

File Name: ISH1 9th November 2023 Part 2.mp3
File Length: 01:42:00

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:04:29 - 00:00:05:14

We.

00:00:08:27 - 00:00:14:17

Thank you and welcome back, everybody. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me clearly.

00:00:16:12 - 00:00:22:16

He's a member of the case team confirmed that can be heard and the streaming has started.

00:00:34:04 - 00:00:41:12

Thank you. So now we're going to proceed to agenda item four which is need site selection and alternatives.

00:00:46:07 - 00:00:50:01

I believe the agenda may be shared imminently.

00:00:52:04 - 00:00:56:08

Whilst we wait for that. If you do turn to item four of the agenda that was sent out.

00:00:58:20 - 00:00:59:09

Thank you.

00:01:01:27 - 00:01:23:28

Okay. So first of all we're going to turn to the applicant and that her set out in the draft and the application that should be determined in accordance with section 105 of the Planning Act, 2008. At the time of the acceptance, no technology specific had effect.

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This means that in deciding the application, the Secretary of State must have regard to any matters which the Secretary of State deems to be both important and relevant.

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As important and relevant to their decision. At the present time, there are a number of existing national policy statements and pieces that are considered relevant. We've discussed a number of these this morning and made reference to them. And there are also now a number of draft and buses that have also been referred to early this morning in 1 in 3 drafts, which were issued for consultation between March and June. This year.

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So we'd like to start by asking the applicant about the weight accorded to the relevant draft NPS. When passes in the determination of the application. In terms of the overall planning balance, specifically, if possible, how the position suggesting that they be given significant weight has been reached.

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That's. Excuse me. And that's it. Out in the planning statement. 5.4.12.

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Project for the applicant. Then yes. Just by way of introduction, the planning statement does set out the applicant's assessment of the scheme against national and local planning policy. And. In terms of national policy. There is a table at appendix C of the planning statement, which is AP 313, which includes a review of both the adopted National Policy Statements from 2011, which is in one and three and five.

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It also includes a review of the draft maps one and three, that were published by the government in September 2001. The application was submitted prior to the publication of the updated draft NPS in March 2023. So the applicant will be submitting an updated version of the planning statement, a deadline one, and just to update those tables in respect of the.

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Changes to or minor changes to wording. Relevant to this scheme that were included in those. March 2023 versions of the documents. However, there aren't any. There are no material changes that are relevant to the conclusions. The planning statement as a result of the updated drafts and the draft and one, as you had mentioned, includes some transitional provisions and does refer in paragraph 1.6.3 that the emerging drafts are potentially capable of being important and relevant considerations in the decision making process, and the extent to which they are relevant is a matter for the relevant Secretary of State to consider with regard to the specific circumstances of the particular application.

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And the Secretary of State confirmed in the decision letter for the Longfield set of DCA that both the adopted National Policy Statements and the revised draft National Policy Statements were important and relevant to the decision made under section 105 of the Planning Act 2008, or that solar project. The decision went on to say that the Secretary of State had concluded that the solar projects contribution to meeting the need for renewable energy, set out in those draft maps should be given substantial positive weight in the planning balance, and therefore the applicant would.

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Consider that the conclusions that it reached in the planning statement about the weight to be given to the draft NPS is appropriate in light of the decision that was made on the long field project. Given that this is a scheme of a similar nature.

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Thank you. So we will expect updates to the. I'm saying to that effect at deadline one.

00:05:52:00 - 00:05:56:04

Which if the applicant. Yes, that's correct. It'll be a deadline. One submission. Thank you.

00:06:00:06 - 00:06:09:13

Do other participants have any comments on NPS and draft NPS in the position that's been reached by the applicant?

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Thank.

00:06:16:12 - 00:06:43:15

And. And then just to add in terms of local policy, there will also be some updates to that section of the planning statement. In light of the fact that the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was adopted in

April 2023. So there were references made to the drafts in the planning statement, and those will be updated to refer to and the adopted planning policy again at deadline one.

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Just a flag that there will also be those amendments made in the update as well, to make sure it's as up to date as possible.

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Thank you. Okay.

00:06:55:29 - 00:07:00:00

Uh, Mr. O'Grady? Yeah.

00:07:00:02 - 00:07:20:03

Peter O'Grady. 7000 acres. King Tola couldn't hear me, so I'm trying to get a bit closer to the microphone. Um, okay, so it's a couple of things with regard to NPS one and part of it, NPS three draft, should I say, which was raised right at the beginning. And as a.

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As part of the to the case for the need.

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I think one of the things that must be made explicit is that although there is a clear ambition for 70GW of solar, there is not a clear mandate for that being ground mounted solar. But I think one of the other things that are also in those is the the draft PS3. Uh, there is a clear hierarchy for what land is used.

00:07:57:02 - 00:07:57:17

Uh.

00:07:57:24 - 00:07:58:20

I think that's.

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Just bear with me a second.

00:08:10:26 - 00:08:56:06

So applicants should use, where possible, previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary. And it goes on to a caveat. The applicant has gone straight for agricultural land and has not used any of these other land classes, and has not shown that need to be there. And the other the other part of the NPS is is clearly about good design and which includes sensitivity of place and efficient use of land, which are both points that the applicant chose to omit when describing the relevance of the NPS.

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You.

00:09:01:00 - 00:09:24:00

Thank you, Mr. O'Grady. And we are going to turn to the use of land and including BMV shortly throughout. Today, and I'll just ask the applicant to respond to the issue there around national targets, 70GW and. The difference or split between ground mounted and other forms of solar.

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Subject the applicant. It's important to recognize that the national policy statements apply predominantly to, or designed to apply predominantly to nationally significant infrastructure projects. So when it refers to solar farms,

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it is to support solar farms in excess of 50MW, a project that's in excess of 50MW rather than solar generation. Generally in terms of individual houses having rooftops, etcetera. Albeit that the NPS are considered to be relevant and material to solar applications that are perhaps below that threshold, they are specifically designed to be relevant to nationally significant infrastructure projects.

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So when we're talking about.

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The government being supportive of solar farms. They are talking about large utility scale projects that are above 50MW, so they need to be read in that context, which in this case is largely ground mounted. We are talking about, as you say, site selection later in terms of what was considered, but. Of making the point that that when they talk about solar farms, they are talking about over 50.

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Thank you. And. Well, I think we. We can have a discussion really around national policy guidance and BMV land, if that's okay. I'd like to hear the applicant's view on what the approach should be to assessing this aspect of the proposed development. So we started to train to thinking about. The BMV land. I would just like an update really from yourselves on the approach that's taken.

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Atkins apology, just finding the relevant bits and. Get ahead. So when you're looking at site selection and consideration of alternatives and. Npci, n1. And in the revised N1, which is largely the same as the adopted one, sets out a number of considerations that need to be taken into account when you're looking at alternatives.

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Um. And those are from paragraphs

00:12:03:19 - 00:12:43:18

4.2. 21 to 4 .2. 28. And that basically says that consideration of alternatives should be carried out in a proportionate manner. And only alternatives that can actually meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered. So the proposed development here is a large scale solar project. When looking at alternatives, there needs to be a realistic prospect of any alternatives that are being considered actually delivering the same infrastructure capacity in the same timescales as the proposed development.

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And the applicant is not under the NPS, but to consider specific alternatives. However, it should set out the alternatives that it has looked at and the reasons for selecting the site chosen. And the policy needs to be read in conjunction with other legislative requirements in terms of site selection, both in terms of the regulations as to what needs to be contained within the environmental statement, and also where there are site specific considerations.

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So in relation to flooding, for example, or consideration. So there are other requirements that apply. But the general approach to consideration of alternatives is, is set out in in one draft and three, and then has a section from section three point 10.9 about the factors that should influence site selection

and design for solar projects in particular, and including, as it says, in their consideration of irradiance and site topography, proximity to dwellings.

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And then it does mention, in addition to agricultural land classification, other matters such as accessibility and network connections, etcetera. The applicant has set out its consideration and approach to site selection in chapter five of the Environmental Statement, which is document app Dash 043 and and that includes the site selection process that was undertaken.

