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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:06:22 - 00:00:07:07

Okay.

00:00:07:09 - 00:00:11:25

The time is now. 1125. It's time to continue.

00:00:18:10 - 00:00:24:07

Thank you. Confirm with the case team that the live stream recording has commenced. Thank you.

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So moving on then to agenda item seven A in relation to land use and soils, a consideration of the extensive soil surveys.

00:00:38:24 - 00:01:19:11

Noting the applicant's response to question 1.21 or further written questions that it wouldn't be proportionate to undertake soil surveys outside of the old limits. And the existing public information has already been used as part of the process and also noting Natural England's response to that question as well, which broadly echoes that view. And nevertheless also note the responses from the respective local authorities that all expressed a preference for such a work to have been undertaken, and also that the weights to be given to the site selection process may be diminished because of the absence of that.

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And I also note that the the Long Fields site Longfield Solar Farm did appear to take soil sample work in the periphery of the old limits with a view to helping to refine the boundary of the build limits itself to try and help to avoid using best and most versatile land as far as possible. So there's a few different factors at play there. Um, the applicant's response to the line six The local authorities set out their view that there was no policy basis for such work to be undertaken and just like to bring in the local authorities really just to see if they could expand on what they believe to be the policy basis for additional soil sampling work to be undertaken outside of the the old limits.

00:02:09:12 - 00:02:14:18

So first of all, Rutland County Council, would that be Mr. Johnson? Would you take that question?

00:02:16:07 - 00:02:52:22

Yes, sir. And I think our viewpoint was in terms of government policy, in minimizing the best and most versatile use of land. If if by doing undertaking a a proportionate additional survey of soils outside of the site, it may deem that there are areas that are equally suitable that are of a lower value and therefore more appropriate to use than some that are currently within the order limits.

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And so it was again I suppose going through that. Um. A sort of sequential approach to it. You've got your order limits. You've looked at what you've got there. You've set out that there are there's quite a large a relatively large percentage in the best and most versatile category. And it's perfectly reasonable to consider sites adjacent to that where you could equally potentially put solar panels.

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Thank you, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Jordan, on behalf of South Kesteven District Council.

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Phil Jordan for South Kesteven District Council. Yeah. Mean think we're agreeing both in our local policy. We advocates a sequential approach to

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agricultural land quality which is also there in national policy. Um, think what sort of the understanding of that as the examinations got on is. And it's from my point of view, it's similar to some of the discussions around sequential testing for flood risk yesterday. Um, I think the applicants have been clear that the starting point was always based around the grid connection and, and then an area of land was identified, um, you know, larger than what then has been ended up and some of that land was, was pulled back um, from where possible.

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But it's still leaves a, you know, a very high amount within the order limits of best and most versatile land and I think would be the the point may be around this agreement is is the is the any other land that was beyond the the land originally identified close to the or limits that you know could have been subject to that more detailed sampling.

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Thank you, Mr. Jordan. Do we have Mr. Willis on behalf of Lancashire County Council?

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Okay. Thank you, sir. Mark Wallace, Ventura County Council. Not really to add much more than what my colleagues have said. Really? Think we've made comments in the written response to questions about our position on that. And think again. It just comes back to this point about compelling evidence in terms of the written ministerial statement and confidence that that there isn't, as we've seen when detail has been carried out, that we have seen that grade to particularly land has been reduced and taken out of scheme as a consequence.

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And so on that basis, there could have been the opportunity potentially for lower grades have been identified outside the limits and included within the scheme. So I think pretty much colleagues have covered that off as well already.

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Thank you, Mr. Willis. Will the applicant like to come back on the point raised by local authorities, but also the and the fact that the Longfield do appear to have undertaken at least some additional work beyond the limits.

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Mr. McCarthy will bring in Sarah Price, who is online in a moment. But think two quick points make she comes in, first of all, those referenced there to the written ministerial statement and think would emphasize again the decision in Longfield, which emphasized the national policy statement and how that has changed and how that changed policy from 2015 when that came out and that it is the policy focus that guides the way that we undertake these exercises.

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And that point about Longfield haven't done it on the periphery, don't know the details of that. But I would say that that's that doesn't mean that that don't think that is the same question because that's not about this process of site selection is my understanding. And I think the applicant we've explained in

our submissions the thorough site selection process we went through and which I'll just emphasise is just one factor which was considered in light of the relevant policy considerations that guides us in that way.

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But on that point, I'll bring Mrs. Price in.

00:07:15:28 - 00:07:52:07

Thank you, Mr. Fox. Fairer price for the applicant. So Mr. Fox has already touched on some of the points. And so you made reference to our question response, which I think was 1.2.1, which address this point. And the key point is proportionality. And that's set out clearly in paragraph 4.4.3 of NPS and one that's adopted NPS one, and that's been carried through into the subsequent revised drafts of the as well.

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And I would note that all of the councils in their responses did also refer to the need for proportionality in any survey data. Again, I can't comment on precisely what Longfield did and we can of course look into that. And I think probably the overarching point is we've touched on it in previous hearings is that Longfield did also end up with a significant proportion of best and most versatile land in their boundary. And even having done those surveys and again, we've talked about it previously, but also had more Grade two land.

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And I think it's for each scheme to form this balanced approach for the level of best and most versatile land compared to other issues and effects, as Mr. Fox touched on there now and think, well, the applicant's position is really where would you stop? There's been reference to doing it around the margins. What we have done in our robust approach to site selection and then development is to survey the land that has been identified as being available to us.

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And in order to be able to carry out soil sampling of adjoining land, one would need to reach some sort of agreement with those landowners to be able to even go into the land to carry out surveys. And it clearly it's not my evidence in terms of a soil specialist. We'll hear from Mr. Kiernan later on those aspects. But.

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This is clearly a landscape with some best and most versatile land and some not best and most versatile land. And as we set out in the site selection stage, we did focus on the areas where there was lower propensity for best and most versatile land as set out in the DEFRA predictive agricultural land map. So moving to other land parcels further afield from the application site would not necessarily have achieved a different outcome.

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So the applicant's position is we did carry out a proportionate approach and I'm not sure by going further that it would achieve a different outcome of the stage that we're at or indeed would have been possible without that landowner agreement.

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Noted, Mrs. Price. Think your offer of the summary of your views on the approach taken along the would be would be welcome by deadline. If that's possible, please. Yes. Yes. Thank you. Mrs. Holloway, did you have a point on on this?

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Mrs. Solloway from Low Price Action Group. I'm not sure that the applicant can claim that the survey work they did was proportional. The initial stage one samplings at a quarter of the density required, and this is within the order limit area and even upon the final secondary top up sampling that was still only on a selective and restricted part of the site. So only 330 odd or 34 auger samples were done across an 852 hectare site.

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We know it's the 100m square ruling as per tins O049 Natural England's guidance on how you're sampling. So I would suggest that even within the order limits, they didn't have the proportionality that was required and therefore perhaps that would have allowed them to explore other areas outside of the site, given they weren't at the required density in the first place.

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Thank you.

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Thank you, Mrs. Holloway. Mean? Yes. Mean. On that point, notice that the soil management plan has been updated to refer to, um, the restoration of soil at depths. And that will be informed by the. So so, for example, I'm not quite clear on how that could be achieved across the whole of the old limits, given that there aren't surveys across the entirety with the applicant like to just come back on that. That point raised in terms of the extent within the limits as well.

