

File Name: HFSP ISH2 20th September 2023 Part 3.mp3  
File Length: 01:37:41

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:06:25 - 00:00:11:28

Hey, welcome back. I'm issue specific. Hearing two is now resumed.

00:00:13:26 - 00:00:22:27

We are on agenda item nine, which relates to ecology, biodiversity and ornithology.

00:00:24:18 - 00:00:44:10

And firstly, I'd just like the applicant just to provide a summary of their approach and their findings in relation to ecology and ornithology matters such as surveys, effects and what's proposed in terms of mitigation and enhancement. Thank you.

00:00:46:13 - 00:00:50:09

Thank you, madam. Simon Pickering on behalf of the Applicant City.

00:00:53:13 - 00:01:04:25

The approach taken was first, to determine the current nature conservation value of the energy park and cable route, both alone in relation to international, national and locally. Significant.

00:01:05:11 - 00:01:07:25

Sorry, could you move your microphone a little bit closer?

00:01:08:00 - 00:01:10:04

Actually use the other one? Yeah.

00:01:12:12 - 00:01:14:03

There you go. Better. That's better.

00:01:14:05 - 00:01:14:20

Thank you.

00:01:14:22 - 00:01:50:21

Okay, great. Um, and then we looked at the potential effects of the development on the nature conservation value of the site. It was assessed any significant impacts were identified. Mitigation measures have been proposed. These are all set out in chapter eight, which is 063, and also detailed in the the Conservation Environmental Management Plan, which is um, stroke one, four, six, and also in the outline, um, landscape and environmental management plan, which is 148.

00:01:51:11 - 00:02:21:00

We did do an assessment of the potential biodiversity net gain using the DEFRA metric. And this is done by converting to the habitat code from phase one to the habitat code and entering to the appropriate database. The basic findings were that there are no designated sites of international, national or local importance within the energy park. The nearest internationally important site is the Wash

00:02:22:21 - 00:02:58:25

special area of Conservation, special protection area and Ramsar site that is 16km from the energy park and ten kilometres from the cable road to the nearest point holding fen SSI nationally important that sites of special scientific interest is located 11km from the park and five kilometres from the nearest point. Actually at the substation a bike often. Note that that exercise designated for geological interest. There's one local wildlife site which the cable route will cross, which is the south 40 foot drain, which I'll talk about in a minute.

00:02:58:29 - 00:03:29:15

And there are three further local wildlife sites within five kilometers. Most of those are to the west of the south, 40 foot drain. The habitats on the site of the energy park is flat, low lying farmland and continuous arable wheat production, largely for animal feed stock divided by rectilinear fields, parcels through tracks, grass margins and drainage ditches. Some of these are internal drainage board managed ditches and some of these are landowner managed ditches.

00:03:29:17 - 00:04:05:22

There are intermittent hedgerows and boundary features. The three small plantation blocks of woodland on the energy park site and one line of trees within the along the habitat. The great connection route, the habitat is very similar, but with a great variety of crops, including barley, oilseed rape, wheat beet. The route does cross the 40 foot drain south, 40 foot drain. And there is a small plantation woodland at Becker Farm substation, which has been subject to various discussions earlier.

00:04:05:27 - 00:04:41:09

In terms of species with the species surveys, there's no evidence of great crested Newt waterfall or otter, although there is suitable habitat on the energy part. American Mink, a major predator of waterfowl, were observed on the site and a dead one found on the road nearby. There was a low level of bat activity across the site, concentrated on the wet ditches and the internal drainage board managed issues. There was evidence of two common on one long eared bat coming from a roost in the abandoned brick farming farms in the center of the energy park.

00:04:41:11 - 00:05:12:13

This is actually technically outside the the area and will be unaffected by the development quite interestingly, when we did the surveys for the wind farm in 2011, we also found two paper straws on one longhaired bat in those very same buildings. Um, these will not be affected. The static bat recorders recorded a number of species, up to 12 species, but again, 98% of those passes are on the transects and 83% on the static were common purpose trails.

00:05:12:15 - 00:05:50:18

It was a fairly standard mixture of a range of bat species on the site, mainly using the wet ditches. Badgers have colonized the area since the original surveys in 2010 2011. We found that there's two main sets on the site and a number of outlying sets. Each time a surveyor has been on site, we've noticed that the outlying sets have moved. It's clearly a recent colonization and the Badgers are in the process of establishing their territories. Breeding birds did breeding bird surveys a total of 68 breeding birds during the breeding season, of which 56 were confirmed breeding.

00:05:51:21 - 00:06:23:02

Um, there were included three schedule one annex, one species that's Marsh Harrier, Barn Owl and Kingfisher, and there were 12 red list stroke species. Um, however, the number and distribution of bird breeding birds on the on the site and the cable route was relatively low and typical of the farmland there. Most of the breeding birds were restricted to the, uh, the ditch edges and the grass margins around the site.

00:06:23:07 - 00:06:53:07

With the exception of Skylark and Yellow Wagtail, we do nest in open habitats, wintering birds. There was a total of 71 wintering birds recorded on around the energy parking grid route. The

numbers were relatively small. Um, and there was only one species that was, um, recorded in the citation for the special protection area that was Pink Goose. That was one record of 54 birds on the grid route.

00:06:53:09 - 00:07:33:08

And there was one species that was in the citation for the wash sites of special scientific interest and one record of a whooper swan. So the potential effects and mitigation measures, the major effect of development, quite honest, is actually the conversion of 440 hectares of intensive arable to semi improved grassland in hubs categories, other neutral grassland which actually increased the conservation value by that single change in the land use there, there were no impact on the existing grassland margins, the woodland loss on the energy park site.

00:07:33:24 - 00:08:17:09

Um. Potential significant effects on the 40 foot drive in the need to for the great route cross. It will be avoided by drilling beneath the watercourse and direct drilling will also avoid potential significant effects on all the major internal drainage ditches and as advised, the impacts will be minimized. Obviously, any development may have potential effects on existing breeding birds and as you know, all birds are protected under Part one of the Wildlife Conservation Act, and these can be minimized through the appropriate measures of not developing at the inn during the bird breeding season and putting in appropriate mitigation measures.

00:08:17:11 - 00:08:19:03

These are all laid out in the.

00:08:21:01 - 00:08:25:06

Uh, construction Environmental Management plan. Um.

00:08:26:21 - 00:08:56:13

And Protection of the Woodlands. And that's all set out there. And the one species that has been highlighted that does nesting and open fields is the Skylark. Now, the the science on skylarks and solar farms is still emerging. Some places they've found skylarks nesting within solar parts. Some places they've found them avoiding them. Logically, as an ecologist, would assume that this is an open

00:08:58:04 - 00:09:00:13

habitat species that would tend to avoid it. Um,

00:09:02:18 - 00:09:54:28

there are some very large areas if you consider the stand off of nine metres from the drainage ditches, from the internal drainage ditches and the landowner drainage ditches of eight metres either side. This are quite large areas of open grassland which we are confident that skylark will nesting and the area set aside for grassland in the middle will be important. However, we do recognise and we've talked extensively to the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and we are looking at putting Skylark nesting plots within an area within the same land ownership as solar farm to the south of the of the solar farm that we're proposing, 140, 140 Skylark plots within the arable landscape there.

00:09:55:13 - 00:10:27:07

Skylark plots are a fairly standard method 60 meter square now used extensively, revised extensively by the RSPB and are very successful providing extra nesting habitat for skylarks. You end up with a much higher density of nesting skylarks in an arable field. If you put these Skylark plots into that, that will be there. But we have recognised working with, uh, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust that there may be some wider benefits to Skylarks and we're willing to work with them on an opportunity there.

00:10:28:05 - 00:11:06:23

The other nature conservation enhancements are the improvement of the grass strips either side of the of of the drainage channels. We actually managed 6 to 6 hectares of species rich conservation grassland within the site. There will be the orchard that we've already talked about well, enhance the pond and there'll be approximately 8.5km of new hedgerow. In addition to this, we're we're putting in appropriate nest boxes in mature trees and and in woodlands, because one of the things that's lacking on that site is its nesting habitat for woodland and birds that like holes.

00:11:06:25 - 00:11:17:12

And also there's limited opportunity for bat roosts which we'll put in and also more boxes for barn owls and kestrels.

00:11:19:12 - 00:11:55:03

In terms of biodiversity net gain, we've one has to remember that biodiversity net gain is is a habitat approach and it's used to assess an area of wildlife and it uses the UK habitats classification and it uses a metric of biodiversity units, which is just a proxy for the biodiversity value of an area. It is not an actual measure and it's the currency of the metric and the outputs of the metric are not absolute values but provide a proxy, but they do not consider species.