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And there's a sort of a staged process which is set out within that document, um, which. In terms of this particular scheme, with further detail provided in appendix 5.1, which was a document reference as 004. And how the applicant has met the test set out in policy in that site selection process is set out in section 6.3 of the planning statement, which was app Dash 315.

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So that's just where the information is contained. So the first step in the site selection process was to identify the area of search. And that started with obviously the connection agreement points being a 480 megawatt connection of export, 20 megawatt import connection at West Purton Power station. So the starting point for the site selection process for this scheme was the location of the grid connection point.

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And a search area within 15km of that connection point was identified, with sites located closer to the connection point being considered first. And appendix 5.1 goes into more detail at each of those stages of the process, as mentioned, but in terms of the sort of the summary once and.

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The study area was identified. Stage two involved identifying all brownfield sites within that search area in accordance with the information available, and then looking at agricultural land classification based on Natural England's mapping, which was doesn't distinguish between grades three A and three B land. So at that stage in the process, the focus was on trying to find suitable sites within areas of grade 4 or 5 or unclassified agricultural land, as well as looking at the availability of any brownfield sites.

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And so it's important when they were doing when that exercise was being undertaken to identify not only the sites. And there are a number of those listed in table 2.2 of that appendix 5.1, a number of sites were identified as being potentially large enough, so a 40 hectare threshold was used to identify the minimum threshold for a particular site that then could be linked together with other sites to

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produce an overall site for the capacity that we were looking at at West Burton. So that table lists out various brownfield sites within the study area and their sizes. Obviously, a lot of them were either too small or they were already allocated for another type of use and therefore not available. So allocated for housing being owned and promoted for housing development, for example, planning permission for other types of developments.

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So the applicant didn't consider those sites to be available for this project and therefore consistent with the policy, didn't take those forward.

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And.

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He was also then, at that stage in the process, looking at the availability of any lower grade and agricultural land again. There was none identified as being available within the study area. And.

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As part of that site selection process. At that stage, the applicant also looked to see whether there were any commercial rooftops or combine premises with an adequate size. So that's that 40 hectares available within the search area, and none were identified as being available of sufficient size for a project of this scale. And think we set out in our documents, and we'll be setting out in our responses to the various relevant representations in the comments that were made last night.

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The applicant very much agrees that rooftop solar, both on residential and solar commercial rooftops, is desirable and should be deployed. But that's in addition to large scale solar projects, and we don't consider individual rooftop solar to be a viable alternative to large scale ground mounted solar. And given that we're talking about generation at a grid national grid scale here, rather than generation to the more local distribution network, and if it would be helpful,

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Alvin could provide some more information about the distinction between the requirements of the national grid versus an that grid connection versus individuals or individual businesses coming forward with a smaller scale project. And so whilst we had once we've done that exercise, um.

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And identified some areas. Stage four of the process was to look at more detailed constraints that might apply to the land that was available, and that included things like biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage, flood risk, land use access, and operational factors. At that stage. In the process, no suitable sites were identified, and therefore it was necessary to reconsider the study area to include potential areas of grade three land. So there were no brownfield sites and there were no lower grade sites available within the search area that met the requirements for this size of scheme.

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So the applicant then reconsidered the grade three land within the study area, and that excluded land that was already being considered for other nationally significant solar projects. And discussions took place with landowners in order to identify which landowners might be willing to enter into voluntary agreements with the applicant. And with a focus on landowners that perhaps owned multiple sites and so therefore could provide, um, you know, a number of, of suitable land holdings for the project.

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Once those sites have been identified, they were then subject to the stage four assessment that previously mentioned, which was to look at more detailed constraints, which were the environmental constraints such as landscape, heritage, etcetera.

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And the results of the site selection process are set out in annex in the annex in appendix 5.1, and the applicant continued to consider the suitability of the sites during the pre-application process and as further survey information became available. So the identification of the area was done based on the Natural England mapping, which said didn't distinguish between grade three A and grade three B. The applicant then undertook its own survey information to establish the grading of the land with some.

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The VLANs. That's grade three and above being removed from the scheme as a result of that further information being made available. So, for example, the site that was known as West Burton four was removed from the scheme between the statutory consultation and the submission stage, based on comments received and as a result of further information from surveys being made available at that time. And the scheme maximizes the utilization of non BMV land, with 73.76% of the land being non BMV, where the BMV land has been included within the order limits.

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And the application provides information as to why it is justified in respect of that particular parcel of land based on their location and context within the scheme, and also their relationship with the wider landholding belonging to that particular landowner. So, for example, there are some small areas of land that would remain small and isolated if they were removed from the order limits, such that they would not be viable for the farmer to continue farming that that small field in isolation.

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And so it's therefore considered appropriate to include that land within the scheme, but think the site selection process does set out clearly that the considerations mentioned in the entry and the preference for using brownfield land and the preference for avoiding land where possible, have been taken into account. And the applicant has done that as far as practicable for this particular scheme.

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Thank you, Miss Broderick. So. I'm going to bring in other IP's in a moment and seek comments where applicable from local authorities. And just before that, perhaps either Ms. Gillett or sorry, Mr. Gillett, or as Broderick can. Just explain and help me understand the reason, the rationale for the 40 hectare threshold. Choose alternative sites and think you were going to just give a brief overview on some of these, some of the rationale and the points of grid connection.

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Dave Alvin for the applicant. Yeah. So the 40 hectares is roughly the amount of land you'd require for 50MW. And that's in terms of efficiencies, which you talked about this morning across the scheme. There are a number of factors in terms of you require additional substations on every land parcel if you separated them, which makes requires more cables and more infrastructure, and overall makes the scheme much less efficient electrically and commercially.

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So that's that's why that threshold is then in terms of the grid. So the transmission network was originally designed for power generation. That's why in this area we have Cotton West Burton and Hyman and power stations in the past. And it is very much designed for power to be input at that level and then distribute it out through the local networks. That's why there is capacity or has been capacity until recently, a transmission level that didn't exist locally.

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So if you were, for example, to say you wanted to put a lot of infrastructure and lots of generation into the distribution network, it then requires much more reinforcements at local and national level. And that's something that's been subject to sort of widely publicised issues in terms of grid connection dates recently. So going back to the point this project made earlier, when we started looking at the grid capacity across the country, there were a number of locations which were the old power stations where there was capacity available.

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Thank you. Okay. And on that, on that point about site selection and BMV and agricultural land. Is there any comments

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anybody would like to make? Thank you, Mr. Sommer.

00:26:36:26 - 00:26:37:19

Yes. Thank you.

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Jefferson has, um. It appears to me that we've now got to the nub of the problem here today. That is the site selection.

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Good.

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There are hundreds and.

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Thousands of acres of land across the country. A very, very low productivity in numerous issues. It sheep, cattle, arable, whatever it is very low productivity. The problem here really lies with the the location of these connection points.

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And we just spent billions on HS2, basically going to Manchester and nowhere else. Billions. And it is.

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It's this connection point that is driving the whole issue and the problems for all the local people. If you go to areas where there are where you have land which has very low productivity. Mainly no crops being grown at all. Livestock is the main enterprise.

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There are bodies within this country. For the last few years who have been trying to talk down the farming of livestock due to.

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Methane expression.

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Uh.

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To me, that's ridiculous. Because how did the earth go forward when we started off with dinosaurs?

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It really is a pathetic situation. How the lack of scale within the national grid and national infrastructure is driving applications such as this into very productive arable areas in the country, producing food of various types, extensive amounts which are contributing enormously to the food provided within the UK.

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Um.

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And it's on the doorstep. It's here. There's no export. There's no air miles, no imports. Um, it's it really is a very sad situation. Um.

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And if you claim that vegetation will grow beneath the panels, why not mount them on grass or bracken or highland? Areas of very low population density. It wouldn't be half the issues if that approach was taken.

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And this as far as alternatives are concerned, then it just beggars belief that no one is working on wave power. We don't have the intermittent productivity levels from such like sources as we do don't have intermittency with power stations. A nuclear fusion is another option that is coming forward and hopefully within a few years it will be developing at West Burton, possibly even Compton. And so I think this really is the problem.

