V in a very short space. It creates a capacitive effect, an electrical capacitive effect, which has the effect of raising the voltage. And if the voltage rises too much and to shorter periods, the whole transmission curve collapses. So basically we get collapse of energy within the cable. So we have to come above the ground. We have to put these reactors in which act a bit like if you imagine a bath or it's called water pouring at the top and the voltage is rising.

00:39:03:10 - 00:39:37:18

A reactor is like putting a cap on the bottom of the bath and removing some of that excess capacitive energy. And that has to happen on any cables that are going over the roots. The advantage of HVDC, and one of the reasons why it's used worldwide is once you go into DC, you don't have those capacitive effects. But what you have to do to enable that is to have the converter stations at each end. And the largest converter stations with cables that are being used currently are two gigawatt at 520 kV.

00:39:37:22 - 00:40:07:23

So to achieve the six gigawatts that we require to meet the needs set out in the previous slides, we would need, um, you know, resets of these HVDC systems with a minimum, as referred to previously, of three converters at each end of um, a connection between Norwich to Tilbury. And we'll come on to why that doesn't actually match the proposal we're talking about in a second.

00:40:07:25 - 00:40:43:20

So if we move to the next slide, please. So also from app 357, um, our selection of costs here, um, based on that transparent economic appraisal that we provide in app. 357. If you look at the top line

that shows the proposed project when it was wholly overhead line without any regard to, um, any landscapes or any other environments as we do on the initial appraisal.

00:40:44:17 - 00:41:15:29

The second set shows with the post consultation view of those requirements to mitigate in the landscapes. Um, the cost with the cable of 1.6 billion and then a wholly for ended HVDC options. So this is where we come in to Brantford, go out of Brantford again and transpose all of the energy to AC, DC. The swapping between AC and DC, that's 5.8 billion.

00:41:16:16 - 00:41:52:27

The offshore suboptimal version we talked about connecting between Norwich and Tilbury is 4 billion. And the reason why we say that is suboptimal is because it doesn't have the connection in the Brantford, and it doesn't at that price, facilitate the connection of the generation and therefore does not give the same transmission, um, transmission capabilities. We do as we have in the proposed um, connection we're providing to achieve that proposed same electrical capabilities.

00:41:52:29 - 00:42:20:20

We do have an option to have a three ended link in Brantford. So you have three converters at Norwich, three converters at Tilbury and three converters at Brantford on a three ended HVDC VCC link. That would then bring it to a similar technical capability, and that would raise the price to 5.3 billion. But again has no ability to connect the generators. Generation customers.

00:42:21:00 - 00:42:22:11

Just just before you go on from.

00:42:22:13 - 00:42:22:28

That.

00:42:23:00 - 00:42:40:02

Slide, because I think you're just about to flip over. Um, can you just point as to where that is? I can see it. I haven't got my distance glasses on. Um, I think I can see it at the top. It just points where it is. And also explain if if the the submitted application, which one of those is the submitted application on the list there.

00:42:40:04 - 00:42:40:19

Yeah.

00:42:40:21 - 00:43:29:27

So AEP 357 is the 2023 Strategic Options report, which has all of those costings within tables. And we can provide that in our written uh evidence. That's the majority overhead line, which is a back check version against the consultation based upon appendix D, which is set out in appendix 3.57, is an analogy of the proposal because you have to remember this is appraisal costing in 20 2021 cost base as set out in our appendix for the purpose of achieving appraisal overhead appraisal of alternatives.

00:43:29:29 - 00:43:53:06

Okay. So sorry, just just for clarification. So the second line is the closest analogous to um, can I just ask that that's review just to clarify in the funding statement, because the 894 is phenomenally close to the 8.95 in the funding statement. And that's not that's the top line rather than the second line.

00:43:53:13 - 00:43:55:02

Yes, it is. Um, uh.

00:43:55:04 - 00:43:55:24

But.

00:43:55:26 - 00:44:12:00

The, uh, second line includes mitigation and in particular the significant mitigation under the um, the AoNB. Can we deal with this in in writing? Yes. Conscious of. There's so much more still to come.

00:44:12:02 - 00:44:13:16

Yes, yes. Thank you.

00:44:13:23 - 00:44:21:13

That's the question I asked, and I got the answer which we'll put in writing. It all fits together nicely. Thank you.

00:44:24:16 - 00:44:26:27

Okay. We move to the next slide, please.