00:11:55:20 - 00:12:58:02

So it's quite important to remember that, um, we follow the guidance from, from the metric and changed all the habitats to the habitat classification. Um, and it was put into the, the metric and we've got a very significant biodiversity net gain, more than more than 10%. Most of that is, is, is from the just the change from arable to grassland, but the, the species reaching grasslands on the margins and through the centre of the site to the north will also be a very significant contribution, both contributing more than 10% in terms of that, uh, in the, in those words, we did take a very conservative approach in our biodiversity net gain, um, recognising that some of the land beneath the solar panels will be grazed by sheep and it will be technically poor, I think it could be poor, um, other neutral grassland, but almost certainly we'll be much better than that.

00:12:58:27 - 00:13:38:08

Um, the, we mentioned the loss of the woodland at Becker Farm, which was mentioned earlier, um, that loss in terms of one has to remember that, that, that woodland was planted as screening for the substation there, not for nature conservation reasons. It was under a condition that was put in for that that planning application. It is of obviously any woodland is important but in terms of breeding birds and other wildlife is is very it's not particularly good bit of woodland because it's not been managed very well to be quite honest.

00:13:38:23 - 00:13:50:08

Um, and in terms of um, biodiversity loss, using the proxy of the units, um, that woodland contributes about.

00:13:52:02 - 00:14:26:29

Less than two units, so its loss will be less than 1% of the of the change in biodiversity net gain. So in stress, the testicle conservation terms that the loss of that woodland is technically will be classified as negligible. But obviously as a as a as the as the developer here is, has a policy of ensuring no loss of of wildlife. And our founder and owner is very keen that we there is no loss of biodiversity.

00:14:27:01 - 00:14:58:19

And we we we always seek to enhance sites that we work on. Therefore we are aiming to plant or replace the area of woodland on an area of deciduous woodland which we will manage to a high conservation standard within land, within the order limits that we will have complete control over. So in conclusion, in overall nature, in very broad terms, high level, without going into too much detail, the site is largely of low nature conservation.

00:14:58:21 - 00:15:16:02

The small areas of slightly higher nature conservation value will not be affected by the development um, species. We've put in the appropriate mitigation measures and we are including some very significant enhancements to the site. Okay.

00:15:19:15 - 00:15:22:08

Okay. Thank you very much. That was very useful summary.

00:15:25:00 - 00:15:32:11

Um, where am I? I think you've answered a few of my questions because that was so comprehensive.

00:15:40:12 - 00:15:58:14

Yeah, in terms of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, um, and the Skylark was mentioned in their representation and I assume that that will be responded to deadline one as well in the response. Yeah. Come in writing.

00:16:00:04 - 00:16:04:23

Yeah. So pickling for electricity. Yes, madam. Yes. Yes, that's correct.

00:16:05:07 - 00:16:06:04

Yeah, that's fine.

00:16:08:25 - 00:16:10:24

In terms of survey data.

00:16:12:24 - 00:16:34:09

And for example, the Bat survey report, and it states that the data is only valid for 18 months from. August 22nd. Um. So updated ecology surveys for bats and other species. Um, how will they be secured? Is that through the camp?

00:16:36:15 - 00:16:53:24

So I'm thinking, yes, in terms of the, um, birds will obviously be pre-construction breeding bird surveys and we will recheck the bat surveys, particularly those roosting species where there will be a um, a potential impact that that that can be done. Yes.

00:17:19:06 - 00:17:40:15

Yeah. And the other question I was going to ask was what does biodiversity net gain, which you've answered? So just put it over to the local planning authorities and the bay as well to see if they've got any comments or any issues they wish to raise at this point after what they've just heard. Stop myself because North Kesteven.

00:17:43:01 - 00:18:22:23

Thank you, ma'am. Nick Feltham from North Kesteven District Council. I think we've said a couple of times today already we'll we'll set out some points in our local impact report. And I suppose some of the key to draw from that is that our consultant ecologists at A.com agree that the habitat baseline is relatively and generally low risk. Um, there is broad agreement in terms of the, the survey efforts, the, the baselines and the approaches to to assessments. There are some queries that are in relation to um, botanical surveys, um, including in particular things like scarce arable flora.

00:18:23:01 - 00:18:48:10

Um, and also a point on which I know we've had a couple of times now that the comfort is there that 10% is likely to be achieved. But there are, we feel, a few gaps in terms of the information embedded

within the, the metric to, um, to give us the confidence of that of that high figure that's stated at this particular point. But we, we will set this out in our larger.

00:18:51:24 - 00:18:55:27

Okay. Thank you. And Lincolnshire County Council. Have you got anything to add?

00:18:56:24 - 00:19:00:05

Not particularly. Again. Mark Wallace, Lancaster County Council.

00:19:00:07 - 00:19:14:13

We will set out an hour as well. That said, the county doesn't have a county ecologist, so we'll probably defer particularly some of the advice to North Kesteven, particularly in this case or other bodies. But again, we can confirm that within the year.

00:19:19:12 - 00:19:22:17

And the Boston Borough Council wish to raise anything.

00:19:25:00 - 00:19:37:01

Right. Thank you. No, again, nothing specific. We also don't have an ecologist at Boston Borough Council. So probably again, like Lancashire County Council, defer to North Stevens consultant.

00:19:39:11 - 00:19:40:11

Okay. Thank you.

00:19:43:05 - 00:19:45:06

What the lights raise anything.

00:19:46:21 - 00:19:47:09

Andrew Scott.

00:19:47:11 - 00:20:02:28

Blushes. Be more an update for you. Really? We've got two otters in the south, 40 foot down by our Boston by our big pump station. So where they going? We don't know. But they were heading north last time we saw them. That was that was this month.

00:20:08:21 - 00:20:09:08

Thank you.

00:20:11:02 - 00:20:15:29

And would the applicant like to come back on anything before I move on to the next agenda item?

00:20:17:22 - 00:20:49:03

Simon Pickering could just. I think we more than happy to respond to the written comments that will be brought forward by Lincolnshire North Kesteven. They are issues that we've been made aware of and we're preparing the appropriate answers. And I think you're right. There may be a few gaps that we can fill in in their in the work we've done and the surveys we've done. And it's good news that there's otters on the on the south 40 foot train.

00:20:52:09 - 00:20:52:29

Thank you.

00:20:55:03 - 00:20:59:11

All the move on to agenda item ten, which is water environment.

00:21:05:04 - 00:21:15:10

We've got the here today, so I'll ask for their comments in a moment. And if the applicant could just provide an update on discussions both with the

00:21:16:26 - 00:21:22:13

lead local flood authorities and the Environment Agency in Anglian Water.

00:21:26:01 - 00:21:27:07

George Taylor for the applicant.

00:21:27:22 - 00:22:09:06

Yes, madam. No problem. So in overview, dialogue, dialogue with all of these statutory bodies is underway and ongoing. It has been positive to date in terms of black sleuths who we'll hear from in a minute. The applicant has undertaken a site meeting with the and ongoing discussions are underway in terms of what the applicant has done in the scheme so far. There's embedded mitigation into the scheme design, which has been designed with a nine metres setback from maintained drains and watercourses and protected provisions are now agreed with the and they will be secured at deadline to within the DCO.

00:22:10:03 - 00:22:12:21

So there's protections through them as well.

00:22:14:12 - 00:22:29:05

In relation to Anglian Water. Likewise, protected provisions are now agreed and they will be captured at deadline two in the DCO and the Statement of Common Ground. We expect to be agreed with deadline one as well.

00:22:31:10 - 00:22:32:22

I hear it is agreed.

00:22:36:06 - 00:23:21:17

In terms of the environment Agency, they they have two functions really for this scheme. One in their capacity as a statutory consultee in the sense of the water environment, but also as a landowner. So in this in their status as a statutory consultee, protected provisions are also agreed with the Environment Agency and again they will be included at deadline two in the updated DCO. The statement of Common Ground is also in a good shape. There's a number of points under discussion, including including the need for an update to the outline design principles which the applicant is capturing at the next turn in relation to the height of floor levels within the control room for the substation.

00:23:25:04 - 00:23:56:10

And in relation to the engagement with the Environment Agency for their Lands team that is ongoing. Um. But there. Their land ownership is in relation to the south 40 foot drain, which my colleague mentioned earlier. We are using a horizontal directional drill under that. So the kind of impact and the impact on their operations is limited as a result of that. Long under the south 40 foot drain. But in any event, we expect to reach agreement with the Environment Agency.

