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Open Floor Hearing 1

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00:00:06:05 - 00:00:15:11

Good afternoon, everyone. Can I just check? You can also hear me. Just great. And I'd be grateful if someone from the case team could confirm that we're now recording.

00:00:22:03 - 00:00:55:04

Thank you, Sammy. Well, it's now 3:00, and I'd like to start by welcoming you all to this. The first open floor hearing for the Quantum Solar project. My name is Rory Cridland, and I'm the lead member of the panel of examining inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State to examine this application and report back with a recommendation. For those of you that weren't here this morning for the preliminary meeting by way of introduction, my professional background is as a solicitor. I've worked as a planning inspector for the past nine years, and this is the fourth nationally significant infrastructure project that I've been appointed to as an examining inspector.

00:00:56:18 - 00:01:35:06

As mentioned a moment ago, this open floor hearing is being recorded and is being live streamed on the Internet. So it would be helpful if you could clearly identify yourselves before you speak. We do have a roving microphone for you to use when you make any contributions. The recording will be retained and published on the National Infrastructure website for a period of five years following the Secretary of State's decision on the application. And so can I ask you all to try and refrain from providing any information that you wish to be kept private and confidential? It is important that you understand that if you participate in today's hearing, you will be recorded and that you consent to the recording and publication of that information.

00:01:36:08 - 00:01:42:13

I'm going to hand over now to my colleague, Mr. Hendley, who's going to introduce himself and take us through the next few items on the agenda.

00:01:45:21 - 00:02:04:27

Thank you. My name is Darren Hendley. I'm a member of the panel of Examiners, inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State for the application made by Cottam Solar Project Limited for an order granting development consent for the Cottam Solar Project. My professional background is in town planning, and I'm a chartered member of the Rural Town Planning Institute,

00:02:06:15 - 00:02:34:24

an authority. We are holding an examination into this application and we will then write reports to the Secretary of State with our recommendation on whether consent should be given. Our examination started early today following the preliminary meeting. Occasionally works alongside us throughout the process and they are managed by Simon Redwood, who is here, who is with us today. They should be your first point of contact. If you have any queries about the examination process or arrangements for hearings.

00:02:36:12 - 00:02:50:07

Mostly run through some housekeeping matters. The hearing is a blended event, which means that some of you are attending in this room and some are taking part via Microsoft teams. However you are attending, we will deal with you fairly.

00:02:52:04 - 00:03:01:19

Please switch off or mute your mobile phones if you're not using it to join the hearing. And please, anyone joining via Microsoft teams, try to minimize any background noise.

00:03:07:05 - 00:03:32:19

A couple of other things for those joining via Microsoft teams. The chat function and Microsoft teams will not be enabled or in use, so please don't try to use that for comments. Also, we will only use the raise hand function in Microsoft teams at specific points in the agenda when we invite general comments. We'll also get people who are not able to use that feature an opportunity to comment at the relevant time.

00:03:35:09 - 00:03:56:09

If you are watching via the live stream, then please be aware that it will be stopped during any adjournments to the hearing. You'll need to refresh your browser page to view the restarted hearing. You all find it useful to have your gender, to have a gender that was published on the 29th of August 2023 at hand.

00:03:58:21 - 00:04:14:01

The purpose of this hearing is for us to hear the views of those interested parties who have requested to be heard. It's an opportunity for us to hear your thoughts about the application at first hand. First, they need to establish who will be the lead speaker for the applicants.

00:04:15:21 - 00:04:18:23

Thankful. Take a microphone or come forward to the table to confirm.

00:04:30:28 - 00:04:36:12

And Claire Broderick. I'm a legal director at Pinsent Masons. Solicitor for the applicant. Thank you.

00:04:36:23 - 00:04:37:08

Thank you.

00:04:44:06 - 00:04:51:06

At this stage, I'm not invited to the introductions, so there will be an opportunity to introduce yourselves later when invited to speak.

00:04:53:15 - 00:05:10:13

The hearing is structured today, so you have an opportunity to raise anything relevant to this hearing when we invite you to speak at the relevant points on the agenda. Each time that we invite you to speak, please give your name and any organization that you're representing that it is picked up for the formal record.

00:05:12:16 - 00:05:17:18

And we were a couple other points on the agenda that was published on the 29th of August 2023.

00:05:19:17 - 00:05:23:15

Please. Could the case now share a copy of that agenda on the street?

00:05:50:04 - 00:05:52:28

Yes. Can copy the gender be put on the screen, please?

00:06:10:01 - 00:06:10:16

Thank you.

00:06:12:26 - 00:06:30:29

We're just about to complete agenda item one. Um, one final point. Under this first agenda item subject to progress. We intend to take short comfort breaks around intervals of 90 minutes or so. So I'm now going to move on to agenda item two, which is the purpose of the open floor hearing.

00:06:36:09 - 00:07:07:08

As I've indicated, the purpose of steering is to give interested parties an opportunity to make oral representations about the application. This hearing subjects our powers of control over its conduct as established by the Planning Act 2008. And to be clear, the purpose is to assist in our examination. Hence, the hearing is not to be used as a political platform, and any attempt to do so will not be tolerated. Each interested party who has indicated a wish to speak will be invited in turn to speak at the appropriate time.

