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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:09:23 - 00:00:11:10

Okay. Welcome back everybody.

00:00:16:00 - 00:00:30:14

Thank you. Um. So we are now moving into the final parts of the agenda. Would it be possible to have that put back up on screen? Can I confirm live stream, etc.? Thank you.

00:00:40:03 - 00:00:46:23

Who now enter item 6E2, which is river ditches and aquatic life.

00:00:49:17 - 00:01:01:27

Some elements of this have actually been addressed under biodiversity net gain. But I have a couple of questions and there may be some wider discussion around rivers, ditches, aquatic life.

00:01:04:25 - 00:01:37:18

First. My first point is ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency around hydrology, flood risk and drainage and the statement of common ground. Environment agency has updated that progress has been good and those issues around protected provisions. HFD 11 and 12, where the Environment Agency is undertaking a comparison between standard protective provisions and those that the applicant has submitted. And in their view, the two are not too far apart in discussions are ongoing.

00:01:39:00 - 00:02:16:03

There's also HFD 13, in the statement of Common Ground, which is still under consideration, and that relates to the book of reference. So I will ask for an update. It may be identical to the response provided under other questions on those discussions with the Environment Agency and Statement of Common Ground, and the submission of that, or the latest version of that as a further date. Also within Environment Agency concerns is the issue around aquatic life and electromagnetic fields.

00:02:17:25 - 00:02:50:21

And I may just go into this now and deal with the items collectively. So on the potential impact of electromagnetic fields associated with the development of pond ecology has been raised by the Environment Agency, amongst others. Environment agency states that the applicant needs to do more work on this topic. That was the latest position that has been submitted to the examination. Uh, the issue is around the impact of electromagnetic fields, EMF on fish, where the cables from this and other schemes passing under the River Trent.

00:02:51:06 - 00:02:58:10

I note that further discussions have taken place between the applicant and the Environment Agency on the Cottam solar project.

00:03:00:04 - 00:03:13:04

The Environment Agency recognizes that this is a new, emerging, new and emerging topic. Um, so the agency is itself seeking. Advice or research from leading academic researchers.

00:03:14:19 - 00:03:23:26

They state that using the evidence submitted in the risk assessment, the Environment Agency believes that the figures provided would provide would prove a low risk to fish, but cannot say categorically.

00:03:25:18 - 00:03:53:28

So the invite is asking the applicant to agree to undertake a scheme of monitoring to corroborate the predicted impacts of EMF on fish, as presented in the Environmental Statement. The suggestion is that the monitoring is linked and therefore linked to, and therefore would add to or work alongside the academic research ongoing within the Trent catchment to demonstrate presence or absence of impacted key protected species such as lamprey, at that site.

00:03:55:17 - 00:04:00:26

Measures may include fish tagging receivers and receivers at the cable crossing points.

00:04:02:21 - 00:04:33:23

Environment Agency is therefore requesting a position of a requirement in the DCO and wording has been provided. Would it be possible to receive the update from the applicant on progress? So firstly, I suppose that point on statements common ground, if I presume that won't differ significantly from the responses provided earlier, but also then on the specific issues are to do with the MF impact on fish life.

00:04:35:02 - 00:05:08:24

Uh, clever of the applicant. Um, yes. The discussions on the Statement of Common Ground are ongoing. As we said, um, in relation to protective provisions. Um, the form of protective provisions was recently agreed for the Cottam solar project. Um, and so we're anticipating that, um, agreement will be reached soon in respect of the West Burton solar project. Um, the Environment Agency were happy with the draft protective provisions that were included in the DCO for the Cottam solar project. So we're anticipating that they will take the same position for West Burton.

00:05:08:26 - 00:05:40:21

But obviously we're just waiting for that formal confirmation. Um, in relation to, um, the point and there will be an updated deadline for just in terms of the status if we haven't got. Uh, obviously the hope is that we may have a signed statement of common ground at that stage, but if not, then an update will be provided in terms of, um, in the statement of commonality. Um, in terms of um. Impacts of EMF on, um, fish as you have referred to.

00:05:40:24 - 00:05:46:19

The applicant did provide further information in the form of a risk assessment. Um.

00:05:48:09 - 00:06:22:20

The applicant was aware of the Environment Agency's desire for further research to be undertaken on this particular topic, particularly in this area where you have a number of projects crossing the Trent and the applicant is willing to, um, assist um, with that research, um, which the applicant considers would need to be academically led. It's not a, a monitoring type of provision that the applicant would be able to carry out.

00:06:22:23 - 00:07:19:28

Um, and therefore, um, the applicant's position is that we don't feel that it meets the test for a requirement. Um, because it's not to mitigate the impacts of the scheme. It's not particularly precise what's actually required. And it would also need to relate to all of the all of the schemes. It wouldn't be. I don't think it would serve the, the purpose that the Environment Agency wanted for each of the individual schemes did their own. Try to do their own sort of monitoring, which isn't provided for as part of this scheme. However, um, the applicant is having ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency in terms of the types of ways that we on this particular scheme and also on the Cottam solar project, could assist with the research in terms of providing information about the nature and usage of the cables themselves, which obviously their academic researchers wouldn't have access to otherwise, and potentially in the form of financial contribution to the academic research.

00:07:20:00 - 00:07:50:08

But we wouldn't it wouldn't normally, um, have a requirement that related to academic research. Um, so it's something that we feel should be dealt with outside of the, of the DCO process. So that's sort of the update as to where we are. But discussions, discussions are ongoing. Um. With the Environment Agency as to how we can best help them achieve their. Collection of evidence, which is what what they are seeking to do as part of this process.