00:23:58:04 - 00:24:31:03

And then finally on lead local flood authority. The discussions have been principally through Lincolnshire County Council and kind of being wrapped up in that process. Uh, the as mentioned, the have jurisdiction in relation to the ordinary watercourses here and are the drainage authority for the purpose of the protected provisions. Um, and I don't understand that any further comments have been

received in terms of a lead local flood authority perspective. But obviously we'll stay tuned if there's anything coming out of the local impact report.

00:24:32:00 - 00:24:34:05

So hopefully that's a helpful summary.

00:24:39:22 - 00:24:54:06

Yep. Okay. Thank you. And could I ask the IDB for their comments, their initial comments? Obviously I'd be saying your, your written representations to come, but if there's anything you'd like to summarize, you can do so now.

00:24:55:22 - 00:25:23:12

Andrew Scott Strange board, nothing in particular. Um, as we've already been stated, we're well underway as far as private protective provisions and the statement of common ground, which has been agreed um, within our own, as has been stated with the, the local authority for watercourses are within district, not only the ones we maintain ourselves, but obviously the, the farmer's

00:25:25:22 - 00:26:12:25

field drains as well. Um, as far as surface water goes, um, there's no particular issues here. Um, most of the running water will just simply fall to the ground and infiltrate into the ground. Concerned and, and then the gravity will eventually end up in our systems. Um, the only other particular concern is how big the storage facility will be on site. But understand that's going to be within an existing area of concrete Hardstanding So there's no major issues with that are only other comments would be regarding the, the drilling, the horizontal directional drilling, regarding crossing of watercourses, whether they're farmer's field drains or our own maintained systems.

00:26:13:04 - 00:26:27:01

That's all been agreed within the proactive provisions and that the consenting process behind that will obviously be dealt at a later date and I'll be the one dealing with those. So the board are generally good with with everything that's been going on so far.

00:26:33:22 - 00:26:35:07

Okay. Thank you very much.

00:26:41:11 - 00:26:47:02

Yeah. Would they? Do Lincolnshire County Council have anything to raise in terms of LFR? No.

00:26:55:13 - 00:27:09:12

Terms of the directional drilling. Um. So the, um. The trains. How is that controlled through. Through the development order process.

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

And what what ensures that that. What type of.

00:27:17:27 - 00:27:20:21

Engineering solution takes place.

00:27:23:13 - 00:27:47:08

So Isabelle Holland from the applicant. So within the environmental statement, we've assessed their locations on site for potential need for locations for drilling under the. And also underwater ditches. Those are outlined within chapter 4.2 of the. So they've been assessed to consider the environmental impact of that as a worst case scenario of a directional drill if that's needed under each of those.



00:28:10:20 - 00:28:17:09

Okay. I've got nothing else to raise on water environment. Is there anything anybody else would like to.

00:28:19:12 - 00:28:28:17

Come up again on the Habitats regulations assessment and the next section. So agenda item 11.

00:28:30:06 - 00:28:41:03

So firstly, I'd like the applicant to summarise their approach to the Shadow Habitats regulations assessment and appropriate assessment. Thank you.

00:28:41:19 - 00:28:44:09

Thank you, madam. Simon Pickering, on behalf of the.

00:28:47:09 - 00:29:30:28

There are several stages to a shadow habitats regulation assessment. Very briefly. First is to consider whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of the internationally important site. And then there's a screening to check whether there's whether whether there is a likely that the project may have a significant effect. And then you carry out the appropriate assessment depending on the outcomes of this. As mentioned previously, the Wash Special Protection area, a special area of conservation and Ramsar site, is 16km to the east of the energy park and ten from the grid connection.

00:29:31:09 - 00:30:08:00

There'll be no development in the wash, so there's no direct effects and it's not necessary for the management of the wash. However, it was identified that there is. A long there is a hydrological connection between the energy park and the grid connection and the wash. This is via the draining network managed by my colleague here from the Internal Drainage Board and eventually flows into the river which flows through this town of Boston and does flow into the washes about 22km in length.

00:30:08:02 - 00:30:49:05

So there is technically a link there. So that is potentially a likely effect. Also, a number of the species in the citation of the special protection area, um, particularly pink footed geese, are known to feed on farmland. In fact, um, they're actively attracted to farmland by some landowners around here for sporting purposes. Um. And so it was three likely significant effects were identified silt laden runoff, water quality effects and loss of what is known as functionally linked habitat.

00:30:49:07 - 00:31:21:14

That's habitat outside the designated area. That's important for the maintenance of the conservation status of the area, either as a breeding area or as a feeding area for species that are normally found within the designated site. So what technical term for functionally linked habitat is critical or necessary for the ecological or behavioral functions in the relevant seasons for the qualifying feature of the special area of concern of conservation or special protection areas or the Ramsdell site.

00:31:22:21 - 00:32:04:09

So that's what we looked at. But in terms of looking at the effect of the scheme, both the energy park and the grid connection, the major changes in terms of silt and chemicals, there will be a cessation of cultivation, so there'll be a stopping the use of agrochemicals on the site, on the energy park. According to the landowners, farm records for 2021, the park, 270 tons of chemical fertilizer added and 55811 of agrochemicals of different types were added to the wheat crop on that land.

00:32:04:11 - 00:32:39:08

That's an average that's probably similar most years. So that will stop completely. There'll be no fertilizers or chemicals added. There will be the as mentioned earlier, the nine meter stand off from the internal drainage board drains at eight meters from the landowner ditches. And also we will be using drilling under the major watercourses. So it's considered that the level of silt and chemicals entering the drain network, which may eventually end up in the wash, will actually reduce as a result of the development.

00:32:39:10 - 00:33:11:24

This is probably a non-significant effect. Um, the other species that didn't mention in the is, is otters. Otters are included in the SAC because of the standoffs from the drains and the and the direct drilling under the major watercourses. It's considered that the scheme would have no effect on otters in terms of the wetland birds. Um, pink for the geese. In the citation, which was in 1988, there was 7000. The average five year average was 7000 pink 40 geese.

00:33:11:26 - 00:33:41:25

As you're probably aware, the population of pink for the geese has increased dramatically and the 2014 to 2019 five year mean was 37,900 pink for the geese using the wash spas. Um, there's been only one observation of pink footed geese during our wintering surveys in the vicinity of the Great Connection, a flock of 56 birds feeding on winter stubble that was actually disturbed by a wasn't actually within our site, it was adjacent to it.

00:33:41:27 - 00:34:25:03

And these were disturbed by a dog walk and they flew away. And there are occasional records of bird feeding in the area, but there's no evidence of significant numbers of birds. Part of the citation using either the energy park or the grid route. Therefore, there was no evidence that this was part of a functionally linked habitat. So it was concluded that, um, taken into the design of development and any appropriate mitigation, that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the Wash Special area conservation, the Wash special protection area or the Wash Ramsar site.

00:34:25:15 - 00:34:57:20

There may be a small but non-significant positive effect in terms of water quality and silt. And it's also noted that in a letter by natural England on the 9th of June 2023 that with regard to the Shadow Habitats Regulations assessment, they noted that the Shadow had ruled out any impacts from pathways, joint construction or operation, and they stated Natural England concurs with the assessment and the reasoning provided.

00:34:57:22 - 00:34:58:08

Thank you.

00:35:01:12 - 00:35:02:19

Okay. Thank you for that.

00:35:10:28 - 00:35:13:04

So say that the the Wash

00:35:14:25 - 00:35:21:06

owns the only European site potentially affected. How how did you establish the study area?

00:35:24:15 - 00:35:55:02

Very interesting question. We looked at the area. Normally one considers ones within ten kilometers is a fairly standard way of looking at this, but also because they're the movement of birds. We also considered those that were within a reasonable flying distance of of migratory birds that may use that area. And as we've noted, there were pink footed geese there. So it was it was in that in that region.

00:35:55:04 - 00:36:22:02

So that was considered. We did actually also in informal discussions with with natural England identify that that was the the the closest and most likely internationally important site that we should consider. Um, there is obviously the greater wash sac, but that is for mainly for seabirds, red throated diver scoters which don't come inland.

00:36:27:03 - 00:36:28:04

Okay. Thank you.

00:36:33:20 - 00:36:45:08

No, it might have just answered this one, but just clarify whether the scope and the methodology used to gather the data was. Was it agreed with Natural England in advance?