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And will look to bring in Mr. Kernan on that. I would say a starting point, though, that in terms of what we did pre-application natural England and the relevant statutory body and they've considered our approach acceptable. But I'll bring in Mr. Kernan in relation to the restoration point. Okay.

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Phoning Sir Tony Kernan on behalf of the applicant and. In response to the question about the sampling density, the agricultural land classification methodology does not actually define the sampling density, so it's developed as good practice and it is stated in technical information. Note 49 that these are samples are normally done on a 100 meter basis, but that is not defined within the agricultural land classification methodology.

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So taking a different sampling density doesn't mean that you've not done an agricultural land classification and there are many agricultural land classification maps that the Ministry of Agriculture did in the past that you can obtain via the government's GIs system, WKT, magic Gov.uk. Those are all put forward as agricultural land classifications, particularly the larger ones. When you go into the depth and get the detailed reports that go with those, many of those were done on a semi detailed basis.

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So. What I think is important to recognize and the way that we approach this was firstly to recognize the.

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Element of impact that might occur. And then secondly, to design the sampling density appropriately. We decided to start with a semi detailed survey. Firstly, it's a huge site and it's about ten hectares a day when it's 20 in the field and another day to analyse it. So you're doing about ten hectares per day in terms of land classification. So it's a lot of work. And we did a semi detailed survey which then gave us a fairly good pattern across the site for where we thought the higher quality was, where the poorer quality was.

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We then looked and in consultation with Natural England, we looked at those areas where it was best and most versatile or on the on the periphery. We went back and did additional samples in those areas that did show a more complicated pattern. So if you compared the original and then the the final ones we've got in some of those areas a more complex pattern. So it's a bit of three, A3B mix. So it's what you'd expect if you've got more samples and you're picking up some which are slightly different, grading.

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But I'm absolutely confident that we have provided an adequate sampling density for this particular scheme. We have to bear in mind that it's, I think, common ground that across the areas where panels will be installed, we're not actually going to change the land quality. So there isn't going to be a negative loss of land. It's the the legs go in, the legs will come out, the land quality will remain the same.

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So knowing whether or not there's a slightly different percentage in terms of a more complex pattern of three, A3B isn't really going to change the impact. The impact is that the resource will remain. It then comes down to a policy issue. And I would also comment that getting a more complicated pattern and as you'll see across this site is that you don't have big swathes of grade of any particular grade.

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And there's quite a complicated pattern. There's lots of little bits of different colours on the map, which means that from a practical point of view and you're not able to exploit the the better quality land really any differently. So it's kind of cereal land with bright crops. So.

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Were you to take the decision that there should be patches taken out of the scheme where they are better quality land and try and find poorer quality land elsewhere? I think all you're going to do is end up with a more.

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Spattered area of.

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Panels across the countryside, you're not likely to result in in particularly easily formed blocks that remain between the panels. So I'm very confident that we've done enough to inform it and think we've got natural England's agreement on that.

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Thank you, Mr. Kerr. Just. Just in response to the query around soil depth stripping back and the restoration of it, which I think there's some changes made to the management plan in response to feedback from natural England. And I don't have the precise reference in front of me, but think they view was that that would be restored to the. At same depth as as previously, and that would be informed by the soil surveys. Just a question as to how that would be possible across the full extent of the limits without a greater density of soil survey being undertaken.

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But yes, sir. Tony Kernan, on behalf of the applicant and.

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We've got enough information. The soil depth, the topsoil depth doesn't vary significantly. So I don't think there would ever be a soil management plan which went down to the nearest hundred meters. Um, to show the depth that's coming off. The soils generally are about 30cm and there's a color difference. So the.

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The question that natural England which we. Clarified because it was always the original intention. Is that where topsoil is removed, which we're only talking about the tracks and the and the inverters, ET cetera is only talking about small areas where topsoil is removed. It will be put back the same soil to the same depth. And you can see when you scrape it off that you see the color change and the difference or the think the change that you're probably referring to that natural England required to the soil management plan related to tracks.

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And I had in the previous draft suggested that we would take 10 to 15cm, which is about half the topsoil scraped off and then put the matting down, assuming that then there would be another 15cm of topsoil below natural. England have required the full depth of topsoil to be removed. The consequence of that will mean that more stone will be required to create the tracks, otherwise they'll be sunken. Or we may be able to just to taper them so we don't need to. I can understand why they've suggested it in the whole of the soil resources protected.

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I don't believe that had we done it as we suggested and left 15cm of topsoil there, that would be alleviated then I don't think it would have made any difference, but in natural England have requested it. So we've we've, we've agreed that amended the soil management plan accordingly.

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Thank you, Mr. Kent. Yes. It was that point I was referring to. Um, from what you just said, it would be apparent in terms of the, the colour of the soil as to where the appropriate depth is and you'd seek to restore that, the full depth accordingly. Is that is that correct?

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Yes.

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Informed by the soil survey itself, which I think is what we alluded to in the response.

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Yes, sir. Tony Kernan, on behalf of the applicant, the Soil survey has informed the methodology that we are suggesting in the soil management plan, which of which we've done the outline on the ground. What's important is that the principles set out in the soil management plan are relayed to those doing the physical work. So that's where we need to make sure that the soil management plan is understood, People are properly briefed and the ultimate action at the end is the person with the digger who properly supervised will be able to see and you'll get it fairly quickly.

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And when you start work on those soils, you can see where the topsoil is and where then you start to get to the clay subsoil, there's usually quite a there's colour change, usually there's also a textural change. So, you know, these people are quite skilled with these machines. They can properly recognise topsoil and then when it starts getting more clay so that it should not be difficult with the tracks where it's only the topsoil that's coming off to just take it down to the right depth, but 30cm. Within a centimetre or two is is about where most doctors are in this country anyway.

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So that's why we suggested that. But it if it needs to be varied on a particular site. So if you've got particularly shallow soils over rock, for example, that will be spotted by the the operator, there's no reason to then adhere to a 30cm strict depth and start digging up the rock. You know, you just take off the top soil that depths there and store it to the side.

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Thank you, Mr.. So be the contractor on site operating the machinery that would be keeping an eye out for for sale debts and acting responsibly. Is that how that would be? Marriage? Yes.

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At Tony Kernan on behalf of the applicant. Yes, sir.

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I think because the tracks etc. are.

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That the linear and so that they can change through the different grades. I think it may be appropriate when they first start just a little bit of explanation and training so that they understand what they're trying to achieve with the soil management plan. But I say most most contractors have done this many a time and understand and can recognize the difference. And most digger drivers can recognize the difference between topsoil and subsoil. They're not going to therefore make problems because it's pretty obvious, um, what they're dealing with when they work the machine.

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But it so it's properly supervised and properly trained and understand what the soil management plans aiming to achieve, then there shouldn't be a difficulty in it being implemented effectively.

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It going to just add, just reemphasize two things. So first first of all was that the measures that we've got in the S&P are reflective of the survey that we've done. So the question is the measures and the effectiveness of them, which natural England has has generally agreed to. And we've we've made the changes that they've asked for. Um, so the practical reality of delivering those measures is something that we are required to do pursuant to the DCA. So, um. That the points about management of the other, the contract to accept etcetera, is something that is required and think that to preempt any suggestion of supervision, etcetera and lack of.

