

A1iN_ISH4_Session2_09062021_TRANSCRIPT

Wed, 6/9 4:16PM • 42:43

00:06

So the time is now 320 10 to resume the hearing.

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We've now completed item three on the agenda, which was biodiversity ecology and natural environments. We will now move on to item four, which is landscaping, visual impacts. And Mr. Pinto lead on this matter. Thank you.

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Thank you, Mr. Gleeson.

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Basically, some have has just mentioned, the next item is landscaping visual impacts item four. And the subheading of this item is issues related to tree protection in tree vegetation removal.

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So, first of all, I would like to perhaps

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turn to the applicant to actually

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provide a quick update in terms of

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any further thinking or proud or if there is any further clarity in terms of the amount of trees that it is anticipated that will be lost by this project. And if you'd like to comment on that, in terms of the removal of shrubs and trees, Mr. Bassford.

01:31

Thank you, sir. The

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numbers of trees is of course, the matter. A measure, which as we've said before, is not typically used in terms of understanding impacts normally done by area, except in the case of veteran trees and other particularly sensitive receptors.

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The

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numbers provided previously are not expected to change very much. And so that is more or less where we where we expect to be. Mr. Mr. Smith is here if it would assist to discuss this with him. But I think essentially, we're expecting things to be as

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apologies, Mr. Bassford, I think you cut off there. I didn't hear the last bit of your response. Could you repeat that place? It was to say that essentially, we expect the position to be as we have already put it out to you. But if it would assist Mr. Mr. Andrew Smith is here and able to discuss that with you.

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And yes, particularly in terms of do for you, Mr. Williams is different.

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That's that's not a problem. Yes, Mr. Williams, if you could, particularly in terms of considering the assumptions on working on to worst case scenario. So if we assume that that worst case scenario is actually going to go ahead, if you could sort of explain and talk a little bit more in terms of tree removal into impacts on that. Mr. Williams, thank you.

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Thank you, sir. Andy Williams from W. Sp and the landscape architect. Yeah, so the,

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the vegetation that's going to be removed, I think we provided a previously provided a a numbers and the calculation of the numbers and things of the trees and shrubs that we're going to be we are anticipating to remove, we have measures in the outline camp, which states that we will, you know, try to avoid the removal of unnecessary removal of vegetation. So

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we would look to as part of the detail design process, we would be looking to try and reduce those, the impacts on the numbers of trees that we we we ultimately would take out. We've been looking at some specific locations where we do have some veteran trees. And we've been looking in terms of the detail design, so that we can avoid any impacts within the tree root protection area. For those trees specifically.

04:27

Sorry, we get something out you mentioned ancient trees and veteran trees. Could you confirm that is by your belief? I believe your response to the third written questions I believe that you have only added to find one veteran tree that is likely to be removed. Is that the case? That That is correct. It's not we don't have any trees that actually appear on the ancient tree inventory. What we have are several trees which the arborists when they were doing the surveys identified as having some characteristic

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So veteran trees, in order for them to start to appear on the inventory, there's a lot more work needs to be done in terms of further surveys and detail surveys and things for them to appear on the inventory. Nevertheless, we've identified some trees, which have those characteristics, we anticipate that only a single tree which is T 688 would be removed. That's because it sits smack bang in the middle of the detention basin number 19 at the northern end of Part A. So, we anticipate that that one unfortunately is unavoidable we will lose that, but we have

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had some discussions with Natural England in terms of a compensation

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strategy for that, which that has now been agreed and actually it reflects woodland trusts.

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Opinion also that they we should be looking at a 30 to one replacement ratio for for the veteran trees

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that will be captured well has been captured on the latest version of the landscape mitigation master plan, Part A, which is

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ref eight, a 003.

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And a number of scattered trees that we've indicated to the east, nope, yes to the east of detention basin 19.

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And then there's also some additional tree planting that will be going in to the west on the opposite side as part of the area of woodland that we have identified also as providing compensation for air quality issues associated with veteran trees. So in total, we will we will have 30 number tree individual trees that will be

06:46

there to compensate for the loss of T 688.