00:07:50:10 - 00:07:50:25

Okay.

00:07:52:02 - 00:08:16:08

Okay. Thank you for that update. So so the the applicant doesn't feel that this, as you say, means the requirement meets the tests for a requirement imposition, but is happy to work with the Environment Agency and academia to maybe achieve the exact same results as set out in the concerns.

00:08:18:08 - 00:08:57:23

Uh, Claire? Yes that's correct. Obviously there are other, um, we are this particular project and the other projects are going beneath, um, the River Trent. We're not proposing to access have access to the River Trent itself. Um, we are aware, as I think they mentioned, that other research is going on on the River Trent itself. And the intention is that that research may be extended to cover, uh, this area of the River Trent. So, as I say, it's a an academic research project that will, um, speak to them about how we can assist rather than a matter that is, um, an impact that requires mitigation, that can be secured by way of requirement.

00:08:59:01 - 00:09:21:08

Excellent. Thank you. And even though it may be addressed outside of the DCO, I think it would be useful to have that update, which you've already indicated would be forthcoming at deadline for, um, so as the panel is aware of progress on discussions around that point. Okay.

00:09:38:04 - 00:09:46:05

So on my list. I have a repeated point here about the filamentous algae. Algae.

00:09:47:23 - 00:09:56:21

Which has already been addressed under biodiversity net gain. I don't intend to go through that again. I think the summary was that.

00:09:58:07 - 00:10:04:20

Agreement was close with the Environment Agency, and an update would be given that deadline for.

00:10:08:13 - 00:10:30:08

Like before moving on to item 789. I'm just going to invite any other comments on six E drainage and flooding which we have covered. But rivers, ditches, aquatic life, either iprs in the room or online.

00:10:37:23 - 00:11:16:04

No. Okay. So that takes us into item seven, which is other matters. The main matter under other matters has been discussed. And that's the rearrangement of parts of the agenda which we've had both today and issue specific hearing for tomorrow. And that there will be a decision made as to how to address cultural heritage, cumulative impacts and landscape and visual impact through hearings, written submissions or virtual hearings.

00:11:17:02 - 00:11:22:09

Does anybody else have any other matters that were needed to be raised under item seven?

00:11:23:17 - 00:11:24:02

Um.

00:11:25:00 - 00:11:58:29

The applicant. Um, just in relation to, um, procedure or the format of tomorrow's hearing as cumulative effects are not going to be on the agenda. Um, we were wondering whether it would be possible, therefore, to release the applicants experts who have dealt with the topics on the agenda for today. So climate change, soils, hydrology, etc., because they obviously intending to stay in case there were cumulative questions that that may come up. But if we're not going to be dealing with cumulative, then it would be very much appreciated if they were able to, uh, to leave the.

00:11:59:06 - 00:12:06:22

Yes, I think that's the best solution as mentioned. Um, I think we have a message to, uh.

00:12:08:10 - 00:12:17:28

Historic England to the same point, and I know local authorities might be rearranging attendees on that basis as well.

00:12:22:26 - 00:12:36:18

Okay. In that case, item eight is a review of action points arising. This is not definitive, but it's certainly the ones that I've noted. Uh, if there are other actions that have been.

00:12:38:10 - 00:13:17:09

Allocate it to you that you've agreed, then most of those will be required by deadline for I've noticed under the heading example of comparable size schemes. Um, there's an undertaking, I think, from the applicant to update on where some of those consented schemes are at and whether or not they are under construction, what can be seen, and anything internationally. Um, I've made a note that there's a. To review the waste section of the outline Battery Management storage safety plan by El-Sisi.

00:13:17:21 - 00:13:27:10

This was a discussion around the newly, uh, relatively newly inserted chapter dealing with waste.

00:13:28:27 - 00:13:47:08

Uh, CloudWatch. I think it's in the outline environmental management plan. Um, just for, uh, to clarify, so that that was the text that was inserted at, um, a deadline. Three. So if there are any comments on, on that text or on that document generally I do. Yeah. Of course. Happy to receive those.

00:13:48:12 - 00:13:48:27

Uh.

00:13:52:02 - 00:14:04:18

Community Benefit Fund. I suppose we're all to note that the applicant is open to suggestions, and really, those suggestions would be worked through with Lincolnshire County Council. Nottinghamshire County Council.

00:14:06:27 - 00:14:39:04

Confirmed the location of the US study on water drop phenomenon. I know, Mr. Rigby said it was not material to the over all conclusions of that study. But if by deadline for you were able to identify the location of that, please enter it into the examination. Um, the Environment Agency Statement of Common ground and being securing is ongoing between the applicant and Environment Agency, and we'll have submission by deadline for.

00:14:43:12 - 00:15:15:17

A number of questions raised under agriculture and soils. I think 7000 acres is undertaken to respond to those in writing, where necessary, by deadline for due to the absence of your expert. Okay, so note of agreed actions will be published on the West page of the National Infrastructure website. As I've said. If there are requests with documents identified, please give these provided by deadline for 28th of February 2024.

00:15:16:12 - 00:15:21:23

Similarly, it would be helpful if the summer of your oral submission today could be made by deadline for.

00:15:23:15 - 00:15:28:18

And the recording of the hearing will be published on the project web page as soon as is practicable.

00:15:30:09 - 00:15:55:18

Item nine clothes. Just to thank everyone for participating and contributing today. To remind everybody that issue specific hearing for will take place here tomorrow at 10 a.m. with registration from 930. As discussed, there will be changes to that agenda. So all that remains for me to say is thank you for your participation and issue specific hearing three is now closed.