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It's connection points. And this is a desperate attempt. To establish an intermittent production phase because simply because there is a connection point in this location without the due consideration for what those natural facilities are producing today.

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Thank you. Chairman.

00:30:25:06 - 00:30:41:06

Thank you, Mr. Summers. I think that that's covered a wide range of topics around BMV and site selection. Is there any final comment on that before? Move on and bring in local authorities and look at local policies.

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The project for the applicant. I'll just respond to those points. And then Mr. Skelton. And hand raised.

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Yes, obviously we note the comments that have been made, and Mr. Geller also mentioned issues at national level in relation to

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grid connection availability. And as to Mr. Elvin, in terms of capacity issues at the distribution network level and for this particular scheme, and obviously the matters that are relevant to the Secretary of State's consideration about site selection and consideration of alternatives is recognised in revised draft three, in section three point 10.34 to 3.10 .39. That network connection and network availability is a key consideration and that there is a.

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Policy objective to maximize existing grid infrastructure. And as part of that, and so sites based on nearby grid export capacity is relevant to the site selection process. And as I said, for this particular scheme, we were looking at site selections for a scheme that was deliverable for the connection point at West Burton Power Station.

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Thank you, Miss Broderick. Okay. We do have Mr. Skelton. Mrs. Skelton is an interested party and is going to think comment back on points you've heard on the BMV.

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Yes, I'm a skeleton resident. It's basically site selection. Um. Possibly small issue, but it's very important to the people of Lincolnshire, especially the ones that got for solar schemes on the doorstep. Um, during consultation, uh, Island Green Power stated that. Because everybody asked, why weren't these solar farms going close to or around the power stations in Nottinghamshire? We were told there was no suitable land available and it floods, etcetera.

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Yet. Two weeks ago, Steve Paul Solar was announced. And it could be up to twice as big as the West solar project. So. But obviously there is land available around West Berlin power station. Um and in Nottinghamshire and not all around. But in. And Willingham and Stern Barstow. There is other places close to West Burton and Cotton power stations.

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Thank you.

00:33:35:10 - 00:33:41:09

Thank you. Okay. That. Point there about the.

00:33:43:18 - 00:33:44:03

Me.

00:33:46:12 - 00:33:48:18

I'll just bring Mr. O'Grady there.

00:33:48:23 - 00:34:02:12

Yeah. Peter O'Grady, 7000 acres. It's really on the point of of site selection. And starting with the idea of a of a a grid connection opportunity at West Burton. Um.

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To maximize the use of that connection implies a certain number of panels.

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Now normally when you would consider a planning application. There's a unitary size around something in planning. So you know, HS2 in regard to planning has a particular size. It can't break it down into lots of different little processes. Same with the nuclear power station.

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But cell is different because each individual panel is only a few hundred watts. It's only only 48V or thereabouts. It's only by aggregating so many. That the scheme of this size has been created.

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And it's only once they're aggregated to that level that there is a an implied need by the developer that that requires, therefore the grid connection. Now noting that the the kind of tortuous trail that the applicant's been through to identify land. And I think it's notable that at no time did they actually vary the opportunity for grid connection. Uh, so noted, the applicant made the point that, um.

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To be able to connect at a distribution level would require a modification and reinforcement of the grid, but that's only if you've applied a certain volume of panels that you've. Yeah. Created for the for the West burn scheme. As it stands, in reality, you could disaggregate the scheme into any number of

smaller schemes or panels, but that's just not being considered at all. So, for instance, you know, as I say, don't want us to be painted as being anti solar at all.

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Um, you know, there's a, a smaller development called Stowe Park that's been proposed, um, which connects to a passing grid line, for instance, rather than having to make a, you know, specific 400 high power connection. Um, so it's that sort of inventiveness which seems to appear to be missing in the, in the applicant search for a site selection. Thank you.

00:36:34:19 - 00:36:46:03

Thank you, Mr. O'Grady. In the interest of moving on, I'm just going to invite the applicant to respond to those two points from Mr. Skelton and Mr. O'Grady. If if they wish to do so.

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Just in relation to the points raised by Mr. Skelton about other land being coming forward for solar and the applicant's position, as obviously that if the land is being put forward for another solar developer for another solar project, it's therefore not available for this scheme. So the.

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Just because the other land is considered suitable. It's not actually available for this particular scheme, and obviously that's to be taken into account with the overall policy objectives of trying to achieve that 70GW of solar by 2035, which necessarily means we need a lot of solar schemes in order to achieve that total. So the policy is quite clear that just because other schemes can come forward doesn't mean that that scheme is available. You know, it's not available for this particular project. And in terms of the.

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Grid connection and the ability to put forward a number of smaller schemes and.

00:37:56:25 - 00:38:29:08

You see, what we were looking for is for a scheme of 450MW for the grid connection capacity that is available at Westbury and Power Station, and utilizing that existing national grid and export capacity. So that was the scheme that we were looking to deliver, rather than a series of smaller schemes that connect in at different parts of either the distribution network. And as for example, I don't know anything on that as well.

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A stipend for the applicant? Yes, to Mr. Skelton's point, actually, and further to this project, said the particular and in question near West Baton Power Station is now being in the public domain for, I believe, the developer.

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I think somebody mentioned last night the open floor hearing the land ownership had changed on that recently. We spoke to the prior landowner at the time of the site selection and that land was not available. They were not willing, but they into a scheme at the time. And so as we understand it, the new owner has a different view. So that was why we had discounted that particular land parcel at the time, and it is now part of another proposal.

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Other than that. Think it's also worth noting that we have put in applications for grid in many, many locations, including some in Lincolnshire, and at a similar time to when we were talking to National Grid about the location at West Burton, they came back to us with a grid offer for £28 million for a

smaller project, which would be below the 50, which is clearly highly unviable. So that does clearly set out that it is not a simple case of just lots of small projects can be connected.

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It's huge reinforcement works which extend beyond the county that are required to to deliver that reinforcement at distribution level. And that's something we're seeing nationally, which is why the states are going out ten, 15 years now.

00:40:02:03 - 00:40:32:11

Thank you. Think. We think if it's okay, I'm going to move us on and bring in some comments and thoughts from the local authority. We'd like to hear comments, really, from both the applicant and local authorities, and the extent to which local policies are important and relevant through site selection and scheme assessment, and in doing so. In briefly setting this out, I'd invite comments on respective positions of the applicant and local authorities in terms of the.

00:40:33:06 - 00:40:40:03

Importance, importance and relevance of local policy set out in statements of common ground, please. So I'll.

00:40:42:00 - 00:40:56:02

I'll direct question firstly to the applicant and then bring in local authorities for comments on what we hear there. So the question really is around an extent to which local policies are important and relevant.

00:41:01:14 - 00:41:20:15

A project for the applicant. See local planning policy is considered to be important and relevant in decision making processes, and that's why we have set it out. How are the weight that is given to those local policies where they potentially conflict with national policy?

00:41:22:00 - 00:41:30:19

Greater weight is given to national policy. Um, didn't wasn't clear whether you wanted us to go through the individual

00:41:32:06 - 00:41:39:25

policy requirements, but sort of generally speaking, obviously there are similar points in terms of recognising.

00:41:42:00 - 00:41:55:10

The importance of renewable energy, the transition to net zero future and maximise renewable energy. Energy generation within Lincolnshire, there are policies in relation to.

00:41:57:13 - 00:42:11:02

Uh, not that there's a policy on ground mounted solar which states a presumption in favor unless a number of criteria are met. And that does include reference to development on land

00:42:12:28 - 00:42:28:03

and land that is allocated for other purposes within the local plan. And so the applicant has had regard to local policy. When can during its site selection process. And that's reported in the planning statement that referred to earlier.

00:42:30:01 - 00:42:48:08

Thank you. And going to invite any representatives from local authorities here to comment on local policy and the application of that to site selection and any comments really around the statements of common ground and updates on that. Thank you.

00:42:53:27 - 00:42:54:12

Mr.

00:42:56:01 - 00:42:56:26

Russell Clarkson.

00:42:56:28 - 00:42:57:26

For West Lindsey District.

