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00:00:05:08 - 00:00:46:17

Okay. It's 12:00, so we will resume the hearing, please. Is everyone logged back in or everyone online? That should be does have a thumbs up from anyone? Yes. Perfect. Thank you very much. Okay. We'll come on to agenda item number five, which is in relation to land use and in relation to Roman numeral one, which is in relation to agri environment schemes. The applicant's reply to written question 1.16 .1.3 sets out that where the project has impacts to an existing agreement that cannot be avoided, affected land owners or occupiers will be consulted to enable them to liaise with the Rural Payments Agency.

00:00:47:09 - 00:01:32:18

If the project impacts any land subject to schemes where compensation could become payable. The applicant will review this on a case by case basis and will reimburse financial losses where appropriate. Further to that, the applicant's reply to written question 1.16 .1.4 also notes that if the proposed development wants to exercise powers of compulsory acquisition under the DCO to acquire land or rights, which created an impact on agri environment schemes, then any affected land owner occupier would be entitled to claim compensation for financial losses in the usual way under the principles of the compensation code.

00:01:34:01 - 00:01:50:28

It is then noted that there's no requirement to include any provisions in the DCO for such matters. Could I first come to the NFU please, about whether you have any thoughts on the approach proposed there by the applicant?

00:01:56:29 - 00:01:59:08

Mr. Staples, are you like that? Perfect. Thank you.

00:02:00:14 - 00:02:15:15

Sorry. Actually, Staples for the nephew. Uh, sorry. We don't know. We don't have any comments. I don't think, at the moment about the application of compensation. I don't know whether any other colleagues in the room want to comment on that.

00:02:17:18 - 00:02:31:08

Okay, Thank you. But in terms of your you're of the view that that's a fairly normal process which the applicant is referred to. Yes. Okay. Thank you. Yes. Suppose you've got your Toblerone up. Thank you.

00:02:32:26 - 00:02:36:00

Jane Kenny Savile's our concern here. Sorry, I'm.

00:02:36:02 - 00:02:38:09

Struggling to hear you slightly. Sorry. Thank you.

00:02:38:11 - 00:02:42:29

Jane. Kenny Savile. Our concern here is with regards to

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derogations and it takes 30 days to get a derogation return from the RPA allowing for those works to be undertaken. Whilst the worst case situation is we can obviously claim compensation, the actual.

00:03:04:12 - 00:03:33:27

Obligation and the and the issues that arise when breaches occur is actually very onerous on a landowner and has a real ripple effect in terms of cash flow. And that's what we're just trying to avoid, that if we're given sufficient notice, we can get the correct consents in place rather than being found to be in breach and have all of the

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all of the but the or the countryside stewardship funding just frozen until the issue gets resolved.

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Okay. Thank you. That leads slightly on to my next question in relation to a request from the NFU about a 28 day notice period rather than a 14 day notice period, which is currently the applicant's approach with the applicant. Like to come back on that point or if that's okay, please.

00:04:15:07 - 00:04:16:13

Laura Fuller for the applicant.

00:04:16:24 - 00:04:47:28

So think there is an overlap with what we've got on the compulsory acquisition agenda for next week, which addresses the specific point about the notice period. So we were preparing an answer ready for then. Okay. But I can I can give you an initial response now and obviously we can repeat as necessary or pick up further next week. The drafting in the for the temporary possession Article 26, the 14 day notice period has appeared in numerous echoes.

00:04:48:05 - 00:05:33:03

There's a wealth of precedent and I think obviously this follows on from what we've previously said, not just in offshore wind, but other echoes for that period. However, I am aware that there are some more recent non offshore wind development consent orders that have offered to increase that notice period to 28 days. And that is something that we were looking at ahead of the hearing next week. So before I completely preempt where we were were in those discussions internally, what I would say is that point is noted and we will come back and provide confirmation around where we have got to precisely.

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Next week at the hearing where that item is on the agenda as well.

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Okay. That's absolutely fine. Thank you for that. Um, is there anything you wish to say now or are you happy to leave it until that point in the compulsory acquisition hearing?

00:05:53:16 - 00:06:01:21

Thank you, Louise Staples, for the interview. No, we're happy to leave it until next week. But yeah, that that is absolutely the point we have raised. Thank you.

00:06:02:00 - 00:06:33:26

Okay. Thank you. That's noted. Okay. We'll see if we move on to number two and this issue and which is in relation to the cumulative impact assessment for the temporary loss of agricultural land. The applicant's reply to a written question, 1.16 .1.5 sets out that the cumulative impact assessment takes into consideration that land will be reinstated. Post-construction ensuring normal agricultural activities would resume.

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But this is not considered for the proposed development only assessment, given the impact is associated with the temporary loss of agricultural land. Can I ask the applicant, please, why this has been factored into the assessment? Ultimately, the the the the post-construction reinstatement, because we're dealing with temporary impacts at that point.

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Alan Shields for the applicant. Apologies. Can you can you repeat that? So we're making sure we're understanding and responding correctly.