00:44:29:10 - 00:45:06:20

So we dealt with the East Anglia drivers of need and some of the consideration of alternative. It's important to also reflect the requirements of the customers that are connecting at five estuaries and all fours and talk on um giving the total of 3.5GW, 3480MW. Um, and and the effect this also has on the early one boundary. Hence why the connection goes all the way to Tilbury, which has a deficit of four 620 before the generators connect, and ultimately that rises to seven four 6 or 7 six.

00:45:06:23 - 00:45:24:06

Once the customers are connected for the faults, they are considered so that that slide shows the Essex Coast Connection Generation group and all of the boundary transfers that meet the need set out in our needs case. I'll hand now to Paul Reese then for the next slide.

00:45:24:22 - 00:46:07:27

Thank you, Paul Easton, for the applicant. Um, just drawing. If we go to the next slide, please. Uh, drawing that two together, the strategic options, uh, backtrack and review the app. 355 document sets out how we evaluated the options, taking into account the environmental assessment, socio economic aspects, technical benefits, including the capital lifetime costs that Neal's just run through. Um, and we concluded that the need case was met by the onshore solution in line with the In One and Electricity Act, and integrating new customer connections with the Norwich Tilbury project, in line with the transmission and the licence obligations.

00:46:08:20 - 00:46:40:27

The connections should be largely overhead as Mr. Harris set out earlier and aligned with N5. Use of underground cable would be required in the national landscapes and again in line with N5, and there would be consideration of underground cable in other areas and the combination of overhead line options Ian four and IAS two are set out in that app document, which equates to the Norwich Main to Brantford and Brantford via a new ECN substation to Tilbury.

00:46:41:04 - 00:46:43:19

Is the project satisfies the need case

00:46:45:06 - 00:46:47:13

and I spoke to Mr. Carter.

00:46:50:25 - 00:46:52:28

Neil Carter, the applicant.

00:46:53:23 - 00:46:54:08

Mhm.

00:46:55:12 - 00:47:30:29

So I want to come down to um actually quite rightly some of the raise, some of the questions, um, presented by stakeholders about the timing for the problem, uh, that we're trying to resolve with this transmission solution, and also in particular, um, the Iron smart energy report, which has been presented, uh, as one of the reasons why we could consider some alternatives. Um, we, as the applicants did respond to that report, um, uh, in, in April 24th and our responses on the project website.

00:47:31:12 - 00:48:05:06

Um, in summary, we didn't agree with the report's conclusions. Um, that a delay to 2035 would be possible. Um, for the reasons pointed out by Mr. Harris in particular with the Niso report. Uh, stating the requirements to be delivered sooner, but also with our consequences to consumers of constraint costs, but also our obligations under, um, the planning requirements, but also our transmission licence.

00:48:06:24 - 00:48:38:16

Um, in particular, I would like to draw attention to M1, given the urgent need N5 2.85, which makes it clear that we as a transmission company are required to facilitate um generation, and also reflected in our transmission licence obligation, D2 and the obligation to provide transmission services when requested. Um, and those are clear requirements that weren't necessarily needed to be considered by the Ion's report.

00:48:39:07 - 00:49:15:24

Um, the delay to any, um, investment would incur the costs of 2.7 billion as set out in the Nie. So, um, and X2 from the Clean Power 2030 report. And also we do note that market constraints in the HVDC market, which we are very active within, do not mean that even if delay was incurred to those timescales, that it would make the HVDC alternative deliverable. Where we are currently delivering HVDC projects, we are delivering two gigawatt solutions.

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

This is a six gigawatt solution, not only how we would have constraints in delivering the cables, but also in the converter market and the specialist requirements that are needed as part of a HVDC installation, including cable access to cable laying ships and equipment to do it, which are under extreme worldwide pressure, with a number of companies, both offshore wind farms and transmission companies worldwide seeking to use limited HVDC resources that are available.

00:49:50:27 - 00:49:53:22

So we move on to the next slide, please.

00:49:57:08 - 00:50:47:24

I just wanted to touch on offshore coordination as well. In terms of, um, the requirement for um consideration of offshore alternatives. And it's when it was in initial considerations about managing to deliver offshore wind farm in a more coordinated and effective way. We should also understand that, yes, NPS one also does state, however, even with the importance of coordination, you know, each is important to bring forward urgent electricity projects and consider on their own merits some of the technical limitations that are causing issues within that coordination currently are the availability of HVDC circuit breakers.