00:42:57:28 - 00:43:03:09

Council, only to echo the comments of the applicant that we consider that the.

00:43:03:23 - 00:43:04:22

Visions of the Central.

00:43:04:24 - 00:43:07:15

Lincolnshire Local Plan are important, relevant for the.

00:43:07:22 - 00:43:08:07

Protection.

00:43:08:24 - 00:43:13:04

Of our Local Plan was adopted recently, April 2023.

00:43:13:06 - 00:43:15:00

So we do consider it up to date.

00:43:15:19 - 00:43:18:10

Again, reiterate, we agree that it is important and relevant.

00:43:21:26 - 00:43:27:00

Thank you, Mr. McBride. Anything to add? No.

00:43:27:12 - 00:43:30:00

Lancashire County council? No, not really sir.

00:43:30:06 - 00:43:38:04

Um, I would just concur with the comments from Mr. Clarkson on behalf of West Lindsey District Council. Um.

00:43:39:01 - 00:44:11:16

But we obviously, through our local impact report are looking at the policies that we consider are relevant for each particular sort of topic area. I would say that probably we haven't moved very much further forward of the statement of common ground yet. I think that's probably a work in progress, and that's common across probably a number of the projects, the projects in this area, in terms of working on statements of common ground and policy, um, relevant policies.

00:44:11:18 - 00:44:42:27

So it's a work in progress. And given that we've only just sort of had confirmation of our local impact report this week, it's still quite early in terms of stages and then that work. That's just the only other sort of policy document, sir. Yes, sir. The Minerals Plan Authority will obviously make reference to any relevant policies from all links minerals and waste local plan, particularly around mineral safeguarding. Again, that will be our local.

00:44:45:04 - 00:44:57:25

Thank you. I'm just looking on line. And Mr. Poynter from Nottingham shared County Council. Any comments that you'd like to make?

00:44:58:28 - 00:45:35:29

Yeah. Thank you sir. Yes. Just echo Mr. Ride's comments. Uh, the, um, we do regard local policies as appropriate. Adopted local plan policies are in general conformity with national policies. So they are relevant. Uh, and we're pleased to note the pipeline corridor which does cross mineral safeguarding area, um, now does avoid quite an existing mineral site, um, which is a commitment within our minerals plan.

00:45:36:01 - 00:46:12:11

So, um, we're pleased with that. That will be noted and referenced in our local Impact report and would also draw reference to the West Burton Power Station site. Um, this is not allocated to gather within the in the Bassetlaw plan, but it is a site which both councils are seeking renewal and redevelopment on and working with EDF over. And it's recently been announced as the site for the UK Atomic Energy Authority Step programme, which is a nuclear fission um initiative.

00:46:13:05 - 00:46:19:04

And we know the references have been made to that within the representations made by

00:46:20:26 - 00:46:32:12

UK and and EDF. So clearly we want to make sure that both both initiatives can proceed.

00:46:33:27 - 00:46:39:25

And that will be also reflected in our and our local impact report to.

00:46:40:25 - 00:46:42:22

That's all I'll say at this point.

00:46:44:03 - 00:47:03:23

Thank you, Mr. Pointer. And yes, so on that point, we discussed yesterday the importance of the local impact report, things of common ground, which are referred to in the timetable, at which point we will. The examining authority will receive these and they will be brought into the examination

00:47:05:14 - 00:47:07:26

arena for further comment. Thank you.

00:47:11:19 - 00:47:21:21

Okay. I think I'm going to turn attention now to relevance of recent solar farm decisions.

00:47:23:23 - 00:47:46:13

And certainly a number of appeal decisions which have come to light. Much of the applicant's documentation dates to the first part of 2023, and therefore predates a number of significant solar farm decisions. We'd like to hear about the applicant's approach to this changing context in terms of implications of these decisions. Okay.

00:47:50:12 - 00:47:51:15

For the applicant. And

00:47:53:07 - 00:48:18:26

as you recall, I referred to the long field solar project decision earlier in the hearing, which is the most recent decision relating to solar at the CIP scale and the recent appeal decisions that you believe are referring to our decisions at the under 50 megawatt

00:48:20:21 - 00:48:36:03

scale in terms of a differing in approach across the country, in terms of the planning balance applied to the benefits of those particular schemes

00:48:37:20 - 00:48:56:02

as against the impacts falls, both in terms of usual types of impacts like landscape and cultural heritage, for example, but particularly in relation to impact on best and most versatile land and agricultural land use. Um.

00:48:57:21 - 00:49:33:24

What I would say at this point in time is that there are a range of different appeal decisions, with obviously each inspector deciding to apply the balance as he considers appropriate for that particular scheme. And this particular scheme, given its scale and given the long field decision, we would say the planning balance in favour of the benefits of renewable energy are very substantial and therefore some of the decisions taken at the. Level are not relevant or should not be considered comparable to this particular project.

00:49:34:06 - 00:49:54:09

I would also note that one of those appeal decisions is being challenged in the High Court, which is a court challenge. I mentioned yesterday about the application of some of the policies relating to impact on agricultural land site selection process, and that's a.

00:49:55:08 - 00:49:55:29

An ongoing.

00:49:57:18 - 00:49:58:29

Challenge. So.

00:50:00:16 - 00:50:07:29

Without. I guess you're referring to any particular decision. Those are our sort of overriding comments on.

00:50:09:09 - 00:50:32:22

Thank you. Yes, it is a general point that for the benefit of others in the room. A number of appeal decisions have. Pre post dated the application and I'm seeking really by way of questioning what the applicants view, if any, is in the approach of these changing context. And that's noted. Thank you.

00:50:38:06 - 00:50:45:24

Right. Going to turn on to news and benefits now, which is sub item B.

00:50:48:17 - 00:50:52:06

We'd like the applicant to set out their position in relation to need.

00:50:54:13 - 00:50:55:07

Apologies.

00:50:57:24 - 00:50:58:09

These are.

00:50:58:21 - 00:51:37:12

87,000 acres. Just with regard to the the long field decision. Looking at the the outcome of that. I think there are a number of important factors that were. Not thoroughly considered in that decision, which I think needs to be. We need to learn from as we as we move forward and think. Most importantly, the land use considerations were too narrow. I think we seem to be getting trapped in this, this differential of 3 or 3. And is it is it is it productive or not? I think more widely we need to consider land use at its at its most fundamental level.

00:51:38:07 - 00:52:14:00

The Climate Change Committee calls for between 30 and 70,000 hectares of trees to be planted every year for decarbonisation, as well as restoration of peatlands, and there are massive pressures on land use. And and that's the sort of fundamental point is that the Royal Society produced a report this year, and they conclude that we cannot afford to waste any land. So the inefficient use of land is is a criminal waste, if I'm honest, and it really, really gets in the way of decarbonisation.

00:52:14:07 - 00:52:54:04

So this is the this is the, the crux. And this is why we keep going back to rooftops, is that you can deploy solar very easily without any of the grid connection requirements and at at scale, effectively through multiples of houses and without those adverse consequences on land use. So that first one is land use. The second one is where the, the and we're finding a lot of this is where clearly there's a, there's a vast body of material that is produced by the applicant, which to a certain extent goes unchallenged.

00:52:54:06 - 00:53:02:05

And we find ourselves as a, as a, as a small kind of haphazard band of people, sort of if.

00:53:04:03 - 00:53:09:19

Um. Being able to sort of pick out particular points. Um.

00:53:11:11 - 00:53:24:15

But one of them. One of them. There's the assertion that the, the, the examining authority concluded that this scheme would make a meaningful contribution to decarbonisation and think that that scale of.

00:53:26:08 - 00:53:59:17

An outcome and and output that the scheme would produce think went unchallenged. Think, think. Mr. Skelton made the point yesterday that the scheme would produce something like 0.14% of the UK's national output, and that would typically be at the times when it's actually the lowest demand. So it's not it's not the it's not perhaps a significant contribution that is, was, was was made the case by the applicant.