00:07:38:09 - 00:08:09:07

Absolutely. So, um, as part of the written questions, I asked a question about why the cumulative impacts were less than the project development impacts identified in the and through the written question, it was identified that the reason for that was the cumulative impact assessment had taken into account reinstatement, whereas the project only assessment hadn't. So the question was, well, given we're talking about temporary loss here, why is reinstatement be taken into account for the cumulative assessment?

00:08:10:11 - 00:08:43:29

Thank you, Ellen Shields, for the applicant. So since responding to your question, I've since gone back and reviewed the again in the chapter and we'd like to acknowledge that the cumulative significant impact could indeed not be lower than CIP and DEP alone. This should have been considered to be moderate. Um, noting that this is indeed for a temporary period during construction. So just to be clear, the stated minor, but we're now adjusting that to moderate.

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Okay. Um, generally from my the various topics that are reviewed of the yes is if there's a moderate impact that's considered to be potentially significant and therefore may sort of trigger the need for mitigation. Is that going to be necessary in this case?

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Ellen Shields For the applicant and absolutely. So, um, just to reiterate some of those mitigation measures that can signpost that they're identified in, in section 19.7, point one, .2.5. Um, so we detail that an agricultural liaison officer will be appointed to assist with appropriate planning and timings of the works to minimize the disruption. Um, taking into consideration the practicalities of construction, whichever developer follows the first construction project, the geographic interaction and hence the potential cumulative impacts would be minimized by the crossing point being undertaken by trench loss technique, thereby limiting the repeat disturbance um of the agricultural land which is temporarily lost and allow not strictly a mitigation in terms the private agreements will still be reached with the farmers or compensation in line with the compulsory purchase compensation code.

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Okay. Thank you. So in terms of the moderate impact, just so I'm clear, that's a residual effect.

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Ellen Shields For the applicant. That's correct.

00:10:11:01 - 00:10:11:23

Okay. Thank you.

00:10:22:22 - 00:11:10:24

Okay. Thank you very much for that. Okay. Moving on to item number three. Under this under land use. Is there any evidence of soil heating associated with the existing dudgeon development and whether any mitigation, such as cement based sand was used for that scheme? The question really originates from a point made by the National Farmers Union, which notes that underground cables crossing farmland from the first Dudgeon scheme showed clear evidence that there was heat dissipation when it snows, as the snow melts along that strip of the cable that's buried, is you able to confirm if any mitigation was used in the original Dudgeon scheme and therefore, if with the or the cement base and that wouldn't occur as part of the proposed development.

00:11:11:12 - 00:11:33:22

Yeah. RODRIGUEZ for the applicant. So on that of the evidence, what we have heard is just that as well of like faint sort of melting know on, on the route for people that know where the where the cables are. So that's what we know now. On mitigation, my understanding is that Durgin did not use on the cables they only used on the joint base.

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Okay. Thank you. Does the NFU have any further to say on that particular point?

00:11:59:11 - 00:12:14:18

Thank you. Sorry, there's delay getting back on. Uh, Louise Staples, nephew. Uh, no, I don't think we do. But has it now been confirmed that cement based sand will definitely be used on the cables this time to help reduce the heat?

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You can get the applicant reply to that one.

00:12:19:10 - 00:12:41:24

You know, he just goes for the applicant. It's not a confirmation because we still need to do the proper assessment. So what will determine whether that is needed or not is after when you are doing your detailed design, when you when you take the measurements of thermal resistivity and whether it shows that the ground needs to account for that. So it is taken on a case by case basis.

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Okay. Thank you. Anything else from the NFU in reply?

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Can I just ask then? So if when they've done their testing, it does show that it is needed. How do we again get that secured that that will happen?

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To the.

00:14:00:21 - 00:14:31:16

Sorry. Yeah. Rodriguez for the applicant. As for the determination of this. So as I said, I mean, we're doing the studies. We have to do the measurements on site and then it's for our it's for the, for the integrity of the system that we don't want to overheat cable. So it's also in our in our benefit to secure that the that the right thermal resistivity is accomplished. And it's also of course, guidance as well. And we have like we have to follow the policy.

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So it's both on the policies and also for the need for the cable. So it goes on like half the the requirements and the proper technical specifications that we will need for the cables to function properly. And as I said, there are specific numbers and specific measurements that are in policies, as I understand it, that needs to be need to be rich. So.

00:14:55:25 - 00:15:12:16

Okay, is there any mechanism at the moment where such requirements would be in a plan that a local authority had to sign off for the example, the outline code of construction practice is there should there be a requirement in there for the local authority to consider when it's required?

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I'm Sarah Chandler for the applicant.

00:15:15:03 - 00:15:26:26

I don't think there is in the outline code of construction practice at the moment, and I'm not sure that that would necessarily be the appropriate place for it. But we can take that point away and have a look at it.

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Okay. I think that would be be good if that's okay. Thank you.

00:15:53:00 - 00:15:55:12

Okay. Thank you very much. Yes. Savills, please.

00:15:57:21 - 00:16:28:16

Think any survivors. I would just like to pick up on this. This is a real concern for landowners. I was involved with Dodge and the original Dudgeon, and we were given assurances that there would be no heat dissipation. We have got some evidence to suggest through snowmelt. But not only that, we've had temperature probes which would be very happy to provide that there is heat dissipation and therefore we are extremely concerned that going forward this is addressed properly.