00:07:09:12 - 00:07:25:01

These are all submissions we have based on representations previously made in writing by the Speaker. However, they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in a written submission, but rather provide further detail, explanation and corroborative evidence that will help to inform us.

00:07:26:22 - 00:07:32:18

We will ask necessary ask questions of the speaker and also provide the applicant with an opportunity to respond at the end.

00:07:34:13 - 00:07:40:08

Are there any questions about the agenda or how this hearing will be conducted before. Move on to agenda item three.

00:07:45:27 - 00:07:46:12

Thank you.

00:07:48:18 - 00:08:20:07

So they moved on to agenda item three. I'll now invite parties who provide notification of their wish to speak at the hearing to identify themselves. If there are a number of people representing a party, then please join all all the screen at the same time with cameras on and introduce yourselves one by one if you're joining. Virtually. So firstly, I'm going to start with the room. Um, and firstly, um, just again, I'll just confirm in here that people who wish to speak rather than the speaker itself that will follow on the next agenda item.

00:08:20:22 - 00:08:25:17

So firstly, Russell Clarkson from West Lindsey District Council.

00:08:27:04 - 00:08:29:00

It's also clocks and presents.

00:08:30:15 - 00:08:37:13

Uh, yes. Good afternoon, sir. Russell Clarke's West Lindsey. I don't intend to be speaking. I'm simply observing this afternoon.

00:08:38:20 - 00:08:40:04

Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

00:08:46:07 - 00:08:50:15

And Carol Gilbert certain by Stowe Parish Council.

00:08:53:12 - 00:08:53:27

You.

00:08:58:00 - 00:09:06:12

And also finish filling in Parish council. Parish meeting. Thank you. Can I just take your details, please, In terms of your name?

00:09:08:01 - 00:09:11:03

Can just like a microphone comes to you.

00:09:18:23 - 00:09:22:22

Hello, Margaret O'Grady. And I'm the chair of Filling and Parish Meeting.

00:09:23:09 - 00:09:23:24

Thank you.

00:09:28:24 - 00:09:36:03

Can I just clarify one point? We've had correspondence from filling on parish meeting. Is that part of the parish council or is that a separate organisation?

00:09:40:01 - 00:09:47:11

We are not a parish council. We are a parish meeting because of the number of elect on our electoral roll.

00:09:47:21 - 00:09:49:13

Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you for that.

00:09:53:02 - 00:10:02:27

Thank you. And 7000 acres, understand? Up to four people maybe speaking on behalf of 7000 acres.

00:10:05:13 - 00:10:06:28

This garbage. Thank you.

00:10:07:18 - 00:10:14:02

Yes. Liz Garbutt 7000 acres. I don't think there's anybody else speaking on behalf of 7000 acres that I'm aware of.

00:10:15:03 - 00:10:17:06

So just clarify. Are you not speaking at this?

00:10:17:10 - 00:10:20:07

Yes. Am sorry. On behalf of 7000 acres.

00:10:20:09 - 00:10:21:28

So nobody else is just just yourself.

00:10:22:10 - 00:10:22:26

Correct.

00:10:22:28 - 00:10:24:16

Thank you. Thank you. Clarification. Okay.

00:10:35:06 - 00:10:37:10

And Claire Heller.

00:10:45:04 - 00:10:47:15

Yes. And you will be speaking?

00:10:47:19 - 00:10:48:09

Am indeed.

00:10:48:11 - 00:10:49:04

Okay. Thank you.

00:10:55:23 - 00:10:56:27

Simon Skelton.

00:11:01:21 - 00:11:05:29

Yes, I'm the affected resident and will be speaking. Thank you.

00:11:06:06 - 00:11:06:21

Thank you.

00:11:12:17 - 00:11:13:21

Patricia Mitchell.

00:11:20:26 - 00:11:22:14

And will you be speaking? Yes, I.

00:11:22:16 - 00:11:24:05

Will. I'm a local resident.

00:11:29:21 - 00:11:30:25

Katrina Morton.

00:11:31:27 - 00:11:32:12

Yes.

00:11:34:15 - 00:11:35:05

Okay. Thank you, sir.

00:11:38:16 - 00:11:39:20

Pauline Organ.

00:11:43:21 - 00:11:52:13

I'm sorry. Could ask you all just to wait until the microphone comes to you just because for the purposes of the recording, everything needs to be recorded and captured by the microphone.

00:11:57:14 - 00:12:01:27

Important. Pauline Organ. Local resident. Yes. Would like to speak, please. Thank you.

00:12:02:29 - 00:12:03:18

Thank you.

00:12:06:22 - 00:12:08:00

Roberts court.

00:12:14:04 - 00:12:17:12

Yes. My name is Robert Court. I'm not going to be speaking today.

00:12:17:18 - 00:12:19:01

So you will you say you will be speaking?

00:12:19:03 - 00:12:20:09

Will not be. Will not.

00:12:20:11 - 00:12:21:16

Be speaking. Okay. Thank you.

00:12:25:07 - 00:12:27:00

And Jeff Summers.

00:12:29:13 - 00:12:29:28

Mr..

00:12:31:21 - 00:12:33:14

Just coming to my phone. Just coming to you.

00:12:36:27 - 00:12:42:16

Yes. Jeff Summers, I will be speaking today as a local resident. Thank you.

00:12:42:18 - 00:12:43:03

Thank you.

