

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets
Hearing:	Issue specific hearing 1- Part 2
Date:	30 April 2025

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:21 - 00:00:44:00

Okay. Thank you everybody. It's time to continue with issue specific hearing one. We're on item four and the applicant's overview of the site selection process. As I said before I think these A, B, C, D, e will merge together to a certain extent. And the applicant was going to introduce the grid connection. Uh summary. And this does relate to one of my questions, which is for the applicant to explain the choice of the pen where the substation is, the grid connection point for the proposed development, uh, taking out the taking account of the holistic network design, which sets out the preferred connection option.

00:00:44:10 - 00:00:51:09

So I'd like the applicant. So I think you were going to do this anyway. Explain the process for the final decision made on the grid connection point. Uh.

00:00:55:03 - 00:01:09:13

Including with reference to the existing network design. So, so that all parties are aware of this. And also, perhaps just for clarification, at the end of your what you're going to say on. To what extent is the choice of grid connection point the applicant's decision? Okay.

00:01:12:16 - 00:01:44:01

I'm speaking on behalf of both applicants. Um, yes. I'd just like to cover off some high level points in respect of grid connection and also trying to cover off some matters raised through relevant representations and indeed through the open floor hearing yesterday. Um, as my colleague Mr. Hota mentioned, um, the projects were scoped in to the 2030 Offshore Transmission Network review and the reporting process through that in July 2022, which recommended, um, the coordinated connection at Penwortham for both Morgan and Morecambe.

00:01:44:12 - 00:01:57:07

Uh, I would just like to share a figure. It's from the summary report in July 2022. It was not part of our application. So at the panel's discretion, we would like my colleague Mr. Johnson to share that on the screen.

00:01:57:10 - 00:01:59:11

Sorry. What was the document again?

00:01:59:13 - 00:02:03:00

Uh, the the, uh, summary report from July 2022.

00:02:03:02 - 00:02:25:10

The summary report. Uh, okay. My view, I'm aware of that. It has been referenced. I think it's one of these documents that, whilst not being part of the examination, is widely known, accessible. On that basis, I haven't got an issue with, uh, you raising I don't think it's new evidence in that respect because it's been referred to by several parties. So I think people are clearly aware of it. Yeah. So yes please do.

00:02:29:03 - 00:03:03:29

Okay. So in essence, I think this is an important point in terms of our our fundamentals around site selection. What the figure shows is the outcome of the end process. Uh, on the left we have uh, the recommended solution, which is to have both Morgan and Morecambe, um, connecting in at Penwortham. And then for further context, there is the singular radial solution of Morecambe to Middleton and Morgan to Penwortham. I think it's really important to, just as a basic principle to get that across, that the recommended solution was for both projects to go to Penwortham.

00:03:04:01 - 00:03:07:24

However, there was another option of of the separate connections.

00:03:10:19 - 00:03:36:00

Just get the reference of the document again. Just so everybody is aware, I know it's not got an examination reference, but just give the full title of it please. So everybody is aware of it and can exit. It's easily accessible via the internet. Uh, it may actually be worth actually there's a question mark as to what examination documents need to be put into examination and what doesn't, but it probably worth is worth adding it into the examination library, I think.

00:03:36:03 - 00:04:02:14

List done on behalf of the applicant. Um, Mr. Johnson has just put up the front page of that document. So it's being shared at the moment. It's the pathway to 2030 document. It is referenced throughout the applicant's submissions. But we can add in a I think maybe as a hearing action point, we'll we'll add it in as a reference and perhaps draw out any of those relevant plans so that they are they are there and available. It is a publicly available document and it is referenced throughout.

00:04:06:19 - 00:04:07:04

Okay.

00:04:07:21 - 00:04:47:28

And as many people will be aware of that, each and process looked at a range of options for the the projects in the Irish Sea. Um, and again, to reiterate the point made by colleagues and the applicants, I think there is a real benefit in the process considering what we have seen, uh, in the industry prior to this point, where projects have effectively been going along in isolation, developing cable routes to get to their respective connection points, particularly on the East Coast. So a real benefit there in terms of the HMD process there, and it's endorsed by, uh, national policy in five, uh, paragraphs 213, one through to four.

00:04:54:02 - 00:05:29:00

And they like to go on to consideration of the connection. That's a matter that's come up, um, through through relevant representations. Um, as I said, the HMD process considered a number of potential grid connection locations and options were considered by National Grid Electricity System Operator through that process. This process included the existing Middleton and Stana adjacent to the Hillhouse Enterprise owned substations, and that was confirmed to the House of Commons by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of state um on the 17th of December, 2024.

00:05:29:18 - 00:05:43:29

Um, the statement within within that response says the electricity system operator assessed connection to the sun, a substation for Irish wind farms, alongside other substations in the north, west and North Wales, as part of the holistic network design.

00:05:46:18 - 00:06:25:29

So identified that the substation would require extension to accommodate the Morgan and Markham offshore wind farms. Due to limited space, a new substation would be needed with associated time and cost access or challenging due to residential and recreational surroundings, and there were environmental constraints around Morecambe Bay. In contrast, Penwortham had a more accessible footprint, fewer constraints and better electrical connectivity to the wider network. It is noted that the need for an extension of the existing Penwortham 400 kV substation to establish base for connection to the offshore network was identified as part of the HMD, and was a known factor in reaching the recommendation to connect.

00:06:26:03 - 00:06:26:28

At that point.

00:06:27:26 - 00:06:51:05

A quick question on that reference. I think it refers to a is it a Hansard reference? It's the quotation, isn't it, from the parliamentary Under-Secretary of state. As you read out, is there any other document that's behind that? I appreciate that was a statement made in. In Parliament. Is there any other.

00:06:52:29 - 00:06:57:01

Yeah. That would be a matter for National Grid. Yeah. So that was their response and not.

00:06:57:03 - 00:07:08:23

The evidence behind it. It was a statement made, but it doesn't seem to have the. I know it's quite heavily relied upon I think in your response to relevant representations, but I'm not quite sure where that, where that comes from. I don't know that. Could you address that?

00:07:08:25 - 00:07:16:03

Yeah, that would again be National Grid ESO who provided the response. And I guess it would be informed by their own analysis undertaken.

00:07:16:09 - 00:07:26:29

Because there's something out there. But. Well there is but if information on that could be provided as the background to this, you know, um, this parliamentary statement would be useful to see.

00:07:29:19 - 00:08:01:26

A list done on behalf of the applicants. Um, I appreciate that that this point around the connection has come up as to the approach, you know, whether Penwortham, um, and the extent to which an applicant or applicants have an ability to, um, to um, uh, to have a choice in terms of where they go. Um, the point of connection is ultimately a matter for the ESO. They identify where there is capacity and then they offer connection points based on that.

00:08:02:12 - 00:08:57:18

Um, the applicant isn't party to or applicant aren't party to that process with National Grid. It's the national grid to check the system, see where there is availability. And part of their job is balancing the network to ensure that, um, that they can make connections to a number of parties. Um, as a result of that, I think it is really important that we bear in mind, um, that national policy statement, Ian five does. Uh, so this is paragraphs, um, uh, 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 onwards does talk about the, um, the degree to which, uh, applicants have control over the point of interconnection, and paragraph 2.2.1 reflects the situation which is and again, this is directed at the Secretary of State in terms of decision making.

00:08:57:20 - 00:09:28:29

But it says that the Secretary of State should bear in mind that the initiating and terminating point. So the wind farm lease has missed Sahota. Uh, a um, I was talking about before coffee, where the round four area was, was, uh, was granted by the Crown Estate. And then the point where National Grid says we have a connection here for you, and we can deliver that connection to you. Um, what the paragraph says is, is the initiating and terminating points of new electricity networks.

00:09:29:01 - 00:09:59:24

Infrastructure is not substantially within the control of the applicant. Uh, and then it says, uh, 2.2.2 siting is determined by the location of new generating stations, i.e. Area where the wind farms are, uh, and uh, other infrastructure required connecting to the network, i.e. the balancing of the network with other people that need to connect into system capacity and resilience requirements determined by the electricity system operator.

00:09:59:26 - 00:10:41:17

So that's how that decision is made. It is not one that applicants are party to in terms of information provided by, uh, by the ESO about the considerations that they've taken into account. So I just I, I don't want to set any expectations within this examination that the applicants are going to be able to provide information or that National Grid will release information about how that was done. The applicants have to rely on the work that National Grid does, and then, uh, are required to, uh, to effectively work out an appropriate siting from their point of generation to their point of interconnection.

00:10:42:00 - 00:11:05:14

Um, so the, the, the information that was put into the relevant responses, which was the Hansard reference, was an attempt by the applicant to to include some information that was in the public domain regarding that. If there are questions about this, these are questions for, for for National Grid and the ESO. Um, I'm not sure you'll get answers to them.

00:11:05:21 - 00:11:24:06

Um, no. We might address some questions for them in writing. Obviously, they're not here today. Um, can I just ask one question on on what's been said because the had section 4.22. No, it's not section 4.22. It's the h d. I've not got the paragraph reference, but it does set out that the.

00:11:26:10 - 00:11:57:10

Connection point of Penwortham is the preferred connection option. The preferred doesn't say it is the connection option. It's a preferred connection option. So because back to the sort of the question about is it actually the actually applicant's decision. It must be the applicant's decision. It's the applicant's application. But as he had said, is only the preferred connection option, then that indicates there might be other options available. And if I could one further question on that. And then you can deal with them both together.

00:11:57:12 - 00:12:35:10

I think it's paragraph five point gosh, paragraph 5.1. 13.03 of the HMD states that whilst cable routing on or close to the Blackpool airport should be technically feasible, the impact on airport operations and the feasibility of using the airport land remain to be established. And I know we had a presentation on this yesterday which indicated there might be some progress being made on the issues there, but that that indicates there is actually some doubt about within the HMD itself. On the appropriateness of landfall across Blackpool Airport, going up to Penn within that way, and that it's not clear from the evidence before us so far.

00:12:35:12 - 00:13:03:06

And notwithstanding what we said yesterday, that the impacts on airport operations and the feasibility of using the airport land have been reasonably established. And so why has such matters not been clearly established before the final route has been chosen, as it appears to be indicated? One reading or my reading of the H and D, is that while it says, um, the impact on the airport operations and the feasibility of land remain to be established, it just creates doubt, I think. And then as to whether or not that is actually a the best route.