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If this is true of any sort of management plan of any DTA, there are practical measures and mitigation measures, and they they lead to the conclusion of effects that we have. And if nobody trusted that any of these measures is going to be complied with, then you you wouldn't give consent to anything. I think it's important to say that, um, and just before you turn to interested parties, um, we do actually have now an answer on that long field point. Just to go back five minutes. Um, just bring up Mrs.

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Bryson. She should be able to just add some, some more info on that.

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Thank you, Fox.

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Sorry, sorry, Sorry. Are you happy for. Yes, for the applicant. Thank you. So whilst we've been talking, I've just had the opportunity to review again the design, the alternatives and design evolution chapter

of Longfield where where this is set out. Set out. So that's chapter three of their environmental statement. What happened in the case of Longfield was that they had a single landowner with a very wide landholding. They consulted on a boundary that they took to scoping stage for their environmental statement, and then they were able to reduce that further, taking into account a number of factors, including effects on best and most versatile land.

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So I think that what is being suggested potentially by the local authorities as a later stage, going out further from the landholding to seek to survey wider than the land that's available. What happened in Longfield, which is in fact the same process that the applicant went through here, is they looked at the available land and then they reduced it according to environmental effects said, including best and most versatile land. So so that just meant that they were able to take some land out of the proposed order limits to account for primarily whole fields of grade two, which is actually the approach that the applicant went through here as well.

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So I think actually the approach at Longfield just endorses the approach that the applicant has taken in this case as well.

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Thank you, Mrs. Fry. So the context there is there's a different situation in terms of the extent of the ownerships that are within your limits and that are actually on board in terms of projects, which is a slightly different situation that we have here. So thank you for that clarification. That's that's quite helpful.

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Thank you.

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Yes, sorry about that. But I just wanted to add I'll give you the proper cross reference in our summary. But there was questions on this. I believe in our first written questions where we talked about the fact that if you look at those maps and the situation in terms of land in the area, if we were to avoid it purely on the basis of those maps, for example, then asking would have to be more spread out. We need a longer grid connection, cable, more land being acquired, etcetera, etcetera.

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So I think that's important context to that question.

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Thank you, Mr. Fox. Mrs. Holloway.

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Mrs. Holloway, for past Action Group. I'm just wondering, though, if you have only got selected areas of the site where you have apparently, allegedly more robust data, how can you guarantee returning the land and the soil to the correct grade without having that baseline information in the first place? And I just wanted to sort of add further to that why I'm raising that and I'm particularly concerned. Um, I know you mentioned earlier about new evidence, but I'm sure you understand as an action group, we're not in the same position as the applicant in terms of having access to the land expertise and funding in the same kind of timely way.

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And we've been concerned for a long time about the robustness of the work, both stage one and stage two and reported within our written representation. Rep 2090. However, we basically knew that the

only way we could perhaps take this further was get external validation on this from an independent source which we seek to do. So we've engaged the services of a highly qualified scientist which the applicant and their soil expert from will be fully aware of the expert in question as they've been in close proximity with each other recently.

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And we have conducted our own on site surveys within the order limits with the permission of a landowner on a section of the site. And we specifically covered the four areas of the site that were resampled in the grade two to to improve the density. And we principally targeted one of those areas not completely to re survey that and a full suite of tests was done, soil pits dug lab test, soil samples taken and the full results will be provided.

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But also assessing the the differences between stage one and stage two of the testing also revealed some anomalies. Um, the important being that we don't feel that the BMV has been correctly reflected. So I don't know if you're aware, but at stage one, which was Pre-application Peer, the BMV was 53% of the site. At stage two, it was downgraded to 41.

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Bearing in mind that there are only four selective areas that were picked resample and they were targeted as 3 or 3 areas with the possible highly likelihood that that would be downgraded, which is what happened. Um, in conclusion, our expert fields from both the review of all the data available and the sampling that he's done within the order limits that this would take the BMV across the site or the level of three A to over 50% and with a small amount of grade two.

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So shifting the dial in terms of the percentage by the 20% change. So come back to the point that it is absolutely imperative that of the robustness of the data survey work in the first place and the interpretation of that and the understanding of some of the anomalies that exist. For example, there are at least ten fields across the site that were not reserved but were downgraded, for which there is no explanation.

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One of those areas or part of it includes the substation field of field 19. But that's just one of a number of many examples. Um, so we would like our report, our experts report to be given due consideration within the mix because obviously with this now being a 60 year time application, um, the decision on land use and the impact on land use of so much BMV needs to be taken into account. There is just one further aspect that wanted to to raise in this respect.

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We're talking about with respect to the solar area, but we seem to have missed a chunk of land. So the site is 852 hectares. We know there's 239 hectares retained arable. So we ignore that. That's carrying on in arable production. That's fine. And then you take away the solar area, including the margins, which is 531 hectares, which is what KC's work was based on.

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And that leaves you 82 hectares of mitigation which will not be in retained arable and therefore will be taken out of the food production. And with that loss of BMV over that 60 year period, and I would argue that that also needs to be quantified what that 82 hectares is made up of and how much extra

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that actually is in actual terms because it's just kind of been forgotten about completely. But when we're looking at land use and the decision as to how much food production and we can afford to give

away, the total area needs to be considered that's affected not just the solar area. So we will be supplying our report in full or our experts reporting full to identify all these points.

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Thank you, Mrs.. Hello. I think you referred to the fact that the applicant might have been aware that this work was being undertaken.

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Mrs. Holloway for Malpass Action Group. I probably didn't explain myself very well. I think Tony Kernan will be familiar with our expert Sam Franklin, because they are working on other hearings and possibly even the applicant may be aware of the expert as well due to other

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solar farms that they are looking after.

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Okay. Hasn't yet had a chance to review this information.

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We have only just the the work was done last week so it hot off the press to me. I need to review it and discuss it. The expert has been in other hearings. Um, so he's been tied up so haven't even literally been able to have that full cross over yet.

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Okay. Thank you, Mrs. Holloway. Um.

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Duncan clearly can't comment on the the report itself yet or the survey work. But just in terms of the the broader points there right away, particularly the concepts that come forward at this stage and also the extensive BMV outside of the area, the extent to which that may be an issue or not.

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It's there. So I'm talking about the applicant. So on the point about the quality of the mitigation and enhancing areas and the lamp areas. Um, that was the first written question on that, which is what I was talking I was trying to find and I can't immediately find. So we'll put it in our written submissions. But we have specifically answered at that point. Um, the second point is just to re-emphasize again, there's this constant talk of loss of land.

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If not the loss of land is a change of the use of that land, not from farming to something else. And it's where did that change of use to soil is what it is. And I would note that of course farming practices in and of themselves, um, can negatively affect soil health, that the question of soil health and whether it's able to be used afterwards is still um, something that we've, we've dealt with before. Um, and the, the point about 60 years, we, we dealt, we dealt with yesterday, um, what would say in terms of the, um, another survey results being produced to the examination.

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Obviously this is very late into the examination. Um, we will do our best to respond to that. Um, but I'm also very conscious of getting into an expert off in the context of the last six weeks or so of examination, um, we've done with Mr. Conan's, um, long expertise in this natural England has agreed with it. And if a statutory body is agreeing with it, then there's going to need to be a very strong reason for that to be disagreed with. Um, so think that, um, as I say, we will do what we can, but think that.