00:54:00:15 - 00:54:40:09

Um, and then the other one was that the specific need for ground mounted solar was not thoroughly examined. So again, the applicant had provided evidence to say that rooftop solar couldn't be done. And effectively that was taken at face value. And there have been two fairly significant reports in the last year that have identified the scope and scale of commercial and domestic rooftop opportunity. So those three things, I think are material and and finally, following the Skidmore review this year, um, you know, that really called for a rooftop solar revolution.

00:54:40:11 - 00:54:45:13

And it's not called for a wave of ground mounted campaigns. Thank you.

00:54:47:15 - 00:54:49:01

Thank you. Okay.

00:54:50:08 - 00:55:07:29

Mark Pryor for 7000 acres. Just to add on a point about use of the land in three and draft and three call for these schemes to be for temporary land use. Now, if we look at the.

00:55:10:10 - 00:55:40:22

Lovington solar farm that was turned down by the inspector because the inspector disagreed that 40 years was for temporary use. Now we see the applicant here trying to shift the goalpost from 40, which is not temporary use to 60 years, which is certainly not. I'm 63, and I would not describe 60 years as being a temporary period of time.

00:55:42:28 - 00:55:53:21

Thank you for those comments. And we have gone back into part A of item four. I'm just going to do if the applicant wishes to respond to either of those before I do need to move us on things.

00:55:57:03 - 00:56:34:08

Okay. Obviously we're going to go on in the next agenda item to talk about need for this particular scheme, which will touch on some of the technical points that have been raised. All I would say is that there is a slight conflating of points being made here in the sense of obviously, support for residential rooftop solar and commercial solar is recognised. And I've said that the applicant acknowledges that. What we're saying is, is it a suitable alternative for this particular scheme, which is a scheme trying to maximise the available grid capacity at work? Best burn substation.

00:56:34:10 - 00:57:11:23

And our response to that is no it's not. We're not saying that we disagree. Our scheme is not compliant with other policy objectives for increasing rooftop solar. And those Skidmore review was mentioned, but there is a sort of an implication being made that support for rooftop solar necessarily means that there is no support for ground mounted solar, and don't think that link can be made. What we're saying is there is a need for all forms of renewable energy generation, and the government specifically recognises that there is a need for solar generation.

00:57:11:25 - 00:57:27:05

And that's why large scale solar farms have been included within the revised draft. So just wanted to make it clear that. I'm not saying that you shouldn't have an increase in rooftop solar. We say it doesn't meet the need in this region.

00:57:27:17 - 00:57:29:26

Thank you, Ms.. Garbutt.

00:57:30:18 - 00:58:06:02

Thank you. Liz Garbutt, 7000 acres. Um, Ms.. Borwick made a point there that there's a desire for large scale ground mounted solar. And obviously the impact of maybe obviously, there is that assumption, but there's also the assumption along with that, that well, there's an impact there on local landscape and local residents, as you heard last night. That's not acceptable to local communities. And therefore the impact of these schemes is is suffered at a local level.

00:58:06:04 - 00:58:32:01

And this is going back to the first point being made about the Skidmore review. There's a mismatch there in how the impact of these schemes is then suffered at that local level. So therefore it's just

something we need to sort of understand thoroughly that. It's not acceptable and it's something that locals do not want. Thank you.

00:58:33:11 - 00:59:00:02

Thank you. Okay. I think. I will move on to needs and benefits now, and we have already started to strain to in some of these. But to start with under item B. And I'd like to just ask the applicant to set up the position in relation to need, and in particular, to provide an update on the material set out in the statement of need, without necessarily repeating anything that we've already had. Thank you.

00:59:02:28 - 00:59:04:27

Thank you, sir. So for the applicant, um.

00:59:06:18 - 00:59:37:20

You're right, you've mentioned the statements of need in which the applicant's case for need is set out. App 3 to 0. I'll take that document as read. I won't go over ground that it already covers, except to reiterate three very simple points that the need for the scheme. Is based on the requirement for the urgently to decarbonise. But the requirement for the UK to increase its security of energy supplies. Thirdly to deliver on the affordability of electricity to consumers.

00:59:37:22 - 00:59:42:03

Those are the three points which I'll talk through in turn.

00:59:43:28 - 01:00:03:17

What will address is relevant updates and events have occurred or been made since statements of need was submitted. And I will start with with decarbonisation. I'm very happy to provide to the examination copies of any documents that are mentioned that haven't previously been submitted. I'm.

01:00:05:27 - 01:00:13:13

My next statement should not be a surprise to anyone that the world is warming due to increasing levels of atmospheric carbon.

01:00:15:26 - 01:00:48:17

In May of this year, the World Meteorological Organization stated that there is a 98% likelihood that at least one of the next five years and the next five year period, 2023 through 2027 as a whole, will be the warmest on record. So the World Meteorological Organization is sounding the alarm that the world will breach the 1.5°C global temperature increase as set out in the Paris Agreement, at least on a temporary basis, with increasing frequency.

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And decarbonisation is about stopping that from happening.

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Firstly, slowing it down and secondly stopping it.

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So the actions that needed to be taken to decarbonize and to slow that warming are firstly to stop emitting CO₂. And secondly, to take CO₂ out of the atmosphere. Have the urgency, which is a really important point of action, is increasing because the longer CO₂ emissions continue. Or there isn't the atmosphere. Warmer. The world will become warmer. Therefore. Sorry the more. Therefore we must rely on CO₂ removal to limit further warming.

01:01:32:26 - 01:01:55:06

So Committee on Climate Change has already been referenced in this issue. Specific hearing. Every June, they publish a progress report to government or to Parliament, or in June 2023. There's no difference. The report that they issued described as one of the major points, a lack of urgency in the delivery of decarbonisation in the UK.

01:01:57:09 - 01:02:31:19

Page 14 of their report summarizes that their advice as a statutory body is that the UK should stay firm on its existing commitments to decarbonise and move to delivery. The report states that to achieve the 2030. Nationally Determined Contributions levels to to to achieve those commitments, which are a goal of at least a 68% fall in emissions from 20, sorry, from 1990 levels by 2030.

01:02:32:12 - 01:02:52:22

They state that the rate of emissions reduction outside of the power sector must almost quadruple from what has been achieved so far. But they also state that some of those key planks for the UK's net zero strategy, which are designed to achieve those, have substantial lead times.

01:02:54:16 - 01:03:24:23

And this is really important because those two statements are incongruous. How can one urgently decarbonize if the technologies that we're relying on to decarbonise have substantial lead times? We discussed that point in the statement of need. But the answer essentially is through the urgent delivery of proven renewable generation technologies, including large scale solar generation, which can reliably be deployed in quick order to meet that urgent need.

01:03:25:14 - 01:03:59:24

Government has set a target of achieving a zero emissions electricity system by 2035, and that will support its achievement of its legal requirement to achieve net zero by 2050, because it will use electricity generated from low carbon sources to displace carbon emitting fuels from other sectors, i.e.. The urgent decarbonization of the electricity system now will support a quadrupling or achieving a quadrupling in carbon emissions outside of the power sector.

01:03:59:26 - 01:04:04:26

It's an absolutely essential plank of the UK's decarbonisation strategy.

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Are we talked about?

01:04:09:10 - 01:04:38:13

Connection points as well. Renewable generation schemes must connect to electricity networks to deliver their benefits. They don't connect. There's no benefit. On 10th of July of this year, National Grid, the electricity system operator. They published their annual Future Energy Scenarios documents on page 132 of that document. They state that sufficient electricity connection capacity is vital. Supports solar capacity projections.

01:04:40:20 - 01:04:59:22

As of today, around 15GW of solar is generating clean and zero carbon electricity in the UK. But that's not yet enough. National Grid's pathways indicate up to 90GW is needed by 2050. Governments committed to supporting 70GW by 2035.

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The implication is, firstly, there's not yet sufficient solar operating to meet net zero requirements. And secondly, from National Grid's reports that there's not currently sufficient available electricity collection capacity to support government's ambition, and therefore it will already be very difficult to meet that commitment. Despite the fact that the business case for solar generation is currently very

strong. I should say that those projections are not. It's not a there are a long side of ambitious projections for other low carbon generation capacities as well.

01:05:41:12 - 01:05:59:23

So in summary, to be successful in our fight against climate change. We need to make the most of the infrastructure which is already currently available. And this context provides further support for the applicant's proposal to make use of the existing and available grid connection capacity at National Grid's West Burton substation.