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Think of images Mr Williams apologies. Could you please repeat the reference number that you have just mentioned in the OB mitigation master plan? Yeah, that was your I think that you mentioned a rep eight reference. Could you just repeat that one place? No problem. It is rep eight a 003, which was the landscape mitigation master plan part A. And I think it's revision five. So part A, so Rep. Eight a so in relation to change requests.

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But it updates all of the information is that what yeah, there's a single there's a single plan, which has captured all of the landscape mitigation master plan. Yes, so revision five, yeah, communication master plan, but a revision five.

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So just for clarification,

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I assume then

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that get master plan will actually replay this. Rep. 707, which was the agricultural technical nelta calculation of total tree removals for Part II NB

08:02

thought documents supports it. But what we might need to do is look at whether or not there's any any numbers on there that we need to, we perhaps need to revisit that and just look in terms of any final numbers to court to just capture that compensation. Okay.

08:19

Thank you very much for that. Can I also ask please Northumberland county council to actually comment on this and provides sort of any feedback in terms of where we stand on tree protection and treatment session, we move on? I understand from the latest presentation that some of the issues were actually resolved on this topic. But

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if I could ask Ms Robbie, or to point us in the right direction, who within Northumberland Council would respond to this issue, please.

08:54

Yes. Can I ask Mark, Mark Evans to just make a comment.

09:01

Mr. Evans, please. Yes, sir.

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Just to confirm that we've reviewed the additional information that the applicant has provided in Appendix A impacts on ancient and black countries. And it does provide a good level of detail in respect to potential impacts on these trees and

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makes it clear which which will be removed or which are most likely to be removed and those which are most likely to be retained.

09:33

Thank you very much for that. And Mr. Evans. I also this is slightly it's a more wider issue, then tree protection into vegetation removal. But nevertheless, it is also very much linked with landscaping visual impacts. I believe there were previously also some questions regarding the methodology. And I believe that within the latest statement of common ground and reps that you have submitted to us

10:00

That issue has been resolved. Could you actually confirm that now? there was agreement in terms of methodology used for landscaping visual impacts? Yes, it was, I think was a minor issue in wording within the statement of collagraph. Common Ground. We, we have discussed this with the applicant, and we were not happy with where things stand. Okay, thank you very much. Mr. Bassford. Would you like to comment on that, or just confirmed information from Mr. Evans?

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If Mr. Evans is happy, we are happy.

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Perfect. Thank you very much, Mr. Bassford.

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Again, apologies for this. It Mr. Bassford. If you do not have a attended moment,

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an officer that can actually answer this question for us, then I'm quite happy for a written response to actually be submitted at a later stage. But I also wanted to ask a couple of quick questions in terms of the soil storage that

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is being proposed. And the landscape in visual impacts of this, this is something that I'm also anticipating that we'll probably cover or touch upon

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under item six, mitigation and construction. Pardon, apologies. And item seven combined with cumulative effects. But nevertheless, I wanted to just question in terms of how D assessment has been made in terms of the impacts of the soil storage areas.

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In relation that are being proposed,

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in how these have been incorporated into I am looking particularly for information in terms of from what angles

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the assessment has actually been carried out. And if this has meant was actually carried out in a 360, sort of degree view from the source storage is or not, Mr. Bassford, I do not know if you would like to actually refer this back to Mr. Williams or not, but I'll leave that to you to point me in the right direction.

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I'm sure that Mr Williams will be able to embellish this further. But the

12:48

first thing to say is that one does not have a viewpoint or a 360 degree view for a landscape impact, you consider the feature within the sense of landscape rather than looking at it from particular viewpoints. From the visual point of view, it isn't a 360 degree assessment, what one does is one works out what the key receptors are going to be, and then assesses the impacts on the visual impact upon the receptors. So you start with the receptor rather than with the, with the storage storage. However, having said that, there is mitigation in place in any event, which is that the the soil storage areas will be mounted to an area no greater than two metres in height. And where soil is stored over a more protracted period, it will be seeded, meaning that it just performs as part of the landscape as a grassy mound.

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That's during the construction period. I think that that probably covers the points that Mr. Williams would like to add anything.

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We have him on hand. Mr. Williams,

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either.