00:16:32:18 - 00:16:34:15

Thank you. Okay. Thank you.

00:16:36:07 - 00:16:59:27

Um, reference to the information about the temperature probes. Mean, ultimately, it's not for the examining authority to suggest what evidence should be provided. But if you feel that ultimately is part of your case for your clients, that it's it's beneficial, then ultimately that's a matter for you to decide. Okay. Thank you. Okay. Anything else on land use? That's that's all we had for discussion today before we move on to socioeconomic.

00:17:01:26 - 00:17:52:28

No. Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. We'll come to an item agenda number six in that case. And the first matter is the robustness of the environmental statement in terms of its consideration of impacts on tourism in North Norfolk, including whether there is any evidence to suggest potential impacts have been understated. Um, first question is for North Norfolk District Council. Please. You state in your local impact report that whilst tourism value has declined between 2018 and 2021, that this is most likely as a direct result of the COVID 19 pandemic, but that any further impacts upon the tourism sector will likely have a disproportionately high impact on the overall economy of the district.

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I just just wondered, particularly in the the view that it would cause disproportionately high impact. Is that a view of the district council or is that justified by any sort of studies or evidence that the district Council might have?

00:18:11:02 - 00:18:15:18

Good afternoon. Geoff Lyon from North Norfolk District Council. Um, it's

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evidence to underpin, um, impact on tourism is very hard to come by. I think the applicant will probably attest to that when sort of bringing together their evidence in chapter 27 and appendix 27.2. So it, it's quite hard to get sort of firm evidence that corroborates a particular position. Yes, COVID 19 has had had a significant impact on

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how close and related that sort of business is. Some have recovered quite well and sort of the sort of the home home holidaying and sort of a lot of people came to North Norfolk. Um, but that's not sort of a permanent sort of uplift for, for the district. And things will change in the future as people start to travel again. Um, I think our main concern is really about how the impact on not just the big tourism providers.

00:19:21:08 - 00:19:56:12

So the applicant sort of highlighted a number of large tourism businesses. It's the smaller businesses, the it's the pubs, the sort of cafes, the people that rely on passing trade that if they suddenly have a reduction in people visiting them, that impact on that individual business will be quite significant. The applicant study at appendix 27.2, which is A277 um, paragraphs one, two, five and 126 in particular sort of look about the tourism draw in North Norfolk.

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So it talks about over 90% of tourism in North Norfolk is day visitors and it highlights the spend per visitor around about 32, £33. That's quite that's lower than the average in North Norfolk in the rest of Norfolk. And I think that's because a lot of people like walking and appreciating the natural beauty of North Norfolk and there aren't many shops to to visit on the way when you're having a walk out in the countryside. So that's probably reflective of people going out to visit the countryside as part of their recreation and tourism draw.

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Now if activities are going on with the wind farms and that's dissuading people from coming to visit, then those visitors won't then pass through Weybourne, they won't go to the pub or they won't go to the pick up some food in a local cafe. So. So although in the grand scheme of looking at this project in its entirety, it may seem quite inconsequential, but those individual businesses at the sharp end, the impact on them will be quite significant if they're losing their footfall from their from their premises.

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So that's why we're raising this issue in the in the examination when we've raised this in the past, as said in the local impact report, those issues were set aside by the examining authority and the secretary of State. And of course, that's within your gift as examining authority to do the same. But I have to raise it as on behalf of the local district council, and we've done that in our local impact reports. Um, and so it's very hard to provide. Of evidence because we haven't had large schemes like this happen yet, but waiting for the impact to happen, it's then too late, isn't it? So it's can.

00:21:42:00 - 00:21:50:10

Is there anything that we can reasonably do as part of the decision making to secure any mitigation if it's actually required? Thank you.

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Okay thank you very much with the applicant like to reply to any of those points.

00:21:59:07 - 00:22:31:05

Just introduce myself first and didn't introduce myself earlier. So my name is Oliver Chapman. I work for Hatch on behalf of the applicant at Equinor and I was the project director for the Socio Economics and Tourism Assessment. Um, yeah, I'll just come back to the point about evidence. Really. The point was made that there is no evidence either way about the impact of offshore wind farms on tourism. There is, I would say, I would argue a considerable amount of evidence.

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None of it is perfect. There are flaws in the evidence. But just in North Norfolk itself, you talked about some of the impact of the COVID pandemic, but we do have data for North Norfolk on the number of visitors, the number of trips over the period 2015 to 2019. So during the period when Dudgeon windfarm was built over, have included this data in our response to North Norfolk's local impact report.

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But during the construction period of Dudgeon, the number of day trips to North Norfolk between 2015 and 2017 increased by 815,000, which was an 11% increase. The number of overnight trips increased by 62,000, which is a 10% increase, and total visitor expenditure increased by 20.4 million, which was a 5% increase. And the number, if you compare that to the number of day visits against regional and national comparators, it's much higher than the increase for Great Britain as a whole in terms of day visits was 2% over that period.

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And if you extend the period 2015 to 2019, the number of visits to North Norfolk was one point increase by 1.9 million. So that's that's evidence for North Norfolk itself. We've also drawn upon evidence from other offshore wind farms which have focused specifically on the construction period. So this is referring to evidence which has received some criticism from from other consultees, but analysis that was done by Biggar Economics, which is focused on the change in employment in tourism based sectors over the period when a number of different wind farms have been built and then subsequently.