01:06:01:09 - 01:06:35:02

There's also recently been a lot of press coverage about the capacity of generation projects in planning pipelines. It's the applicant's position that the total capacity of solar generation projects in such pipelines is not of a significant sorry, it's not a sort of a sufficient quantity to meet government's targets. The connection registers held by National Grid and the distribution network operators do appear to be well supplied, but majority of those projects have collection dates well into the 2030, and they do not therefore meet the urgency of the need.

01:06:36:01 - 01:06:52:26

Further, National Grid stated earlier this year that only between 20 and 30% of the projects listed on their registers actually make it to fruition, providing further evidence to support the points that we made in statements of need, particularly in section 7.2.

01:07:03:07 - 01:07:34:22

But it's not just solar that's required to be built out. And it's not just solar, which is subject to grid connection constraints. A broad range of technologies is required to meet net zero. This scheme, if consented, will play its part in making in achieving the UK's Multi Technology Energy system of the future. So this is examples. Carbon capture usage and storing storage may be part of the future solution, but there remain technical funding and consenting hurdles which firstly must be overcome.

01:07:35:21 - 01:08:07:09

Hydrogen is being presented as an opportunity for further decarbonization, and progress has been made in carbon in hydrogen development since the statement of lead was submitted. But we need to be clear about about about carbon sorry about hydrogen because it will only deliver if other low carbon technologies deliver first. Blue hydrogen, as it's called, relies on the removal of carbon dioxide from its process, which will not be possible until carbon capture usage and storage is delivered at scale.

01:08:08:03 - 01:08:48:09

Green hydrogen relies on the abundance of low carbon generation for electrolysis. So green hydrogen requires all the buildout, requires the buildout of significant quantities of low carbon generation in order to electrolyse water. So abundant low carbon electricity is essential if green hydrogen is to be a thing. Or else we're locked into a future of us which isn't yet proven. So urgent action is needed now to deliver both a low carbon grid by 2035, a zero carbon grid by 2035, sorry, add to provide options for further technical development later.

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Solar delivers on both of those because it's a proven technology delivery and it's a proven technology in operation.

01:08:57:25 - 01:09:10:00

Beefing up the security of supply. Electricity supply should be plentiful at all times to avoid shortages during foreseeable circumstances. So generation should be abundant, but it should be efficient.

01:09:11:26 - 01:09:44:22

There are elements of the State of Need sections 8.7 and 8.8, specifically figures 8.2 and 8.1, which provide evidence of a multi technology approach to decarbonisation of the electric system. They show how wind and solar can work together to deliver efficient supplies. That's consistent with grid's Future Energy Scenarios 2023, which states at page 16 that a range of technology with different characteristics can, in combination, help deliver secure, affordable, low carbon electricity supplies.

01:09:45:09 - 01:09:52:15

They also state that more accuracy from wind and solar is vital to help UK Beta's target for net zero by 2050.

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So this scheme also includes proposals for battery energy storage system and the security of supply benefits associated with those we discussed earlier. So some details.

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Moving on to discuss affordability. It's a characteristic of any market where quality is scarce or even thought to be scarce. Its price increases. For example, we saw that this characteristic. So for electricity, this characteristic highlights the relationship between security of supply, national capacity of supply, decarbonization and the affordability of energy. And we've seen that very starkly with the risk to European gas supplies through the last 12 months.

01:10:40:18 - 01:11:00:08

Climate Change Committee reports in June 2023. Slates at page 20. But given the short lead time and rapid deployments of onshore wind and solar, if we could turn back the clock, those assets could have helped to mitigate a dependency on imported gas during last year's fossil crisis.

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

The Climate Change Committee also believe that UK based renewable generation provides affordability and security of supply benefits. And it's the applicant's case that the scheme bill, if consented, also provide those benefits from the very first day of its operation.

01:11:18:27 - 01:11:54:12

Figure 10.2 of the statement of the describes how delivering new solar generation reduces consumer commodity prices. And figures 10.3 and 10.4 of the statements of made show that large scale solar is already among the cheapest generation. Technology is projected to get cheaper. I mentioned that because the electricity Cost of Generation report from governments was reissued in 2023, post submission of our Statement of Lead and Reconfirms Solar's benefits in relation to its cost position versus other technologies.

01:12:00:21 - 01:12:40:22

But it's zero carbon future. Isn't yet fully assured. Contracts of different schemes. If the government's made mechanism for supporting low carbon electricity generation and in the summer 2023 allocation, round five was held when the results were published in September of this year. It's been widely reported that no contracts had been awarded to offshore wind projects. So what does that mean? Well, the effect that that could have on the future development of offshore wind does remain to be seen, but at best it will delay the construction of projects which have already secured planning.

01:12:41:00 - 01:13:16:12

At worst, subprojects just may not deliver, pulling into into risk the pipeline for offshore wind. And of course, the shortfall in the delivery of low carbon projects against national grid scenarios will need to be made up for by other technologies. We talked also. Fusion was mentioned five minutes ago and

since the statement of need was published, government have issued a Fusion strategy and Energy Act 2023 puts in place some keystones to enabling fusion.

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But it's important to note that government's target, its ambition, is for a single prototype plant to be deliverable by 2040. So fusion does not cannot meet the urgent need for the harmonization.

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It contracts for difference allocation. Round five. However, by contrast, you might say nearly two gigawatts of solar projects successfully secured agreements starting as early as 2027. So solar also continues to deliver on affordability.

01:13:50:05 - 01:14:24:15

It's close. I'd like to quote from page 25 of the 6th June 2023 report on Climate Change due to 2023 report. They state that government's decarbonization framework is currently missing coherent plans to mitigate the delivery risks of meeting the UK's 2030 commitments under the Paris agreements and its sixth carbon budget. The current strategy has considerable delivery risks due to its overreliance on specific technological solutions, some of which have not yet been deployed at scale.

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This lack of balance carries considerable and increasing risks to meeting the emissions targets.

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Against that context, the need for solar is enormous and urgent. Solar has a critical role to play to deliver decarbonization, security of supply, and affordability benefits. These benefits are consistent with those described by the Secretary of State in the 2023 draft. One at paragraphs 3.25 and 3.26, in which the Secretary of State has determined that those benefits should be given significant weight when considering applications. And we ask therefore, sir, that you also give those issues significant weight when considering this application.

01:15:12:24 - 01:15:47:12

Thank you, Mr. Gillet. Um, there's quite a lot in there and a lot of references, some of which, again, post date, current statement of need. So I'm minded really to ask for an up to date by way of submission. So a summary of the information that you've just run through in terms of the references that that links into provided they are publicly available, accessible documents may hold off from taking those into the library for the time being, provided.

01:15:47:14 - 01:16:06:17

The statement of need can be updated and we can receive your written summary by around deadline one. And I'm going to. Just look at the agenda and the time. So we're still on baby needs and benefits. I'm going to bring in interested parties in a moment.

01:16:08:02 - 01:16:18:07

Just have a question. Mr. Gillet, just very succinctly. Really, should the scheme not go ahead? What would be the implications in terms of delivering government policy

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specifically relating to renewable energy?

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So so the implications if the scheme does not go ahead. A two fold.

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The first. Is that a large scale scheme? Which is able within the 2020 to deliver against the government's targets of a renewable energy system and support the delivery of renewable energy system by 2030. Welcome forwards.

01:16:52:27 - 01:16:54:14
The second implication.

01:16:56:04 - 01:17:09:10
I'm sorry. Maybe that other schemes will need to come forward with greater urgency and greater capacity in order to meet those same aims. And the second point.

01:17:10:23 - 01:17:11:25
Is a.

01:17:13:20 - 01:17:29:10
It's actually a little by extension, but there is a national resource available here in the location in the west first location, which is the grid connection at West Burton Power Station. And it is important for.

01:17:31:21 - 01:18:11:26
For consumers that that grid capacity is used. A. And as I say, it's by extension. But I think my question back would be that if there is if a low carbon scheme which connects to an available grid connection capacity is not consented. So that capacity effectively goes to waste, which causes time, cost and risk implications to the delivery of government's targets again by 2035 and continuing through 2050.