00:50:47:26 - 00:51:28:17

So like at home, we will have a circuit breaker board. When there's a fault on the pit of the house network, it takes out the ring main to your kitchen or lighting circuit. And for HVDC we would need similar technology which is available on the AC network but isn't available in 520 kV HVDC circuit breakers currently. And this is reflected in the DMV report commissioned by the system operator. Um, when they were looking into these issues, this restricts any generation connecting to a HVDC network to 1800 megawatts, because without the circuit breakers, we would lose the whole network.

00:51:28:19 - 00:51:58:22

So if you had a network that carried three times that amount for one volt on that HVDC network, the whole network goes down and that energy is lost. And that has serious implications to the operation of the transmission system in this country. Um, and the way we would see wide scale transmission system problems and it's a breach of the, um, National Electricity Transmission System Security and Quality Supply standards, which, again, is set out as a requirement in our licence to follow.

00:51:59:10 - 00:52:03:07

If we move on to the next section, next slide please.

00:52:05:23 - 00:52:38:16

Just again, to address some of the alternatives that have been suggested by stakeholders as already addressed in the needs case section, the system in East Anglia is operating at the maximum of the IEC technical ratings already, and some of the alternatives provided. And I'll go through the list quickly. Um, like Lynn, vision is actually about enabling us to be able to use our circuits at their full rating more at the time. So what happens is every circuit has a rating for summer.

00:52:38:18 - 00:53:10:26

It assumes the worst conditions in summer being a heatwave, and we have to operate all summer at those Ratings. But we have a line vision on there. We can operate at what the ambient temperature is rather than operating at a worse rating for summer. But again, none of these can exceed the IEC rating. TS conductor is a high temperature, low side conductor. It's about using a conductor to get us up to those IEC ratings on equipment or infrastructure. We couldn't really achieve those ratings without that specialist conductor.

00:53:10:28 - 00:53:43:14

So that's what we use. Super, super conductors are a low maturity, uh, technology. At this voltage. They require liquid nitrogen to cool the entire length of the conductor. Um, to be able to operate at those levels. Generally, they have been deployed in city environments, including by National Grid USA, across very short distances to transmit powers across cities, in um, short sections of nitrogen filled cables where the compression and nitrogen can be managed.

00:53:43:22 - 00:54:20:28

Power flow control and transmission switching are used by National Grid across our whole network, but is about maximizing the power that flows on existing circuits. So you could get every circuit up to that IEC rating if you load the power correctly. Constraint management into trips are used across the country by system operator ourselves, but they are only to be applied in outage conditions. So they are basically allow a generator still operate when a circuit is being taken out of service and the next fault will trip it off, but only to a maximum level of 1500MW.

00:54:21:06 - 00:54:54:27

Again, for managing those issues that occur on the system when you lose the infield of power and finally, interconnection operations. Interconnectors are commercial businesses and they operate within the balance of their contracts and energy prices. They don't respond to typically issues on the system. So so of all the alternatives that have been raised, they don't really change the need for additional infrastructure at all, although they are helpful and useful in many ways across the network and are utilized, but for different requirements.

00:54:58:01 - 00:55:00:20

And if we move on to the next slide, please.

00:55:02:29 - 00:55:06:09

I'll hand over to Paul Reston now or take through the slide.

00:55:06:11 - 00:55:45:27

Thank you, Paul Reston, for the applicant. So again, just closing off the sort of alternatives raised by stakeholders. And I think we've heard some of these in some of the open floor hearings, just a couple of mentions and various alternatives of connecting to Bradwell. And we've had over the years that the consultations, suggestions to continue on from the connection of substation to Bradwell and HVDC down to Bradwell, the customers connecting into Bradwell, and we've looked at different combinations and reported in the app one, two, two document and its previous year Incarnations, and the challenge in all of them is the onward connection.

00:55:45:29 - 00:56:22:05

The existing overhead line from Bradwell has been operating at 132 kilovolts. Rather than its original design, 400 needs rebuild and is constrained by onward routing challenges towards Rayleigh and Tilbury and SBA effects, etc. so it's not one that we've identified as being preferred. It is constrained in that way, and we've had other combinations that the one of the early slides where we picked out the particular Norwich to Brantford, Brantford to Tilbury combination, there have been other combinations, and Norwich to Brantford with 20 dead to Tilbury.

00:56:22:07 - 00:57:00:21

And again those don't achieve the the full knee case, don't provide that connection of the customers. And adding that in takes it up to a more expensive option and other alternative design variants we've also covered in in various reports and expect to cover in more detail in future issue specific hearings. We'll go to the next slide, please. Um, just the last couple of slides then just connecting from this, um, large sort of like the strategic picture as to how we get to the the detail of the project.