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And that evidence shows again that either the areas that either exceeded their long term average in terms of tourism, employment growth or exceeded national and regional comparators. So again, it suggests no evidence to support the claim that there are negative effects from from wind farms on tourism. Those those studies. The study by Biggar Economics has been criticised on the basis that we are using employment well.

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It uses employment in tourism based sectors, things like hospitality, hotels and restaurants, and they make the point that local people also spend money in hotels and restaurants as well. So you can't assume that it's all tourism related. That's true. It is only a proxy indicator. But if you look at any area in the country that has a successful tourism economy, the the percentage of employment in hotels and restaurants is much higher than the national average. It is a very good proxy indicator for the health of the tourism sector and that in North Norfolk has also grown strongly over time.

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25 employment in hospitality hospitality has increased by 25% since 2015. So coupled with there's that data, but coupled with the wider evidence on the relationship between offshore wind farms and

tourism, which is usually reliant on visitor surveys, there isn't a lot of ex-post evidence, there isn't a lot of robust assessments that have actually looked at, um, the, the change in visitor numbers or visitor value.

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There's very few of those types of studies, but lots of them rely on visitor surveys. And a kind of the general finding from those is that most people say their behaviour would be unaffected. A small proportion say they'd be less likely to visit the area and a small proportion say they'd be more likely to visit the area. And it all really, you know, is closely related to their their views about wind farms. But those survey based evidence, we would say are less robust than the evidence that I've cited, which is actually looking at what has actually happened to the visitor economy over time since wind farms have been developed.

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Okay. Thank you very much. That's raised through most of the rest of my questions. So it's dealt with it in a very succinct way. So thank you for that. I was going to ask North Norfolk District Council whether they had any concerns about the figures in terms of how tourism has as what's the correct word, continued throughout the construction of the initial Dudgeon project and whether you dispute any of the figures which were quoted back by the applicant in its reply to your local impact report.

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Geoff Lyon, North Norfolk District Council. I'm just picking up the bigger report. Think and I can share this and put this into the examination. We did make observations on that as part of the Norfolk Borough application and we said that the examining authority should disregard that and provided three reasons for doing that. So rather than me repeating that now, I can provide that in evidence if in writing, if that's helpful to the to the examining authority. As I say, the evidence is to us it's very high level.

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So it's it looks at things at the bigger picture. It doesn't go down to the sort of micro detail. And it's the small the small business is the small pubs and restaurants are the ones that will take the bigger impact because they're the ones that will suffer from any potential people choosing not to go into the Weybourne area. And conversely, you could say, well, people won't go to Weybourne, they might go to to Sheringham or Holt or other places and might actually spend more money. So yes, there are a wide range of views you could take on on how this this construction impact and we are just talking about the construction impacts, how that will will affect tourism behaviour.

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I don't think there's enough evidence and certainly the bigger report shouldn't be relied on for evidence of of impacts from from construction because it was really about landscape impact rather than constructional impacts. Um, but yeah, we just, we don't feel the evidence is that strong to say without, with sort of complete certainty that there will be no impacts on small businesses in the Weybourne area. There may well be opportunities to, to work with local businesses to, um, as part of the project.

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So that would welcome the applicant to have discussions with local businesses I'm sure they're already doing to try and help them through those construction phases. And there may be opportunities to, to work with, with the construction companies, um, so that they can offset the impact or any potential impacts on their on their business during the construction phase.

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Okay. Thank you. Anything else from the applicant? In reply to those concerns?

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Um.

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I would just, I suppose, draw attention to paragraph five point 12.7 of NPS one which suggests that limited weight should be given to assertions of socio economic impacts that are not supported by evidence.

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And I think

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in this case there is some evidence to suggest that there are there won't be negative impacts. It's not perfect.

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But there is some evidence.

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To support that view.

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Whereas there isn't.

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Any evidence that's been put.

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Forward to demonstrate that there will be a negative.

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Socio economic impact or impact on tourism.

00:30:11:02 - 00:30:14:00

Okay. Thank you. Yes, Thank you. Hi.

00:30:14:08 - 00:30:50:02

Sherry Atkins. I introduced myself yesterday, but onshore consents manager just wanted to build upon what we've just said and refer you to the outline code of construction practice section 2.4 on local community liaison, which commits the applicant to develop a stakeholder communications plan and identify a local communications community liaison officer. And the purpose of that, that person would be to work with community, work with local businesses to try and reduce impacts any construction impacts and maximise the opportunities for local businesses.

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Okay. Thank you very much for that. Mr. Betz, I know you submitted some concerns, particularly about the use of the big report. So would you like to maybe join the conversation there, please?

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Thank you. Jonathan Betz for the Norfolk Parishes movement for an offshore transmission network. Yes, I think there is seems to me to be common agreement that there is limited

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valuable data or relevant data to on the impact of these construction projects on tourism. But there's two two points that I would like to make. The first is, is that what we're actually facing here in Norfolk is something of a perfect storm. As we pointed out, you know, in the opening round of hearings, there's not only an overlap of the construction project projects from offshore wind farms, but also road construction projects as well.