01:18:13:25 - 01:18:48:18
Thank you for that response. In terms of timing, I'm going to bring in again interested parties to to discuss this need case. We still need to look at benefits and we need to strain to items C and D which. Parts of which we have begun to cover. So on conclusion of item B, I'm going to suggest that we will take lunch at that point. That'll be in a few moments. Once I've heard from any interested parties, anything they wish to raise regarding the needs case that has just been outlined.

01:18:49:01 - 01:19:01:28
Mr. O'Grady, I think that you raised some things earlier on in the day. They may now have been. Fully addressed, but happy to hear anything on the need case, after which we'll look at benefits, Mr. Grady.

01:19:02:03 - 01:19:27:09
Okay. Thank you. Grady. 7000 acres. And. The applicant laid out three things urgent need to decarbonize security, supply and affordability. I think the urgent need to decarbonize is is clearly understood, and I think all parties around the table are in agreement with that. And what would draw the examining authorities attention to is.

01:19:29:02 - 01:19:49:02
Three reports, actually, that were identified this year. That. Which one was from the National Audit Office? Warner from the Climate Change Committee and one was from the business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee.

01:19:51:18 - 01:20:26:15
All of them came to the same conclusion that we urgently need to coordinate planning of the energy system, so not piecemeal. We need to resolve the grid connectivity issues. And we need to deliver offshore wind. There was no call for an acceleration of solar. The implication, actually, from the Climate Change Committee report was actually the deployment of solar is currently broadly on track for meeting the government objective.

01:20:26:17 - 01:20:35:19

So there was not in any of those reports anything that called for an acceleration of solar development.

01:20:37:08 - 01:21:08:10

And. The reports cited a the inadequate pace of development of wind and nuclear, and the applicant has rightly identified the issue with CFD round five and the issues that's had on wind development. The reason why wind is such an important factor is that National Grid perceive that would be 70% or more of the UK's electricity supply by 2050.

01:21:08:12 - 01:21:15:08

So offshore wind and wind, it's it's crucial that that's going to be able to decarbonise.

01:21:17:10 - 01:21:47:11

And then the fourth area that these these reports have identified is the need to manage energy flexibility. And so simply piling more and more renewables onto the grid, without the tools to be able to manage that flexibility and absorb that energy simply results in wasted energy and curtailment and effectively less efficient deployment of the resources that we have.

01:21:49:15 - 01:21:56:29

So that's the decarbonisation position just in terms of security, of supply. Um.

01:21:59:00 - 01:22:36:09

There is a temptation and it's quite seductive. Position to look at wind and solar being entirely complementary. And there is a there is an element of truth in that. But because of course, you have to match supply and demand in the minute. And sadly, wind and solar aren't entirely mutually convenient in the way that they behave. Um, so yes, there is a, there is a benefit by having a range of technologies. But, but for the applicant to assert that solar makes an appreciable contribution to security of supplies is.

01:22:37:19 - 01:23:09:17

Is stretching the point. And typically security supply is meeting demand. Absolutely. When we need to and be able to guarantee that. And clearly at the point at which we were holding the the open floor hearing last night and, and there people providing their opinions, clearly the scheme would have been producing nothing at all at that time in the evening. And so the flexibility is is important to manage.

01:23:10:26 - 01:23:41:11

Just in terms of that. Um, the applicant in the statement of need talks about the fact that solar is a contributor to the the UK's primary tool for ensuring capacity, which is the capacity mechanism. Um, the document talks about there being over 2000MW of solar that contribute to that capacity mechanism. But what it doesn't say is that because technologies are De rated based on their, um,

01:23:43:03 - 01:23:51:20

their expected delivery at a time of crisis, solar is De rated to less than 5%. So that.

01:23:53:12 - 01:24:11:26

About 2000MW that was quoted there would only be counted on for 100MW or so. So there's a. An element where. Once again, the applicant is is being very selective in what they say with regard to security supply.

01:24:14:09 - 01:24:20:03

The third point was with regard to affordability and. And.

01:24:22:07 - 01:24:35:27

It's interesting this point that if we turn back the clock, we could have had a we could have done a better job of decarbonisation. I'd entirely agree. As I said, having put solar on my roof in 2008. Um, but we haven't.

01:24:37:17 - 01:24:38:02

Um.

01:24:40:16 - 01:25:16:03

Interesting that the the indication of where we are with commodity prices and the low cost now of deploying solar and what that's triggered in the last two years is actually an awful lot more domestic rooftop installations. And despite the fact that the government has removed the subsidies for that in 2016. And so it's all about the economic framework. And the the applicant talked about the fact that the.

01:25:17:02 - 01:25:45:18

Yeah, the business case for solar at the moment is very strong. Clearly it's very strong for them. But it's now currently because of market price is very strong for residents. And a lot of residents are putting solar on their rooftops, which is great. And that's actually partly what's driving the the deployment of solar, and probably why the climate change Committee were less concerned with solar deployment versus what they were with wind farm deployment.

01:25:55:17 - 01:26:48:25

Category as well the the concluding points that were made with regard to the government missing. Coherent plans with regard to risks and that resulting in risks to delivery of decarbonisation. And there are clearly requirements for things like carbon capture, use and storage. Hydrogen. They are very, very much in their infancy. Um. But without attacking those four things that are described that were identified by by the Climate Change Committee, the National Audit Office and the base Committee, which are coordination of planning, sorting out connectivity issues, especially to deliver winter wind generation and the inadequate pace of deployment of wind and nuclear and the need to manage energy flexibility.

01:26:48:27 - 01:27:00:25

Those are the four keys and those are the four risks. The risk isn't the the anything to do with slower deployment of solar. And.

01:27:04:00 - 01:27:22:14

You asked a specific question at the answer with regard to. If the scheme didn't go ahead and think. It was interesting to note that in the round that the applicant referred to. I don't think any of the schemes were above 50MW. Is that is that the case and the.

01:27:25:09 - 01:27:25:24

There are some.

01:27:27:15 - 01:27:57:21

So the so the the the schemes that are, that are through, there are sort of 50 to 60 to 70MW that were, that came through the, the, the last round with regard to solar. And so there's a, there's a healthy pipeline of things that are actually coming through with regard to solar, without the additional requirement for all schemes of the scale. And just heading very briefly back to the national planning framework and statements.

01:27:58:04 - 01:28:06:20

And while the statements clearly make room for large scale solar and by implication, ground mounted stuff.

01:28:07:07 - 01:28:07:22

Um.

01:28:09:15 - 01:28:11:28

NPR season three talks about a typical

01:28:13:22 - 01:28:26:21

Incept scale scheme being off around 50MW. So it's interesting that the applicant here is taking that by a factor of ten as being as being appropriate. And.

01:28:28:09 - 01:29:03:11

The last point you mentioned in the reply to questions at the end there was about the the resource at the West Burton Grid substation. Um, and I think it's worth pointing out that there's, you know. There is a clearly a strategic resource there. It's a high power connection to the national grid, high voltage, high power. And as mentioned earlier, solar can be disaggregated because at its unit level, it's 48V.

01:29:03:13 - 01:29:12:14

It doesn't have to be stepped up to 400,000V and step down again to 240. It's only already at 48V. And so.

01:29:14:04 - 01:29:58:16

There isn't really the strategic need to occupy a high power, high voltage connection. Now. We don't know what is the future need for such connections necessarily. One was talked about which was the fusion reactor, clearly electrolyzers or another thing that are being talked about as being a key thing to develop. But if we occupy all these strategically important, high power, high, high voltage connections, then we do risk using them and squandering them for systems that aren't necessarily required, dependent on needing high power connections.

01:29:58:18 - 01:29:59:03

Thank you.

01:30:01:03 - 01:30:08:26

Thank you, Mr. O'Grady. So. I think with the updating of the statement of need.

01:30:09:23 - 01:30:10:18

Um, and.

01:30:10:20 - 01:30:24:23

The submission that Mr. Gillet has put in and maybe some responses to some of those queries that have just been raised by Mr. O'Grady on behalf of 7000 acres. We do need to move us on to benefits.