00:12:47:27 - 00:12:48:28

Michael Dover.

00:12:55:17 - 00:12:59:11

At Michael Dover, a local resident. And if you were to say thank you.

00:12:59:16 - 00:13:00:12

You will be speaking.

00:13:00:18 - 00:13:01:03

Will be.

00:13:16:07 - 00:13:17:25

Great Perry Hepburn.

00:13:25:23 - 00:13:31:02

Harry Hepburn will be speaking on behalf of Billingham as a resident.

00:13:32:13 - 00:13:41:03

Just far from you say, on behalf of him. Obviously, we've already got the parish meeting, speaking. Are you speaking on your own behalf or. Yes. Okay. Thank you.

00:13:50:29 - 00:13:51:26

John Lockwood.

00:13:58:29 - 00:14:00:10

Uh, John Lockwood, um.

00:14:02:06 - 00:14:05:08

Didn't realize I was down to speak, but I will not be speaking.

00:14:05:15 - 00:14:06:16

Okay. Thank you.

00:14:28:21 - 00:14:29:26

Chris Matthews.

00:14:37:22 - 00:14:41:14

Yeah. So I'm just a local resident, but I will not. Not be speaking.

00:14:41:16 - 00:14:42:24

Not be speaking. Okay. Thank you.

00:14:56:00 - 00:14:57:08

Craig Pace.

00:15:03:06 - 00:15:08:22

Hi, I'm Craig Pace and I'm an impacted party and I will be speaking.

00:15:09:05 - 00:15:09:27

Okay. Thank you.

00:15:12:26 - 00:15:14:03

Catherine Booth.

00:15:16:04 - 00:15:19:14

Hi, I'm Katherine Booth. I'm an affected party and will be speaking.

00:15:25:01 - 00:15:26:04

James Lockwood.

00:15:33:13 - 00:15:37:24

Uh, hello, James Lockwood. I'm a local resident and I will not be speaking.

00:15:38:12 - 00:15:38:27

Thank you.

00:15:45:27 - 00:15:48:06

Is anybody else in the room who wishes to speak?

00:15:52:28 - 00:16:02:05

Okay. Thank you. And in terms of teens and online, um. Firstly.

00:16:06:02 - 00:16:07:18

Mr. Michael Downes.

00:16:12:02 - 00:16:14:19

Council. Mr. Towns is not with us.

00:16:17:24 - 00:16:19:18

And Mr. Ray Stanfield.

00:16:22:20 - 00:16:27:08

Yes, I'm a local resident at Raymond Stansfield and would like the opportunity to speak.

00:16:28:02 - 00:16:28:18

Thank you.

00:16:37:13 - 00:16:40:15

And he certainly wishes to speak virtually.

00:16:47:19 - 00:16:48:04

Thank you.

00:16:49:24 - 00:16:56:28

Okay. I've now confirmed those who wish to speak. So now we want to agenda item four, which is the oral submissions themselves.

00:16:57:29 - 00:17:10:12

I don't know if I can just come into for a moment, could ask everyone when you're using the microphone, if you could perhaps move it a little bit further away from your mouth because we get quite a bit of interference otherwise. So we'll probably capture your your points better if you could just hold it a little bit further away.

00:17:10:28 - 00:17:11:13

Thank you.

00:17:21:00 - 00:17:40:04

And so moving on to the speaking then, please keep your all statements succinct and to the points take up to ten minutes as indicated on the agenda. We may if you become if it becomes repetitious, ask you to move on or conclude your oral statements and you'll wish to hear from all interested parties and we should take this opportunity to address us.

00:17:41:23 - 00:17:46:03

And please direct all comments through us rather than rather than directly to any other party.

00:17:47:19 - 00:17:51:24

And as I say, we will give the applicant an opportunity to respond to all submissions at the end.

00:17:53:16 - 00:17:58:05

We will be taking notes. So please do not be put off if we are not looking at you.

00:18:00:27 - 00:18:07:21

I'm sorry. Firstly, please, can I turn to Carol Gilbert from certain Bristo Parish Council.

00:18:26:09 - 00:18:30:05

Good afternoon Carol. Gilbert Stoughton by Stowe Parish Council.

00:18:33:04 - 00:19:01:02

The first point I would like to make is that. This particular solar farm. Is on an unprecedented scale. Combine that with another three projects and where none of us are experts on dealing with the Planning Inspectorate. None of us are experts on dealing with a solar farm or a solar project application.

00:19:03:01 - 00:19:33:09

From the multitude of documents that we are having to trawl our way through. It would appear that many of them are basically outline planning applications. A lot of this uses the Rochdale envelope to procure a worst case scenario, but that shouldn't really preclude from putting in a definitive plan.

00:19:35:15 - 00:19:53:18

From what I understand, the applicant is potentially an investor and maybe not actually the developer. So my first question is, will this be sold on before it's actually getting to the developmental stage?

00:19:56:08 - 00:20:01:07

As you guys you mainly questions as opposed to statements.

00:20:03:04 - 00:20:22:02

How many solar panels are actually forecast to be used for the Cottam solar project? What is the rate of failure of the panels and the expected replacement timings? And this will impact on traffic obviously throughout the.

00:20:23:24 - 00:20:32:08

Duration of the project itself. The site. Where will these panels be manufactured?