00:13:03:18 - 00:13:34:24

Uh, is done on behalf of the applicants. I think there's I think we need to separate two elements out here. So the HMD was a report, the holistic network design coming out of the Offshore transmission Network review was a report that looked at if we are trying to do this strategically and in a confined way, what are the things that come out of it and what are the recommendations that come out of it? And the HMD was uh, it was not a connection offer.

00:13:34:26 - 00:14:27:05

So. So what we need to separate out is there's a strategic review of connection points separately to that. There is National Grid making its connection offers to projects which says actually we connect we can connect you into here. So because of the nature of the HMD report, it was a high level report which looked at what the options were in terms of bringing those things forward. And it wasn't for the had to say, we're making this project. That wasn't the kind of report, it was what it did do and what we are going to, um, go on to consider around Blackpool Airport in particular, was that, um, that that connection through to Penwortham? Um, there was uh, there was a landfill that was possible and there was a connection that that came through Blackpool Airport.

00:14:27:07 - 00:15:07:01

It recognised, uh, it wasn't going to be entirely straightforward, but it said there is an option here. And the applicants have made it very, very clear that they didn't start with that and say HMD says you should connect to more of them. Oh, and it's Blackpool Airport and we'll just crash on ahead with that. What the applicants did was with a connection at Penwortham that had then been offered by National Grid. Said how do we get here in the best way? And that's the purpose of going through this process now and being able to explain it is actually looking at and it is important that we go with it.

00:15:07:03 - 00:15:38:27

And I know everybody's wondering how long it's going to be till lunch, but it is important that we do it, because actually, if you start to look at where the where the cables come out of and you start to look at the constraints along the coast there, which we will go into, there are, dare I say it, there is one option that's available, which is the option that National Grid Identified as part of the HMD. But the point is that the applicants didn't just take that and say, that's what we're going with.

00:15:38:29 - 00:15:55:00

They looked and we can talk through why it isn't possible to come ashore. Any of the other areas so that you do end up with that landfall, although recognizing that you know that there is work and there is work ongoing with Blackpool Airport in terms of sorting that out.

00:15:55:12 - 00:15:57:04

Okay. Oh, okay.

00:15:59:15 - 00:16:09:19

Oh, yeah. Do you want to take your, uh, the there we are. Oh, no. I can see myself. That's not good news. Can you put the agenda back up? Anything by myself, please?

00:16:15:20 - 00:16:47:12

A further question in terms of the HMD, it also presents a I think it's on page 34, an optimized radial design, which includes a separate collection from the proposed Morecambe generation assets to Middleton Substation, which is negation, the purpose being to provide a credible counterfactual against which to compare recommended design in the. So it's a sort of comparable exercise that the seems to be undertaking, and the document goes on to state that the recommended design reduces the impact on the local communities.

00:16:48:09 - 00:16:57:05

Um, wasn't just first, it was the Middleton option considered by the applicants at any point in the site selection in terms of the connection.

00:16:58:02 - 00:17:12:22

Not in terms of our individual site selection process, obviously, once we'd accepted Penwortham. But the Morecambe Project, um, obviously looked at the outcomes of the HMD, uh, but then ultimately agreed with the recommended approach of the co-ordinated connection.

00:17:12:24 - 00:17:28:22

So was the risk assessment carried out for the, um, that my project's mixed up for the Morecambe generation assets in terms of whether or not that could connect into, uh, Middleton. Was there any assessment carried out.

00:17:28:24 - 00:17:45:15

For the work in terms of the connection to Middleton was done by National Grid Ieso as part of that process? Right. We ultimately looked at the outcomes of the process and then decided on the best path forward, which was to go for the the recommended, um, solution.

00:17:45:27 - 00:18:19:21

Okay. Okay. So the applicant didn't look at the do assessment for the for the potential for the because obviously there's an issue raised by residents. I think it's fair to say it's a concern that we're going to be asking as we go through sort of today and tomorrow and, you know, going into the examination about the benefits of having a coordinated approach and how much of a coordinated approach there is here, we should probably go on to discuss, I think, under other topics, and obviously the issue about having two separate construction periods, you know, the proximity to community, environmental constraints.

00:18:20:01 - 00:18:53:07

It may be that in some people's minds, having one going up into Middleton and one going up into going to Penwortham reduces reduces the overall impacts on the community. I'm not saying that I think that's a view taken by by residents. And obviously I think we'll get on to discussion of that as we go through the examination. So I don't need an answer to that now. We can provide an answer if you want, but it opens up rather a larger question, which we're not that time to discuss right now, which I think will be drawn out through the through the examination, i.e. is a, you know, in this case is actually the coordinated approach being proposed in this case.

00:18:53:09 - 00:19:24:12

And, uh, you know, separate separate substations, trenching, etc., is that is it actually superior to an alternative to that optimized radial design put forward in the HMD? I'm not expecting an answer on that now. I think it's a wider point that that sort of like needs to be sort of kept in the back of, in the back of everybody's mind, because I think from our point of view, the answer to that is not actually clear at the moment, perhaps as it could be. But let's draw that out as we go through the examination, if that's if that's that's fair.

00:19:24:23 - 00:19:26:19

Um, and.

00:19:28:25 - 00:19:29:24

Was the more.

00:19:34:19 - 00:19:39:26

Well, did the hand process. It didn't consider did it consider the more valid projects? I don't think it did.

00:19:39:28 - 00:19:40:13

Did it

00:19:42:05 - 00:20:25:09

on behalf of the applicants? No. The more well, the more Varnum Project is an Isle of Wight. Um, it's. We're sorry, Isle of man. Sorry, sorry, sorry. It's been a long week. I have, uh, is within Isle of Man waters. Um, and at the time, the HMD was, in fact, at the time the HMD was being carried out, I don't think anybody thought there would be a more van in project. Um, so that came forward after that date. Um, and, um, uh, has been it, it obviously the generation element, um, the application has been submitted to the Isle of Man but isn't available yet, and there's no certainty yet about where the grid connection will be in respect of that project.

00:20:25:11 - 00:20:37:08

I think we'll have some further questions as that as we go along, just in terms of one. Well, I have one question that I know probably was a hand up over there. It's probably Mr. Walker's. I will I will come to you shortly. The.

00:20:39:24 - 00:20:40:09

Or.

00:20:47:03 - 00:21:17:03

The landfill search in this case which is relevant to the to the grid connection. I might be jumping around a bit here. So. So bear with me. Which figure? Figure 4.2 of annex 4.1 of volume one of the ES. You can put it up if you want to. Um, it's figure 4.2 of annex. It's app 033. I think this might take longer to get to. Then I think for the next issue specific hearing, we will try harder to give you references. This one was debatable if it was needed or not. Um, we will for the next one.

00:21:17:09 - 00:21:17:24

Um.

00:21:22:04 - 00:21:34:04

I'll ask the question anyway. Is that the landfill search area identifies an approximately 50km range of coastline extending up to the urban area of Blackpool, but not beyond.

00:21:35:21 - 00:21:46:02

Why does this not also extend northwards of Blackpool, when it's noted that the available details for more valid transmission assets include indicative boundary that extends as North as North and Fleetwood.

00:21:48:03 - 00:21:59:00

I know that projects at an earlier stage, but given that project also intends to connect to Penwortham. Why is the applicant search area inconsistent with that for more more than in in this respect?

00:21:59:24 - 00:22:32:15

Listen on behalf of the applicant. Miss Koski is going to actually show the figure, which we think is helpful in terms of, of of highlighting that. Um, uh, the as I've said, the Morven project is at a very early stage. Um, the decisions the Morven project makes in respect of where its cables route will be

affected by other infrastructure and other development that is available. You know where there is space in the area in terms of where they can come forward.

00:22:33:00 - 00:23:05:24

We can't comment on where they think they may be able to connect their projects into or not. And what that route might look like. Um, but suffice it to say, it isn't nearly two gigawatts of capacity being brought forward in a coordinated way by two projects. So there will be differences in terms of availability. Um, and I think we have to be very, very careful not to be seeking to make direct comparisons between projects that are not comparable in terms of what they're bringing forward.

00:23:05:26 - 00:23:10:27

So I understand it is an obvious point as to why the applicant's search area stopped.

00:23:11:09 - 00:23:20:28

Koski will explain why the search area ended effectively to the south of Birmingham, up the Blackpool. Sorry, Blackpool.

00:23:21:13 - 00:23:41:05

Before you do, just in case there's a point that's related to this, you can also pick up and I don't want I will give you opportunities for the residents. Talk about the hillside and this is not that opportunity. But is there anything, Mr. Walker, was your hand up that you wanted to say just at this point? If you keep it fairly brief, because this was not during the introduction of other representations or third parties.

00:23:41:07 - 00:24:14:29

But thank you, Sir Angus Walker for Newton, etc.. I was just going to respond on the current conversation, not introduce the other option yet. Um, the I mean, we can all quote bits of national policy statements, but in five at paragraph uh, three, 2.3. 17 says applicants are expected to be able to indicate how coordination, including reduction in impacts, has been considered drawing on the work of others, including that LED or enabled by National Grid Electricity System operator.

00:24:15:15 - 00:24:46:09

So that doesn't say you've got to do what National Grid told you. It seems much and more up to the applicant. Coordination seems to be the main purpose of the. And indeed, so a coordinated approach is more important than the geography of where it's going. In my in our submission, um, the HMD process was if you search for the word desktop, you will find that it owns up to being a desktop exercise.

00:24:46:18 - 00:25:28:00

It didn't have the level of rigor that a DCO would normally have of public consultation and environmental assessment and on site visiting the site, etc.. Um, on that written answer by Michael Shanks, which was read out, you may think it curious that it says about starnier. There were environmental constraints around Morecambe Bay when this project is nowhere near Morecambe Bay. We think that the origin of that is because the last time Stano was looked at was in connection

with the Moorside Nuclear Power Station in Cumbria, which was going to potentially use it and go across Morecambe Bay.

00:25:28:07 - 00:25:41:08

So it seems to be a sort of legacy issue that is not relevant to this project, which suggests that the whole answer is a bit dubious, shall we say. Um. Any more points?