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And all of these things are conspiring to impact this Norfolk at this time over the projected time of the development of this particular project. So I think it's important to really consider the cumulative impacts that this might have. And the second point I would like to make is that it is frustrating for all concerned with examining these these projects that there is no data on this. And it seems completely unreasonable in my submission that these developers, one after another, have relied on this lack of data to support their case.

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In essence, as was drawn attention to the the national policy statement and they've hidden behind that successively. And what I would submit to the examining authority that unless they make a stand and impose a requirement on these developers to actually sponsor studies of this nature, then they're, you know, we're going to go forward without, you know, without having any clarity on the issue. And I would ask that this was some consideration was given to that.

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Thank you, sir.

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Okay. Thank you. Anything from the applicant, please?

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Yeah, just. I mean, just on the.

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Point about we've.

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Presented no data. I feel like I've presented.

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Quite a lot of data in the context of North Norfolk. And just to, I mean, this was, this was data which was it's not in the public domain. It's actually data that came from North Norfolk Council.

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Itself and Research.

00:33:32:25 - 00:33:54:28

That they've commissioned with a company called Destination Research. And just to reiterate, it showed that the number of visits to North Norfolk since Dudgeon Wind Farm started construction has increased by 1.9 million, which I believe is an increase of 25%. So that is that is relevant data over a period when a wind farm has been constructed and become operational.

00:33:55:16 - 00:33:58:09

On the point about cumulative effects.

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And it is true that there are you know, I can't say that the evidence that I've cited so far is based on areas where.

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Multiple projects have.

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Been happening at the same time. But I would refer to the findings of the other chapters, environmental.

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That.

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Have assessed environmental effects. I think the the key issue in the.

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Context of tourism is potential overlaps with Hornsea three, which occurs at Weybourne Beach, but about one mile further along the beach and in the NB in that area. But both projects have.

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Put forward embedded mitigation measures.

00:34:42:08 - 00:34:46:06

Committing to use trenches crossing for the coastal.

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Path, for instance. So any disruption that might occur at.

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That point.

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Is being mitigated.

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And I understand.

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That there might be only a temporary diversion for up to a week.

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And so whilst.

00:34:58:02 - 00:35:12:18

That might impose some, it might for some people impinge upon their visitor experience. It's a small if they're walking along the coastal path, for instance, or walking along the way on Weybourne Beach, it would be.

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Confined to a very limited area.

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They would probably only experience it briefly.

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And I would argue it's probably insufficient to outweigh the positive benefits.

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That come from visiting North Norfolk.

00:35:30:05 - 00:36:00:25

Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. Anything else on this point from anyone before we skip on to our next agenda item? No. Okay. Thank you. Okay. Whether there is a need for a tourism and associated business impact mitigation strategy. Um, again, this question is directed towards North Norfolk District Council who set out in their local impact report that the draft DCO should require a tourism and associated business impact mitigation strategy to be produced.

00:36:01:19 - 00:36:22:06

Um, but will note that the District Council's reply to a written question 1.22 .1.4 notes that it accepts that it is challenged to present hard evidence, as we've already heard. And on that basis, can it be, um, justified to require that of the applicant, please?

00:36:26:15 - 00:36:29:15

Okay. Geoff Lyon, North Norfolk District Council. Um.

00:36:31:16 - 00:37:02:14

I think we're at the point now where Moeen said. But need to say on the previous question about concerns about impacts, it's a matter of judgment for you as an examining authority. If you want to follow previous examining approaches and not require that requirement, that's a matter for you. You don't have to follow our concerns in the local impact report if you don't think those impacts are likely, but need to raise the point. So it's in your minds when making your making your recommendations to the Secretary of State. I am quite drawn to the idea that

00:37:04:23 - 00:37:38:06

Equinor and maybe other windfarm developers who are about to pursue construction. So that's Vattenfall and Orsted. Whether they would outside of the process, like to contribute to some kind of study so we can actually build on the evidence. Because actually if it is evidence that says that this won't have a negative impact, that's helpful for us as a district council to assuage concerns of our residents that and businesses that such projects do have an impact. So if we can build on the body of evidence, that's great. And if the applicant can commit to helping towards that, then that's that's great as well.

00:37:39:00 - 00:37:42:29

Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Understood. Anything from the applicant at all?

00:37:47:09 - 00:38:00:01

Oliver Chapman for the applicant. Um, just to reaffirm that we, we don't believe mitigation is, is required because we haven't identified any significant adverse effects on tourism. Okay.

00:38:18:27 - 00:38:30:17

So just coming back to the point that the district council made about contributing to funding more studies to understand this, maybe with the other developers a bit more clearly what the applicant stance be on that.

00:38:42:22 - 00:38:46:04

Could we give that further thought and come back to you on that?

00:38:47:02 - 00:38:53:03

Yes, that's why we called that as a hearing action and probably a written question alongside. Thank you.

00:38:54:27 - 00:39:27:11

Okay. We'll skip on to agenda item three, which relates to the cumulative effect of the proposed development and others in East Anglia on available bed spaces for construction workers, including whether any mitigation is required in this regard. The applicant's reply to written question 1.22 .1.3 notes that when considered cumulatively with other projects in East Anglia, available bed space for construction workers might be very tight during the peak summer period.