00:57:00:23 - 00:57:34:21

Um, and very much just an illustration of the, um, consultation feedback and ongoing assessment, the sort of changes we've looked at and the process has been consistent at a variety of levels. Um, from the comparing alternative corridors all the way down to individual detail at individual locations. Um, and the map is just an illustration down by um, Ingatestone, Abbotsbury Church. If we go to the next slide please. Um, and again, just to sort of illustrate and connect us back to the policy that Mr.

00:57:34:23 - 00:58:07:00

Harris was referring to. Um, so this is the the northern part of the route, Norwich to Brantford Rd section, and again an example of why it's predominantly overhead, the different corridors that were considered as end to end solutions and in various hybrids. Um, again, no national designations and nowhere identified that um with uh that met the tests in elsewhere in NPS and five. So uh, predominantly overhead, an overhead route was taken forward. And if we could go to the next slide, please.

00:58:08:15 - 00:58:40:20

Um, but again, as we've, um, touched on in some of the earlier imagery, um, we've looked at and the Brantford through to the connection of substation section. Um, various corridors identified either going around or going through the national landscape. Um, regions set out in, in earlier documents and in the s chapter three as to why going around the national landscape and back to the ECN, um is not preferred and we end up selecting a route that goes through the national landscape.

00:58:40:22 - 00:59:13:20

But engaging with that reversal of the presumption to overhead line and that transition to cable between those cable sealing end compounds that we talked on. And I think next slide please, which is the I believe the last slide. Um, finally, just to sort of commentary about um, pylon type, um, what we've got shown on the screen on the left hand side is the, um, standard lattice, uh, pylon, the uh, three cross arms. Um, and that's been the starting point for overhead line.

00:59:13:27 - 01:00:04:00

Um, we have, as we touched on in the overview, um, change to the low height lattice design, which is the two images in the top right. Um, to um, in the vicinity of, uh, Little Waltham and by Thurrock

airfield, um, the one by Little Waltham for heritage reasons. Um and keeping heights below and out of the view of some garden down view to some gardens and the technical reasons the airfield at Thurrock and the final image at the bottom there shows the T pylon, which was considered in line with the mitigation hierarchy, where lattice was unacceptable but not identified for use on Norwich to Tilbury and without passed back to Mr.

01:00:04:02 - 01:00:04:19

Harris.

01:00:05:17 - 01:00:18:13

That's our high level case. Russell Harris KC on behalf of the applicant. In short, insufficient reason to rebut the high level strong presumptions contained in Ian five.

01:00:22:23 - 01:00:28:00

Okay. Thank you. I don't have any further questions, but just check if any of my colleagues do.

01:00:29:18 - 01:00:46:20

I really just wanted to ask in writing, could you just give a bit more explanation on the net regret costs, I think in the bits that I've read aren't necessarily clear what has additionally been included, apart from the capital costs and how the net regret cost actually works. So just a fuller explanation of that place.

01:00:48:03 - 01:00:53:08

Russell Harris KC we will we will do that. And a fuller explanation of the constraint costs will be provided to.

01:01:02:03 - 01:01:13:09

Okay. I'll move on to interested parties then. If anyone else has any comments on what I've just heard, just with the caveat of what I said at the beginning. Thank you, Mr. Banner.

01:01:13:11 - 01:01:44:00

Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Um, the first set of questions is a great overall approach to alternatives. And, um, I suggest there's a distinction between an analysis, the fact that there are some alternatives that, um, meet the project objectives subject to cost ultimately irrespective of individual particular challenges. Ultimately, if you put enough enough money at it, you could meet the project objectives and then the differentiator is cost.

01:01:44:15 - 01:02:18:24

Or alternatively, um, alternatives which could not meet the project objectives. And it would be very helpful I would suggest. Sorry, it would be very helpful. I would suggest if the applicant could. I'm not expecting this to be done now, but but by the first deadline, specify which of the alternatives they considered fall into which category, because we've heard a lot of mud thrown at particular alternatives. For example, you might need three sets of cables in relation to HVDC, which of course they could be laid together or alongside, uh, or supply chain issues.

01:02:18:26 - 01:02:53:01

Are they really showstoppers or ultimately are there for some of the objectives you've heard about ultimately, does it come down to cost? Um, or if it is said that for some alternatives they couldn't meet the project objectives, specifically which project objectives? Which goes back to my earlier question, um, a few minutes ago about what are the objectives. So so I would welcome through through you, Madam Chair, in the panel, um, very specific clarification from the applicant in relation to that in relation to HVDC.