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It's on the begins to produce evidence to justify the conclusion that we have done that. And that's been agreed by the statutory body.

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Thank you, Mr. Fox. Mrs. Holloway.

00:36:00:16 - 00:36:02:24

This is all the way from Past Action Group.

00:36:04:21 - 00:36:39:13

I think, you know, to say that we're bringing evidence to the table, accept that and explain the reasons for that and think you'd have to have some kind of appreciation, understanding. But equally, you know, we have all had to accommodate moving from a time unlimited application and everything that was put in there to a 60 year a complete change and turn around. So which does affect many of the areas of the year which we still haven't had a chance, which we will hopefully today as we go through the different topic areas, discuss the implications.

00:36:39:22 - 00:37:07:03

So this is iterative. The documents are constantly being changed and amended and updated by the applicant and therefore don't think it's unreasonable. We're not trying to bring this data in at a late point. It is just the best we can do given the resources and timing and importantly, access to the land because we couldn't have done any of the sampling without access to the order limits.

00:37:07:10 - 00:37:18:09

So thank you. Thank you. Think think. It would be helpful if perhaps the action group and the applicant perhaps could go in, have a conversation about the appropriate point in which this could be submitted. And

00:37:19:24 - 00:37:35:27

I'm sure the sufficient time for the parties perhaps to engage in that as well and respond accordingly. That's something that could be taken away and perhaps a submission can be made with the applicant response at the same time, for instance, that other parties could come back on.

00:37:40:06 - 00:38:01:01

Thank you, James. Mrs. Holloway from Action Group, we we will do our best to do that. But mean obviously, we will commit to submitting the response in full at deadline seven. They would have still have the opportunity at deadline eight to to respond to that. Are you asking us to give them all the documentation prior to deadline seven?

00:38:01:14 - 00:38:14:18

I was just going to ask myself, in terms of deadlines about how this is going to work, in terms of when are you going to submit it. Obviously, from our point of view, everybody else, but not least the applicant, to give them a fair chance to respond to it. Yeah. You're saying you're going to submit it at deadline seven?

00:38:15:00 - 00:38:18:12

Well, because that's the earliest next deadline. Yes.

00:38:18:14 - 00:38:18:29

Okay.

00:38:19:09 - 00:38:24:04

If obviously you've got to agree with yourself, sounds like you're going for an internal process to to review it, because.

00:38:24:09 - 00:38:26:14

I'm just I've just got to you know, literally.

00:38:26:16 - 00:38:45:18

There's no reason why you can't provide a copy to the applicant before deadline seven, albeit when you submit it to the examination. It won't go in the library till deadline seven. So think in situations like this, if you can provide it early for the applicant, because obviously we've got to ensure that they have a fair chance to to consider it and respond to it. And then. Is that by deadline eight?

00:38:46:15 - 00:38:50:00

We can look to respond. Yes. But mean would come back to.

00:38:52:15 - 00:39:31:07

Not getting it, not getting kind of lost into an expert off. You may be aware of the ongoing debates that there are on this on Sunday, for example, where two different expert reports were put in. There was a suggestion of trying to agree a joint approach, which is not even possible because the starting point couldn't be agreed. Um, I think yes, we will respond, but um, and as much as we can and, and think just I just want to come back on this 60 years point. Just to reemphasize this, the point has always been that the scheme has the effects that we say that it has and which is essentially none, apart from the worst case scenario for access, track and substation.

00:39:31:14 - 00:40:05:22

The fact that we are now saying that there is a date in which it will definitely come back versus the unknown date that it could have been, because the worst case scenario pre this change would have been that it can never come back. So now we're saying that it's changed. But the point is whether the measures are deemed to be suitable to reverse them and make sure that there is the impact that we're saying that they are, that hasn't changed. That is not a change to our position. It has always been the case. The the any impacts are reversible. Provinces want to emphasize that because we keep hearing that this is a big, massive change to the scheme and it isn't.

00:40:08:21 - 00:40:12:04

To Mr. Fox and Mrs. Willey.

00:40:12:22 - 00:40:15:26

Can I just make one point? We've been talking a lot this afternoon.

00:40:16:21 - 00:40:26:11

Or this morning. Sorry about. And the applicant has referred to soil health. BMV and soil health are not the same

00:40:28:12 - 00:41:09:21

as we've discussed at many of these hearings is around the land classification. Soil health is very much about how the land is managed, how it's used, what its microbial health is, and think it's really important that we don't confuse the two and think the the applicant is suggesting that the land can be returned to its former soil health, which it may be able to be, but it won't happen on day one. It is very unlikely that because of the way and the nature of the grassland that is going in, it is very likely that the soil health will change over the scheme in order to reflect the way in which the land is being used at the time.

00:41:09:23 - 00:41:20:24

To assume that that can then come straight back into production is a big assumption and one that should actually be considered in the light of the claims which are being made.

00:41:24:05 - 00:41:32:08

Just to be clear, I wasn't saying they are the same thing. We've got the commitments that we make in respect of what it means to be within some management plan.

00:41:33:27 - 00:41:41:06

Thank you, Mr. Fox. Think just to move us on. Think this is an action there for the action group and the applicant to.

00:41:42:23 - 00:41:47:25

Share information and come back accordingly. Thank you.

00:41:48:03 - 00:42:05:24

Gareth Phillips To the applicant. Just to say you've made the point previously helpfully, that, you know, we don't have to wait for the next deadlines. So think yes, if we can have the report as soon as possible, and then it can obviously be submitted to pins outside of deadlines and move the process forward. So that would be really helpful, I think.

00:42:05:26 - 00:42:06:12

Thank you.

00:42:07:15 - 00:42:17:10

Particularly where we are with a timetable. Yes, I think that would be a useful suggestion. Thank you. Um, Mrs. Davis, do you have a point that's related to this particular item? Yeah.

00:42:27:09 - 00:42:58:12

Year old deadlines. And consequently, we have done our best to find out that information when it has been given to us. They have a team of people. They are professionals. This is their job. And in fact, we've had an example this morning of somebody being able to look up something and come back to this this meeting about something that was asked at this meeting. We have never been able to do that.

00:42:58:14 - 00:43:05:15

We've had to go away and find it and search for it. And I don't believe that this is a difficult.

00:43:08:10 - 00:43:20:14

A point that the action group need to get it to the applicant beforehand. We've never had that opportunity and don't see why the applicant should.

00:43:25:15 - 00:43:27:12

Thank you, Mrs. Davis.

00:43:29:02 - 00:43:33:02

Michelle moves on to the next agenda item. Um.

00:43:35:04 - 00:43:40:20

I'm sorry. Yes. With a further hand. Is it in relation to this particular point? Thank you.

00:43:42:06 - 00:43:47:09

We've heard the word proportionality used several times by the applicants.

00:43:49:18 - 00:44:24:25

The reason why they can't do more. So surveys it would be too expensive. The reason why they can't do more archaeological surveys, it will be too expensive and it will end up making the energy more expensive. I don't think that they are considering what proportionality is affecting this whole area. And the thought that they are prepared to go against the government on the initiatives of best and most versatile land being used to produce land.