00:39:28:00 - 00:39:46:04

On this basis, is there a need for mitigation, such as example, encouraging room sharing to reduce the demand wherever possible? Because as I understand that there's nothing particularly in the DCO or the code of construction practice, which ultimately requires any mitigation in that regard.

00:39:48:09 - 00:39:50:28

Oliver Chapman for the applicant. I mean.

00:39:51:00 - 00:39:52:11

If it would help, we've done we have.

00:39:52:13 - 00:39:59:04

Done further work on this, which I'll, I will submit, just looking, trying to put more flesh on the bones really.

00:39:59:06 - 00:40:00:04

In terms of.

00:40:00:06 - 00:40:38:16

The potential level of demand that could come from the other projects. I mean, it doesn't really alter the conclusions, but we've we've considered seven projects Hornsea Project three East Anglia, one North East Anglia, two, East Anglia, three, Norfolk, Vanguard, Norfolk and Sizewell C Nuclear New Build Project. Um, like you say, outside the peak summer months, there would be adequate capacity to meet demand from all of those projects. It is in just the peak summer months where there would be an issue and in a hypothetical worst case scenario where the peak accommodation.

00:40:38:18 - 00:40:39:17

Requirements.

00:40:39:19 - 00:41:25:28

For all seven projects overlapped with the peak for CIP and DEP, and there would be total demand for 2500 bed spaces. So if all workers required their own room, that would leave 1600 rooms unoccupied in East Anglia during peak months. So that would mean that the the occupancy rate during peak months increases from 85% to 94%, which is a high level of occupancy. Um, it does suggest that there would there would be overall in numbers terms sufficient capacity to, to meet demand, but they would

inevitably be greater competition for rooms and so on and potential for for accommodation providers to increase increase their price.

00:41:26:07 - 00:41:47:08

Um, however, we we believe it's highly unlikely that the peak period for all seven projects could overlap. And given that some have started um already, which is East Anglia three believe construction started last year and Sizewell C and the peak according to their accommodation strategy, the peak.

00:41:47:10 - 00:41:50:21

Workforce demand isn't likely to occur until year.

00:41:50:23 - 00:41:52:28

Seven. So, um.

00:41:53:09 - 00:41:57:11

Assuming it doesn't start this year, the year if it started next year, the earliest date for peak.

00:41:57:13 - 00:41:58:06

Workforce would be.

00:41:58:08 - 00:41:58:23

In.

00:41:58:25 - 00:42:03:09

2031. And given that all of the wind farm projects, um,

00:42:04:25 - 00:42:07:08

all of their onshore works, which is when.

00:42:07:10 - 00:42:13:18

The peak demand occurs, is in the early years of the construction project, we think it's highly unlikely.

00:42:13:20 - 00:42:17:14

That it would overlap with the peak for Sizewell. C And so.

00:42:17:16 - 00:42:21:03

If you remove East Anglia three and.

00:42:21:05 - 00:42:24:14

Remove Sizewell C, for example, that reduces to about.

00:42:24:16 - 00:42:26:06

90.4%.

00:42:27:00 - 00:42:27:18

Which is still.

00:42:27:20 - 00:42:31:15

High, but it's not unheard of in visitor markets.

00:42:32:04 - 00:42:36:25

Um, so I suppose the other point to make about that as well is that this.

00:42:36:27 - 00:43:05:08

Accommodation isn't fixed. We haven't made any allowance for future growth in the visitor in the supply of visitor accommodation. And given that this is a market, a market based product and it's not like public infrastructure, like GP surgeries and schools, for example, the market can respond to evidence of increased demand. You would expect not just businesses and hoteliers to respond to that evidence of increased demand, but also, um.

00:43:06:18 - 00:43:08:16

Households themselves, people that you.

00:43:08:18 - 00:43:28:17

Can use, Airbnb for example, people that own second homes in East Anglia to let out their homes on short term lets. Um, we haven't made any allowance for that. So I think if you do make an allowance for that, for future growth in the supply of visitor accommodation, it's probably reasonable to assume that the occupancy rate could be under 90%.

00:43:29:07 - 00:43:33:28

Um, so we don't. I mean, you've mentioned the point about.

00:43:34:13 - 00:43:36:01

Encouraging room sharing.

00:43:36:22 - 00:43:40:22

I'll have to discuss with, with colleagues whether that.

00:43:40:24 - 00:43:48:10

Would be practical or whether, you know, coordination with, with other developers might be an alternative option. But in terms of.

00:43:48:12 - 00:43:49:05

The exact.

00:43:49:15 - 00:43:52:08

Potential mitigation, um, if it's.

00:43:52:10 - 00:43:53:23

Okay, we'd like to come back to.

00:43:53:25 - 00:43:59:22

You on that point because this is uncharted territory, really. It's the first time I think that outside major.

00:43:59:24 - 00:44:01:07

Nuclear newbuild projects where.

00:44:01:09 - 00:44:02:22

This has been raised as an issue.