00:20:34:25 - 00:20:50:23

Has the carbon that will be produced in the mining of the bare earth minerals. The manufacture and transport actually being accounted for against the generation of the electricity.

00:20:53:23 - 00:21:00:28

The mental health of residents is something that seems to be being. Systematically marginalized.

00:21:02:15 - 00:21:13:26

This is something that we are going to have to put up with for a minimum of 40 years. One of the project is is potentially 60 years. These are not temporary projects.

00:21:16:13 - 00:21:47:25

There doesn't appear to be an upper limit of time, sorry, an upper limit of generation on the self. Why is that? Then I would have expected it to be capped. What is the actual capacity needed in order to

generate 600MW? Because you will have to step up and step down. From from the solar panel generation to cotton.

00:21:50:09 - 00:21:53:12

My understanding is it's about a 6% differential.

00:21:56:10 - 00:22:03:16

Again. Sheep and grazing seem to be coming under grass management. There's a strategy.

00:22:05:15 - 00:22:32:19

Clearly this cannot be a serious option. There are four large solar projects, one of which has actually said yes. There are not enough sheep, but there is not the infrastructure, there is not the transport, there is not the abattoirs, there is not the shepherds or the sheep. So can we sort of dismiss that bit out of all of the written stuff, please?

00:22:35:18 - 00:22:41:24

I'm sorry. Can I ask if people can not call out while anyone's giving evidence? Because it's very distracting for the person speaking.

00:22:43:29 - 00:22:45:05

I'm sorry about that to continue.

00:22:45:09 - 00:22:45:25

Okay.

00:22:46:12 - 00:23:18:18

Thank you. Lighting. Um, now, in a rural area, which these clearly are, there are no other buildings. There's no background light pollution that that can be mitigated to take account of any lighting that flicks on or off. Um, if they're going to be using it does state that there could be using infrared light, which I'm assuming will be used for a cameras.

00:23:19:04 - 00:23:23:13

Um, because clearly we can't see in infrared. Um.

00:23:25:04 - 00:23:42:02

So this is something that really needs to be taken into account if ordinary white light is to be used in any form. This will have a major impact on the surrounding area. It will have a major ecological impact as well.

00:23:45:12 - 00:24:02:17

There doesn't appear to be a time limit specified in the DCO for operational reasons. And the the paperwork states potentially 40 years until decommissioning. Why is it not stated in the DCM?

00:24:04:24 - 00:24:31:03

And also in the on page 78, schedule ten, Article 22. And it says it refers to blasting and piling. We know that we'll have to be piling of which. That would be a nonsense in itself. But where will they have to be blasting? To my mind, there isn't a rock problem.

00:24:34:28 - 00:25:12:15

Traffic is going to be a major, major headache. The A15 hundred is going to be a main route for Stoughton by Stowe in particular and Stowe all the way through to Willingham. The B12 41 is going to be the main access route. This is going to be used for access 114115 and 119. You need to be aware that this is a very narrow road in places and very narrow pavements in places.

00:25:13:01 - 00:25:37:27

This will also take traffic past Stoughton based primary school. And in the paperwork it does state about. Traffic will not be moved between 5 and 6. When you go past school at 3:00, there are cars parked. It is a single track road,

00:25:39:13 - 00:25:46:07

buses, lorries. One has to reverse. There is no room for manoeuvre.

00:25:50:10 - 00:26:25:29

Once I'm on the subject of traffic. There are five transport transformers of approximately 70m that will be needed to be moved from the A15 hundred using the 1241. To get to their final resting place. Now, I am aware that Stoke Parish Council have particular major concerns of the bends in the middle of Stowe, which go past the scheduled monument of Saint Mary's, which is immovable.

00:26:26:25 - 00:26:59:09

You cannot widen the road in any way, shape or form before you get to that particular point, turning off the 1500 onto the 1241. There is a pedestrian refuge. You may have to look at actually reconfiguring that particular crossroads. You won't get anything that's 70m long around that corner. There are two additional corners within Stoughton that will have the potential to be that problem as well.

00:27:00:06 - 00:27:06:24

Never mind the 75 cable drums, which are 26m in length as well.

00:27:10:01 - 00:27:30:28

The traffic in chapter 14. Appendix 14.2. There's there's quite a serious omission, actually. The traffic passing along the 1241 in Stoughton by Stowe Pass. The primary school is not included in the safety and delay assessments. Why is that?

00:27:35:19 - 00:27:40:01

And I'd like to bring my particular point to a conclusion.

00:27:40:05 - 00:27:41:12

Thank you. Thank you.

00:27:52:22 - 00:28:09:24

I'm also going to ask you not to applaud speakers. If you could please understand the feeling behind some of these things, but it's not helpful for our perspective. So if people come forward, I do appreciate that. It's a it's it can be a bit intimidating, but hopefully you will see that.

00:28:12:07 - 00:28:21:12

We are prepared to listen to all of the views here today, but would ask that you didn't applaud or comment during this during the points when people are coming forward, if possible.

00:28:23:11 - 00:28:23:26

Okay.

00:28:24:02 - 00:28:26:14

Margaret O'Grady, please. Bellingham Parish Meeting.

00:28:39:23 - 00:29:12:05

Sorry. Good afternoon. Margaret O'Grady, Chair filling and parish meeting. I would like to share my experience of the process so far. Thousands of pages are produced by the applicant. We study them and make what we feel are valid concerns. We attend consultation events held by the applicant and we raise what we feel are valid concerns. This scheme, along with the others in the region, is too large and will radically alter the character of the area.