01:02:53:03 - 01:03:24:14

I foreshadowed one of my points, which is, does the applicant accept that to the extent that HVDC may require three sets of cables, they could be laid essentially alongside each other, obviously subject to appropriate separation distances? That's not a showstopper. Could they confirm that? Um, then in relation to Bradwell, there was a slide, um, a few minutes ago entitled Environmental Consideration of Alternatives.

01:03:24:18 - 01:03:29:15

Although it's possible to get that back up. Is it is that going to be possible? You might.

01:03:31:27 - 01:04:02:17

If not, you may remember that slide and you can look back at it. Now, it appeared that that's from that slide and from the text that we've seen in the application material that um, in relation to Bradwell on Sea, there was no consideration of um, undersea cabling coming to land at Bradwell, you know, making landfall at Bradwell as opposed to Overground to Bradwell and then onwards to Tilbury.

01:04:02:27 - 01:04:39:18

Is that right or not? And specifically, it would be helpful to have complete clarity of what Bradwell related alternatives were considered, having regard to potential usability of existing infrastructure and what were not considered. And lastly, in relation to whether it appeared from what was said earlier and the slides, that one of the Bradwell options that was looked at was capable of meeting the project objectives subject to cost. So far, in the first of those two categories, I alone wasn't incapable of meeting the jet as it was, and the differentiator was cost again.

01:04:39:20 - 01:04:47:11

Is that right? Or is it not right? So those were my my comments. Not not expecting immediate answers, but it would be helpful to have the answers to those in due course.

01:04:50:08 - 01:04:57:17

Thank you, Mr. Barnard. The applicants made a note of those. Anyone else in the room? Mr. Bedford?

01:04:58:23 - 01:05:39:00

Thank you madam. Michael Bedford, Suffolk County Council I'm conscious of the time constraints, so I'm only going to make some brief comments. First of all, in relation to national policy, both N1 and N5, we don't accept that the picture painted in Mr. Harris's comments is as simple as he suggested. It would have been very easy if the Secretary of State had stated wanted to to say in N1 or N5 that there is an urgent need for a grid reinforcement which must be met by 2030.

01:05:39:09 - 01:06:22:22

That's not what N1 says. And when one considers as urgent to meet the need urgently, as soon as possible and as quickly as possible. That then raises the question of what is possible, and that has to be seen properly in the context, first of all, of the statutory framework. Section 104 in particular and 104, subsection seven, you'll be well aware of. And that is also then reflected itself in N1, particularly at paragraph 4.1.5, on the balance between adverse effects and benefits.

01:06:23:19 - 01:07:12:09

Obviously, we can develop all of that further in our submissions, but we do think that the Polish position isn't as. As it were simplistic as was being suggested to you by the applicant. Secondly, in terms of consideration of strategic alternatives, we do think that there is a lack of clarity in the way that the applicant has presented material, particularly on costs and the calculation of constraint costs. We don't think that the position is has been brought up to date in the material that's been presented by the applicant, and we think that there are clear factors which would put the position in a rather different light if one carried out a proper review of the available alternatives.

01:07:13:01 - 01:07:24:21

I won't say anything more about that on strategic matters. And there are separate points that we raise about particular aspects of the route in terms of its alignment in particular locations. Thank you very much.

01:07:25:29 - 01:07:57:22

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Pearson. Hello. Rosie Pearson on Anglia. Um, firstly, to echo what Mr. Bedford has said. Um, we were going to ask if it's possible to have an issue specific cost hearing. Uh, there's so much hanging on the costs that are put forward. Um, and part of the issue is that we've had four years of consultations, but it's always broadcast at us. So we've never been able to sort of assess those and debate them properly. So it'd be really helpful to have a proper discussion with evidence. Um, and then I have a lot of other points in writing, but that we're looking at these maps and ECN, the choice of it to be at Ardley.

01:07:57:24 - 01:08:13:01

I still don't understand why it's there. They're jumping through hoops with you've seen the map, it goes that way too oddly and back out. So how did the applicant alight at ECN in the first place? Because it's driving all these mad decisions for the region. Thank you. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Bell.

01:08:37:04 - 01:08:37:28

Turn it.

01:08:38:04 - 01:08:38:19

On.

01:08:42:16 - 01:08:43:22

Okay. Thank you.

01:08:47:21 - 01:08:50:02

Anyone online in the room?