00:44:02:27 - 00:44:40:25

Okay. No, that's fine. I mean, the suggestion of room sharing was actually in the application, in the application documents, I believe somewhere or somewhere in the evidence that was put forward by

the applicant. My question was whether that needed to be secured. Yes. Given that, you know, the the issue in terms of the occupancy rates in the summer period. Just another follow up. Quick question in terms of is the applicant got any idea of the cost of those and whether obviously it's a general view of the overall available bed spaces, but whether in terms of the very expensive hotels, whether that's actually likely to be a feasible option for the vast majority of people who might want a bed space during that time.

00:44:42:20 - 00:45:14:10

We haven't done any research to date, to be honest, into the price. Of the affordability of accommodation, we'd have to do some further research to to to look into that. But I mean, contractors tend to be price sensitive. They don't believe they would wish to pay. You know, the most the highest price levels for worker accommodation. So if that wasn't available, they could potentially look at other options, for instance, using accommodation over a wider area than just East Anglia.

00:45:15:15 - 00:45:23:01

But in terms of further research into the price of visitor accommodation, we haven't done that research yet, so but we can look into it.

00:45:23:03 - 00:45:51:02

Okay, that's fine. I mean, obviously the part of the concern about the lack of available bed space is that it could displace homeless people families in a temporary accommodation. Yeah. And whether actually the the construction, the construction workers bed spaces that will be required are actually aiming at the same market rather than. So that's that's more of a qualitative quantitative assessment rather than quantitative I think is would be helpful to for us to understand. Yeah. Yeah.

00:45:51:04 - 00:45:56:06

I mean I think most contractors would be very flexible in terms of the.

00:45:56:08 - 00:45:57:19

Type of accommodation that they would.

00:45:57:21 - 00:45:58:06

Use.

00:45:58:08 - 00:45:59:27

But we can do further.

00:45:59:29 - 00:46:02:05

Research to look at the type of accommodation.

00:46:02:07 - 00:46:03:04

They'd be seeking.

00:46:03:19 - 00:46:07:24

Okay. Thank you. Okay. We'll add that to a hearing action as well. Thank you.

00:46:10:09 - 00:46:13:17

Okay. Norfolk County Council. You've got your hand up.

00:46:16:16 - 00:46:48:27

Bank. You, sir, just want to put to the applicant ask them a question. When they were talking about cumulative assessment, they're on overnight accommodation and they referred to a number of projects. Um, I don't think I picked up and I might be wrong. Did they refer to the A47 projects? I'm

aware that they are currently subject to a High Court decision, but you know, we've got potentially another three projects to take into account. So the question is, have they taken those other projects into account? Thank you.

00:46:50:22 - 00:46:52:21

Okay, that we can confirm that question, please.

00:47:35:17 - 00:47:45:20

Oliver Chapman for the applicant. Um. There are a number of highway improvement schemes which have not been included. Um.

00:47:49:08 - 00:47:54:10

North Norwich Western Link Highway Improvement scheme was not included.

00:47:54:12 - 00:47:55:15

In the CIA.

00:47:56:16 - 00:48:03:05

And the rationale for that was it's been agreed with and national highways that potential cumulative impacts between the.

00:48:03:07 - 00:48:07:22

Construction phases of the highway scheme could be managed through the respective construction.

00:48:07:24 - 00:48:21:28

Traffic management plan rather than the application. Therefore, these schemes have been screened out of the cumulative impact assessment. Um, but I'd have to revisit in terms of the accommodation requirements haven't we haven't looked into.

00:48:22:00 - 00:48:22:17

It, so we would.

00:48:22:19 - 00:48:23:19

Have to look into that.

00:48:23:24 - 00:48:28:27

We add that maybe to the previous action as well. For a slightly broader look at those matters, please.

00:48:31:27 - 00:48:33:26

Okay? Yeah. Thank you.

00:48:36:26 - 00:49:07:03

Okay. We'll move on to agenda item number four. And this matter, which is in relation to the outline skills and employment plan. The applicant's reply to written question 1.2 22.1. Point three sets out a number of actions to be undertaken to strengthen the outline skills and employment plan, whilst noting that the applicant will integrate the County Council's suggestions and insights into the plan for deadlines.

00:49:07:06 - 00:49:18:13

Three. Um, it was a question really for clarification whether the other seven actions listed in reply to that written question will be implemented during the examination.

00:49:32:15 - 00:49:37:26

Sarah Chandler for the applicant. Can I just confirm on that reference it's question 1.2. 2.2.8.

00:49:38:08 - 00:49:46:04

1.8. Sorry. Repeat that. Sorry. Yeah. 1.2. 2.18. 1.8.

00:49:46:29 - 00:49:47:24

1.8.

00:49:49:25 - 00:49:52:16

I think the answer is yes, but just wanted. Sure.

00:50:00:20 - 00:50:03:20

So do the candidates. Just want to jump in there just for the applicants having a look.

00:50:03:24 - 00:50:13:17

It is actually it's it's 2.8. There's there's a typographical error in your printout, which I have. Oh, yes. Yes. With your.

00:50:13:23 - 00:50:17:12

Thank you. You did make us aware of that. Yes, absolutely. Thank you for that.

00:50:17:19 - 00:50:18:26

Sorry to be pedantic.