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Yes. So I think Howard has us covered most of those issues. Quite, quite simply. So yes, the we look at the the receptor on the impacts of

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something like a temporary site, temporary soil storage area, as opposed to looking at, you know, the impact specifically of of that, of that structure that that's there on a temporary basis. So during the construction period, we will look at whether or not

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soil storage areas or construction compounds or temporary hoardings that type of thing would be visible and that would be taken into account as part of the assessment on specific viewpoints or specific receptors.

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Thank you.

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Thank you very much for that information. Mr. Bassford. Mr. Williams?

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My question, if I may actually be a little bit more specific is also, I understand the response that was just given in how you actually evaluate the impact

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the landscape in visual impact in that you will actually have elevated from the receptors that you have identified. Nevertheless, looking at the landscape, and I'm peeking

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some examples in terms of, of the source storage areas that are included within

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within the landscape mitigation master plan. So for example, if we actually look at top source storage area, location five, I do recall from site visit that, particularly within this specific stretch of the a one,

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although I do understand that there is a maximum of two metres high limit for these soil storage.

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Generally speaking, there isn't a lot of different elevations within the ground. So in terms of the wider impacts of this to the landscape, hence why I was

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saying that we need to look at in a more holistic way perhaps, how has the visual impact of that being assessed?

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That will be a matter for Mr. Williams.

16:41

Thank you, Mr Bassford. So yeah, so the location five is around Earth and more farm, I believe, is that correct?

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Yes, I believe so. It's, I am looking to associate with bond to hear nothing, because well, the fine in the terms of the final?

17:02

Yes, yes. Yes, sheet. So nothing of 19 of the latest version of Let's kick mitigation master plan, I just picked one. For an example. That's fine. So if we take that, take that site.

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As an example, what we've looked at then in terms of the the wider landscape character, we've looked at the

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not only the works that are going on to construct the scheme, and the temporary soil storage area within that, so we've taken that

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assessment as a view or as a,

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an assessment of the impact on the landscape character, in conjunction with the works to construct the the actual scheme, which lies not very far away to the west. And we've looked at that in terms of the overall impact of construction activity. So that would include the temporary sort of storage areas, it would include

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the plant machinery and movement running through and the temporary sort of soil stripping and

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sort of gradients changes and things that would that would happen anyway, in terms of constructing the scheme. So it's not that we have looked at that particular site in isolation, we have looked at it in terms of its impact on the landscape character, which I think is going to try remember this now it's gonna skip character 338 B, I think long hoarsely, which is a big landscape character area, and holistically, we would look at that. What is the impact of the overall? What is the overall impact on that lens on the perception of landscape character? For that, for that landscape character areas defined by Northumberland county council?

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Okay. And as part of your assessment you have

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could you actually explain a little bit further sort of, sort of what conclusions are did you reach and also what sort of

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limits during exist in terms of you taking a different approach if you find that the impact is too great within the area? So

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how would what would be the triggers for that basically? So I'm asking for further clarification, perhaps in terms of why a two metre Earth bound within that location, according to your view in your expert view is acceptable, despite the impacts that might exist?

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I think we're from

19:49

from a construction perspective,

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we will need soil we will need we will need to store temporarily some some areas of soil

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And within the limits of, of practically constructing the road and being able to move materials around, without necessarily sort of slowing them some distance away and creating unnecessary traffic movements at the two metre storage partly comes from two issues. You know, it's it's not overall it's not a sort of a

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significant landform. Within the wider landscape, we have local undulations in the landscape, we have local landform, I think particularly if we looked at that location five, it actually sits on the edge of a gentle hills, it comes down towards, towards the where the scheme is constructed through a sort of a lower point in the landscape. So from that perspective, the two metres is it's not considered to be a significant bond. And we're not we're not putting them in necessarily to provide screening to construction activity either. And the other

21:01

the other important thing is the two metres is limit limits or is limited by sort of best practice in terms of soil soil storage. So, we look we generally look at not storing soils for any long, long period of time above two metres, because what happens is the soil structure starts to be compacted. And the answer is, and it's lost over time. If we have

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soil over two metres in height being stored on top of one another, effectively, the structure of the soil is is less, less good in terms of the longer term use of it. Okay, thank you very much for that clarification, Mr. Williams,

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I think it's an important thing to recognise the test is not about the accessibility

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impacts or whether the impacts are acceptable taking things viewed in the round. And so, what has happened is, we have promoted the concept as a whole, it will have certain requirements on a temporary basis during construction and those need to be accommodated.