00:29:12:23 - 00:29:45:20

The panels are far too high and could never be effectively screened. The fragmented parcels of Cottam and West Burton schemes each dwarf the communities they surround. Development at this scale will last for years and be massively disruptive to the people of the region as well as its wildlife. Despite raising these concerns, nothing changes. The applicant produces many more pages and the process rolls on.

00:29:46:10 - 00:30:17:15

At every stage, the development, as submitted by the applicant shows an absolutely no sensitivity to the region. The villages in this region are not affluent. They have few amenities. They the one thing they do have is tranquil, rural setting with open views that have been shaped by agriculture for generations. It's where we walk and run and cycle and ride horses. It's where many of us work.

00:30:17:24 - 00:30:55:18

It's where we live. What we can see plainly is that this setting our villages have will be decimated by this development and others within a closely concentrated area. And it doesn't happen this way. We know the country needs solar, but every day more rooftops are built on houses and commercial buildings without solar panels. How can there be a climate emergency that ignores the most obvious place to install solar panels and instead results in the ruination of our environment? It makes no sense.

00:30:56:03 - 00:31:29:05

It makes me and other people in our community weep with frustration that this relentless process is even allowed to march on as we are somehow seriously discussing throwing away productive farmland and a landscape the size of a city for power when the sun shines. In Britain, Britain, where the population flees in droves through the summertime, in search of sunshine elsewhere, apart from today, obviously throwing it all away for no power at all when this country shivers on a winter's evening.

00:31:29:15 - 00:31:55:15

Finally, there's a moral dimension here. If you humanity wants to feed itself and provide power and decarbonize, then we cannot simply tear up our farmland and expect other countries to feed us in the parched desert South Africa and India, where they can grow no food. They will look at us in disgust at our wastefulness, and rightly so. Thank you.

00:31:57:18 - 00:31:58:04

Okay.

00:32:02:25 - 00:32:05:20

I'm going to ask you not to applaud again, if you can, please.

00:32:09:10 - 00:32:09:25

Yes.

00:32:13:18 - 00:32:18:10

Person. It's about fairness. I'm sorry. Didn't catch your name, but it's about fairness.

00:32:20:15 - 00:32:21:00

Miss Holton.

00:32:21:28 - 00:32:23:00

Could you could you speak into.

00:32:23:05 - 00:32:28:09

Say, Katrina Morton? I don't see why it's unfair to other people.

00:32:28:29 - 00:32:41:00

Well, it's unfair in the sense that the applicant is one party and you are opposing the party. And so we are an independent panel and applauding doesn't add anything and it is a bit disruptive. So I would be grateful if you couldn't do it.

00:32:41:14 - 00:32:42:04

Yeah, right.

00:32:43:07 - 00:32:43:22

Okay.

00:32:45:04 - 00:32:45:22

With that.

00:32:46:09 - 00:32:53:28

You are entitled to disagree. But it is our examination. It is our open floor here and would be grateful if everyone could refrain from applauding. Please.

00:33:06:01 - 00:33:06:16

This is.

00:33:08:24 - 00:33:15:03

But I can't comment on what Mr. Stone did wasn't there. But I would appreciate it if we could refrain from applauding. Please.

00:33:18:21 - 00:33:19:06

And.

00:33:33:23 - 00:33:38:09

Thank you, sir. Let's Garbutt 7000 acres.

00:33:40:05 - 00:33:44:24

A statement I'd like to read on behalf of our members, some of whom are here today.

00:33:46:15 - 00:34:24:18

This project comes down to three simple things need benefits and impacts in terms of need. We do not dispute the need to decarbonise and that solar has a role to play. However, the first key question we would like examining authority to address in this regard is what is a specific need for large scale ground mounted solar development in the UK? The UK Warehouse Association have found that by using only the largest 20% of commercial rooftops, this could double the UK's existing solar capacity from 14GW to 28GW.

00:34:25:13 - 00:34:47:19

And in May this year, Eco Tricity published a report that is estimated that from what they consider suitable domestic rooftops, a further 37 gigawatt of solar could be installed. These examples highlight that there is a growing evidence that there is sufficient available rooftop solar capacity on suitable buildings for the UK to meet its solar requirements.

00:34:49:16 - 00:35:22:19

In terms of benefits, it is clear that the developer has persisted in providing oversimplistic and misleading information regarding the role solar power can play in the future of electricity supply. The fundamental principle for electricity system to operate is that the supply must match demand at all times. This is a challenge as demand is highly variable throughout the day and over the year. No solar scheme can power 100,000 homes. As developer has repeatedly stated, not even.

00:35:23:15 - 00:36:01:18

Most Is this because solar schemes do not address the fundamental requirement to match electricity supply with the demand in the moment? Solar is an intermittent form electricity generation. It also has the lowest load factor of any renewable technology, which is the actual yield from the headline capacity figure for this scheme. For a 500 megawatt capacity scheme using UK government energy statistics, Solar delivers between 9 to 11% of this capacity on average, so around 50MW in practice.