00:44:24:27 - 00:44:45:01

They are prepared to go against. That I don't think is acceptable and I don't think it's think it's acceptable that they can say that natural England has agreed with them. So that must be the last word and nobody is allowed to have another opinion on that. I think that is not democracy.

00:44:52:16 - 00:44:55:04

Mr. Kernan is quite a stand up, so just Thank you.

00:44:55:06 - 00:45:01:09

I just noted that. Mr. Kiernan. Would you like to come back on the points raised?

00:45:02:25 - 00:45:38:09

Very briefly, Tony Kernan, on behalf of the applicant and in respect of soil health being distinct from agricultural land quality, completely recognized, and I think that's reflected in the documents and. Where land goes into long term grassland, the soil health improves. So there may be less fertilizer, but that isn't an indicator of soil health, which in respect of the question it was just asked, would it be helpful if I provided you with some more information on that and some references? ET cetera. Because there's lots of scientific documentation that we could reference to you to respond to that in writing.

00:45:38:11 - 00:45:40:03

Would that be the best way of dealing with that?

00:45:40:05 - 00:45:40:20

So

00:45:42:10 - 00:46:03:00

thank you. Yes. Now we give people a chance to comment back as well, perhaps by deadline eight. Thank you. Yes, sir. Well that your response by seven subsequent responses back by deadline eight. Um, I think we'll move on to the next agenda item just conscious of so I've got my hand up.

00:46:05:11 - 00:46:07:27

Sorry. Yes, Dr. James.

00:46:08:25 - 00:46:10:16

That's correct. Yes. Yes.

00:46:10:27 - 00:46:11:25

Um, please go ahead.

00:46:12:20 - 00:46:46:19

Dr. Alan James from, um, we're at we're coming to the conclusion that in planning generally, there is an over emphasis on land grades, and we think that it is much more important to consider what is the land growing? If land is good, crop growing land, no matter what it is, grade, then it's good crop

growing land. And in some areas of Cambridgeshire we have grade four land, which is some of the best root crop growing land in the country.

00:46:47:13 - 00:47:22:13

So we think that in addition to the land grade, one needs to look at what this land is doing and how productive it is, and that this is extremely important at a time when we are importing 60% of our food. And the National Audit Commission sorry, you know, perhaps not the national the think I've got the body wrong, but the government has been advised that it must grow more food in the UK.

00:47:22:23 - 00:47:57:14

So taking land out of production, that's good. Growing land is not a good thing. And when it comes to soil quality, I'm not a soil expert, but these solar panels have to be cleaned. They're cleaned with chemicals often or distilled or denoised water, which requires energy to produce it. And so you get land contamination. So and on top of that land that's under solar panels will not be exposed to sunlight and the weather and it will degrade.

00:47:57:18 - 00:48:28:20

Think there is evidence, published evidence that if soil is not in an open position or being having plants grown on it, then it will degrade. So I think that degradation of land needs to be considered and how long it will take to get it back into production when or if these solar panels were removed is a significant factor. And I'm not sure that the evidence is even there, but I do think it needs to be considered. Thank you.

00:48:30:18 - 00:48:39:24

Thank you, Dr. James. I think we have had some previous written submissions and responses back from the applicant on a few of those points, but perhaps Mr. Fox, if you could just summarize.

00:48:39:26 - 00:48:48:20

Yes. Applicants. So the areas around kind of controls cleaning and management during the operation period are set out in our

00:48:50:05 - 00:49:34:09

soil management plan and, and the length where we're relevant. Um, the point about, um, change of use mean that this is what we've always said either acceptable or it isn't in terms of food security. We put in submissions about why we think it isn't an issue to recognize that. Um, point of view was 0.0005% and Rutland never mind the um, and of course we have farmers who've asked for the scheme to be put on their land and the appendix that has the interviews with them which explain how in some cases it means that their farms continue to be sustainable, sustainable economically.

00:49:35:00 - 00:49:37:19

It's like. Yeah, that's enough.

00:49:38:16 - 00:50:21:21

With respect, if I can come up, come in on that point. Um, we're aware that farmers are struggling, and that is not a the alternative is not to put solar panels on that land. It's to ensure that those farmers are getting properly remunerated for their crops. And the the economic system in this country at the moment puts farmers way down the heap. Um, the, the, the supermarkets in particular, they're buying processes really do um, make life very difficult for farmers no matter what they're doing, they're growing or producing, whether it's milk or crops.

00:50:22:05 - 00:50:35:06

And we think that nationally that's not a matter for this inquiry. I know that that issue needs to be looked at much more closely and farmers need to be getting more money for doing what they're doing and feeding us.

00:50:38:29 - 00:50:47:00

Like a talk show. I'm keen to move on with the with the agenda. So move on to item seven B.

00:50:51:17 - 00:51:05:09

Seven Be Yes. Yeah. So matters arising from responses to further written questions in relation to the management and monitoring soil, including the suitability of some of the measures set out in the outline soil management plan.

00:51:07:00 - 00:52:22:12

And the Landscape Environmental Management Plan and the outline operational environmental management plan as well. And. Was some feedback from from Natural England. In response to those questions. And that has made in response a number of updates trying to improve matters in relation to so handling compaction and the stripping back and reinstatement topsoil which alluded to before In terms of the, the depth and yeah, the applicant's updated the outline soil management plan update sets paragraph 11.1 and also the table three eight also to commit to soil health monitoring over the lifetime of the development itself and for evidence around the impact of solar farms on soils, which again touches on some issues that are just being discussed, really keen to get some feedback from the local authorities as well as the action group in terms of their thoughts on the latest iteration of those management plans, whether you have had a chance to review them now or whether that's something perhaps you could take away and feedback by Deadline seven in writing, whether that be preferable at this stage in Cancer Council.

00:52:22:14 - 00:52:27:02

Mr. Johnson, did you have any comments at this point, or is that something that you'd like to respond to in writing?

00:52:27:04 - 00:52:36:14

Yes, I think so. Justin Johnson Rutland County Council. Um, we have had a look at it, but think it's something that we'd like to respond in in more detail at

00:52:38:04 - 00:52:39:10

stage seven. Thank you.

00:52:40:18 - 00:52:42:08

No, just thank you, Mr. Jordan.

00:52:44:12 - 00:52:56:09

Phil Jordan, First District Council. Same position. If we could respond to those plans in writing for deadline seven. Thank you. Mr. Wallace From Lancashire County Council.

00:52:57:02 - 00:53:31:09

Mayor Mike Wallace Links to County Council. Yeah. Similarly, I think the the only thing I did pick up on is that in the it suggests in the in the final landscape environmental management plan that details about stocking rates, perhaps sheep grazing will be confirmed. And I think it's just about um, I've seen the applicant's response with regard to that, but it's about how we can ensure that grazing is secured and if so, as a mitigation confidence. Therefore, how much weight can be attached to that as a mitigation to the change, if you like, from arable use to grazing.

00:53:31:21 - 00:53:38:11

So I think we will respond formally, but I think it would be I'd be interested to know how that could be secured or tightened up, really.

00:53:40:24 - 00:54:07:17

This box can be the applicant. Think just to restate the point that the the grazing of sheep is not a mitigation measure. It's a benefit that we hope will happen through the measures in the the particular um, we talked and in answer to questions we've talked about how that would work practically and what that means, but it is not a mitigation measure. So we're not seeking to secure that 100% will be delivered.