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So that the soil arisings can be can be accommodated for later reuse and storage, we have to do that in the most environmentally appropriate manner. And so therefore, we choose locations which are environmentally appropriate, not just for their visual effect,

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or landscape effect, but also because of the distance that it is necessary to move materials. And so. So all of that is taken into account and sites chosen because they're appropriate. Nice overall.

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Thank you, Mr. Bassford

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Can I just very quickly ask Ms Robbie, if there are any comments that the local

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county council would like to make in relation to landscaping visual impacts?

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Thank you, sir. I don't think so at this moment time unless

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Mark Evans wants to make any comment. But I would echo what

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what Andy Williams said there about soil storage with Mark, Mark's extensive knowledge of do mineral sites in the soil movements, and

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it is definitely best practice to keep soil move soil storage level of two metres and below otherwise, has got to correct that the condition of the sale does deteriorate the longer It's kept in. So what yeah, that will be

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that'll be absolutely, you know, correct in his assertions in saying that. And you know, in a normal sub minerals site, we will be looking at 10 metre storage. And really, those visual impacts aren't enormous. So two metre high storage man would wouldn't have great visual impact. But Mr. Evans wants to,

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to add to that, that'd be great. Thank you.

24:17

I can just feel my I agree with what Mr. Williams and Ms Robbie have said, I don't have anything specifically further to add at this point. Okay, that's great. Thank you both. Thank you, Mr. Evans. And thank you Ms Robbie.

24:32

In relation to landscape and visual impacts. I would like to ask if there is anyone that would like to make a specific comment, and this topic of landscape and visual impacts

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before we move on.

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Mr. Hawes, I believe that you have raised your hand which you'd like to intervene on this topic.

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Just the only to add that was I've got nothing new to add that the existing documentation and comments in the past still stand true. And nothing has been just as disgusted as change.

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Thank you Mr. Hawes, then I believe that you are referring to.

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So you are reiterating the points that you have made on your previous representations, including the last one, which I believe was rep 8033. Is that case? That's correct. Yes. Okay. Thank you very much for that, Mr. Hawes

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Mr. Bassford, would you like to comment on this specific issue? provide us an update in terms of from your from the applicants perspective.

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In terms of Mr. Hawes and the visual impacts now, I think we've set out a position

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amply, and you have that in writing, sir.

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Okay, thank you very much. Mr. Bassford.

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Would anyone else like to raise any issues in regarding to landscape and visual impacts? Mr. Pinto? Can I just ask a couple of questions. clarification, please? Certainly. Mr. Gleeson. Thank you. So for Mr. Williams. Essentially.

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He provided the arboricultural technical notes kreft. Seven, double oh seven, which is very helpful in identifying number of trees that would be lost and just wants to understand

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replacement trees, how are they confirmed? In some is he looked at on the basis of numbers or to be looked at in terms of areas?

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I can see that the landscape mitigation master plan, the legend includes areas of proposed woodlands, woodland creation areas.

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Is that how you are proposing to replace through that?

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Or what are the measures are within the

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TCM camp, for instance, think just sort of, I think what the way that that has been approached is, is correct you it's been done on an on a genuine and area basis. So we're looking at the amount of woodland that has been taken out. And then we're looking at in terms of the area of woodland that is put back, what we have done, perhaps more specifically, is in terms of things like the veteran trees and the coronation Avenue trees, we've looked at that in a little bit more detail in terms of the numbers that I think is appropriate, but also through discussion with NCC is, is just how that would appear. And their their take on that was it would be

28:07

appear as a sort of informal Avenue. It wouldn't be paired trees sort of creating that sort of formal it would be more informal than that.