00:25:43:27 - 00:26:04:00

Well, you've talked you've already raised the question I was going to ask about the width of the AMP search area. Um, I'd be interested to know about the connection offer, because Penwortham being the connection point seems to be very important. Um. Do you did you? Well, I can't ask. The applicant.

00:26:04:02 - 00:26:06:09

Directly. Has to come through us. But there are.

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

A.

00:26:07:02 - 00:26:07:17

Lot of.

00:26:07:19 - 00:26:26:12

Points raised via. You see, if the way it works is the applicant says we've got this project, where should we connect to? Or does the applicant say we'd like to connect to Penwortham? Is that is that available? Because that makes quite a difference to to how this project is developed. Um, finally.

00:26:27:28 - 00:26:31:10

And I don't think there is a final one.

00:26:32:19 - 00:26:33:19

Okay. Well, that's quite a few.

00:26:33:21 - 00:26:34:06

Points.

00:26:34:08 - 00:26:35:13

To consider. So thank.

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

You. They were on that issue. I hope you were relevant to the current discussion.

00:26:39:24 - 00:26:58:22

That's helpful. And I will come back to you and others. Obviously on the the main alternatives proposed by by residents, not not the applicant. Okay. There's quite a lot there to sort of consider, but

if the applicant could provide us as full a response as possible as to, in terms of where we are with the debate at the moment, um, that would be helpful.

00:27:01:01 - 00:27:13:02

Sorry, Liz, done on behalf that I'm not quite sure what it is I'm supposed to be answering at this point. Um, uh, was it Mr. Walker's questions, or was it something else that I was going to be answering?

00:27:13:04 - 00:27:23:11

I think we're going. We're going to start speaking before inviting Mr. Walker to, uh, as to where we were. Or maybe we've got some sort of a conclusion on that. So if you want to start by responding to Mr. Walker's concerns, then.

00:27:27:27 - 00:27:42:12

At least on behalf of the applicants, I think we were going to go on to explain the landfill search area in respect of why it didn't go north of Blackpool. Sorry. Yes. North of the southern point of.

00:27:42:18 - 00:27:50:12

Yes, if you'd like to do that. And then any point you want to come back to Mr. Walker, then please do so as well. I realise there's quite a lot there.

00:28:02:18 - 00:28:09:03

Heather Koski, on behalf of both of the applicants. So today I will be covering.

00:28:09:05 - 00:28:26:18

Kind of the landfall and the offshore site selection summaries, kind of starting with the landfall. And this will be an overview of what is in app 031, which is volume one and x 4.1, the site selection and refinement of cable landfall.

00:28:26:25 - 00:28:29:03

Okay. Thank you. And if you can keep it as a as a.

00:28:29:06 - 00:28:29:28

High level.

00:28:30:01 - 00:28:36:21

Appreciate what's being said. But as a high level sort of overview as you possibly can. So an understanding can be got without going into the detail.

00:28:36:23 - 00:29:14:09

Thank you. Yeah. So so I think a lot of this does come back to the guiding principles as highlighted by Miss Sahota. And so for landfall we are looking to accommodate the design envelope. So in this case this is where the six offshore export cables can come onshore. And as already highlighted that that's around the locational alignment. And looking to have the cables beside each other. There is a general preference for the shortest and most direct route, because this minimizes the potential for interactions with the communities and the environment.

00:29:14:28 - 00:29:43:23

And then we're also looking to avoid kind of then those key sensitive environmental features where possible, as well as populated areas wherever possible. So when we look to identify the landfall area of search and as and I'm going to talk to this figure that's up here. So this is figure 4.1. This is actually from app 032. But I've put it up here because it does kind of show that wider area around Morecambe Bay.

00:29:43:25 - 00:29:45:27

Sorry. Can you just repeat that reference again.

00:29:45:29 - 00:30:05:03

Yes. So this is figure 4.1 from app 032. And that is the selection and refinement of the offshore infrastructure. And that's just because it shows the existing infrastructure and designations around Blackpool and Morecambe Bay.

00:30:06:21 - 00:30:42:13

So, as highlighted by Miss Sahota, the starting point for the search area is the location of the wind turbines. So where the Maughan turbines are and where the Morecambe turbines are, and kind of to the west, and then the point of interconnection at Penwortham to the east. So the main reasons that we started at the south of Blackpool is when we look kind of further to the north, there are a higher number of designations around Morecambe Bay, and then you're moving into the built up nature around the town centre of Blackpool.

00:30:42:29 - 00:31:20:09

And ultimately it was considered that there were fewer constraints that could be better managed to the south of this. And so I will just touch on briefly kind of Morecambe Bay in the first instance. So Morecambe Bay is considered ecologically sensitive because you have five principal rivers that kind of meet here in the estuary. And that's the Leven, the Kent, the Kir, the Lune and the Wyre. And so collectively, Morecambe Bay, in its designations, forms the largest single area of continuous intertidal mudflat and sand flats in the UK.

00:31:20:20 - 00:32:08:21

And so this is covered by a Special Area of Conservation for the habitats that support the Special Protection Area for the birds. You also have the Ramsar site, which is an international wetland site at the seabed there on the southern end is also protected. It's a marine conservation zone and there are numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest all around the coastline of the bay. So the applicants made the decision to exclude Morecambe Bay as a landfall location because it was considered that we could avoid these sensitive features, kind of in line with the guiding principles, as there were kind of better and less constrained options further to the south.

00:32:08:23 - 00:32:46:09

So there's kind of fewer designations coverage and less density further to the south and closer to both where the wind turbines would be and to Penwortham and then kind of just below Morecambe Bay, you know, you are moving into Blackpool. It is a densely populated area. It is quite a built up nature. And there's also kind of an extensive, an extensive beach front and that has manmade sea

defences running up and down that so kind of in line with that guiding principles as well to avoid populated areas where possible.

00:32:46:20 - 00:32:54:29

The decision was made then that the best place to start when looking for landfall was to the south of Blackpool.

00:33:00:09 - 00:33:04:20

I'm happy to touch on why we went further south to Formby. If that's helpful as well.

00:33:09:02 - 00:33:10:14

Yeah, it is quite brief.

00:33:10:16 - 00:33:12:03

Briefly. Only briefly please.

00:33:12:05 - 00:33:12:20

Yes.

00:33:12:22 - 00:33:46:08

So as you travel kind of then south from Blackpool along the coastline, um, there's smaller populated centres with gaps between these, with the potential to align with those guiding principles. Um, and we didn't really go further than Formby because at that point you're moving towards the greater Liverpool area. The population density increases and you're also getting close to the port of Liverpool. So you have a lot more vessel traffic in that area going into and out of the port.

00:33:46:22 - 00:33:54:10

So as such, that's why the area of search for landfall was defined as being the south of Blackpool to Formby.

00:33:55:26 - 00:34:07:28

And that is shown in figure 4.3 of app 031. If Mr. Johnson can show that and that that will show kind of that layout this way.

00:34:24:15 - 00:34:56:15

In terms of the constraints that you've highlighted. North of Blackpool or Blackpool beyond to the north obviously highlighted several environmental constraints. There's also obviously several variables, constraints in connection with the route that's been chosen. So is it a case, putting it simply, that your case is that the amount of constraints north of Blackpool are less than the environment constraints as to south of Blackpool or in Livingston, and where the weather for the landfall is, etc..

00:34:58:07 - 00:34:59:14

Offshore and onshore.

00:34:59:26 - 00:35:35:00

Yeah. Offshore and onshore. So offshore. You also have the shelf lots and deep special area conservation and kind of just off the coast of working Bay as well. Uh, and, and obviously where we've ultimately selected we are into those rebel designations, which is the Ramsar site and the Special Protection Area. And I think when you look at Morecambe Bay, as I said, it's a it is a huge embayment. And those designations extend all the way to the end, where as the river designations, it's one river, it's not five.

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

So the way that it extends out, we have sought to minimize that interaction. So our crossing is at the far north where those designations are the narrowest.

00:35:46:29 - 00:36:07:19

And is there any information and just refer to it in terms of the environmental constraints. It's not part of the search area. So is there actually any information in the application about why the application is not considered in that position? Is not actually. Is that because it's not in the search area? So I presume what you said, you said it, but there's not actually evidence behind that before the examination, I'm assuming.

00:36:08:01 - 00:36:14:18

Well, no, I mean, but there is evidence of the designations of Morecambe Bay, which are in the public.

00:36:14:20 - 00:36:18:17

But not the applicants assessment. So, so that the two could be compared, for example.

00:36:18:19 - 00:36:40:23

No. And it's as we come back, it's looking at those constraints and more from that high level perspective of that balance, of the environmental sensitivity, the communities and kind of the space available, um, where we are trying to get from the wind turbines to Penwortham.

00:36:41:12 - 00:36:56:15

And in terms of residents have also raised the River Ribble option. I think it's clear in the representations what's been suggested by the residents. In that case, I'm not necessarily going to go back residents to explain that. So I think it's you've read you've read those.

00:36:58:09 - 00:37:04:15

What was the what's the just? Can you just summarize the applicant's response to that in terms of just the River Ribble option, please?

00:37:05:08 - 00:37:37:06

Yes. And we have touched on this within uh, app 031. Um, and as well as in our responses to relevant reps and PD PD 005 and that's sections 2.3, 1.2, 20 to 24. And so at the initial stage of that, if I could perhaps ask Mr. Johnson to share figure 4.4, which then does show, uh, the constraints around the river.

00:37:37:08 - 00:37:38:04

River, please.

00:37:45:20 - 00:38:21:21

So the, the initial feasibility work when we're looking at landfalls and kind of around lithium, Saint Anne's and banks along the southern bank of the river. And this, as I highlighted before, is a smaller estuary than those at Morecambe Bay, where there's five and there's only the one river here. And there are fewer designations covering this area than there are at Morecambe Bay. Um, and as I said, you know, the landfall does ultimately interact with some of these, but we have chosen that periphery as far north as possible to minimise that.