01:08:52:15 - 01:08:55:10

Any my colleagues want to say anything before I move on?

01:08:55:20 - 01:09:20:02

Um, just one point. I just wanted to come back on. You mentioned about t pylons. There's a limited information, I believe, in the, um, submission about the use of t pylons compared to, um, the lattice pylons. Could you, in just response, could you either just, uh, bookmark as to where that is, signpost us or give us a little bit more explanation about the the reason for not using t pylons, please.

01:09:20:08 - 01:09:21:15

Russell. Harris. Casey. Yes.

01:09:21:17 - 01:09:22:06

We shall.

01:09:22:08 - 01:09:23:02

Thank you.

01:09:25:09 - 01:09:31:06

Thank you. So moving on to item six. Since relationships with other projects.

01:09:34:13 - 01:09:37:06

Sorry, is a hand up, Mr. Humphreys?

01:09:39:26 - 01:09:52:02

Yes, that's a thank you, ma'am. Apologies. Um, just to flag that those online I don't think could hear Mr. Bell's comments. They didn't quite come through. Um, from start to finish. So just to flag that for the.

01:09:52:04 - 01:09:55:20

He was essentially echoing Miss Pierson's comments about all.

01:09:55:25 - 01:10:26:04

Oh, fine. Just in case there was something of of on costs. Thank you. Yeah. Okay. Thank you. The other point, sorry, was, um, it was mentioned previously in terms of more sort of refined design changes in the Design Variance report, uh, or the Design Variance section and the consultation report. Is it the applicant's intention? And this is really for a question for you to to to to ask um, for that document to be updated as the examination progresses, please.

01:10:26:06 - 01:11:01:08

Because there are aspects where I suppose in terms of design refinements, they, they, they are non-existent for areas that, um, my clients interested in in terms of, uh, impact on its scheme, but those that there aren't any details at all in terms of the interactions with my client sites, um, if it transpires that we seek agreement or if changes are made from the applicant side, will that document be updated, or will there be some form of, uh, documentation that reflects those updates? Because, uh, it would be helpful to have those obviously, um, confirmed.

01:11:01:10 - 01:11:02:01

Thank you.

01:11:03:26 - 01:11:14:07

Uh, there will be a number of documents that are updated throughout the examination. Um, that may well be one of them. Um, I'll ask the applicant to respond to that in writing in due course.

01:11:17:04 - 01:11:21:16

We've got a different speaker for the applicant now. Right. We'll move on to

01:11:23:12 - 01:11:57:28

interrelationship this. This is a very short item anyway, but it's just be useful for participants to have. Annex F of the rule six letter 13th of January in front of them. And as item two of annex F sets out our procedural decision where we requested a reports on the relationship with other projects, and it lists the insects that we're currently aware of, which will or are likely to interact with the proposed developments and whether over the same land or in other ways, as such as during construction and other cumulative effects.

01:11:58:00 - 01:12:39:10

And we've heard from a couple of the other operators today, um, there are a number of major planning proposals also included in the cumulative effects assessment, and there are too many of those to list. Um, and they include other energy projects, such as the solar farm, as Mr. Humphries was just mentioning as well as major housing commercial developments proposals. So we felt it would be useful to have a standalone document which is regularly updated and beginning midpoints, and at the end of the examination, as the status of these other projects will, of course, change over time during the course of the examination.

01:12:39:15 - 01:13:03:25

And we've provided a list in annex F of the type of information we expect to be included in that report. So similarly, I assume the applicants on track to submit this document, um, at deadline one. Um, but could you just provide a summary update and on the status of the the assets that are listed in that annex of our rule six letter, please?

01:13:06:18 - 01:13:36:23

Um, thank you madam. The short answer is yes we are. I've got a draft here. It's quite a long document. Um, but it is on track, and we'll be submitting that at deadline. Um, one as requested. I mean, in terms of factual developments on the CIP side, since the submission of the environmental statement and development consent was obviously granted for Lower Thames Crossing and five estuaries offshore Wind Farm was granted consent in December. And there's also the Tashan interconnector project, which is now on our radar as an emerging.

01:13:36:25 - 01:13:49:14

And so we are covering all of those and then all the other assets that were already in the ES, um, and will provide the details that you've specifically requested in the rule six letter. Um, in, in the report.

01:13:51:24 - 01:14:14:26

Okay. Thank you. It's useful. Um, and just in terms of continuing dialogue with promoters and operators of those other projects and, um, the the draft development consent order will um, it will throughout the examination will be changed as necessary. Um, but can you just provide a.