00:36:01:22 - 00:36:34:08

However, increasingly it is when power is produced that matters. Peak solar output is when demand is typically very low and when the country needs most power. On a winter evening, solar produces nothing. What is worse is that the electricity system is already fun itself, with too much power on summer days, resulting in the phenomenon the national grid call curtailment where excess renewable power is switched off, to which the generator concerned will be highly compensated.

00:36:35:05 - 00:37:14:17

The national grid for curtailment will grow between 50 to 90 terawatts of energy per year by 2030. It is an amount of electricity that is hard to fathom. The whole country currently uses around 300 terawatts in a year, wasting between 15 to 30% of the country's demand need because of excess installed capacity that the system cannot handle. Our second key question. We would like to ensure the examining authority thoroughly covers is to what extent can the proposed solar scheme truly contribute to the decarbonisation of the electricity system?

00:37:16:10 - 00:37:50:19

In doing so, we would seek the examining authority to thoroughly understand and assess the potential role of this solar scheme, what it can contribute, and crucially, what problems it also causes for the future decarbonised energy system. This question is crucial because these benefits will be weighed against the harms and the consequences of the development. Therefore, the development must not be allowed to overstate and oversimplify the benefits of the proposed scheme. The final dimension is the impact the scheme will have.

00:37:50:23 - 00:38:29:06

Harm stems from the fact that solar has an extremely low power density, which means that a ground mounted solar scheme of this capacity uses a colossal amount of space. Using so much land has a tremendous concentrated impact on the immediate area and its people. Consuming such huge areas of land also puts a wider pressure on land use and an agricultural crop land in particular, which is facing many pressures. The UK Climate Change Committee asserts we will need to lose some of this land to plant trees, to sequester carbon and for energy crops.

00:38:29:08 - 00:39:09:04

There are fears that climate change will change. The yield of farming, land and rising sea levels have the potential to have a further impact, all of which is before any renewed expansion of urban development is considered. In addition to this, there are growing demands to increase self-sufficiency for food production because of food security concerns in the wake of rising global political instability. This is not about land that is best and most versatile or what land is 3 or 3 B, which are distractions frequently used by the developers to deflect from the fundamental need to use our precious land resources efficiently.

00:39:09:08 - 00:39:19:14

Quite simply, overcommitting agricultural land to such inefficient land use as ground mounted solar could very quickly become a cause for regret.

00:39:21:00 - 00:39:51:17

A third question to the examining authority is therefore, what are the impacts of the scheme when considered both from the perspective of the immediate area, but also from a macro level that truly considers the wider sustainability impact of consuming cropland at this scale? There is a huge challenge to decarbonise the UK and good progress is already being made, particularly with the closure of coal fired generation and the significant contribution by renewable generation, especially from offshore wind.

00:39:52:09 - 00:40:23:21

For energy. The challenges from here are in two main areas. The first is about getting power to the right place. By far the largest source of the country's future energy will be wind power, perhaps 50% or more, according to the National Grid. At a transmission level, it is essential. This has a necessary grid infrastructure so it can be used at a distribution level. We need to configure networks to enable the charging infrastructure to power electric vehicles in decarbonized transport.

00:40:25:00 - 00:41:03:24

The second challenge is about being able to flexibly produce green energy when the wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't shine sufficiently to meet demand. This is about dispatchable, low or no carbon generation or into seasonal energy storage. These are key questions to decarbonization and scale. Solar farms are a massive distraction from these challenges. They exacerbate the backlog issues facing national grid transmission, connections, misuse, the insight process and the voracious appetite for land could compromise other decarbonisation efforts.

00:41:03:29 - 00:41:36:20

We do need solar, but even with 70GW of installed solar capacity, National Grid estimates this would contribute less than 6% of the country's future energy needs. With its contribution so limited solar should predominantly be delivered on rooftops where it can make its contribution where there are fewest adverse impacts. It should not be ground mounted on this scale. In the UK. At present there is a bandwagon for large scale ground mounted solar development akin to the Wild West style goldrush.

00:41:37:04 - 00:42:09:14

Developer must not be allowed to overstate and oversimplify benefits and understate harm for financial advantage. This proposed development, along with the other three in the West Lindsey district, have the potential to significantly harm and even decimate communities for decades. And in the worst case, all for schemes that could contribute very little to decarbonization. It is essential that these decisions are right and this must not be all for fool's gold. One final point to address is that we are aware that you, sir, Mr.

00:42:09:16 - 00:42:40:16

Cridland, have previously acted as the examining authority for the long field solar farm and recommend the approval of the scheme. Having read the recommendation report, it is clear that all material considerations that appear not to have been presented to the examining authority and so we explicitly do not consider the long field decision as a precedent. We will return to these considerations in our written representations and having reflected on what will be the best way to present this material in the available agendas and hearings to come.

00:42:41:02 - 00:42:41:22

Thank you.

00:42:43:12 - 00:43:07:09

Thank you very much. I'll just pick up on that last point was the examining inspector and Longfield, as everyone here will know. But I'd like to make entirely clear that what what my decision was in Longfield will have no bearing on the examination of this application whatsoever. This is a separate application and any conclusions reached on the Longfield decision will be completely different to the ones that may or may not reach on this one. They'll have no bearing on each other.

00:43:07:11 - 00:43:13:12

Yes. Thank you, sir. It's just we wanted to highlight that we felt that you weren't given all the facts.