00:38:23:06 - 00:38:56:09

And then when you start looking at landfall further to the south, kind of within the mouth of the river itself, it involves a much more extensive interaction and impacts of the designated features that are associated with that. And that's because there's a much greater area of mudflats and, uh, salt marshes and stuff there at the mouth of the river. And so, similarly, the rebel does have a special protection area. It has a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

00:38:56:18 - 00:39:30:04

It's a Ramsar site. And it's also a marine conservation zone as well. And so when you look at shifting south, there are more designations around the mouth of the river, uh, mouth of the river than what, what there are kind of to the far northern point where the landfall currently is. Um, so bringing the cables further south means you have, as I said, a greater interaction with the main concentration of features for which those designations are associated.

00:39:30:06 - 00:40:08:29

Mudflats, sand flats and salt marsh habitats. And the disturbance then to those designated features would be over a greater area and within those main concentrations of the sensitive features. And then we also had to look at the feasibility of bringing the cables up the river. And you know, when you visit kind of the river or the estuary, it has quite a large tidal range of over eight metres, and it does have occasional tidal bore, which is when the incoming tide forms a wave or waves that travel up the river.

00:40:09:07 - 00:40:40:13

And I don't know what it was like on your site visit, but it does. If you've ever been there when the tide's coming or going, it does move quite rapidly around that and that that those are challenging engineering conditions and to put the cables in and to make sure that it's a safe working area for, for people undertaking that work as well. And the river channel itself is no longer dredged. So there is a rather large 2 to 4 metre thick sand or silt layer on the riverbed.

00:40:40:16 - 00:41:20:21

And again, that's related to the mud flats and the sand flats and stuff in there to maintain that. And then also as you get further down the river, you do have very high banks and flood defences kind of on either side. So if you if you visited the river location that the banks are quite high compared to the surrounding landscape, and that means if we were going into the river, we would still need to breach that somehow and try to be able to either trench this technique from within the river underneath that, or potentially need to breach that, which is very, very challenging to do when you have such soft riverbed conditions.

00:41:21:13 - 00:41:54:00

And so ultimately that meant we couldn't get the cable vessel into the river itself. So the cable lay vessel, which is a large that pretty much has the cable on it, which is quite a heavy vessel, and it struggles with shallow waters and with those types of debt. So that would be very difficult. So there'd be a very long cable that we need to come in, as I said, about breaching the flood defences. And it was considered that just those challenges around the interaction with the sensitive features and the ability to do that and made it an unfeasible option.

00:41:54:13 - 00:42:31:10

Okay. Thank you. And I think just one more question from me. And this has been raised actually in representations, but um, in terms of other grid connection points considered by the applicants either individually or together as a combined approach. I think I probably know the answers, but were there any options for a grid connection point or points in North Wales that were considered by the applicant? I know in an early age and there's lots of drawings in the H and D aren't there, and there is one option, not an option that was carried forward, obviously, which presents, I think it was the Morgan uh, scheme connecting down to uh

00:42:33:03 - 00:42:46:03

is it a wooden. My colleague will pronounce it better than, than I will in North Wales. Uh, But was it? I presume that I presume that that's not being considered without putting words into your mouth. From what.

00:42:46:05 - 00:43:23:20

I've read, it is done on behalf of the applicant. It wasn't an offer from National Grid, um, and therefore it wasn't considered. Um, again, I just think it's very important to, um, to put this point of connection. I know, I know, it's a, it's it's an issue that that has been raised and considered, um, and um, but and probably going to Mr. Walker's, uh, question isn't the choice of the applicant as to where the connection is? National grid will identify, uh, they may identify one option.

00:43:23:22 - 00:43:58:00

They may identify more than one option. Um, as part of this process, clearly, they identified that there was an option of splitting the cables and and having them separately. So Morecambe going to, um. Uh uh, um, uh, Middleton and, uh, Morgan going to Penwortham. There was never a consideration within that of Morgan going to a wedding. Uh, and anybody that's involved in any projects around the wedding will be very delighted that there isn't another project seeking to connect into that area.

00:43:58:05 - 00:44:29:20

But that's a separate matter. Um, so, um, it wasn't an offer, and it wasn't it wasn't something that was brought forward by National Grid. The applicants, uh, were given were those options were identified in the HMD? The applicant, on the basis of the whole approach to HMD, which was to seek to avoid the situation that had happened on the East Coast, where you have multiple projects connecting in at different times with individual radial connections.

00:44:29:23 - 00:45:15:12

The lack of of of strategic planning around that, the lack of coordination between those projects. All of those things were the things that HMD was seeking to avoid by by recommending a joint

connection between the projects. And so the applicant. So the outcome of HMD was, was Morgan, um, coming to um Penwortham and either Morecambe following that in this in this combined coordinated approach or Morecambe going to uh to Middleton and the applicant seeking to align with that approach that was seeking to be put forward by government about how you try and minimise the impact on, on, uh, from these, uh, different types of development.

00:45:15:16 - 00:45:39:07

Said, actually, do you know what we will what? And I was going to say this later, but I think it's actually really important to say it. Now, these applicants have worked together in a completely unprecedented way to bring this project forward. Okay. And the transparency about what's been done. And they're seeking to bring this project forward together to allow that planning of actually can.

00:45:39:09 - 00:45:40:12

We come up to that, to the next.

00:45:40:14 - 00:45:42:21

To it that can look ahead to it? But I just.

00:45:42:23 - 00:46:14:29

It's because that is a key point. Yeah, absolutely. Key points. One of the questions, one of the points we would sort of raise as being an issue in terms of our reading so far, and we'll come to this in the next this this afternoon is whether or not the sort of the coordination, the collaboration is what was expected when the when the writers of the had documents, what went behind that in terms of the benefits would result? Are those actually being realized in this case, as opposed to perhaps an alternative radial approach that was discussed before at Middleton, where where some people might argue potentially the impact might be might be less because there's not two going in at the same time.

00:46:15:01 - 00:46:20:00

So so that can we go on to that this afternoon. Because that is part of the agenda for this afternoon. Um,

00:46:21:18 - 00:46:53:03

before I bring in interested parties to talk about, uh, hillside strokes. Donna, what's an alternative? Is there anything else that you wanted to do? The question I had was about offshore exploration, the offshore route in terms of how it explains how it avoids or seeks to avoid, uh, sensitive, uh, offshore areas, environmental areas, and also, obviously the, uh, the crossing of the SSI dunes as to what consideration was given to avoiding that.

00:46:53:05 - 00:47:02:00

Obviously, there's a separate discussion on that in terms of any possible effects. That's for later on those the other two outstanding matters I was going to raise before moving to interested parties.

00:47:02:02 - 00:47:13:20

Happy to happy to do those. There is just one point to draw out and it might be very obvious, but sometimes it's really important to make. The obvious point is, there was never a connection offer identified for these projects at stammer. Never.

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I understand that, and I think we will ask some questions for National Grid on on that.

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They are for National Grid. Yeah, absolutely. That has never been on the table for these projects.

00:47:21:25 - 00:47:22:26

Thank you I understand.

00:47:25:12 - 00:47:40:10

Again a brief a brief overview. Because what I'm planning is that this consideration alternative site selections continues till lunchtime. And I do want to hear from the residents on alternatives that are being proposed. And obviously I want to give you the chance to comment on that as well.

00:47:42:07 - 00:47:57:08

Thank you. So, Heather Schakowsky, on behalf of both of the applicants, if I could, could I ask Mr. Johnson to share figure 4.6, I believe, from app 032.

00:48:05:02 - 00:48:43:05

So coming back briefly to what I touched on the landfall. So when we're looking to do the offshore search area and to refine the cable corridors, we are looking to go from the wind turbines then to the landfall site that was identified at Saint Anne's. So similarly, we needed to find areas that could accommodate the the six cables, as well as looking at the environmental constraints and in this case for the offshore routes, the other marine users and the existing infrastructure that exists there.

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So there are a lot of offshore designations as well. And these cover the majority of the sea along the coastline. And so it's looking at what is feasibly possible to avoid these or to minimize interactions with these. So I know this is quite a busy figure, but but this shows the initial offshore search area, which is kind of the the big line that goes around and to the outside of that, which is what I'll touch on briefly now.

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So the northern boundary of the search area was defined by looking to avoid the shell flats feature of the Shell Flats and Loon Deep Special Conservation Area. And that's the blue kind of horizontal, um, stripe there just to the north of the file Marine Conservation Zone. As part of that is wave. And looking to the north, we were able to to draw that line to avoid the Walney and the Copeland marine conservation zones as wave as I highlighted earlier, avoiding as within the area around Morecambe Bay and those designations.

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And that route also considered some of the oil and gas platforms within defining that route. And those are kind of the great bright green points there. Uh, just to the north of where the Morgan turbines would be. So that is the northern boundary of the search area that then comes down, as you can see. Um, that way, uh, and within looking at that, I think one of the important things to highlight within

this area is the Liverpool Bay spa pretty much covers the whole, uh, West coast here, um, up to the top of Morecambe Bay, down to Wales.

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We also have the the Fylde Marine Conservation Zone there as well. And that is pretty much centered between where the turbines are located and where the landfill is.

00:50:44:16 - 00:51:18:27

And looking at the southern boundary. We did look to try to avoid and minimise interactions with the estuary and the mouth of the River Ribble, as I highlighted previously. Um, and then we also look to avoid those the aggregate areas to the south, that's kind of that large brain area there on the south of the figure. Uh, and this area is slightly bigger because we needed to consider how we can potentially look to get the export cables around the existing telecoms cables and the cables running there.

00:51:18:29 - 00:51:23:20

And so those are all the kind of light gray lines that run generally east west there.

00:51:26:19 - 00:52:06:02

So ultimately, I think it was deemed because of the extent of the Liverpool spa, sorry, Special Protection Area, we would be unable to avoid this. Um, and then on that balance of being able to avoid, um, the, the Shell Flats portion of the Special Area of Conservation to the north and to minimise that interaction with the rebel designations around the mouth of the river. Um, we we were unable to completely avoid the Fylde Marine Conservation Zone to kind of inline sustain with the mitigation hierarchy.

00:52:06:04 - 00:52:39:27

And looking at that, we then further considered the division of routes to try to cross that at its narrowest point. And you can see it's slightly bigger at the bottom and much bigger to the north of that. And. And so that was part of the next step. Once we defined that search area, we looked at how we could route the cables kind of through this area. So highlighting we can't avoid the Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area. We've crossed the Fylde Marine Conservation Zone at its narrowest point.