00:54:09:19 - 00:54:12:29

Thank you. Mr.. We appreciate what that means in terms of the way you must place on it. But.

00:54:13:25 - 00:54:14:17

Guys position.

00:54:18:06 - 00:54:30:15

And I've said I'm. Some further questions that pick up on some concerns raised by the action groups. If I could go through those first, they may address some of the points that you're about to raise, but I'll go into those and.

00:54:32:03 - 00:55:25:29

So in response to its questions. 7.0.6 to further written questions, the action group identified whether they proposed proposed grassland mix. So the Moors gate basic general purpose meadow mixture and that's proposing that raise is going to be adequate. I think they've been in contact with the with the provider and had some feedback that the the seeds are quite slow growing and therefore there may be an implication there in terms of the extent to which they may take effect, which has obviously knock on implications for flood risk and other other matters and also believe the position was from the action group that there's perhaps some conflicts in terms of the grazing proposals as well with that particular seed mix and perhaps if the action group could.

00:55:26:27 - 00:55:29:26

Just elaborate on that point to begin with. Yes, Mr. Britton.

00:55:30:23 - 00:55:31:16

Yeah. Bill Britton for.

00:55:31:18 - 00:56:09:24

The Action Group and the Parish Council. Yes. The concern around the most of these species in their Moore's mix are said to be slow growing, shade tolerant species, which is a good thing, but they need a lot of time to establish, to establish adequately and thoroughly so that benefits of reducing flood risk include increasing infiltration rates. Are there before construction starts also. They will help with enhancing the resilience of the soil to resist compaction and if trafficked in the right conditions.

00:56:10:14 - 00:56:32:21

So our point is we would like to see them established at least 12 months, maybe 18 months before, so harvest the crop, drilled the grass, manage it appropriately through the first year to get it properly established with a full root system to then get the benefits that would accrue from that for the construction period and for the following, possibly 60 years.

00:56:33:25 - 00:56:37:29

Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Austin with the applicant like to respond to that point.

00:56:38:18 - 00:56:49:02

And will bring Mr. Cannon in. Um I think will say now that we would not be making a commitment to establish grass 12 to 18 months before construction.

00:56:54:03 - 00:56:57:03

When you said, why would that be? What would be the reason for that?

00:56:57:27 - 00:57:27:29

Because don't let Mr. Mr. Kernan come in. Because what you need to to plant will be dependent on the area of the site and what's appropriate. We've got the mitigation measures in place across the SMP and the drainage documents that we discussed yesterday to deal with the situation where it doesn't doesn't grow in time. Um, but if we were to put in a 12 to 18 month, then you're talking about 12, 20 months before on top of the preconstruction process and we're already planning for.

00:57:32:21 - 00:57:34:03

Thank you, Mr. Kiernan.

00:57:35:02 - 00:57:43:14

And thank you, sir. Tony Kernan, on behalf of the applicant. What we've. Endeavoured to do with the outline. Soil management plan is

00:57:45:12 - 00:58:21:23

derived to seed the grass in advance where possible and where that fits in with the timescale, but not commit to it. And the benefit of sowing the grass in advance is really from a management point of view because then it's sown before the works go forward. We, you and I discussed at the last specific hearing about the length of time before you can get sheep grazing, etcetera. And in that following year when the if you've sown in the autumn, in the following year when the grass is growing, the the average is good.

00:58:22:04 - 00:58:23:08

But the.

00:58:24:23 - 00:58:56:12

To the network of routes below the surface isn't very strong. So in terms of resisting compaction and the newly sown lay isn't as good as an older sound lay, But I would add that in all cases, having even an old lay of grass and doesn't mean that it's it's like concrete, it's not resisting compaction effectively, it's just that you can't see it so much because the grass doesn't dimple in the same way as if you're going across plowed soil or cultivated soil. So the important point in terms of.

00:58:57:17 - 00:59:30:24

The mitigating missing. Not creating any compassion is to deal with the soils, whatever the land coverage is at the appropriate time in terms of when those soils are suitable so far as you can. So it's not a. Mitigation really to require grassland to be sown in advance. The reason we also suggest that we'd need to look at this as the scheme progresses, that there may be some areas that, for example, aren't scheduled to start installing the lakes until after a crop's been taken.

00:59:30:26 - 00:59:53:25

So if you know that those sections of the site are going to be developed in the September, October into the November, there doesn't seem any particular benefit from sowing a grass the year before and leaving it. You might as well wait until you've just harvested the crop. You've got all the doubles there, go in, spread the grass seed, but carry on and then put the panels in. So I think there needs to be flexibility and

00:59:55:10 - 01:00:20:11

some kind of. Evolving situation so that you can take a view based on the weather and based on the schedules and based on the progress that's being made. So to summarize that it's as set out in the the outline soil management plan. It's a target. But among anything among any reasons is because it's better and easier for the applicant. It's not, in my mind, an essential requirement to sow the grass in advance.

01:00:22:19 - 01:00:51:08

Thank you, Mr. Cannon. Just appreciate your points around flexibility. But and we've got a clear message that there's no commitment to advance. So 12, 20 months before construction, where sowing is proposed in advance, how much before construction would that be undertaken? What what would be the period of time that would be acceptable to the applicant, if not 18, 12 to 18 months?

01:00:53:24 - 01:01:12:16

Andy Cohen on behalf of the applicant. Think so. That will depend on once we get to the detailed scheduling program, when you know which areas you're moving to at what time. And then I think you can take a view. So I would suggest that the sowing of the grass is going to

01:01:14:09 - 01:01:54:21

be intrinsically linked to when they want to take the land, which would generally be because it's mainly arable generally between harvests. So if they have. They know that they will be working on that land before the next crops grown. There won't be any point growing a crop of wheat, say, if you're going to take. So if you put a weight in in the in the autumn and you know that they're going to start moving on to those areas in March, April, May, you're just going to be ending up losing a crop that you started growing. So in those cases, you can say the grass down the autumn before and think the grass sowing will mainly be done in the autumn so you'll know which areas you're taking before the next harvest.

01:01:54:23 - 01:02:27:20

And so them then. To reiterate the point I made earlier, I don't see it as essential that the grass is sown because the grass doesn't stop compaction. Compaction is is stopped by working on the land when the ground conditions are correct and as set out in the soil management plan, etcetera, there will be times, just as there is enough when the weather defeats you and there will be localised damage. But that's easily rectified as we know from other schemes and brought back.

01:02:27:22 - 01:02:35:16

So it's really not necessary to plant the sole of the grass 18 months in advance in my view.

01:02:36:10 - 01:03:11:03

So just just concluding that just quickly, if I can just. Just to say that, um, and think what Mr. Turner's said at the end there is really important because if you put a if we were required, we had to put it 12 months in place or that it had to be established before we could do anything. What that would mean is that if there was a weather events that essentially there could be you'd have if you had three years of bad, bad weather, then, you know, you'd be imposing an unknowable stock pointer when it could start in terms of that that that having that effect.

01:03:11:05 - 01:03:20:27

And we put in place, uh, as I said, through the central management plan and specifically in your questions, those updates to the water management management plan we talked about yesterday.

01:03:23:03 - 01:03:31:10

Yes, there is that in there now, which is noted. Okay. Um, Dr. Williams.