00:43:14:02 - 00:43:24:14

Appreciate the way Mr. Hanley and will approach this examination is that we will take into account all of the representations that are made to us as part of this examination and be that over there.

00:43:24:22 - 00:43:25:10

Thank you.

00:43:26:19 - 00:43:27:17

Thank you, Mr. Abbott.

00:43:31:06 - 00:43:32:12

Claire. Anna, please.

00:43:47:23 - 00:43:48:12

Good afternoon.

00:43:48:14 - 00:43:49:00

Says.

00:43:50:15 - 00:43:51:06

Claire Ella.

00:43:51:15 - 00:44:29:00

I'm a complementary health practitioner and. Was born live, work and exercise in and around villages affected by all four large solar projects. But to my comments are for the most part related to cotton one as that is the area where have a view of from my house and covers the area exercise. In most. I'm very concerned about many aspects of the project battery safety, the true net carbon cost of these projects, including around the globe, transportation and the current reality of their non-recyclable city. On decommissioning the effect on food security. The myriad examples in these scheme of where profit is the driver over and above any purported goal of clean green energy.

00:44:29:02 - 00:45:11:24

But in my ten minutes today, I'm going to focus on local people and issues. Firstly, repeated requested requests by residents, our district and county councils and other interested parties for the four projects to be considered as one to make it easier to focus our limited time and resources in objecting to them have just been ignored by the thousands of pages of documents to be read. Overlapping deadlines for the four projects make it unfairly prejudicial to those whose daily lives will be affected for many years by the decisions whether to allow the projects, the applicant's legal teams and the respective Pins Examiners are professionals well-versed in both terminology and procedure of this kind of application paid to spend all their working hours creating and trawling through documents for one project.

00:45:11:26 - 00:45:49:04

Meanwhile, we residents have to find time outside our working days trying to understand the procedure, work out what some of the terminology, acronyms and abbreviations mean. Look for the

latest versions of documents, trying to remember which of the four projects we are reading about and preparing submissions on. How can that not be prejudicial? On top of that, I have to keep losing income, taking time off work to come and repeat similar arguments. For each inquiry. I treat over 200 local residents and am involved in organizing many local community events and through the people I'm talking to the effects on mental health, in addition to a feeling of hopelessness about the outcome are becoming apparent in our communities.

00:45:49:11 - 00:46:28:09

But the applicant scoped out and specifically on health and well-being matters. Instead, it chose to give a few paragraphs in other s lists of to patient ratios, employment figures in the county, pages and pages of other irrelevant statistics collated behind a desk or not what we need to be looked at. It's on the ground research into the real impact on the physical, emotional, mental and financial health of the communities, which I personally think deserves more than a passing mention. At the end of the other essays, we are assured that construction workers will travel to avoid the rush hour, but that shows a total lack of understanding of rural traffic.

00:46:28:11 - 00:47:08:00

Whereas your research into the cumulative effects of the four projects increased traffic, but also road closures and restrictions on school bus routes, parents trying to drop children off at schools on the way to work. Have you bothered? Sorry, this is addressed to the applicant. Has the applicant bothered to consider the pressure on home care workers already? They're trying to get from one client to the other next to the next one early in the morning and early evening. How are they going to manage with all these extra traffic issues? Green Lane, the track running from between Ingham Road to the South and Coach Lane to the north was originally a proposed route for construction traffic and a route considered for taking abnormal loads through to stone pit lane.

00:47:08:06 - 00:47:46:15

The local reaction to this was one of disbelief and many residents made their objections clear to IGP. Also, 48 people signed user statements providing evidence of use on foot, bicycle, horseback, horse drawn and motorized agricultural vehicles uninterrupted by any obstruction or objection to passage for at least 80 years. This is in support of a demo application made a year ago for Green Lane to be registered as a public bridleway Not one of those 48, including some who have owned, tenanted or worked on the land either side of Green Lane and resident of Stow since birth some 86 years ago, have ever thought anyone owned Green Lane.

00:47:46:17 - 00:48:17:00

They thought it was common land. One elderly resident recalls his family cutting hay from Greenland for their animals as no one owned it. Old maps show the route of the track unchanged from at least 1808. So Cottam Solar then announced that they had listened to local concerns and at page ten of the Phase two Consultation Summary report published September 20th, 22, they assured us they had amended their plans to remove it as a construction access route to the site. Many local residents foolishly believed that that meant that Green Lane was safe.

00:48:17:02 - 00:48:51:28

Oh no. The draft Appendix 14.2 Power 3.2 Access nine. Green Lane. Cotes Lane to Ingham Road is for operational use only and 14 at 14.7 .70 says that during the operational phase there will be five visits to each site per month by light barn or 4x4. So that doesn't sound too bad. But then read on. See

6.4., 4.3 shows a maintenance track going off to the. East of Green Lane, 400m north of Ingham Road, but not which end of Green Lane it will be accessed from.

00:48:52:14 - 00:49:23:27

Then works plan sheet ten revision a shows the whole of green lane to be subject to works nine b which schedule one of the draft shows as to facilitate permanent access to works 1 to 7 and 10 to 11. There is no need to use the full length of Green Lane to access that maintenance track, access it from the north or the south. The plot numbers for the length of Green Lane are ten 2282, two nine and 232. Table 3.1..