00:52:40:06 - 00:53:07:06

And then the other route, kind of beyond that to the west are looking at the existing infrastructure that's there. So there's quite a bit of the oil and gas wells, platforms, pipelines, and it is a busy bit of the seabed as you can tell. There's a lot of telecoms cables, there's an interconnector. So it was looking at how we could route around that to try to minimise the interaction with that.

00:53:07:20 - 00:53:27:21

And would you move on to the the dunes as well. In terms of the, uh, it might be quite a simple point, I don't know, but in terms of what considerations were taken into account in terms of the potential for avoiding the dunes, or where they were they unavoidable in terms of the route that you've chosen.

00:53:45:10 - 00:53:58:01

Yeah. So then within routing through that, ultimately I think it is highlighted. Apologies, I can't find it, but the NPS does acknowledge how difficult it is to

00:53:59:24 - 00:54:27:14

find areas to bring things onshore throughout the UK as a whole, because you generally have a pattern here. Um, as is the case here and through most of the coastline where you have populated areas, um, if there's a gap in a populated area, it's environmentally designated. So. So what you're trying to look to do is balance that. And so so when looking at those options, obviously

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the applicants made the decision not to go through the centre of Blackpool, not to go through the sea defences. And when you move kind of further south, you're coming in to the beachfront around the main portion of Saint Anne's. And so ultimately it's looking at the options, and it was determined that the best option would be to come through at this narrowest point. And the sand dunes are there. And it was determined that there would be engineering solutions that would enable us to avoid those directly.

00:54:59:10 - 00:55:04:11

Which we can go on to discuss. I think sort of later on, or even through written representations, etc..

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And apologies, I can provide that reference now.

00:55:07:10 - 00:55:07:25

Yes.

00:55:07:27 - 00:55:43:24

Please do. So it maps in 32.8. Um. No. Sorry. Apologies. It's in five. 2.9.25 is where it acknowledges kind of that pattern of designations and built up areas along the coast. And also 2.1, 13.14 again highlights that there's likely to be fewer landing sites available when you are looking at coordinated applications because it's, uh, more cables.

00:55:43:28 - 00:55:58:11

Thank you. I think this is probably a good time to open things up a little bit in terms of alternatives. I do want to ask some questions on the substations, but I'll come on to those later on. You can say what you need to say. In short, on the on the substations. But.

00:56:00:17 - 00:56:03:21

Obviously several parties have raised, uh,

00:56:05:06 - 00:56:06:21

hillside and uh,

00:56:08:09 - 00:56:14:27

as an alternative. Sorry. Let me just get to the relevant bit of my notes, because I know we're jumping around a little bit here.

00:56:20:23 - 00:56:59:07

And obviously we've read all the relevant representations on hillside, but I think it would be useful for, again, a summary to be provided. And then I'll ask for the applicant to do comments. What I don't want is repeated summaries of the same thing being provided. So who would like to present the if you like almost the residents case on. Okay, I'm not surprised. Mr. Walker thank you again. Again quite high level because in many instances it's more. The applicant's comments on it are probably the most interesting because I've read your all the representations received, but I appreciate there might be elaboration on points that have been received in the applicant's responses as well.

00:56:59:09 - 00:57:03:09

That's probably, again, the more the more key bit than repeating what's already been said.

00:57:06:24 - 00:57:12:18

Just just to add, after Mr. Walker's had his say, there are matters that we want to follow up on?

00:57:12:20 - 00:57:17:17

Absolutely. Yes, I did your hand go up, but if you want, if if the council wants to leave, that's absolutely fine. Sorry.

00:57:17:19 - 00:57:37:14

Just that's on this point. I'm happy to, um, uh, let Mr. Walker speak on it. I just want to clarify that you have asked us to wait before making comments. We have comments to make on the last half day of of discussion so far. Um, will we be able to make those comments before we break for lunch? Yes. That's important.

00:57:37:19 - 00:58:10:18

There's two ways of doing it. You can make comments, um, before lunch time, which we'll give an opportunity for, but also it's relevant to all parties. We've got written representations coming up deadline on the 20th of May, local impact reports. I think part of the intention for today is to help build up an understanding of what's being proposed. So it's absolutely an option that responses to what's been raised today can be presented in your written representation and local impact reports. Uh, but so you might want to give a high level responses today and go into more detail.

00:58:10:20 - 00:58:41:07

What I don't want to do is prejudge the process in a way, and we have got very early in the examination. We're on the first day. So by all means, I will give you a response. But it's just a general point that what's been said today hopefully will feed in to people's written representations and or local impact reports as, as as appropriate as you wish to do. I appreciate that I probably would give you more opportunities to comment on things in other hearings, but I just I want to get through things, and it is at an early stage where it's the the scope of things we're looking at. So if everyone's happy for Mr.

00:58:41:09 - 00:58:42:07

Walker to present.

00:58:43:15 - 00:58:44:00

The.

00:58:44:02 - 00:58:47:09

Hillside case, if you like, or stomachaches. I'm not quite sure which title to use for it, but.

00:58:47:14 - 00:58:51:00

That's a point of clarification. It's Hill House rather than hillside.

00:58:51:02 - 00:58:51:18

Hillside.

00:58:51:20 - 00:59:28:08

Hillside is a famous planning sorry case at once. The Supreme Court, which is probably why it's in your mind. Um, Angus Walker for Newton, etc.. I think the the best, uh, visual presentation of the alternative is in the relevant representation of well, it's RR. 1261. I hope I've pre warned Mr. Johnson that this will be necessary. Uh, from the snappily named Lancashire Association of Local councils, Fylde area committee, energy working group.

00:59:29:11 - 00:59:29:29

Um

00:59:31:18 - 00:59:41:27

that's it. If you if you could zoom in on the diagram on the plan. Don't think we're too worried about that. Um. Thank you.

00:59:43:23 - 01:00:14:26

And just go down a bit so you can see the application route as well. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Thank you. So at the bottom in the orange oval is the application route, which is some 20km long from the coast to Penwortham and at the top In. Yet in the other smaller orange, um, oval is the alternative Hill House route.

01:00:15:26 - 01:00:52:10

So it is until it gets to the Hill House. Um, enterprise zone area. It's only about two kilometres long, so it's a 10th of the distance. It, um, there is available landfall there, and you can see that there is a gap between, um, communities there, and it can thread its way across for its two kilometres until it reaches the Hill House site, which is an industrial site. The former ICI plant that also contains the Starner um substation.

01:00:52:27 - 01:01:23:03

It also contains the Walney two substation. So there's a precedent for wind farm offshore wind farm substations to be located there. Um, I don't know what Harvey would say about this, but I think the representation from the owner of this site actually asks for it to be used, rather than the one in the application. It's pretty unusual for a landowner to want this project on their land. And I got the reference to that one somewhere.

01:01:23:16 - 01:01:28:27

Got too many references in my list. Um, they're called HPL.

01:01:31:15 - 01:01:32:04

Um.

01:01:35:00 - 01:02:07:29

And I've lost it at the moment. Um, now, the four criteria in the holistic network design are listed on the left there. They they are cost to consumer deliverability and operability, impact on environment and impact on local communities. And our case is that on all four of those criteria, this is a much better option than the one in the application. It's cheaper. It's We? We haven't calculated the exact cost because we don't have the expertise to do so.

01:02:08:01 - 01:02:12:23

But it speaks for itself that if it's a 10th of the length, it's going to be a lot cheaper.

01:02:14:12 - 01:02:27:09

Um, and that also means it's more likely to be deliverable, although it won't need these huge substations halfway along that are next to, uh, my clients, um, properties.

01:02:29:09 - 01:03:00:24

And any substation that is needed can be put on the Hillhouse site. Um, the impact on the environment again is clearly much less it doesn't go through an Spa, whereas the application version does, for example, um, and the impact on the local communities, most importantly and closest to the hearts of my clients is much, much reduced. Um, it's not simply a case of moving it to somewhere else.

01:03:00:26 - 01:03:09:23

It's shortening the project considerably and making it have less impact in total on on communities.

01:03:11:08 - 01:03:17:26

Um, I don't know if any of my colleagues would like to supplement what I've just said.

01:03:20:25 - 01:03:22:15

Apparently. Yep.

01:03:26:07 - 01:03:47:03

NPL. Yes. That's the that's the owner. I'm just not just check what their relevant representation number is because it'd be useful to know. Of course, I can't find the list of relevant representations when any at the very crucial moment. Here we are. It is RR 16561656. That's correct.

01:03:47:08 - 01:03:49:21

Thank you, Mr. Cope. Do you want to.

01:03:49:27 - 01:03:51:02

Okay. That's the end of my.

01:03:51:04 - 01:03:51:27

Thank you, Mr. Walker.

01:03:51:29 - 01:03:53:06

High level presentation.

01:03:53:11 - 01:04:00:21

Thank you. That was a suitably brief. Thank you. And we have got the detail behind that so that that's that's I want you to make sure that's understood.

01:04:01:13 - 01:04:32:00

Yes. Thank you. John. Borough council? Yes. I'd just like to, uh, to comment and put on the record that we agree with what has just been said there by Mr. Walker. Um, I also just wanted to add that as well as the onshore considerations in terms of offshore impacts, um, as demonstrated on the on the figure that was shared earlier. Um, apologies. I um it may have been figure 4.1 in app 032 or it could be in the later figure. But to do with the offshore sensitivities, it is worth noting. Um, yes. Uh, yes, that is the one.

01:04:32:02 - 01:04:57:03

It's worth noting that the, um, the option of connecting further north as well would also provide the opportunity to avoid or reduce impact on the marine conservation area and the shale flat and deep um areas. Um, and then as we come online on land to avoid the sea around the sand dunes and other impacts as well. So I think that is, um, worth adding. think.

01:04:59:06 - 01:05:11:26

So. So perhaps Angus Walker again, I should just mention this is wholly within the area of Wyre Borough Council. So it's in a different council area. It's not in Blackpool or Fylde, just so that you know that.