00:36:46:23 - 00:36:48:29

At the survey techniques were.

00:36:51:13 - 00:37:03:21

Were discussed. I don't know whether we've got a formal letter saying that they're happy with that, but they they they approve that. The methods and approach we took yesterday, they concurred with the approach we've taken.

00:37:11:21 - 00:37:16:17

And was the same carried out with the local authority their consultant ecologist.

00:37:20:07 - 00:37:28:23

So I'm Pickering for the applicant. I believe the consultant ecologist did comment that this was an appropriate method.

00:37:30:09 - 00:37:44:27

I can't recall. We can come back to on that in any firmware. I can't confirm the actual. I can't remember the actual letter to do with that. But we did have that conversation and think they were happy and I think the local authority may help me out here.

00:37:45:23 - 00:37:47:25

Yep. Okay. Yes.

00:37:47:27 - 00:38:09:00

Nick from North Kesteven District Council. Yeah. The local authority, through their consultant ecologist, has been retained to this project from very, very early stages. I think probably the best course of action is for us to confirm that those written exchanges about the scope of the this particular chapter in these particular studies and confirm that it deadline one, if that's possible.

00:38:11:01 - 00:38:11:29

Yeah, that's fine.

00:38:29:04 - 00:38:46:04

And I assume that when the local impact report is submitted, we'll have the the ecologist views in there as well about the. Ecology chapter in the air to come in writing?

00:38:48:17 - 00:39:05:27

Yes, ma'am, There will be. Nick Feltham from North Kesteven. There is a separate appendix to our list with detailed comments from A.com. So it will be the particular point about HRA. I will just need to double check, but there will be an appended set of comments from a.com that comes to you. Yes.

00:39:06:12 - 00:39:06:27

Okay.

00:39:06:29 - 00:39:07:14

Thank you.

00:39:34:27 - 00:39:37:25

Just a question for.

00:39:39:23 - 00:39:43:20

The applicant on unrelated to silt laden runoff.

00:39:45:29 - 00:39:46:17

Um.

00:39:47:03 - 00:40:18:21

So the appropriate assessment, paragraph 7.5 onwards, relates to this and potential for silt laden runoff during construction. And as you've mentioned, the standoff distances from from drains. And it states they would be fenced off during construction. And paragraph 7.8, the appropriate assessment refers to the potential installation of silt fencing to be implemented as part of the camp.

00:40:20:06 - 00:40:37:03

Um, can you explain when or what what circumstances the installation of silt fencing would be required? What what sort of criteria would you use to determine whether fencing is required or not? I don't know if the ID can answer this one as well.

00:40:40:02 - 00:41:04:23

Uh, thank you, ma'am. Simon Pickering. It's a very precautionary approach that we're taking here in that, um, because we are fencing off the ditches and ensuring there's no, uh, risk of of movement into the dishes. Um, but one always has to be aware that.

00:41:07:01 - 00:41:14:16

There happened to be, say, some torrential rain at some point or a.

00:41:15:17 - 00:41:16:02

Uh.

00:41:17:00 - 00:41:50:11

Not. It should happen. But somebody drove in the wrong area and there was a rut or something like that. There is always a risk on a on a landscape like that that there could be a flow of water into one of the ditches. We will have a a consultant, ecologist, a psychologist on site, and obviously all the workforce will have a training for this beforehand to ensure that should an incident occur, um, that we will put that in place immediately.

00:41:50:13 - 00:42:28:01

It's, it's quite nice. It's probably a leftover from my career in dealing with wind farms where we would always ensure that we had that type of facilities available should it be necessary to stop silt running into a watercourse. It's a very precautionary approach. Um, it would be only in extreme conditions

that that would happen on a on such a flat. Relatively simple site to construct, but it's important that we always put those measures there in place should

00:42:29:20 - 00:42:30:20  
it arise.

00:42:34:29 - 00:42:35:16  
Okay.

00:42:36:06 - 00:42:39:13  
And do they want to raise anything on that? No.

00:43:01:27 - 00:43:07:16  
So in terms of water quality and going back to the to the.

00:43:11:16 - 00:43:12:06  
Just trying.

00:43:12:08 - 00:43:13:05  
To find.

00:43:21:25 - 00:43:25:08  
Paragraphs 7.17.

00:43:34:19 - 00:43:37:27  
Yeah, there was a wayward paragraph number in there.

00:43:39:20 - 00:43:44:12  
Between 7.17 and 7.18. There's paragraph 5.9.

00:43:47:17 - 00:43:53:12  
But yeah, that paragraph refers to a positive effect on water quality.

00:43:55:03 - 00:43:56:02  
If the wash.

00:43:56:27 - 00:43:57:23  
And.

00:44:00:19 - 00:44:08:02  
So the question is just why? Why does it form part of the appropriate assessment when it's a positive effect?

00:44:13:15 - 00:44:31:16  
Thank you, madam. Sam Pickering. On behalf of the applicant. When considering all impacts one looks at always looks at both negative and positive effects. And I think it's always important to mention when a development may have a positive effect.

00:44:38:21 - 00:44:39:06  
Okay.

00:44:39:08 - 00:44:39:23

Thank you.

00:44:41:25 - 00:44:44:18

Apologies for the numbering.

00:44:46:00 - 00:44:46:25

Not a problem.

00:44:54:05 - 00:44:59:09

So Section eight, Table three of the report.

00:45:05:17 - 00:45:17:11

So can the applicant explain the methodology which was used for the assessment of in combination effects to justify the conclusions which are in that final column?

00:45:21:27 - 00:46:00:27

Thank you, madam. I'm Pickering, on behalf of applicant Echo City. The, um, in combination of facts that we looked at were those where, um, that we were aware of and those which may. Under consideration may have an income, a combined effect, particularly in terms of water quality, but also if we had information on the from those applications, whether they would like to have a significant effect.

00:46:00:29 - 00:46:25:22

We tried to identify those, any of those that had significant numbers of wintering pink footed geese, but also those where there may be an impact on water quality, particularly, I think towards the end, the Boston Alternative Energy facility, where there was some considerable concern about that. But I gather that the conclusion was in that one, that there would be no effects there.

00:46:28:25 - 00:46:37:21

So we actually tried to use the same criteria that we're using for our site to look at the cumulative sites. That was the consistent approach that was taken. There.

00:46:46:07 - 00:46:46:29

Thank you.

00:47:08:27 - 00:47:26:12

And just ask the local authorities just still on this table at some table three, Section eight of the Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment And. Are there any other projects which they consider should be included?

00:47:28:24 - 00:47:40:14

And the assessment of combination effects should it be updated like the discussion we had earlier on cumulative effect? Should should this also be updated?

00:47:41:14 - 00:48:06:27

Yeah. Thank you, ma'am. Mark Wallace Lincolnshire County Council. Yeah, we were just discussing that and I think in recognition of what we said earlier, I think it'd be pertinent to, to review that and just to make sure that there aren't any other sites that perhaps need to be captured in that HRA. So again, expanding on what we talked about earlier in terms of additional projects and site that may potentially have in combination effects to be useful for that table to be reviewed.

00:48:10:29 - 00:48:13:29

Okay. Thank you. The applicant comments on that place.

00:48:15:21 - 00:48:41:10

Thank you, madam. Sam Pickering. I think that's that's a fair comment. As we've discussed earlier, there are projects coming forward, um, at the moment and the this Shadow Habitats regulation assessment was done at the time on the information that was available. Subsequently, other sites have come forward and that can be done and submitted at the appropriate timeline.

00:48:43:15 - 00:48:44:04

Okay. Thank you.

00:48:44:13 - 00:48:48:01

We try and keep it consistent to ensure consistency. Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah.

00:48:50:07 - 00:48:51:18

Yeah. Um.

00:48:53:20 - 00:48:55:26

I think that's it on this section.

00:49:06:02 - 00:49:07:15

Oh, yeah, Just. Just a.

00:49:07:17 - 00:49:11:18

Point. Um. Pens, advice, notes, hen.

00:49:13:07 - 00:49:46:02

Section six. The first bullet point I've got this in front of me so think that's correct. I'm requires provision of a summary table of all European sites, qualifying features and effect pathways to be submitted with the report. And that doesn't seem to have been provided and the summary table in accordance with the guidance. So. When the update is is provided.

00:49:46:04 - 00:49:48:07

Could could that also be provided?