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But yeah, generally speaking, we work on on an area basis, and we're looking at where we need to provide screening perhaps, or we need to provide more landscape integration as part of a woodland replacement strategy. But then overall, we're looking at you will be taken out x hectares of woodland, we're looking to put as a minimum, put that back. So is there a specific provision in the camp that's stays that I haven't looked at as closely as Mr. Pinto? So

28:45

I'm assuming there is but I think in terms of the outline camp, I think on the base that we have got a measure which secure the landscape mitigation masterplan, and therefore the areas of woodland are secured through through that measure, then we have effectively secured that the replacement strategy for the woodland. Okay, so it's an overall strategy. It's not, as you might find in

29:13

a planning application for small sites and how we've placed them by numbers. You're talking about areas? Yeah, we're talking slightly more in terms of general areas and at the detailed design stage, more clarity would be developed into that in terms of the mixes and things that that would be used in that we've, I think on the last sheet of part of the master plan, we've provided some indicative species mixes for some of these for some of the landscape elements, but yeah, we're not down to the point where we're doing the detailed drawings for those. Okay, thank you. When we're dealing at this scale, sir,

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the matter is approached

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on an area basis as Mr. Williams sets out

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And of course, the the landscape master plan the camp, they still have the final iteration. And so one imagines the Ordnance Survey woodland symbol, which has just the old tree in an area of green, we wanted actually to be trees, not the old tree in the area of green. And so, so the submission of the details to discharge the requirements for approval by the Secretary of State will take us through in greater detail what's required. And that's that next level of detail for the, for the discharge of requirements. Okay, thank you. And the final point again for Mr. Williams. So you referred to talk human

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rep at a tableau three, which is the latest version, landscape mitigation master plan. Part A.

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and sheet 17 is where you have the reference to veteran Tree Removal t 6688. Yes, yeah. So

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what's shown there is

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annotated tree planting to compensate for veteran tree removal, t 688. And those are proposed individual trees. Are they supposed to be the number of trees. And so what we have shown on there is,

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is 12 trees, specific trees in those locations, for as part of the compensation for t 680. We've had some discussions in the last few days with natural England in terms of the total number of trees. So what we

our intention would be, if you look on the on the western side, there's a note which says naught point one hectare of woodland in relation to air quality impacts to veteran trees. So what we intend to do with that is just sort of cover the remaining 18 trees, that would be included within that area of woodland. So we've, we've effectively split those up slightly. But we've what we've tried to do is make sure that some of those trees go back within the context of the tree that was removed, which is sort of this wooded pasture character to the fee. So that's where we get the 30 Yes, placements 30 to one correct. Okay, that's fine. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Pinto.

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Thank you very much, Mr. Gleeson.

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Thank you, as long as to Mr Williams. Can I ask if anyone else has any questions that you would like to ask and this

32:44

item.

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I just had one further item of clarification for you and Mr. Gleeson on that last point there, which is about the locations of the replacement trees. And part of the arrangement is so that the trees, the new trees are outside the area affected by changes in air quality. And so that is partly that partly it caps for disposition of the replacement trees

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and its location.

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So that's right, exactly. You've got it.

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Thank you very much for that. Mr. Bassford. Anyone else that would like to intervene on this topic.

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Before we move on to Mr. Gleeson.

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I don't think that anyone else wants to intervene. So I will actually hand it over to Mr. Gleeson now.

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And

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in terms of the next the next items and what we were looking to address next, Mr. Gleeson. Thank you, Mr. Pinto. So the time is now just about five to four.

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The next item on the agenda is transport and traffic both certainly dance. envisage getting into that today.

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Though thinks

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we won't deal with mitigation of construction impacts all combined and cumulative effects.

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We've still got statements of common grounds and on this matter, all I was looking for is an update on the current position. So I think we could do that quite quickly. If essentially you missed the past. We're happy to do that now. Or can stop now and pick it up in its natural order tomorrow, so

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welcome to hear your thoughts on that Mr. Bassford.

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I'm happy to take that just now. I have an update from my team.

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Can we just quickly find and take you through? If that exists?

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I think

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it's would be helpful that we've got it out of the way.

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It would be useful to do that. So yes, please, we'll move on to then item eight on the agenda.

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But we're

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looking for progress on concluding those statements.