01:05:13:22 - 01:05:38:28

And in terms of this alternative route, I've read references to upgrading, I think an existing electricity line to get from Stanhope to Penwortham, because this route still proposes to go to Penwortham eventually, doesn't it? With what? There's little detail on that. What what exactly is do you have in mind in terms of this, this alternative proposal,

01:05:40:17 - 01:05:41:02

in terms.

01:05:41:04 - 01:05:41:20

Of the Newton, it's.

01:05:41:22 - 01:05:42:16

The overhead, the overhead.

01:05:42:18 - 01:06:07:17

Line. So if if the absolute objective is to reach Penwortham rather than just to the national grid, which would be reached at starnier, then it should be possible to either upgrade or add new lines between

Stana and Penwortham on the existing pylons between the two, thereby not needing to cross the river wire a new time. Um,

01:06:09:04 - 01:06:22:23

and we consider that would be feasible if you have to get to Penwortham so you could achieve that, uh, allocation at Penwortham, if that is an absolute, uh, must.

01:06:22:25 - 01:06:24:10

On existing pylons.

01:06:24:18 - 01:06:30:09

Yes. So there is spare capacity on those pylons, I'm instructed.

01:06:32:29 - 01:07:01:03

And in terms of obviously this is a proposal put forward by residents groups, parish councils, etc.. You know, it's not a sort of fully assessed, evaluated proposal. Sort of. How confident are you that it is actually feasible? I suspect the applicant will want to comment on this. I don't know, but I'll invite the applicant to comment. But how confident are you in presenting this that it is actually a feasible alternative, a feasible, practical alternative that actually, you know, is realistic.

01:07:02:28 - 01:07:28:12

Angus Walker for Newton. ET cetera. Uh, I, I certainly think that the, um, section from the coast to Stana substation is eminently feasible, but the continuation to Penwortham will probably need a bit more expert view as to whether as to its feasibility. But I am instructed that it is feasible.

01:07:29:16 - 01:07:42:25

And have you had any discussions with National Grid in terms of this alternative, or has anybody had any discussions with National Grid? What national grid view do we know? Again, we can ask them and we probably will. But uh has anybody had discussions on that?

01:07:44:25 - 01:07:51:10

Do we have a roving mic? When you get the roving mic please give your your name and who you represent. If you're representing anybody, please.

01:07:55:02 - 01:07:55:19

Hello.

01:07:56:18 - 01:08:08:02

My name is Gordon Smith. I'm a member of the aptly named Local Association of Lancashire Association of Local Councils, Fylde Area Committee and Energy Working Group.

01:08:09:25 - 01:08:41:20

And the simple answer to your question is we haven't directly engaged National Grid. We have engaged a number of academics in our voltage area and from an engineering point of view. Uh, upgrades are clearly possible. If you look in the NDI, uh report website, you'll see there's an

extensive, uh, representation of a number of, uh, upgrade projects that were proposed within the HMD.

01:08:42:04 - 01:09:24:19

And you'll see a whole series related to Penwortham and the area around reconnecting, which increases the capacity, particularly to the south and to the southern connections that they have also included in that area their two projects for new Busbar new infrastructure at the site to accommodate the, uh, the connections for offshore wind, the new connections as an hour for an hour. So Morgan and Morgan, um, obviously that would be able to be moved north to Starner because you'd be able to extend that onto the 138 hectare Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone.

01:09:26:28 - 01:09:55:24

So from an engineering point of view, all of this is possible. But just to be fair. Um, what you need to do is obviously take a systems wide view, because obviously there's balancing to be done. There's a number of projects, uh, out of being implemented PEM with them around flow control to improve the effectiveness and excellent performance of the grade in that area as well. So from an engineering point of view, I think there's lots of potential opportunity to incorporate that.

01:09:58:25 - 01:10:00:03

Okay. Thank you.

01:10:05:27 - 01:10:09:14

Okay. That's done with the applicant. Applicants like to respond.

01:10:09:16 - 01:10:58:26

Uh, sorry. Les done. On behalf of the applicants. Um, I just reiterate what I said earlier. Um, a connection that has never been, uh, on the table or been considered or offered to the applicant. Uh, therefore, um, uh, connection into that location in terms of national grid. So getting to the grid there. Uh, isn't it it's not even a reasonable or needs to be considered alternative, to be honest. Um, in terms of using, um, the, uh, Hillhouse site, uh, for the Substations to connect to Penwortham, and that would require a significant uh section of 400 kV cabling to.

01:10:59:00 - 01:11:00:28

So if you, if you, uh,

01:11:02:23 - 01:11:13:10

if, if it was to be, uh, I'm not a national grid expert, so I'm starting to get into slightly dangerous territory, but, um, uh, it is, it is.

01:11:15:22 - 01:11:57:28

It's not a, it's not a consideration of just being able to upgrade that line. When you look at the the, uh, reinforcements that National Grid is making to connect new capacity, it would be a new the likelihood is it would be a new overhead line required by National Grid in order to bring two gigawatts of new capacity, uh, or take that into into the national grid if you were connecting into Penwortham. The other option is that as a pen. Wortham. Um, so so that would either be sorry. I've, I've so assuming

you've got substations at which you couldn't do at um, at the Hillhouse site, you would still need to get the 400 kV connection down to Penwortham.

01:11:58:00 - 01:12:34:25

So the question then is do you do that by overhead lines or do you do that by underground? By underground? In both cases the cost is significant. And if overhead lines has never been a consideration for this project, quite rightly, the the the site selection principles have been around minimizing the 400 kV, uh, connection distance as far as possible, because that is extremely expensive in terms of building in. So it frankly isn't an option for the applicant to be looking at a 400 kV connection from Hillhouse down to Penwortham.

01:12:34:27 - 01:12:55:08

It doesn't make any sense at all in, in, in any matter of cost or whatever, um, considerations. So I think it can be ruled out on the basis that there is no national grid connection for the projects at Starmer, and it's entirely inappropriate and unnecessary, frankly, to look at 400 kV over that distance.

01:13:03:11 - 01:13:05:11

Okay. Thank you. Any further comments?

01:13:07:15 - 01:13:10:15

Yes. Uh, Mr. Smith?

01:13:11:07 - 01:13:41:12

Gordon Smith again. Uh, just to confirm, if you if the applicant could go to the HMD report and figure 32, uh, you'll see that, uh, the stand is part of the 400 kV network. It's currently two conductors between, uh, Stana and Penwortham. And there are three conductors between Heysham and Hambleton. Therefore, there's a the principle to expand should it be required fundamentally. Fundamental should be required.

01:13:41:14 - 01:13:57:19

So fundamentally, in terms of the response to Mr. Dunn, that it is part of the 400 kV network. And if you have a look at Fig. 32, you'll see both Stanhope identified as well as Middleton and Pan with them. And you will see it's part of the 400 kV network.

01:13:57:21 - 01:13:59:05

Okay. That's figure 32.

01:13:59:08 - 01:14:01:12

Figure 3230, the extended report.

01:14:01:14 - 01:14:03:29

Okay. We'll look at that.

01:14:04:18 - 01:14:29:00

Thank you. Behalf of the applicants. Um, yes. It's part of the 400 kV network. It's a matter, as I've said, for National Grid, as to where the offer of connection is. Uh, in terms of what, uh, and as part of,

uh, the overall system design as to whether that would be an appropriate thing to do or not. And, and as I've said about three times now, there has never been a connection offer made for these projects at Stanford.

01:14:29:15 - 01:14:34:15

Okay. Thank you. And as I say, we can ask National Grid any appropriate questions on sir.

01:14:34:17 - 01:15:05:12

If I may. Paul. Council. Uh, just following on on that point, um, you know, the, uh, response is not conclusive. Uh, it is. We believe it's a material consideration to consider alternative sites as part of this application process, uh, taking into account EIA rates. And that's where we're coming from. Effectively, uh, what we've had this morning is a sort of step down version from strategic right down to local.

01:15:06:00 - 01:15:18:09

And there are a number of considerations in that, that I would expect as we move down into the local scenario, uh, that we move towards the EIA regs. And I'm not convinced that that's happened.

01:15:19:22 - 01:15:29:09

Okay. Thank you. And as I said before, is there anything you want to build upon in your written representations. Then obviously that is an opportunity to do so. Uh, yes. So give me your name again, please.

01:15:30:27 - 01:15:45:24

Yes. Bill Morgan, uh, vice chair Newton with Clifton Parish Council and chair of the task committee. Betty. I suppose the point about this has never been an option that's been considered is at the heart of what we're concerned about. You know, we're going through a process today.

01:15:45:26 - 01:15:46:11

Which.

01:15:46:13 - 01:16:20:08

Is going to be long and drawn out and considered, and the stand option is just dismissed by saying there's a bit of connections that doesn't seem to work very well. And at some point somebody should have said, this is an option, we should consider it. And if it turns out that consideration comes to conclusion that it isn't viable, that's fine enough. But for us as residents, we're told we've got to accept all this disruption, all this chaos in our lives and for no reason. Because an option which is clearly, from our point of view, better, has never had any consideration whatsoever.

01:16:20:18 - 01:16:45:17

And the brief comments that have been made this afternoon, this, this, this lunchtime are only just part of the fact that the whole idea that there could be an alternative has just been dismissed from our point of view. It feels like there's a group of people with group think on this. Who have just ruled this out to consideration and now making excuses as to why it can't be considered, whereas it should have been considered in the first place. Thank you.

01:16:47:11 - 01:16:50:15

Sorry. Thank you, Mr. Morgan. I understand, thank you.

01:16:52:04 - 01:16:53:14

Any final points on.

01:16:53:22 - 01:17:31:26

Uh, Liz done. On behalf of the applicant? Um, it's a matter of National Grid, where the connection offer is, where the connection offer was, was, was made, and the applicants are faced with a connection offer, which you either accept or refuse. And. And the connection offer was Penwortham. Um, I would just refer back to the, um, to the paragraphs of the national policy statements and appreciate that it's frustrating. But this is a matter for National Grid. So paragraph 2.2.1 of NPS and five, which says that, um, that effectively the terminating point of new electricity networks is not within the control of the applicant.

01:17:31:29 - 01:17:37:03

That is a matter for National Grid. And these are things that need to be taken up separately with National Grid.