00:50:19:01 - 00:50:20:15

2.8. Thank you. No.

00:50:21:01 - 00:50:53:07

Thank you. So, yes, the answer is we. Yeah, we're including those. We're looking at those seven actions. We're in an ongoing dialogue with Norfolk County Council and various other parties, and the outline Skills and employment plan is an evolving document that's part of a kind of broader initiative that equinor's undertaking around skills, jobs, employment. And so, yes, you'll see those additions at deadline three. Um, and we have had a note from Mr. Faulkner's colleague that Norfolk County Council content with those.

00:50:53:19 - 00:51:02:19

Okay. Thank you. I was just going to bring in the county counsel again just to if you could just provide confirmation that you're content in the direction that the plan is going.

00:51:04:13 - 00:51:37:14

Thank you, sir. Yes, we've been working very closely with with Equinor on the on the employment and skills plan and are quite happy. Direction of travel with that. And you know just suppose really bring to the attention of both Equinor and the examination panel that both you know we will not only be working closely but there are significant opportunities within Norfolk to develop these offshore schemes, particularly around Great Yarmouth with the.

00:51:39:13 - 00:51:49:17

Operations and maintenance companies, which is under construction at the moment. So we are we are working very, very closely. So thank you.

00:51:50:01 - 00:51:58:28

Okay. That's appreciated. Thank you. In terms of the other local authorities present, do you wish to contribute anything to this agenda item?

00:52:03:28 - 00:52:37:00

No. Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. We'll go on to the final agenda item for socio economic, which is in relation to the community fund. The applicants reply to Weybourne Parish councils Written representations sets out that the Community Benefit Fund will be set up if CEP and DEP are successful in being granted consents. At this point the applicant will consult with the community and stakeholders in an appropriate and complementary programme. It was the examining authority's understanding the applicant had not intended to set one up.

00:52:37:02 - 00:52:40:27

Is that a slight change in position? Just for clarification, please.

00:52:41:29 - 00:53:35:28

I'm Sarah Chander for the applicant, so I don't think so quite. But there's also an evolving situation here, so you'll be aware that we have experience of community benefit funds for the existing assets and we have committed to exploring what a sort of equivalent proportionate community benefit scheme could look like for SEP and DEP. But at the same time, we have been in meetings with the Norfolk Community Foundation, who currently manage the existing funds, Norfolk County Council and many of the other developers that are promoting schemes in Norfolk at the moment to really look at opportunities for greater collaboration on community benefit funds, and particularly aimed at ensuring that there's support for any strategic activities in the region.

00:53:36:00 - 00:53:48:19

So I don't think there's a change of position there. But again, my colleague sat behind me, has been in many meetings recently with interested parties and that is an evolving, um, yeah. Position. Okay.

00:53:48:21 - 00:54:09:24

Thank you. Um, in terms of the is it generally accepted by all parties member get the thoughts of the County Council whether ultimately a community benefit fund is really outside of the process and it's not something that can be taken into account by the examining authority in its deliberations is maybe if I can come to the applicant first on that.

00:54:11:00 - 00:54:17:28

Is there a trial of the applicant? Yes. And my understanding is that the local authorities have recognized that as well.

00:54:18:14 - 00:54:22:28

Okay. Thank you. Is the county counsel able to come in and give your thoughts?

00:54:24:27 - 00:54:38:14

Thank you, sir. Regrettably, think it is outside the DCO. I've made this point at a number of examinations that we would like the matter dealt with through the DCO. But

00:54:40:12 - 00:55:13:27

I've come to appreciate that, you know, it needs to be outside of the process. And it has worked successfully, certainly with Vattenfall and with the Orsted schemes that we that they they've set up their own community benefit funds. It's a comment we have made. So in our local impact report for the need for some some form of community benefit going to be set up and think as of stated they are minded to go down that route and picking up again what Equinor have said.

00:55:13:29 - 00:55:44:01

I think given that we've got um community funds in preparation and set up for, for Vattenfall and for Orsted, it makes sense for some sort of collaboration to take place with Equinor's Community Benefit Fund. So there's a more of a strategic approach to the benefits which can accrue to those communities affected within Norfolk. Um, and you know, just put out there the sort of things we're looking at potentially through joint and through greater collaboration.

00:55:44:03 - 00:56:20:11

We might be looking at sort of EV charging points or electric community buses, green cycle paths, um, installation on community buildings, you know, further insulation, um, solar panels, etcetera. So there are some significant benefits I think at the moment it's been done on a fairly piecemeal approach, but certainly through our discussions with Equinor and with other developers of and CIPs within Norfolk, we're going down this route of a more collaborative approach and think, you know, that is entirely appropriate.

00:56:21:02 - 00:56:21:18

Thank you.

00:56:22:14 - 00:56:30:29

Okay. Thank you for that useful contribution. Okay. I think that covers our discussions on socio economic analysis. Anyone that wishes to say anything else?

00:56:34:10 - 00:56:36:15

Okay. No. Hands up.

00:56:41:18 - 00:56:53:05

Okay, In that case, we'll adjourn for our lunch break. If we can come back at 2:00, please, and say just thanks everyone for their contributions this morning. And we'll see you after the lunch break. Thank you.