01:30:26:09 - 01:30:37:13

Mr. Skelton. See? Wanted to come in. So just before we seek a response, a very brief response on the need and move into benefits. I'll just hear from Mr. Skelton and thank you.

01:30:38:17 - 01:30:55:01

Thank you. Simon Skelton, resident. Um, Mr. Gillet, one of the many things you said was. To decarbonise, the UK would need up to four times more power. Um.

01:30:59:00 - 01:31:01:08

The West Burton Solar project.

01:31:03:09 - 01:31:18:08

And inverted commas is to replace one of the 500 megawatt units at the West Burn Power Station. It's using one of the 400 500 megawatt grid connections there, but it would only generate

01:31:19:24 - 01:31:51:14

the six it generates six times less power. In the 500 megawatt units. So in a world where we're going to need up to four times more power. We're actually going backwards. And remember that the West Burton one, two or 3 or 4, the units that used to be the coal fired power stations, they were heavily constrained by grid for half of the life. And we're very flexible in their generation.

01:31:51:16 - 01:32:01:02

So the actual potential power output from one of these coal fired units would have been a lot higher.

01:32:02:27 - 01:32:13:22

The point is, it's a waste of the phone grid connection with something that's given less power when in the future we need more. Thank you.

01:32:15:01 - 01:32:16:28

Thank you, Mr. Skelton. So,

01:32:18:28 - 01:32:38:06

as I previously said, item we will take after lunch. I'm just going to ask the applicant to respond to anything very briefly that you may have heard in previous submissions. And then I'm going to invite you to talk through the position in relation to benefits. So multifaceted question if I could turn that over to the applicant now. Thank you.

01:32:39:02 - 01:33:19:14

Claire, for the applicant. Yes. Just before hand over to Mr. Gillet. Think obviously Mr. O'Grady has provided quite a detailed oral submission that was quite technical in its nature and also given a range of opinions on on capacity and how grid network should be managed, etcetera. It would be very useful if Mr. O'Grady could just maybe give a brief summary of his professional expertise in, in this area, just to support, so that you can have an appreciation of the potential of the weight to be given to some of the submissions that have been made that have been given on a sort of a technical, technical ground.

01:33:19:16 - 01:33:46:04

It would be helpful if maybe he could just. Obviously, Mr. Gillet expertise and experience are set out in the statement of need. So when you're listening to to, in some areas, conflicting interpretations of policy and what government reports are, are stating it would be useful to have a summary of Mr. O'Grady's experience and what that's based on, just so that you can consider and consider that in the round. Thank you.

01:33:49:16 - 01:33:51:24

Yes. Is there anything you'd like to add?

01:33:52:29 - 01:34:28:06

So thank you. That's there's four points that I'd like to make, if I may. So just moving closer to the microphone. Um, the first is um, it's really around kind of the rate of deployment of solar and other low carbon technologies. The applicant's position is that the grid needs to be decarbonised. Um, there is a tremendous increase in requirement for capacity from all technologies, not just solar. And obviously, in order for solar capacity to increase, projects need to be consented.

01:34:28:08 - 01:34:59:00

So, um, that's a kind of a point there. Secondly, um, a distinction between large and small scale was tried to be brought out in relation to the recent CFD results. So I'm sure you're aware that in order to participate in a contract of difference round planning consent needs to be provided before that participation can occur. Um, and we're all aware of those large scale sites which have i.e.

01:34:59:02 - 01:35:30:04

over 50MW, which are in sites which have planning consent and therefore the participation of those schemes in the CFD will always be small. So I don't think that's surprise. Um, in relation to the potential use of the West Burton connection in the future, um, and I think. Essentially for there being an electrolyzer placed there, therefore.

01:35:30:06 - 01:36:02:15

But potentially the position was that we should leave that capacity empty for ten, 15, 20 years until something else else happened. So that's not the applicant's view of what is required in order to decarbonise the system. I would just bring your attention back to the fact that the available import capacity at the West Burton connection is 20MW, and I'm not sure where any power to Electrolyser would therefore be able to get to an Electrolyser which was located at that point.

01:36:03:12 - 01:36:18:05

This is not the biggest electrolyzers. They're very important. We need to understand the round when we bring forward examples. And the final thing, I'd just like to address a point that Mr. Skelton made and apologies if I have.

01:36:21:01 - 01:36:51:27

Slightly miscommunicated, but I don't think we're in any way seeking to replace with one scheme the West Burton a coal. Powered fire station. We are using some of the connection that is made available because it is no longer operating, because it is an end of use, because it is a significant carbon dioxide emitter, and because government is phasing out coal by 2024. So but we agree with the point that Mr.

01:36:51:29 - 01:37:17:18

Skelton makes, which is that in order for the grids to be carbonized, a lot more like. Multiples. More generation capacity is required in the UK because we will need to pull on things like wind and solar and other renewable sources. So that's not a surprise. And we we know at that point, but we're not seeking directly to replace that. Thank you sir.

01:37:18:21 - 01:37:46:02

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Gillet. Um, just a reference to 7000 acres. Or deadline one in providing your written summaries. Note the comments there and feel free to include any further information and credentials that you wish to submit to the examining authority. But where some of the information is coming from and this would be the thing for now, the final point on yes.

01:37:46:11 - 01:38:19:19

Mark Pryor for 7000 acres, just to very briefly say this is a document that the applicant shared to all households. And in it, it states that they will replace 30% of the capacity of cotton. So I'll share this in our written submission. Thank you. But I think that's a general guide as to the way the applicant has conferred with the public.

01:38:19:23 - 01:38:25:10

Because a lot of the details in here are either incorrect or out of date.

01:38:25:24 - 01:38:36:04

Thank you. Yes, please do submit along with your further representations. Okay. I am going to very briefly and succinctly ask again for.

01:38:37:25 - 01:38:39:16

Position in relation to benefits now.

01:38:41:18 - 01:39:37:10

Laboratory for the applicant? Yes. It's just to refer you to section 4.6 of the planning statement. It's referenced earlier, which sets out the other benefits of the scheme. Obviously, Mr. Gillies mentioned the benefits from a need and security of supply perspective, and that sets out the additional benefits. And those relate to things like biodiversity, net gain, landscaping, a permissive footpath that's being provided and the measures secured through the outlined skills and management plan in relation to employment opportunities during the construction of the scheme and the supply chain use of local supply chain in the construction of the project as well, and.

01:39:38:13 - 01:40:03:12

That. Guess that's a sort of a very brief summary of where that information is, is included. And we obviously have ecology and landscaping as specific topics for later on. So perhaps the specific benefits from a landscaping and ecology perspective can be discussed then. And we'll also have our landscape and ecology consultants available to answer any questions about those particular benefits. That's fine.

01:40:04:12 - 01:40:28:03

Thank you, Miss Broderick. So the reference really there is back to the planning statement. And thank you for saying that out very succinctly. I'm going to. Before we break for lunch, invite any comments from local authorities here. To see to the extent to which they may agree with those benefits suggested by the applicant.

01:40:31:17 - 01:40:33:02

Ms.. Clarkson. West. Lindsey.

01:40:34:13 - 01:40:40:03

Russell, Clarkson, Western district Council. Yeah I mean we're aware that we have. So.

01:40:42:14 - 01:40:44:21

Thank you. Anything been?

01:40:47:08 - 01:40:48:06

Just looking.

01:40:51:16 - 01:40:59:00

I'll take that. Mr. Poynter, Nottinghamshire County Council. Nothing to add on benefits at the moment.

01:41:05:03 - 01:41:06:26

Sorry. No, sir. No nothing.

01:41:07:11 - 01:41:16:15

Thank you. Okay. And therefore. And any other interested parties. Any comments to make on benefits?

01:41:25:19 - 01:41:42:27

Okay. Thank you everyone so far for this morning. It is now 132. As I've said, we do need to get through items, but we have started to stray into these so they may be, um, foreshortened and then move on to item five. It's 132. So I'm going to suggest.

01:41:45:03 - 01:41:49:17

If we could reconvene at exactly 230 for the afternoon session. Thank you.