01:03:33:18 - 01:04:09:14

Thank you. James Williams, on behalf of Class Action Group. I'm a little confused here because there is a real issue in terms of the establishment of the grassland, in terms of the soil conditions that will be in place at the point that the applicant is trying to establish that grassland. In practice, the issue is partly around compaction and partly around nutrient status of the land. So currently as agricultural land it will be relatively high nutrient status.

01:04:09:29 - 01:04:49:17

There are issues that will potentially come back to in the biodiversity area item with respect to the management of that grassland. But think that in terms of establishing that grassland, there are some real issues there about high nutrient value and what will grow on that effectively. When you are trying to establish a low nutrient grassland. So there are some real issues here about actually managing over a period of time to establish that grassland that I'm not convinced of fully thought through here.

01:04:50:03 - 01:05:30:24

And there is a real issue with that high nutrient status that there will actually be problems with establishing that grassland. And therefore some issues with respect to pernicious weeds, for example, or the issues with respect to actually having to go back and re-establish that grassland when it hasn't established in the first place. So I think that this is actually a much more complex problem than is being made out, because what we're talking about here is turning an agricultural field into a grass lake, but not just turning it into grass.

01:05:30:26 - 01:05:42:11

Lay but actually how you then manage that thereafter. And therefore, I am actually concerned both in terms of the establishment, but also the management of the grassland. Thank you.

01:05:45:01 - 01:05:48:19

Thank you, Mr. Fox. If it's not for Mr. Kernan or whether you like to respond.

01:05:48:23 - 01:05:56:14

Think actually we should return this one to the writing on that. But I think I'm just conscious of time, but think that the

01:05:58:06 - 01:06:10:02

quick answer would be the combination of the measures in both the S&P and the limp will ensure that it's managed to achieve what it's supposed to be achieving, um, which is, you know, a certain, um,

01:06:11:21 - 01:06:18:01

biodiversity point of view in terms of the grass and what it's achieving with the solar PV areas. Um, but we can say more and more think.

01:06:18:27 - 01:06:24:22

That'll be a response by deadline seven in our summaries. Okay. Thank you. Just think.

01:06:26:15 - 01:06:30:01

Thank you, sir. Carly Tinkler for Mallard Pass Action Group.

01:06:31:18 - 01:07:22:29

I had raised the same question as Dr. Williams in that my understanding is that in order to establish a wildflower meadow is as proposed on a high fertility soil, you have to remove the high fertility soil and get down to a low fertility soil. But in addition to that, I'm also confused about what will happen at decommissioning, because if one does establish a wildflower meadow and the soil, fertility and nutrients are reduced, then if that land is to revert to arable use, then how will the soil fertility be

restored? And I'd also like to know if the topsoil has to be removed for the duration of the operation in order to establish low fertility soils.

01:07:23:01 - 01:07:30:04

Then where would that soil be stored? Where would it go? Have the effects of that been assessed? Thank you.

01:07:30:20 - 01:07:34:15

Thank you. Mr. Fox, is that something that perhaps could be covered in? Yes, the written.

01:07:34:17 - 01:07:35:13

Response, but.

01:07:35:21 - 01:07:49:20

Hadn't appreciated that Mr. Baker is online. Um, I think it just would be useful to answer that the nutrient point and achieving kind of the ecological landscape benefits and then the points about restoration of culture we can deal with in. Martin Yeah.

01:07:49:23 - 01:07:50:14

Mr. Baker.

01:07:52:21 - 01:08:29:06

Hello, sir. Mr. Baker, on behalf of the applicant, think we did respond to a similar point or very similar points in previously. Um, if you look at the outline and the green infrastructure plans, we are not creating a high biodiversity grassland within the solar PV areas, which is, you know, we're well aware of high nutrient level risks on creating high diversity grassland. That's been reflected in our yes, it's been reflected in the metric which again, you know, the proposals were reviewed by peer reviewed by ecologists at Stantec and found to be suitable.

01:08:30:03 - 01:09:01:06

The diverse structure and more diverse grassland would be in the open meadows to the west and the retained areas outside the solar PV. And again, we have not we're not promoting or proposing any sort of soil inversion or removal because exactly of the various points we've been covering on land use and soils now returning to arable, um, obviously if you're a if you do a full the soil inversion, which I accept is what you want to do for a calcareous grassland creation, you would then very, very much struggle to get it back to arable.

01:09:01:08 - 01:09:34:14

But that's always been, you know, one of the main mantras in our design of these habitats was we need to return it to our well, there is a possibility they will need to be returned to arable. Therefore we've been reasonable, I would say, in the aims and the target condition and habitats we are creating, we're not creating calcareous grassland, we're creating species rich grassland with certain calcareous species involved included. Um, so this is why we are confident of our proposals. And again, the length will set out monitoring to this effect.

01:09:36:18 - 01:09:38:14

And remedial action. Not bad.

01:09:41:09 - 01:09:42:05

Thank you, Mr. Baker.

01:09:45:00 - 01:09:53:06

We have several hands. Think they? Gentleman back. Sorry. Forgot, you know, from yesterday. You can have the microphone over please. Since the.

01:09:54:25 - 01:09:55:17

Buildings.

01:10:06:14 - 01:10:32:04

John Hughes, an interested party with regards to the actual planting of the grass. Surely with regard to the actual use of the land and its proposal to be used or change its use for the grazing of sheep. Surely that land needs to be established as grassland before you can actually graze the sheep. So surely the planting of the grass needs to be established so you could actually graze the sheep.

01:10:34:19 - 01:10:35:11

Do you agree?

01:10:36:29 - 01:10:43:15

And I'll let him come in. Think my initial reaction would be yes, but this comes back to the point of the grazing is not the mitigation measure.

01:10:47:06 - 01:11:14:23

And said, Tony Kernan, on behalf of the applicant, I completely agree with Mr. Foster and I agree with the Mr. Hughes's point. You. The grassland needs to be established before you can graze it, but there's no requirement to graze it immediately. And indeed, it's not a mitigation to actually require grazing. So the sheep management will be normal agricultural management when the when the grassland is suitable at the right height and sufficiently established.

01:11:17:05 - 01:11:23:09

Thank you, Mr. Colonel. I think we got one more. That was the representative from Great Parish Council. Yeah. Thank you.

01:11:24:09 - 01:11:43:08

Tony Barker from the parish council. Obviously, we spoke yesterday about flood risk and the applicant's measures to mitigate on flood risk and the amount of surface water runoff into the river West River Glen. Um.

01:11:44:24 - 01:12:24:07

A key part of their mitigation was that to establish grass grassland around the arrays under them. But it does concern that now the applicant is saying they're not going to commit to seed some 12 to 18 months before construction on on the site. And so grass will not be properly established with the appropriate root growth before those panels go in potentially, which will then come back to the problem of increased flood risk downstream.

01:12:26:26 - 01:12:29:21

Thank you, Mr. Barker. Mr. Britain. You have a related point?

01:12:30:14 - 01:13:08:14

Yes. Um, in the last, um, answers in the last deadline, I think the applicant used the word. We used the phrase that the grassland was fundamental to preventing runoff and to enhance infiltration of water into the land and cannot see the agronomist with 30 years experience. How are you going to establish the grass properly on an ad hoc basis when you feel like it? Depending on what the situation is, which season it needs a good 12 months to establish basically a growing season to establish properly so that it will be there to protect the soil, the land flood risk for the following 30 years.