01:17:37:17 - 01:18:09:03

Okay. Thank you. And just to reiterate a point that I made right at the start and our discussion on legal policy sort of background, any submissions at deadline? One, in terms of this is for all parties in terms of like how material is this alternative option in the Secretary of State decision is that it would be helpful to I know that's not a sort of uh, there's not a definitive answer, but it depends on sort of what effects are, what what effects are considered to result by the by the Secretary of state at the end in terms of adverse effects, etc..

01:18:09:05 - 01:18:15:28

But any, any, any help on that would be, would be, you know, would be appreciated from any, any party making representations.

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

Okay. Uh, Mr. Sharkey, sorry I keep missing you over in the corner, but thank you. No, absolutely, absolutely I will I've got my spotters.

01:18:27:24 - 01:18:45:18

So sorry, Miss Dunn, if I heard it correctly quoted from the ANC, but I think there's a word substantially in one of the sentences she read. The site selection is substantially not in the gift of the applicant. Am I wrong or was it a misquote?

01:18:47:27 - 01:18:48:12

It's done.

01:18:49:00 - 01:18:59:26

At least on behalf of the applicants. It does say substantially. That means you don't get a choice. You can say yes or no, but you don't get a choice as to where you go. It isn't for the applicant to choose.

01:19:00:25 - 01:19:16:29

Okay, we'll consider that point. Thank you. Can I just ask some questions on the substation? I know you probably want to do an overview of the substation, but could I ask my questions that I've got and see where we are with that. Mr. Copeland, sorry.

01:19:17:17 - 01:19:27:27

Thank you. John. Paul. Borough council. And I know you said you'll give us an opportunity to make general comments, but I think before we move on to the substation, I would just like to have a minute just to.

01:19:27:29 - 01:19:33:03

I was going to come to you right at the end. But before we do break. But if you want to go there, that's fine. If that's going to be. Yes, absolutely fine.

01:19:33:05 - 01:20:18:20

Okay, so I'll be brief, but I just think it's important that we set our response to some of the comments made by the applicant. Um, being mindful of, you know, what is said today will influence the the preparation of the local impact reports. So, um, with regards to the the HMD and ND process are not repeat matters set out in our relevant reps or today. And we do echo um, the examining authorities dealt with a reference to the status of the preferred option set out in the HMD. We think this is a fundamental issue. And the applicant also has repeatedly, um, made a comment that the effectively, they're deferring decisions to the network operator and seeking to justify decisions which have been made which will result in harm.

01:20:18:22 - 01:20:51:26

So environmental social harm. And we do not consider this this approach is sound. So a more specific example of this is that the applicant, for example, is said today that the HMD seeks to avoid disruption arising from not having single points of connection from the project. So in saying that having two operators joining together will will reduce, um, disruption and harm arising, but it's it's not clear how the approach being proposed here would reduce that type of harm.

01:20:52:06 - 01:21:36:15

Um, on the basis that the buildout would most likely be over multiple separate periods over an extended period of time, and the applicant has refused to commit to a single build out period. So indeed, multiple impacts on the same communities, seascapes and landscapes is potentially more harmful. And if this is the crux of their argument, then it should be evidenced and argued in more detail in their submission. Um, with commitments being made. We've also inquired about being provided with a full suite of reports and references relating to the H, D and ND stages, and we've only been able to find what's available online, which I do not think is a complete, um, a complete record.

01:21:36:17 - 01:22:16:08

So we echo your request for further details about the heavily relied upon Hansard reference, um, and request that that's made available as soon as possible. Um, additionally, we note your response to your question about the methodology, but we would also like to understand how it relates to requirements under the EIA regulations. So again, we would expect to see a detailed explanation in the

environmental statement as to the suitability of their selected methodology and the implications, for example, its relationship to the duties under their requirements under EIA regulations.

01:22:16:17 - 01:22:52:15

Uh, just one final point. Um, so in terms of landfill, not to repeat what's been said, but I would like to make the point that the applicant has discounted consideration of the alternatives with a very limited high level assessment, um, relating um to these options in their assessment. So we do not consider that the brief assessment is sufficient to justify the harmful impacts that would arise, um, as a result of their, their chosen option. Um, they set out in this hearing some general principles around that argument against the other options.

01:22:52:27 - 01:23:16:25

Um, but they've not been presented fully in their submission. So again, we request further information on that basis. And given the significance of all of these issues and the weight of the questions that the examining authority has already raised, we do request that an issue specific hearing on these matters is held after a submission of the local impact reports. Thank you.

01:23:18:13 - 01:23:51:13

Okay. Thank you. Just on the that's very helpful and very sort of helpful sort of summary of your main points. Just on just two points on the issue specific hearings we will consider. After the local impact reports and written representations at deadline one as to which matters to take forward for discussion and our written questions. Indeed, because it sort of goes with that sort of process where it's written representations are, then our written questions and things that are outstanding from that we think we need discussion on. And we'll obviously we'll decide at that time, but I'm very sure we will have some specific hearings on, on and on certain matters.

01:23:51:29 - 01:24:23:11

And just also just a general point that, uh, thanks for being patient with with us today, because I've got to get through quite a bit of questions. Probably would normally want to involve you more in the discussions, but as I said, this is really about outlining the scope. So I think for future specific hearings, a bit more of a sort of an opportunity to sort of, uh, make your comments as we go along. But it's a balancing act for us in terms of getting for our questions, the applicants saying what they want to say and getting interested parties involved as well. So thanks for everyone's patience. Uh, on on that.

01:24:23:27 - 01:24:27:08

Um, does applicants want to come back on.

01:24:27:10 - 01:24:47:00

Uh, just list down on behalf of the applicants. Um, I really appreciate when the local authorities do come back that they, um, just highlight where, um, through their involvement in the expert working group process and the consultation that's been carried out with the applicants right the way through the pre-application process. These points, um, have been raised previously.

01:24:49:18 - 01:24:50:07

Thank you.

01:24:51:02 - 01:24:52:11

Okay. Thank you.

01:24:55:12 - 01:25:05:09

Just moving on to the substations. If I can ask my questions and if there's anything sort of beyond that you want to sort of raise, then do so. And obviously opportunity for.

01:25:12:02 - 01:25:14:20

Before we do. There's a hand up online.

01:25:16:24 - 01:25:18:22

Could you just introduce yourself please.

01:25:19:21 - 01:25:23:01

Thank you. Yes, it's Louise Staples from the National Farmers Union.

01:25:24:19 - 01:25:25:22

Can I just make a comment?

01:25:25:24 - 01:25:26:28

Good morning. Good afternoon.

01:25:27:00 - 01:25:28:27

Morning or afternoon? Yes. Now.

01:25:30:13 - 01:26:02:00

Um, I would just like to make a comment. Um, that's just been raised. And just to say we do have the same concern, which is about, um, disruption. Uh, if the buildout does get done in, in. Yeah, two single operations going across land. But I did think that that would probably be covered. I don't know. Either later on today or um yeah. At a different issue specific hearing. But now that it's been mentioned. I did just want to say that we do have the same concern.

01:26:03:00 - 01:26:15:22

Thank you, Miss Staples, and welcome to the hearing. Yes, there will be considered this afternoon or tomorrow morning, depending on where we get to. So yeah, please raise your hand if you want to participate at that relevant point or with your comments.

01:26:16:00 - 01:26:16:28

Thank you very much.

01:26:17:14 - 01:26:18:05

Thank you.

01:26:19:26 - 01:26:22:05

Let's turn to the substations. Aaron.

01:26:26:11 - 01:26:33:00

The eight kilometer search area, which is on figure 4.2 of annex 4.3.

01:26:35:04 - 01:27:08:10

I bypassed the first question, which was, can you explain further the rationale for the eight kilometres search area? But can you do that in writing, please? For deadline for deadline one. I think there's a point being made by some relevant presentations. I'm not sure it's absolutely clear what the rationale for the eight kilometres is. I think the rationale for going beyond five kilometres, but not for eight kilometres, but can be dealt with in writing at deadline one. Please add that as an action. An action note, uh, it shows constraints as listed in the associated legend and got for example, the triple C flood risk areas and listed building.

01:27:09:06 - 01:27:16:00

Is the green belt also included in these constraints? So figure 4.2 of 4.3.

01:27:24:06 - 01:27:29:00

The document reference is app 033. I think.

01:27:32:05 - 01:27:33:08

Philip Williamson.

01:27:33:10 - 01:28:06:06

On behalf of the applicant. Um, Greenbelt is not mapped on that constraints map. I think it's important to give that answer some context, though. Greenbelt is considered within the black, red and green assessment associated with the onshore substations, although it's not visualized in the onshore substation constraint mapping. Um, I think it's there are four out of the four zones. Three are almost entirely within green belt. And therefore green belt is uh, is considered um within the the black red amber green associated with those.

01:28:06:16 - 01:28:28:03

Um it is partly in zone two. Um, however, zone two is ruled out for other reasons. And so that narrative is, is discussed within, um, the annex to the site selection chapter, which is apologies for the reference. Yes. Yes 028 that narrative is is included within the repeat.

01:28:28:05 - 01:28:29:21

The reference please as.

01:28:30:10 - 01:28:34:13

028, which is the selection and refinement of the onshore infrastructure.

01:28:34:15 - 01:28:37:22

Yeah. And a particular paragraph, section number.

01:28:39:15 - 01:28:41:11

Uh, you'll have to bear with me on that one.

01:28:45:15 - 01:28:53:23

So that is um, annex 4.3 that you were referring to. It is just a subsequent version of it. That's an additional submission. Yes.

01:28:54:01 - 01:28:54:17

Yeah.

01:28:56:00 - 01:29:07:21

Yes. Sorry. 033 is my mistake in doing the, uh, maybe I compile the question a while ago, I don't know. That's the early reference. Yes. It's A028. Thank you. The updated document.

01:29:16:21 - 01:29:25:20

So you just spend a little bit more building on that answer. In terms of how the Greenbelt designation was considered in determining the onshore substation search area.

01:29:28:12 - 01:29:31:05

Hillary Williamson, on behalf of the applicant, sorry, could you repeat that?

01:29:31:07 - 01:29:47:14

You just explained a little bit more in terms of how the green belt was considered. The designation of the green belt was considered in considering the onshore substation search area and the precise location of the substations as well. I appreciate that the green belt covers quite a sort of a reasonably large area.