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Obviously, our objective is to have those signed by if not before the end of the examination. The first one that we have live is Northumberland county council.

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There are ongoing discussions for biodiversity ecology and nature conservation will be you will have heard just now

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that in large part, Mr. Evans, Ms Robbie will confirm that matters such as the

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ecology, such landscape and visual those approaches are now largely agreed.

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The wording of the draft decio, we understand is agreed. We have also looked at the outline camp, and I understand that is acceptable.

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So really, it is about closing down points. Perhaps you'd just like to check in with Ms Robbie, quickly on that before we move on.

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Yes. Just because you that I should say there are maps is still at large between us in relation to traffic and transportation. But we'll pick those up in more detail with you when we guess.

36:41

Quite Ms Robbie tries anything here.

36:45

Thank you. So no, I don't think so. I think Mr. Bassford kind of got that in a nutshell in terms of where we're at. I've got a meeting scheduled for Friday with w SP to do an A further review of the statement Congrats. So we'll be able to agree.

37:02

A further submission deadline. Is it nine next week? next week? Yes. Yeah, that's right. So we would hope to close a few of those things that are under still shown us under discussion, but probably actually been resolved on Friday when we go through the documents. So yeah, I'd say apart from probably the one outstanding matter on traffic and transport, which I'm not sure we're going to get to an agreement on. But that's probably going to be where we where we finally finally end up. But what we will do, what we will be able to do is to record the areas of difference to students Secretary of State's Thank you, Ms Robbie, by the way for that. Thank you. Thank you. Yes, I mean, Mr. Bassford, what I was concerned, the employer can say now is that

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clearly says, you know, what to examine thought is like is to have a read, or preferably agreed and not too many. I'm old, no ambers in the middle. So it's quite clear where items are agreed or not agreed.

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So hopefully, we can get to that position by the end of the examination, one

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nice clear list of matters where you need to

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wear clear and short list of matters where you may need to make a recommendation. Thank you. Yes.

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Moving on, then we have natural England next. They the

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in broad terms, the scope of Common Ground is agreement nationally, and continuing to look at matters related to the change request.

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And compensator II habitat improvements. But what we know is that they are contempt with the approach to compensation that we have agreed with the Environment Agency. And so we're expecting that to be resolved. We're proposing to update state common ground for deadline nine. In addition, I can inform you that we have letters of no impediment for all of the species that the scheme may impact that are the responsibility of natural England. And if they have not already been submitted to you, they will be submitted at a forthcoming deadline. Thank you.

39:15

The next one that we have is historic England. The Stone Cold ground has been submitted for signature. So effectively, that is progressing. Well. newspapers have that signed up before you before too long.

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The next one is the Environment Agency. If I didn't say it this morning, I'll say it now and

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we expect to conclude the compensation contribution agreements and that will enable us simultaneously in food stamps common ground, so that is what we're expecting to happen.

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The

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next one, then is the Forestry Commission. We are trying to make progress with that.

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We are content with where the steps Common Ground is. We're struggling to get

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priority engagement from Forestry Commission. doubtless they have many other pressing matters that they are dealing with magnet criticism. But

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we are not making as good progress on that one. But they are also evidently not in a state of absolute horror at the scheme. Otherwise, they would have told you, I'm sure they would. Thank you.

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So that's those are the five and then the remaining four statements of common grounds. I will do utilities, which we discussed this morning. So that's a total of nine that we had.

41:02

So that's encouraging. Thank you for that.

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Does anyone wish to send in further past statements of common ground?

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No. Okay. You might want me to just confirm that what I said reflected what she understood but

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misspelt, you want to add anything at this point?

41:31

Hi, I agree with everything that Mr. Bassford said regarding common ground. Thank you.

41:41

So I think

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that's probably a good points to adjourn the hearing for today. We'll return tomorrow. First item on the agenda will be transport and traffic. And then we also have mitigation of construction impacts combined and cumulative effects before we wrap up.

42:08

So look forward to discussing those matters tomorrow. Is there anything anyone else wishes to say at this point before I adjourn?

42:21

No, not hearing anything. So on that basis, I just have to four o'clock. I will adjourn this hearing until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Thank you very much