01:14:16:19 - 01:15:02:12

just an update on the discussions that are being had with we've heard from National Highways today, for example, this doesn't need to be in any significant detail. We just want some kind of assurances that dialogue is happening and that it will be ongoing. Thank you. Um, thank you madam. So just to pick up, um, on the agenda item, which raises provisions in the draft eco surveys and mitigation, if I just cover those off briefly. Um, so in terms of provisions to be included in the draft SEO, which is at 56, you'll know article ten, um, sub articles two and three essentially enables the project to progress together with other projects without there being a risk of enforcement action as a result of applying the hillside principles.

01:15:02:14 - 01:15:37:26

So that's the general provision that we've included in to deal with interrelationships. There's then in schedule 16, which is protective provisions in part six, protective provisions that relate to the five estuaries. Offshore wind farm. We anticipate also in due course, including protective provisions in schedule 16 for the benefit of the North Falls offshore wind farm, and probably also in relation to both of those projects, and additional requirements in schedule three to control cumulative noise impacts in the vicinity of the ECN substation.

01:15:38:22 - 01:16:09:21

And then finally on the Draft Development Consent Order in relation to Lower Thames Crossing. And as you all have seen at the moment, for example, in schedule six and schedule nine, we've made provision for a with LTC and also without LTC situation. We acknowledge that, of course, certain elements of the existing draft are likely to require modification to ensure compatibility between LTC and this project. Um, and we'll work with the National Highways to agree the scope of that provision.

01:16:09:23 - 01:16:29:16

But the detail drafting in reality is likely to depend on the content of where we get to with resolving the other substantive matters that are being discussed. And there's also which is relevant to LTC protected provision for National highways generally in part five of schedule 16.

01:16:31:07 - 01:17:01:15

And we can update on where we've got to in terms of LTC at deadline one, because there are ongoing discussions, I think at least fortnightly and also with the legal teams on a rolling basis as well, and on surveys very briefly, we've shared information with five estuaries and North Wales Offshore wind farm, and we've also reviewed survey information from other developments where that's been available to us online. And that has informed our assessments for the North Falls and five estuaries.

01:17:01:17 - 01:17:36:06

We've entered into a cooperation agreement and under which we're sharing information to minimise the need, essentially to carry out intrusive surveys On Lower Thames Crossing. We've shared our GIS data with National Highways to support the identification of the interfaces between this project and

the lower terms crossing. We've exchanged draft construction programmes and we've shared two of three sets of overlaid plans. The third set is land plans. We needed data from LTC to overlay with ours to produce land plans.

01:17:36:08 - 01:18:12:23

We received that on Wednesday the 11th a couple of days ago. So we're working to take that forward, and we're committing to share data with LTC going forward to enable the interactions to be explored and then resolutions to be identified. And finally, on mitigation and again, similarly, we've shared mitigation proposals with five Estuaries and North Falls as part of ongoing engagement. We've also informed our assessments by mitigation proposals for other developments where that's been available to us Online and in relation to Lower Thames Crossing.

01:18:12:29 - 01:18:48:17

The project doesn't share mitigation per se with Lower Thames Crossing, but the project does overlap with some of the mitigation and compensation areas in the Lower Thames. Crossings made DCO and we are. Excuse me. We are aware that we will be required to provide sites to replace an area of nitrogen deposition mitigation and also ancient woodland compensation. We've identified suitable sites for that replacement within our draft order limits, and we're in discussion with National Highways in respect of the detailed design and also the long term management of those areas.

01:18:48:23 - 01:18:55:16

We anticipate these arrangements will probably be secured through a side agreement rather than through provision in the actual DCO.

01:19:05:29 - 01:19:07:04

Okay. Thank you.

01:19:15:09 - 01:19:20:06

Ask questions. 6.3 Statements of Common Ground.

01:19:20:08 - 01:19:41:28

So yeah, we're aware that there are a number of draft statement common grounds already and engagement is in progress on others. And we've seen the overview document app. Oh eight um, but just can you just confirm whether you expect to submit any other statement common ground with, with operators or promoters of the other end tips?

01:19:42:24 - 01:20:18:25

Yes. Yes, madam, we do. So. 31 Statements of Common Ground went in at submission. We're aiming to submit and this is, um, covering everything, not just the interacting projects, but we're aiming to submit an additional 60 at deadline one. So 91 in total. Um, of those 21 either four um update from initially submitted statements of common ground or sort of flesh for submission at the first deadline. 21 of those will relate to development within the shortlist of inter-related projects in the ES chapter.