01:13:08:27 - 01:13:16:08

Mr. Fox said It all talks to each other and that's the fundamental starting point starting block for the whole piece. Thank you.

01:13:18:26 - 01:13:35:24

Thank you, Mr. President. In the interest of moving on, perhaps if I can respond in writing, particularly on the point, I don't think we quite dealt with the the question around the particular type of mix that was proposed and some limitations there. So perhaps if that could be dealt with in writing, that would be definitely one.

01:13:36:17 - 01:13:37:02

One six.

01:13:37:17 - 01:13:38:05

Thank you.

01:13:44:01 - 01:14:09:04

Moving on then, to my next question. Um, the applicant response to questions. Seven 0 to 8. And further questions clarified that the significant moderate effects from the permanent sealing or downgrading of agricultural lands set out in Table 17 one was removed on the basis that this assumed a permanent loss, which is not to be avoided.

01:14:10:29 - 01:14:19:00

So this is on the areas that would be cleared by substations and permanent works in response to feedback from natural England to believe.

01:14:23:09 - 01:14:26:13

Paragraph 2.1. 14 These

01:14:28:12 - 01:14:58:26

licensors, particularly the land, use an assessment. However, states that only permanence, irreversible loss of agricultural land is considered within the assessments as per the guidance sets out with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessments. However, that guidance does suggest that temporary development should also be considered. Can the applicant please comment on the impacts of the proposed development on the ceiling of agricultural lands, the operational phase in relation to the guidance?

01:15:00:13 - 01:15:02:06

I'll let Mr. Conan answer that first.

01:15:07:03 - 01:15:35:17

But Tony Kernan, on behalf of the applicants, was scrabbling around trying to get the documents that you were referring to there. But I think the the point or the or the question that you asked, they were related to the EMA guide and where it talks about sealing and temporary. It does talk about temporary uses, where those would result in downgrading. Just think. Well, bear with me.

01:15:38:04 - 01:15:48:18

If I can find the paragraph while we're here. Um, and I'll provide it in. Writing subsequently the.

01:15:51:07 - 01:15:54:27

Drift to. Temporary uses.

01:15:58:00 - 01:16:02:07

Mr.. If it helps you, maybe a question better dealt with in writing.

01:16:02:26 - 01:16:33:02

I will give you the yes, I'll give you the full quotation because it's not in the other section and didn't. Post up, but it definitely talks about temporary uses where those may result in long term losses or downgrading. So effectively they're talking about temporary users, which will have over time a similar effect as ceiling. So they're not saying it's a use of land that doesn't affect the land quality.

01:16:33:04 - 01:16:45:29

It's a comment about where land quality will be affected. So similar to a slower process, but the same as going in with a digger and changing the land quality.

01:16:48:08 - 01:16:57:10

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you could elaborate on that point in writing at that line seven, that would be that would be useful. Thank you, Dr. Williams.

01:17:00:00 - 01:17:37:16

Thank you. James Williams, on behalf of Mallard Pass Action Group. If you seal a section of land, he will change the soil microbiology underneath that. You then unseal it? You haven't immediately reverted back to what it was before. And there is an awful lot of development research going on about soils, the impact on mycorrhiza, the impact on microorganisms with respect to how those all function in social sciences is developing rapidly.

01:17:38:09 - 01:18:13:28

And I think that there is therefore some real issue here about if you are seeing an area of land, it is actually something that is going to have a long term effect. It's not something that is going to have a small effect. And the microbiology when you. Unseal the land. If you're doing that, will take considerable effort to be re-established and therefore the am not at all convinced that this is therefore a non-significant effect.

01:18:17:21 - 01:18:50:27

Just passed out. Think we can respond in writing? All I would say is that we have made the commitments that we've made in in terms of restoration. I think that even if after you've heard what you've heard, you decided to disagree and say that we should have it back to what we were in terms of it being significant effects as in worst case as we originally had it, that was for don't have to figure in front of me now, but a small area of land for just access tracks and the temporary substation.

01:18:50:29 - 01:19:02:09

So I think obviously we would say that we we would say that we disagree. But even if you found in favor of the other view, that needs to be seen in the context of what that actual effect is.

01:19:04:12 - 01:19:05:11

0.9 hectares.

01:19:06:20 - 01:19:07:20

That's it. Thank you.

01:19:09:21 - 01:19:40:27

But Tony Kernan May had just very quick comment, please. On behalf of the applicant and I an extent I agree with the gentleman in the last who just spoken that soils being stored can affect the the activity in it, which is why we've set out in the outline soil management plan that the bund management in those small areas that have been moved is important so that you still you don't make them too big and they become anaerobic, so you will keep the activity within the soil.

01:19:40:29 - 01:19:46:14

So therefore the topsoil comes back very quickly. And we are talking about small areas, especially along the tracks.

01:19:49:22 - 01:19:56:08

Thank you, Mr. Cannon. And do we have any final points in this particular question before we move on?

01:20:00:22 - 01:20:05:06

Mr. Kenin, your hand is still up. Is that? It's gone. Okay.

01:20:12:16 - 01:20:32:10

Okay. That was the end of my questions on land and soils. Given the time, it's probably the perfect time for a lunch break. Before we move on to the next agenda item, which is landscape and visual times, 12:45 so we can be back and see an hour's lunch break. So we're back.

01:20:32:20 - 01:21:02:04

So I was just going to say, did wonder and don't want to cause panic, but I was wondering if we might want to. There are a couple of the traffic items I think we could take off quite quickly if we went to 1:00. Um, appreciate that means moving the gender around a little bit. But there are there are some things I appreciate that will require longer discussions, but just for the purposes of taking things off the first couple of items for traffic. Think we can respond to you quite quickly?

01:21:03:02 - 01:21:06:14

So sorry. So you prepared this item ten.

01:21:07:07 - 01:21:09:06

Which the ten A and.

01:21:09:08 - 01:21:09:23

Ten a.

01:21:10:04 - 01:21:10:29

10 a.m.. B.

01:21:19:21 - 01:21:20:07

Okay.

01:21:25:09 - 01:21:26:02

Mr. Belfield.

01:21:26:18 - 01:21:35:24

So it's not my meeting. It's your meeting. But if Mr. Fox thinks he can knock these items off quickly, why don't we have a shortened lunch break and keep to the proper agenda?

01:21:38:07 - 01:21:46:05

But I've also been happy with that. I mean, shorter lunch would be fine with that, I think. But obviously if you can knock them off quickly.

01:21:46:07 - 01:21:53:12

When we get to item ten anyway, it's very actual reason for. If that's the that's the that's what expires.
But yeah, no.

01:21:53:14 - 01:21:55:18

That's actually fine. I'm just trying to see if we can get probably.

01:21:55:20 - 01:21:59:12

Better off if we do probably break for lunch now that is. Okay everybody. Um.

01:22:01:25 - 01:22:13:26

And we'll come back at our. How long do people want for lunch? We can come back for 1:30. Is that going to be sufficient for people? It's Fox.

01:22:14:06 - 01:22:14:21

Holloway.

01:22:14:23 - 01:22:20:24

Anybody else? Okay, we'll adjourn for lunch and we will return at 130. Thank you.