00:49:50:28 - 00:50:10:07

Thank you, madam. Yes, that can be provided. But I haven't got that section in front of me. Um. This is a shadow habitat regulation assessment. Are you referring to one that would be submitted by the statutory agency that is responsible for it? Or is everybody happy with the shadow one?

00:50:11:10 - 00:50:13:00

Yeah. Yeah. For the shadow.

00:50:13:02 - 00:50:14:23

Yeah. Okay. No, no, that's.

00:50:14:25 - 00:50:20:21

Yeah, because it kind of. It comes from the Planning Inspectorate advice for forensics. So.

00:50:20:24 - 00:50:22:22

Yes, that that's just.

00:50:23:02 - 00:50:27:27

Just. Thank you. I agree with you on that, that it's the applicant to make that to provide that and we.

00:50:27:29 - 00:50:28:14

Will do that.

00:50:28:20 - 00:50:29:11

In our next.

00:50:29:13 - 00:50:29:28

Update.

00:50:30:06 - 00:50:31:04

Okay. That's useful.

00:50:31:06 - 00:50:31:26

Thank you.

00:50:44:16 - 00:50:52:00

Okay, we'll move on to agenda item 12 land use and soils.

00:51:04:16 - 00:51:18:13

And I'd just like the applicant to summarize your approach to the classification of and identification of best and most versatile agricultural land and the total amounts percentages which are affected. Thank you.

00:51:19:20 - 00:51:55:04

Thank you, madam. Tony Kernan from Kern and Countryside Consultants on behalf of the applicant. And I'm just going to explain the agricultural land classification system. What information is available about it? What we've done and what the findings were and then what we've done with those findings. Um, I think it would be very helpful if you'd be, if you're happy to, to just go into App zero 69, which is the relevant chapter from the environmental statement. I was just going to look at some of the, the photographs and the the plans just to explain it.

00:51:56:15 - 00:51:58:24

So the examination library reference. Sorry.

00:51:59:01 - 00:52:01:27

069069. So it's.

00:52:02:06 - 00:52:02:21

Chapter.

00:52:02:23 - 00:52:03:13

Six.

00:52:05:13 - 00:52:10:17

So I'm not going to bore you with the text. I'm just looking at the sort of photos and plans.

00:52:24:03 - 00:52:25:24

Yeah, I'm in there. Thank you.

00:52:25:26 - 00:53:09:29



Thank you. So agricultural land classification was a system that was developed in the 1970s, and it is an intrusive survey system. So if anyone says they've gone across land and they can grade it by just walking across it, they're wrong. What you have to do. You have to take a soil auger and you auger down. Usually you're in 10 or 15 centimeter plugs each time. Effectively, it's a bit like one of those screws that you see going into a cheese and pulling out a sample and you go down, if you can, to 1.2m and you're recording the soil texture and the color, whether you're getting models which are indicating where the wetness level sits in the winter, etcetera, you get Oakridge models.

00:53:10:01 - 00:53:13:02

So it's an intrusive survey and.

00:53:14:24 - 00:53:54:12

And it's quite slow and you can do sort of 20 to 25 points a day in the field. And it takes about the same time again to analyze them all and then map it out. So effectively it's a progress rate of about ten hectares per day. The reason I've explained that is because then when you see maps such as the one that's that's on there now, they're not the result of surveys because it would take hundreds of years to actually do a survey across the country. So. When they developed system in the 1970s, Maff produced these maps such as the one that's up there, insert two and insert three, which is at a slightly closer level.

00:53:55:14 - 00:54:28:27

Those show where they predicted grades one to grade one being the dark blue, two being the light blue, three being the the green grades four is yellow and brown is grade five. I'll say they're not the result of survey. And this site I realized from the yes didn't put the arrow on it. But this site lies just on the sort of northwest edge. It's a little bit shown as grade one and then going into grade two and it's leaving that big area of predicted grade one around the wash.

00:54:30:00 - 00:54:57:03

These maps are all we've got, but there's a big health warning on them because in the 1988, they changed the system. So math recorded all the areas that relate to these original maps. Um, then in 1988, they've changed the system. They've never produced new maps, so they've never tried to re estimate where those areas are.

00:54:59:07 - 00:54:59:22

I'm.

00:55:01:24 - 00:55:35:20

What math have done since at insert for. Um, there's some rather gaudy colored plans. They've put those into blocks and they've got low, medium and high likelihood of the land being of best and most versatile. So the purple color is where they expect that 60% or more of the land will be of best and most versatile quality. And the light. Sort of skin coloured ones are there where they predict less than 20%.

00:55:35:22 - 00:55:40:04

So what it's showing is that this edge of the country has got a high prevalence of.

00:55:42:03 - 00:55:43:15

Good quality land.

00:55:45:08 - 00:55:49:14

In terms of the figures that we've put into the environmental.

00:55:51:01 - 00:56:25:25

Statement Math should go back one step to the original. Estimate was that they set out grades one and two and they came to slightly less than 19%. What math have said. But they've never plotted on a plan. What they've said in technical information. Note 49 is that they estimate that 42% of agricultural land in England is of best and most versatile land quality.

00:56:25:27 - 00:56:48:20

So they're estimating 21% is grade one and two. 21% is grade three. So in the tables that we've used in the environmental statement, we've adjusted the original measurements from that first plan you looked at and just lifted the figures to try and get it so that it's that we're getting that 42% of best and most versatile.

00:56:50:09 - 00:57:29:06

Um. Policy from when I first started, what, 35 years ago was that grades one and two were the best and most versatile. Three was the best and most versatile. If there wasn't any grade one and two around. But for about the last 30 years, it's been grades one, two and three. As seen as the best and most versatile in terms of its prevalence as say, it's 42% of agricultural land. So it's not rare. And then when you look at maps, you see take out all the sort of upland areas, You find that in a lot of lowland farmed areas, the proportion is obviously much higher.

00:57:30:03 - 00:57:49:19

So. What we. Can estimate and what we have estimated is set out in table 16.4 of my chapter. Um, there and in the sort of bullet points that are just below that.

00:57:51:18 - 00:58:10:25

That across Lincolnshire using that say a little bit of health warning because it's slightly crude estimate but trying to to work those figures as best we can. Something like 71% of agricultural land is of the BMV quality. And in North Kesteven it's just slightly less at 67%.

00:58:13:10 - 00:58:49:14

And just in terms of quantities, the because there are two figures that are in the table, 16.3 shows the original Ministry of Agriculture addition of land in the five grades, and that came out to 11.4 million hectares of agricultural land. The figure that we tend to use as probably a more effective one is that we know that there's 8.9 million hectares of agricultural land actively used.

00:58:49:16 - 00:59:07:12

There's obviously lots of other and horse grazing land and other things, but it means that actively used 42% of that would be 3.7 million hectares. So there's a lot of agricultural land actively used. That's the best and most fertile quality. Um.

00:59:11:09 - 00:59:46:21

What we know from the site. Therefore, it was shown as being grades one and grade two to the north. What we then did in terms of identifying the land quality of the particular site and we know from some other work we've done that it can be quite variable. And because it's such a big site, we went out and took what we did what a semi detailed survey. So normally a detailed survey would have an auger point every 100m. This is a this is a huge site. So you go and do it one every 200m and get back an initial pattern.

00:59:46:23 - 00:59:57:20

And from that then you can see where there's variability, where there's where it's more complex, and then go back and do additional sampling points. By.

01:00:00:21 - 01:00:41:27

Doing that, which we did when discussions with natural England. So I think there was they're happy that we haven't done detailed across all of it. And in fact the North even used an agricultural consultant as well who's looked at it and taken up the same approach. So we then went back and did a lot of extra sampling points because we were getting such variability. The grading and the plan that's up there now is what we've identified. Much of that is actually done at a detailed level because there's one auger every 100m and it's shown what's really quite an odd bag.

01:00:42:02 - 01:01:13:29

Um, think we were kind of expecting when you look at the land, it's just big flat area with crops on it and you assume it's going to be quite variable. And what we've got is, is a very. Mixed amount of. As you can see, some grade one in patches, some patches are grade two and then these odd patterns of grades three A and then a large part of grade three B. And the insert I'd like to just take you to modern is insert ten.

01:01:14:18 - 01:01:26:12

Um, which is a photo. It was an aerial photograph which got published after we'd done our survey. But it's been very helpful because it's taken in a very dry 2020.

01:01:28:05 - 01:01:58:22

Three hours early. 2022. Think I'll put 2023 at the top. And what we knew was that the soils we were finding are ones that have been affected by the sea in the past. And when you look at that area, you can suddenly see these little rivulets. If you if you went to the seawall and looked out into the wash, you'll see these little channels going out everywhere. And clearly in historic times before it was all drained. And this has been similarly affected. Once you start seeing those those patterns, it starts to make sense.