01:29:48:00 - 01:30:18:25

Sheila Williamson, on behalf of the applicant, I think some of this is built into responding to your sort of eight kilometer radius, which you asked earlier. So whilst we started with that five kilometer radius, that was extended out to eight kilometers because of a lack of available land parcels within that five kilometers away from Penwortham. So taking the onshore substation Station. Further and further away from onshore substations, I should say further from the Penwortham National Grid substation reduces the electrical efficiency of the onshore substations.

01:30:18:27 - 01:30:54:29

It would require larger infrastructure, a larger building height, a larger footprint and so obviously the applicants endeavour to reduce those as much as possible. And that's the reasoning behind the limit to the radius of eight kilometres. And that being said, when you draw that radius of eight kilometres and then remove physical constraints and significant designation constraints, you are left with zones that are primarily sited within the green Belt. And although that's not explicitly illustrated within the constraints mapping, it is covered under table 4.7 of A0 to eight.

01:30:55:02 - 01:31:19:20

In terms of the black red amber green assessment of the green belt, the narrative above that explains why the green belt was was wholly more or less unavoidable in terms of, um, green greenbelt land.

Um, but it is captured within the amber scoring under the planning policy. Um planning policy and future development potential. Um category.

01:31:20:22 - 01:31:21:26

Okay. Thank you.

01:31:23:16 - 01:31:41:19

And on page 34 of the applicant's response to Fylde Council's relevant rep, I think it states that a sequential test relating to land, which is not greenbelt, has been undertaken to aid the site selection process. What does that actually refer to? Is it?

01:31:43:13 - 01:31:56:27

I'm aware of this being a sequential test, I think, for flooding, as would be expected. Has there actually been a is it indicated that there's been a sequential test for the greenbelt in relation to the greenbelt?

01:32:04:01 - 01:32:23:02

And question for file. Is this a relation to the greenbelt at this point that was made in your representation? Page 34 of your relevant representation. The sequential test relating to land, which is not greenbelt, has been undertaken to aid the site selection process. That's the applicant. So that's the applicant's confirmation in their response to the relevant rep. Page 34.

01:32:25:02 - 01:32:26:18

Understanding of what that actually is.

01:32:31:03 - 01:32:34:05

If it's a problem now to find it. Can you respond at deadline one if.

01:32:34:16 - 01:32:45:05

Williamson on behalf of the applicant and if you'll allow if we could if you could reiterate the references and we might be able to take that away at the break and provide a response immediately after the break, or if you would prefer, we can respond to.

01:32:45:07 - 01:32:48:15

That in writing at deadline one that is I think that is that is fine.

01:32:51:10 - 01:33:17:13

It's just a I have it here. Just to clarify quickly then. Yes, our comments there were about impact on the greenbelt. We've commented on greenbelt and areas of separation, um, alongside each other in our relevant reps, but our interpretation of the applicant's response there in that in their response to our relevant representations, is the same as yours that they, the that they are stating. A sequential assessment has been carried out.

01:33:17:29 - 01:33:20:09

Okay. Thank you for that for that clarification.

01:33:22:27 - 01:33:50:07

Okay. That response can be provided for deadline one just to save time now and going back to annex 4.3 in the uh 028, the updated document, paragraph 4.5.5, sets out the use of heat mapping exercise to refine the onshore substation search area, leading to four zones with several constraints listed again there, not including Greenbelt. I presume your answer is the same as before on that. On that matter.

01:33:50:24 - 01:33:56:07

Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicants. Yes. At the risk of repeating myself, the answer would be very similar.

01:33:56:16 - 01:34:00:12

Okay. And the appraisal which has been discussed earlier.

01:34:02:16 - 01:34:35:24

Which is carried out in table 4.7. This. This includes. This mentions the greenbelt under planning policy and it gives a amber appraisal rating as a as a constraint. Not. Not black, not red, but amber. But in the context of what the Greenbelt National Greenbelt policy is. Why was amber chosen for that particular constraint? Notwithstanding what you said about earlier, about the site selection process that you've just referred to. But why was Amber chosen? I was a bit surprised.

01:34:35:26 - 01:34:42:03

I thought it might have been maybe up to a red, or even a necessarily a black, but why was Amber chosen?

01:34:50:19 - 01:35:00:13

Hilary Williamson on behalf of the applicants, I think we need to capture all of that in our response. In terms of the scoring associated with the Bragg, which was mentioned earlier, we'll capture it within.

01:35:01:03 - 01:35:24:27

The full response. That's fine. Do you want anybody, any interested party, want to wish to raise any other point in terms of site selection for the greenbelt, for the greenbelt, for the substations? We're going to cover the actual detail behind what the assessment of the is included in this detail for the substations later on in terms of site selection. Does anybody want to raise any other point now?

01:35:28:19 - 01:35:29:13

Mr. Walker?

01:35:29:27 - 01:35:50:19

A very brief point, sir. Angus Walker, Newton, etc.. Um, I just wondered whether part of the process was site selection was required, the two substations to be close to each other, or they could have been cited independently and therefore have less impact on those around them.

01:35:53:18 - 01:35:54:06

Okay.

01:35:56:20 - 01:36:04:09

So, uh, Paul Kim, Council. Uh, we're also with the Committee on Landscaping and, uh, Heritage Matters as well.

01:36:04:11 - 01:36:11:04

Yes. Which we can do later on in the hearing. I think there's opportunities in the agenda for that. Yeah, absolutely.

01:36:14:13 - 01:36:19:12

So just before we break for lunch with the applicant, I like to respond to Mr. Morgan. Sorry.

01:36:20:25 - 01:36:36:10

Yes. Morgan, need some words to Clifton Parish Council just to share some experience of our residents and parish council going through this process. Uh, we originally told that there would be four areas for searching for the substations. Uh, one of which.

01:36:36:14 - 01:36:36:29

Is.

01:36:37:01 - 01:36:37:26

The one that's been chosen now.

01:36:37:28 - 01:36:38:13

Which.

01:36:38:15 - 01:36:39:19

Immediately affects our.

01:36:39:21 - 01:36:40:08

Communities.

01:36:40:10 - 01:37:05:02

In Newton and Newton. Freckleton and Kirkham. And three others, two of which are near Wortham. Uh, I think we had two concerns. One is it felt to us with the criteria that was used by the applicants, which we weren't, that weren't allowed to comment on, that it was going to predetermine where those substations would be. Um, the second is it felt and I think we've had confirmed by the response about the extension of the.

01:37:05:18 - 01:37:06:07

Um, search.

01:37:06:09 - 01:37:32:19

Area that, you know, the reason for extending the search area felt to us that it was to include the area between Newton and Freckleton because it was the best place for them to go. Uh, and our concern was that the extension of that area was designed to result in what then turned out to be the two locations for substation, and that again felt to us very predetermined, with an answer in mind and a process designed to come up with that solution. Thank you.

01:37:33:00 - 01:37:35:14

Okay. Thank you. I understand, thank you.

01:37:40:08 - 01:37:49:08

That's done for the applicants on outstanding substation site selection matters and points that have been raised. Before we adjourn for lunch.

01:37:49:21 - 01:37:59:29

At Lasdun on behalf of the applicant. I suggest we pull those together in terms of the five kilometer and the eight kilometer, um, and the points around, um, uh, the criteria used.

01:38:00:01 - 01:38:31:28

Then I think that is fine. But I've also made the points. And I think if we were doing written questions at this point, it would those would be our written sort of questions on that matter. So I think it also is close to lunch. So I think yes, that can be included in the deadline. One response then that would be helpful. Again, a procedural point. I know the deadline. One response is at the same day as the written response. So people might say they're not had a chance to respond in the written reps to the deadline. One responses elaborating on what's been said, but you'll be able to respond at deadline to to anything that said at deadline. One so it's a sort of iterative process as we go over time.

01:38:32:00 - 01:38:38:26

So just in case you're wondering that that can't be taken into account in your local impact report to representations, etc.. Okay.

01:38:41:26 - 01:38:53:21

Okay. Anything else anybody wants to say briefly on site selection and alternatives before we finish this item as far as this hearing is concerned and break for lunch. All right.

01:38:54:01 - 01:39:31:12

So, Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicants. Um, I do I do really wish to to reiterate that, um, as as Miss Dunn, um, stated earlier that this was a very this is an unprecedented approach to site selection in terms of two developers coming together as a single applicants. Um, and therefore the site selection is reflective of that. Um, throughout the site selection process for the onshore substation, there is coordination and alignment. And the zonal approach to that was was intended to do that specifically so that we could convert and find available land parcels for the size of the onshore substations that are required.

01:39:31:23 - 01:40:07:08

I think it's really important to draw out, and rather than force co-location into immediate proximity, if only one, if only one project was to come forward and therefore be in the under the in isolation construction scenario, that would leave a substation, that does not make sense in terms of the landscape because it is it's essentially sterilized a parcel of land immediately adjacent to it. By finding appropriate locations for those onshore substations and they may not be in immediate proximity. It means that appropriate landscape mitigation can be sited so that it is effective and works well within the landscape it is sited within.

01:40:08:11 - 01:40:49:02

I understand the. I understand what is being said in terms of trying to site these things together, but actually it is important that we consider them whilst separately, but also together as part of that process. And I think that we have done that. Um, it does fall down to what available land parcels are available, and that is that is driven by the constraints that are mapped through the site selection process. And we agreed that as part of our siting principles, as part of the refinement of the search areas together as a single applicant applicants, and throughout that site selection process, and I believe that really underpins that coordination and An alignment.

01:40:49:09 - 01:40:51:05

Um, through that process.

01:40:52:05 - 01:41:11:05

Okay. Thank you. That's helpful. That's a bit of context to for probably sort of later representations, questions, etc., to join the representations because we will be obviously talking about landscaping. ET cetera. Sort of in more detail at other stages throughout examination. So some of that can be sort of questioned and built upon as it may be. As we go through the examination. So thank you.

01:41:18:24 - 01:41:41:29

Okay. Thank you. I hope that's been a useful, uh, discussion. Thank you for all representations. I think it's now time to break for lunch. So we shall return at 2:00 with the next item on the agenda, which will be item five, which is the details of the scope of the development. We adjourned till 2:00. Thank you everybody.