01:20:18:27 - 01:20:21:21

So that's the sort of current headline on progress there.

01:20:28:16 - 01:20:31:13

Okay. Thank you. Look forward to receiving this.

01:20:36:20 - 01:20:56:10

Just just on the matter of statement of common grounds. Final question for me. So we've we've got the National Highways statement of Common Ground. We've got a draft one already. Assume the lower Thames crossing one will be separate to the main national highways, one in relation to the strategic highway network.

01:20:57:12 - 01:20:57:28

Kevin wrote.

01:20:58:00 - 01:20:59:13

In on behalf of the applicant.

01:20:59:15 - 01:21:02:28

I can confirm that there will be a separate statement of common ground.

01:21:03:00 - 01:21:03:28

Okay. Thank you.

01:21:08:19 - 01:21:09:21

I remind.

01:21:09:25 - 01:21:10:10

The.

01:21:10:12 - 01:21:11:08

Large increase.

01:21:11:10 - 01:21:13:03

In statements of common ground.

01:21:13:05 - 01:21:22:08

Can you confirm you have the correct resources in place to actively engage with the parties that you're seeking to enter into those those.

01:21:22:10 - 01:21:22:25

Statements.

01:21:22:27 - 01:21:31:13

Of common ground with? Um, because clearly we can all say we're going to submit them. But, um, unless the parties actually.

01:21:31:15 - 01:21:32:08

Sign and agree.

01:21:32:10 - 01:22:04:23

Them, then they're of limited value. Um, and as I say, if there's not the resources to, to enter into them, what's the purpose of them? So I just want a clear assurance from you. You do have those resources to enter into those consultations and communications with the other parties to reach proper agreement. Kevin Rowan, on behalf of the applicant, I can confirm that we regularly review resource, and we have a stakeholder management team in place who are regularly in dialogue with the stakeholders on statements of common ground.

01:22:06:06 - 01:22:07:07

Thank you very much.

01:22:10:06 - 01:22:20:27

Okay. Thank you. It's just 1:00, so I'd like to draw the hearings for closed. But are there any burning comments from the room or online before I move on?

01:22:23:15 - 01:22:26:24

From Curtis online.

01:22:26:29 - 01:22:46:21

Thank you ma'am Curtis for Mid-South District Council and maybe District Council, just in respect to the interrelationship of projects and the list of NIPS, I would just like to draw the attention to the draft order limits that are now published for the CIP and the interaction with communities at Gillingham in Mid Suffolk High.

01:22:46:23 - 01:22:48:07

What's the name of that again?

01:22:49:03 - 01:22:49:27

Suffolk.

01:22:50:06 - 01:22:51:12

Okay. Thank you.

01:22:51:21 - 01:22:52:12

Thank you.

01:23:04:22 - 01:23:05:26

Okay, we'll move on.

01:23:05:28 - 01:23:17:16

Okay. Thank you. Um, we'll move on to item seven. Any other matters? Um, we haven't been notified. Anyone wishes to raise any other matters. But before we close, can I check if there are any that anybody wishes to raise?

01:23:21:02 - 01:23:23:16

Seeing any in the room or online?

01:23:25:03 - 01:23:49:00

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So if anyone, if anything does raise your mind, then, uh, please do so in writing again for deadline one Thursday, 26th February. Thank you. Um, we have a number of action points, but given the time, rather than go through them in detail. Um, I think we need to do some clarification on them as well. They'll be published on the project page of the, um, our website early next week.

01:23:52:00 - 01:24:26:04

And no other items relevant to this hearing. Can I remind you that parties must provide any post hearing documents on or before deadline one again, 30 to 26 of February. The recording of this hearing will be put on the inspectorate website as soon as possible. Um, today's hearing has been obviously about some high level and more general issues rather than site specific matters. As Mrs. Hunt said earlier, we're only at the start of the examination and there are later hearings in the timetable which will go into more detail relating to environmental matters, development consent order and matters specific to particular locations along the pylon route.

01:24:27:07 - 01:24:56:02

The next set of hearings are currently timetable for week commencing 27th of April. Before this, we will also issue our first written questions on the 20th of March, which may draw upon what we've heard today and in other hearings this week. Uh, before we close as well, I'd just like to thank all of today's participants for their time and assistance at this hearing and indeed for everything that we've heard this week. The time is now. 1304 and this issue specific hearing one on the Norwich to Tilbury project is now closed. Thank you.