01:01:58:24 - 01:02:03:07

While we've got such a varied mix of different land qualities and.

01:02:05:02 - 01:02:31:25

It's very clear from what we've found that there were basically no fields that have got particularly even quality. All of the fields you'll see from land classification are mixed grades that we've got one field that is mostly grade three, but otherwise all of the fields are in a kind of complicated pattern.

01:02:34:02 - 01:03:18:26

We did as survey a wider area as explained in the environmental statement. And there was higher quality land to the south and the west, which has been taken out of the scheme. But what we've then got is this complicated pattern. It does involve quite a bit of best and most versatile land. But think. The reason that the patent implication is important is because it's not really that easy to exploit the land separately. So whilst you've got patches that might be grade one and natural, England said, why and how can you make those into smaller fields? You can't really on this this holding one of the principal reasons is that pretty well every field boundary is a very deep ditch.

01:03:18:28 - 01:03:43:27

And when you when you do the site visit, you'll see that. And when they're properly deep ditches, they're not ones you can just go down and pop out the other side. So you can't just drive into fields at different points. You have to come in off that main sort of central loop and go down the down the edges of the field. So it's it's been used for cereals and it is really cereal and break crop land rather than.

01:03:45:28 - 01:04:10:02

Be suitable for root crops, etcetera. That very clearly there is land to the west, which I've seen in root crops and think we found that the better quality land that we've taken out was off to the west. So there

is land in the area that that's better and less variable. But this particular area has got quite a mixed pattern and it makes it very difficult to exploit the.

01:04:12:16 - 01:04:52:05

The three and certainly the grade two and one. So they're there, but they're pretty well impractical. And it's cereal country. And think in making any assessment we need to look at it as that rather than something that could grow other types of crops and. With that information. Agriculture is only one of the considerations, but the substation has been cited and the three B land. So the big area for the fixed infrastructure is on area that was shown as Subgrade three B it's it's all capable of being restored at the end, but obviously it's a large area.

01:04:52:07 - 01:05:01:20

So that's more of a challenge in terms of the amount of land that's actually going to be.

01:05:03:08 - 01:05:35:12

Adversely affected. I think it's generally accepted and agreed that the installation of the solar panel legs themselves aren't affecting the land quality. What we did in the environmental statement was or assessment process was to measure up where the tracks were proposed and where the various inverters and transformers were proposed, because those areas generally will have the topsoil taken off a matting, put down some stone, put down and.

01:05:36:16 - 01:05:54:25

They'll be restored at the end. But for the duration of the the proposals, those areas aren't going to be farmed. And we've measured those out. And it's there's half a hectare of grade, one half a hectare of grade two and 1.8 hectares of grade three A, which will be

01:05:56:16 - 01:05:59:20

affected by tracks and inverters and party going on behind.

01:06:01:19 - 01:06:05:21

Um, that will be affected by tracks and inverters for the, for the.

01:06:07:18 - 01:06:40:07

Duration. And then the larger area obviously is a substation which is on Subgrade three B. Land. So that's what we've done. That's what we've found. And the only other thing that's just occurred to me I ought to mention is the cable route. Because think natural England's latest comments say they've got a few questions relating to the methodology and it really relates to the cable route. And we haven't at this stage done an agricultural land classification of the cable route.

01:06:40:16 - 01:06:41:09

We've

01:06:44:21 - 01:06:46:02

got a bit too much now.

01:06:51:17 - 01:06:52:22

I think somebody's good

01:06:56:06 - 01:07:27:23

with with the cable route. Obviously, when you look when you look at the the order plans, there's a very wide area and it looks like it's a huge amount of land that's affected. But I've said that has taken a wide area so that they could determine where within those parameters the cable would actually go.

The trench itself, um, is mostly I think the maximum width is expected to be 1.5m wide and it's 5.5km long.

01:07:27:25 - 01:07:43:03

There'll be some areas where it may be a bit wider because of directional drilling etcetera, but sort of simple maths, 5.5km times 1.5m, it's less than a hectare. It's actually going to be the, the trench itself. Um.

01:07:44:20 - 01:08:16:15

We have proposed with Natural England through a revised outline soil management plan, which they're considering at the moment, and a methodology whereby the soil would be fully surveyed before any installation takes place. They'd be consulted on on that and the land quality won't be adversely affected by the cable laying, but it's important that the soils are treated properly.

01:08:16:17 - 01:08:40:08

So that's the focus. And I think as long as that's agreed with them before any construction work should be there, then what's really quite a narrow slice through the land should be absolutely fine with it. There's cables going through to pick a fen all across this area and you can't see any sort of disturbance or any poor growth, etcetera, when you do a survey.

01:08:43:00 - 01:08:43:15

Thank you.

01:08:46:08 - 01:08:47:13

Thank you very much.

01:08:51:06 - 01:08:54:15

Yeah, it was going to ask about that, about the cable,

01:08:56:01 - 01:09:05:08

the cable run and what was being done about that. So I assume that's that's in process at the moment and we'll get an update on that in due course. Is that correct?

01:09:06:28 - 01:09:40:08

Yes, we've we've sent them we're we've got a statement of common ground that's evolving. And we sent them a revised outline, soil management plan to cover the a bit more on the cable route. And that's the outline. Soil management plan is really quite a detailed one. I think it's gone a bit past what I'd call an outline, and some of the questions they've come back with are really quite tight matters of detail. But I'm sure we're we're very close to agreement on it. We've got agreement on other end sites with similar documents, so we should be there.

01:09:41:21 - 01:09:49:10

Okay. So that's likely to be contained in the statement of Common ground rather than a separate response from natural England.

01:09:50:26 - 01:09:51:11

Um.

01:09:51:13 - 01:09:57:21

I think that their agreement to that document would be in the statement of Common Ground. Yes.

01:09:58:04 - 01:09:59:20

Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

01:10:13:06 - 01:10:14:03

Okay.

01:10:14:07 - 01:10:15:01

I'm.

01:10:15:13 - 01:10:29:26

Could you now explain, um, how cumulative effects arising from use of best, most versatile land will be taken out of production in the region have been addressed?

01:10:31:02 - 01:10:37:19

Yes. I think the it's probably going to be a bit of a double act in terms of responding to this. Um.

01:10:39:22 - 01:10:51:27

And as as we're hearing earlier, it's an evolving situation because there are various applications coming forward. I think what I'd like to just say from the outset.

01:10:54:07 - 01:10:54:24

Is.

01:10:56:20 - 01:11:31:09

Your question talks about land being taken out of production and we have to obviously look at each of the insects, but if they are, the solar ones are similar to ours and land isn't being taken out of production. In that there will be a change of agricultural production, but it will go from what, cereals to sheep grazing. So it will remain in production except for the tracks, the transformers, the substation, so the actual quantum of agricultural production that will be reduced and.

01:11:32:13 - 01:11:36:23

If all the other schemes are similar to ours will be quite limited

01:11:39:20 - 01:11:41:03

in terms of.

01:11:43:22 - 01:11:49:15

Land in the region. We know the prevalence of it. We did an assessment in the.

01:11:51:22 - 01:12:02:26

In the environmental assessment. We set out the figures. Those need to be updated because there are now many more schemes coming forward. But

01:12:04:18 - 01:12:19:00

it looks from the figures as though if everything came forward, were we somewhere they're going to use somewhere between point four and point eight of a percent of the agricultural land of the county. But in terms of.

01:12:20:18 - 01:12:39:00

Going out of production. I imagine that the figure is going to be minuscule. So, I mean, in the case of this particular proposal, for example, it's less than 20 hectares that won't be producing out of the 520 hectares or 524 hectares of the current site.

01:12:40:24 - 01:12:46:02

And those those figures that you just mentioned. That's for Lincolnshire County, is it?

01:12:48:16 - 01:13:01:03

Yes, we were trying to work them out last night, so we're going to set that out in the document. We were adding up all the different areas, and one of the difficulties in providing an exact figure is.

01:13:02:18 - 01:13:35:09

Because the question relates to best and most versatile and in quite a number of the schemes. And certainly when we did the environmental statement, a number of the schemes were logged, but no information had been provided as a basis of any survey. So going back to then the the provisional maps, you can look at that and you can say, well, it's shown as grade two, an undifferentiated grade three, but you can't say that that's so much that is better, most versatile.

01:13:35:11 - 01:14:05:16

And we have the reason I thought it was important to just explain those original provisional maps. They're they're not intended for site specific analysis. There's no survey. So they give you a guide. They don't give you an answer. So think to ultimately get the figure, it will mean going through each and every application and seeing where they've provided the information and at what level. And from that then how they're proposing to use the land, what they're doing with infrastructure, etcetera.

01:14:06:05 - 01:14:23:12

But I think in most cases it tends to be sort of 1 or 2% of the site area that's affected by hard infrastructure. And the rest of it is panels, which potentially is grazer, depending on the the applicant and depending on the panel design and height.

01:14:25:21 - 01:14:59:17

Um, so. So Isabel Hollands from the Applicant. Um. So for your clarity, we intend within the interrelationship report. And so there's the expanded site that we discussed earlier this morning to review the information that's been submitted to date. And as we those, there is varying quality of data for each of those at the moment just because of the status of where they are within the system. So we'll use what they've submitted publicly to include within that interrelationship report and that will within there will obviously look at the cumulative impacts from an environmental impact assessment standard ones such as landscape, visual, etcetera.

01:14:59:19 - 01:15:30:27

But we also intend to look at it from a cumulative perspective of loss for the county because no, that's been a key point for them throughout this whole process. And then so that first draft of that will come to you at, uh, deadline one, and then we'll continue to review that as we go through the different deadlines. And if that information is updated, will indeed be updated again within that. And then the cumulative assessment within the Yes will in turn also be updated, but that will be at deadline two for you based on those those schemes that we know at that point as well.

01:15:36:00 - 01:15:46:16

Yeah, that's fine. That's what, that's what I would expect. Um, and presumably the other solar parks are doing exactly the same thing. Are you sharing information?

01:15:48:09 - 01:16:24:10

We mean the information that we're using from our perspective is the public information that's present at the time. We're obviously having conversations with other the other intercepts. We have an open you know, ones are around that we're talking to. I would. I have to say that from their perspective, quite naturally, they want to not put into the public domain information that they're not yet having considered and reviewed themselves based on where they are in the design process, hence why we're

really trying to refer and be consistent to everything being documentation that's within the public domain that's used within those reports.

01:16:24:19 - 01:16:34:12

Um, but we can clarify if there was at any point information that had come that wasn't yet in the public domain, but we were allowed access, I'd clarify that within the reports for you. So you knew the sourcing of it.

01:16:36:03 - 01:16:38:12

Yeah, that's fair enough. Understood.

01:16:43:03 - 01:16:43:24

Okay.

01:16:51:28 - 01:16:52:13

Yeah.

01:16:52:15 - 01:16:58:26

Just come to the local planning authorities. Got any comments on what's. What's been presented just now?

01:17:01:04 - 01:17:02:06

And no Stephen.

01:17:02:24 - 01:17:35:23

Thank you, madam. Nick Feltham from North Kesteven District Council. Um, we will present a quite a detailed set of comments through our local impact report, including an appendix from Landscape who are our retained agricultural land consultant and think it just at this very early stage, it's probably fair to say that there are some areas of disagreement in terms of the approach to, I suppose, the permanent ceiling over, um, which Mr.

01:17:35:25 - 01:18:18:19

Kiernan mentioned in terms of that 3 to 4 sort of hectares of land lost of land, loss of permanent ceiling over versus suppose the loss of opportunity in terms of the, the use of the residual BMV land. Um, there are some other queries as well which I think we picked up on in brief this morning in relation to socio economic effects effects that also overlay with the chapter in relation to suppose the change to a sheep farming enterprise and some of the references to the number of breeding ewes, lamb production estimates and therefore the socio economic benefit that sits behind that.

01:18:18:28 - 01:19:01:25

Um, and. A concern that that is not yet in front of us in terms of how that could be secured, in terms of that level of detail, and therefore the the reliance on some of those estimates and the approach to auger soil analysis has all been accepted by landscape consultants. So there's no, I suppose, professional disagreement in terms of the figures that have been set out, albeit that um, landscape do advise that in real terms the difference between three being BMV and three be non BMV is, is or can be relatively slight.

01:19:02:02 - 01:19:37:14

So there is a very approximate 5050 split and there are some, some points as well that will set out in the about the farming report and some of the the sort of the claimed practical difficulties in terms of irrigation and black grass in particular. Um. I think a key thing is in terms of. The mitigation measures and how those measures are tied up and whether that is through an operational environment management plan, as we discussed yesterday.



01:19:37:16 - 01:19:57:25

Think in terms of DCO and how we would have the surety of those contracts and that change to sheep farming and the mitigation that is reliant to a large degree on that as actually being secured and the mechanism for that. But we'll set out in much more detail in the. Thank you.

01:20:00:10 - 01:20:08:24

Okay. Thank you. And our Boston Borough Council still on the line. If they got anything to add regarding.

01:20:10:03 - 01:20:12:10

Now, I've got nothing else to thank you. No.

01:20:12:12 - 01:20:13:15

Okay. Thank you.

01:20:26:22 - 01:20:39:01

I just had a question on the change application and the mitigation tree planting. Well, what's the agricultural classification of the area where the tree planting is proposed?

01:20:39:22 - 01:21:08:20

It's a good point. It's it's in the very top corner. It's Subgrade three B and think it's just it's 0.4, two of a hectare. But and and we would round to the nearest point one with land classification. So it's a very top that's it's just been pointed out for you madam on the on the screen where the little arrow's going. So there's some trees planted just up against the watercourse at that very top bit, which is a funny little field of Subgrade three.

01:21:08:22 - 01:21:10:22

B That's three. B Okay.

01:21:12:16 - 01:21:14:03

I with a nine metre stand off

01:21:16:06 - 01:21:20:21

trees planted next to with a nine meter stand off from the watercourse. Yeah.

01:21:30:01 - 01:21:38:05

Okay. I don't have anything further to raise on land use and soils unless anybody else would like to raise anything before we move on. The applicant from.

01:21:38:07 - 01:21:38:29

Neil Bromwich and the.

01:21:39:01 - 01:21:39:27

Applicant. Um.

01:21:40:10 - 01:21:41:10

We note.

01:21:41:12 - 01:22:19:20

Um, the council's comments about the which we will obviously respond to a deadline to. Um, there's one point I'd like to draw out now though, which is, which is important is because think there is a little

bit of a concern about how we're securing the the land for farming. And just to highlight at the moment that that is outlined in the outline landscape environmental management plan, that's document 239. Um, and I felt that was just an important point to draw out at an early stage rather than wait until we respond on the other, if that's okay.

01:22:21:02 - 01:22:21:21

Thank you.

01:22:21:29 - 01:22:22:27

Okay. Thank you.

01:22:26:00 - 01:22:35:13

All right. We move on to item 13. So just like the applicant to provide an update on the recent archaeological investigations for for work number five.

01:22:37:20 - 01:23:22:22

And Elizabeth Pratt of Pegasus Group on behalf of the applicant. So trial trenching of the cable route commenced in early August 2023 and is ongoing pending agreement of access to discrete landholdings. The agreed scope is a 2% sample of the order limits area with a 2% contingency. This is the Lincolnshire Archaeology team's standard. The work is being carried out by Wessex Archaeology, who previously completed the trial trenching of the energy park and in accordance with a full, detailed written scheme of investigation that was approved by the RPAs Archaeology Advisers prior to commencement.

01:23:23:10 - 01:24:00:25

And that full written scheme of investigation was based on outline written scheme of investigation referenced at 244. The field work is being managed by me on behalf of the applicant and monitored by Matthew Adams and Denise Drury on behalf of the APAs. To date, 57 of 240 trenches and ten contingency trenches have been excavated. The area of greatest archaeological potential, which is at Royalty Farm south and east of south, 40 foot drain has been prioritized.

01:24:01:25 - 01:24:36:22

So the works there have been completed. Ditches and gullies representing Roman agricultural activity have been recorded. For the most part, these features align with anomalies detected by the preceding geophysical survey, the report of which is referenced App 213 and App 214, which in turn correlate with crop marks visible and aerial photographs which were reviewed as part of the preceding Heritage Desk based assessment, which is Ref app 206.

01:24:37:10 - 01:24:52:18

These Roman features are considered to be of local to regional heritage significance. And the archaeological advisers and I have spoken informally on site about the area of greatest sensitivity and the options for mitigation

01:24:54:07 - 01:25:25:04

in terms of the completion of the works on the remainder of the cable route. We're trying our utmost to secure access permissions so this can be completed during the examination period. The trial trenching carried out so far has revealed some features that were not predicted by the geophysical survey. But generally the survey results have been borne out. As such, the likelihood of there being archaeological remains of a significance equivalent to a scheduled monument, i.e.

01:25:25:06 - 01:25:36:04

the highest level of significance is considered low, as Norfolk and Stephen have also recognised in paragraph 16.25 of their local impact report.

01:25:54:22 - 01:25:56:06

Okay. I'm.

01:25:58:01 - 01:26:04:07

I'll just ask the local authority to comment on that and their involvement in the archaeological surveys.

01:26:10:07 - 01:26:48:23

Thank you, Madam. Nick Feltham, North Kesteven District Council. Yes. As has been mentioned, the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire have been very closely involved on behalf of North Kesteven District Council in terms of having agreed the schemes of trial trenching and in terms of monitoring those works as they proceeded on the main energy park site. It will be a point in our in our about the ability to have summarised, I suppose, the overall significance of effect in terms of the cable route, mindful that that trial trenching is still being carried out to date.

01:26:48:25 - 01:27:16:14

So there is a degree of tension, um, in terms of I suppose our position on the, on the cable work significance in terms of archaeological importance, albeit we accept that those works are in play now. And um, whether or not there will be an opportunity to review that through this process, um, as the examination continues. Thank you.

01:27:17:21 - 01:27:19:03

Okay. Thank you very much.

01:27:20:20 - 01:27:21:07

Um.

01:27:22:03 - 01:27:27:10

So just clarify which local authority is responsible for this? Is it the county? Yeah.

01:27:27:12 - 01:27:30:25

Thank you. It's Mark Willis, Lincolnshire County Council. Actually, both.

01:27:30:27 - 01:27:57:27

Authorities have got archaeological advisors in this respect. So the County Council has a statutory function with regard to the archaeology as well. But North Kesteven also use Heritage Lincolnshire. Um, it's fair to say the applicant has liaised with both of those bodies and there is agreement think between the authorities certainly advises on the approach and the stance that they've taken on it.

01:28:00:16 - 01:28:01:17

Okay. Thank you.

01:28:07:06 - 01:28:32:11

So when we talked yesterday in the development consent order. Um, issue specific hearing one that requirement 12 might be updated accordingly. Um, as the examination progresses. And so we'll keep an eye on that one as well. Um, there are any further comments before I move on on archaeology?

01:28:35:25 - 01:28:38:11

No, we get North Kesteven.

01:28:39:18 - 01:29:23:21

Thank you, Madam North. Nick Feltham, North Kesteven District Council. Just in relation to the the main energy park site as opposed to the to the cable corridor, a point that we will make in the letter is in relation to what we see as a slight disconnect. Think between the environmental statement chapter and some of the technical work that sits behind it. In terms of the I think there's six areas of potential significance that require a further sort of detailed strategy. So there is a comment that you will see in our local impact report about sort of squaring the circle is what at present seems to be a little bit of inconsistency between some of the recommendations about those six specific areas on the energy park site.

01:29:24:00 - 01:29:42:06

Um, albeit I think the Council North Kesteven District Council's position is that the, um, the off site cable works uncertainty in terms of the baseline is possibly the lead issue, for want of a better word. Thank you.

01:29:43:08 - 01:29:44:08

Okay. Thank you.

01:29:49:22 - 01:29:50:11

All right.

01:29:50:13 - 01:30:10:10

That's that's it for the environmental matters. Well, I think we covered this yesterday. Um, agenda item 14 Statements of common ground and where they relate to environmental matters. If you could just have a recap on that place.

01:30:13:17 - 01:30:14:29

All right. On behalf of the applicant.

01:30:15:13 - 01:30:52:25

So, yeah, so I've mentioned yesterday there was 12 statements of common ground requested as part of the Rule six letter. Cadent gas have confirmed that they, they have no assets in the area. So we've not progressed the statement of common ground with them. And of those statements of common ground three are agreed and that's Anglian Water, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board. The statement of common ground with the local planning authorities are underway with some elements agreed and the remainder under discussion, particularly in relation to Lancashire County Council, subject to their local impact report being taken to committee.

01:30:53:24 - 01:31:22:16

The Environment Agency. We have a good draft. There's a couple of points there that are still under discussion, um, which you'll see when it's submitted. And then National Grid electricity transmission, we have a agreed form with them. A couple of points there remain under discussion which will progress during the examination and then National Gas Viking Link, Natural England Network Rail and try to know all drafts have been shared with those parties and their comments are awaited. Thank you.

01:31:25:12 - 01:31:26:15

Thank you very much.

01:31:35:15 - 01:32:07:11

Agenda item 15 accompanied site inspection. Could the applicant provide any details of any initial arrangements for an accompanying site inspection? It's currently scheduled for week commencing 20th of November. I'm see there is a provision in deadline one for any further suggestions for locations. But if you could just provide an update on on any work done so far on this place.

01:32:08:10 - 01:32:40:03

Thank you Madame Neil Bromwich from for the Applicant. Um, yes, just to confirm what we we said at the yesterday or think prelim meeting, we have given some consideration to arrangements for the see some of the assay location points will be on the, the solar farm site which which we have agreement with the landowner and we're therefore making arrangements for that.

01:32:40:21 - 01:33:14:18

Some of the points may be at the event substation. We will need to liaise with National Grid on that because as we highlighted yesterday, some of the um, the location or parcel location might, might be subject to a health and safety risk. So we will need to take some, we will need to work on that. The remaining um, locations will predominantly be from the point of public, um, public access.

01:33:14:20 - 01:33:44:22

There may be an opportunity to visit the site and or access track and we have made arrangements and we, we will confirm arrangements for that, for access to that track. I think it's probably useful to add at the stage that it this afternoon's discussions come out and raise some some some interesting points both on best and most versatile land and archaeology.

01:33:45:11 - 01:34:16:21

And for the applicant I think we should be taking away or we will take away whether or not there might be some benefit in you. Visiting some locations predominantly will be within the development site to assist you in understanding some of the points that are raised this afternoon. Um, we will give also some consideration to those those factors on on the cable route, bearing in mind that the cable route is under several private land ownerships.

01:34:16:23 - 01:34:31:16

So we will do our best to make arrangements for for that so we can come back and confirm with you at the appropriate time and further on the arrangements, but hopefully to give you some confidence that this is all under under control.

01:34:34:28 - 01:34:35:13

Yeah.

01:34:35:20 - 01:34:44:07

That's fine. Thank you. So when the final timetable is published next week, we'll know the dates as well.

01:34:44:22 - 01:34:46:15

Yeah, that would probably help.

01:34:47:14 - 01:35:07:06

And. But yeah. Any suggestions that anyone else would have the same watching the live stream as well and, um, watching the recording if, if they've got any other suggestions for viewpoints for me to visit. So they are welcome. Thank you.

01:35:13:16 - 01:35:17:09

Is there anybody here today that has any particular.

01:35:18:28 - 01:35:21:14

Viewpoints they would like me to visit.

01:35:24:22 - 01:35:34:01

Oh, well, it's linked to cancer. Think we'll take that away and just review that. And if necessary, we can make those suggestions that liaise with the applicant about that.

01:35:38:03 - 01:35:38:18

Okay.

01:35:38:20 - 01:35:39:05

Thank you.

01:35:57:23 - 01:35:58:09

Yeah.

01:35:58:28 - 01:36:15:12

I haven't got any other matters that I wish to raise at today's hearing. If there's anything else. Anybody wishes to raise at this point, whether it's on the agenda or not. Now is your chance or I'll draw to a close.

01:36:18:22 - 01:36:19:07

Right.

01:36:22:03 - 01:36:35:04

There are a number of action points that have arisen from today, and we will publish those as soon as possible. I'm sure you've taken your own notes about what what needs doing and when.

01:36:37:24 - 01:36:46:07

My role. Eight As I've just said, that should be published early next week and we'll make every efforts to get that out as soon as possible.

01:36:48:06 - 01:37:21:06

And that will set out the final timetable as when as well as any other procedural decisions. And that includes the acceptance of the change application. A digital recording of the proceedings will be made available on the website as soon as possible with a transcript and written summaries of any oral submissions made today would be submitted. Should be submitted at deadline one, which is Tuesday 3rd of October. Thank you all for your helpful contributions today.

01:37:22:04 - 01:37:31:09

The time is now. 253 And the second issue specific hearing for Harkins and Finn Solar Park is now closed. Thank you.