00:49:23:29 - 00:49:55:06

One of the book of reference has three sets of plot numbers in column one, and then a whole plethora of rights required and restrictions imposed for each set of plot numbers. Why are plots two, two eight and 229 included in all three of them? And to plot two, three, two and two of them? If Green Lane is to be used for operation only, why are all these rights and restrictions being reserved? My guess would be that the five trips a month by light vehicle is a huge misrepresentation of the applicant's intention for that route, as there will of course be repair, replacement, etc.

00:49:55:08 - 00:50:44:23

of the panels or any other part of the structures which would require far more trips by larger vehicles along Green Lane. The whole point of the community action to prevent Green Lane being used by the applicant at all is that it is an ancient rural green lane which, if covered with a permanent surface and its hedgerows altered in any way, will lose its unique character and important role. And the local communities, history, health and well-being, as well as adversely affecting the flora and fauna which are part of its ecosystem. Can the applicant please be asked to confirm whether as part of work to nine be it intends to lay a permanent surface along the whole length of Green Lane and detail why it is necessary to create an operational access on Green Lane rather than continue to use the construction access further east or travel through internal access routes.

00:50:44:25 - 00:51:22:13

Surely there must be an alternative to designate Green Lane. A final point. The book of reference at pages 303 to 304 and 306 purports to list the owners of plot numbers 2 to 8 two, two nine and 232. Despite extensive land searches and notices talking to everyone could think of, I was unable to find any evidence of ownership of those plots when making the application. Please, could you require the applicant to provide evidence of title of all the listed owners or reputed owners of those three plot numbers? It became well known locally that a number of skeletons have considerable archaeological and local history.

00:51:22:15 - 00:51:52:26

Interest were found during excavation of the trenches dug by contractors in cotton. One area. These are referred to in 13 table 13.9 or 24, which describes 11 graves facing east west, possibly Anglo-Saxon, but 13.37. It's acknowledged that works in that area will result in a large adverse residual effect. Are your 28 list pottery findings. Including second to fourth century and Iron Age fragments.

00:51:52:28 - 00:52:30:00

There are pages of detail about the finds. Some mitigation measures are mentioned for a few of the areas which could be of great archaeological interest, including using concrete put in mounting

structures, which will mean that tracking panels cannot be used. But why not just leave all of those areas free of solar panels? The potential for finding more skeletons Fragments. Parts of the kiln animal bone are the signs of settlements mentioned is surely considerable. Is there really no other suitable land for solar panels within the area the applicant claims to have researched rather than land, which contains historical finds of local and possibly national interest.

00:52:30:15 - 00:53:14:07

Even more concerning is the potential for damage to the listed college and Benedictine Abbey at St Mary's on Lauren Road in Stowe by direct physical impact. 1313 .8.5. The applicant admits that the delivering abnormal loads will need to mount the adjacent pavement. The mitigation offered the presence of an experienced batsman if the vehicle cannot physically get round the 90 degree corner without damaging the wall, what will the banks do? It's all very well modelling it on a computer screen, but if in fact it will not fit with the vehicle be reversed, or would the instructions be to carry on regardless and then deal with the fallout? Literally, I haven't been able to find any details of the compensation that would be in place if damage was caused.

00:53:14:09 - 00:53:27:26

Can the applicant please be asked to confirm its position if the was found not to fit round the bend, what the action would be or whether any compensation measures are detailed? I regularly run around fleets. Lane Thorpe Plain

00:53:29:21 - 00:54:02:07

oblique 31 oblique two cams 31 oblique one and on to coats church then coats lane either up to normally top or turning down green lane. I'd be stopping more and more frequently to take photos of the swans on the till the fantastic hip hoare elderberry sloe wild apple laden hedgerows. The open vistas looking east towards Scampton, the views from the benches in the churchyard or the wildflowers and butterflies down Green Lane as the chances of the next two generations being able to see that for themselves seem increasingly slim. The number of hedges that have been ecosystems in themselves for longer than living memory.

00:54:02:09 - 00:54:54:13

But a plan to be removed is beyond depressing and the creation of a very short, permissive pathway from Norwich Road to England Road goes no way towards replacing the wonderful routes we currently benefit from. I could go on for hours, but wanted to ask you sirs face to face, not to allow profit seeking investors quoting net zero 2050 to achieve their goals unchallenged. I've said it before, and as long as these four projects keep being looked at separately, I'll keep saying to each examiner, What I'm asking is that when you're weighing up the arguments to decide whether to recommend this project, the Secretary of State, please consider why the financial, physical, mental and emotional health of thousands of local residents and their land and the surrounding countryside and ecosystems should be compromised and indeed sacrificed for the benefit of foreign investors.

00:54:54:15 - 00:55:05:27

With little compelling evidence that 10,000 acres of primarily agricultural land under solar panels is the best solution for our need for carbon fuel alternatives.

00:55:07:22 - 00:55:08:10

Thank you.

00:55:09:03 - 00:55:09:19

Thank you.

00:55:12:18 - 00:55:13:12

Thank you very much.

00:55:13:16 - 00:55:14:18

No, you'd clap if you could.

00:55:17:03 - 00:55:18:14

Simon Skelton, please.

00:55:34:15 - 00:55:37:17

Simon Skelton affected resident

00:55:39:12 - 00:55:54:19

says. I'm hoping this examination will at the very least address the applicants immoral consultation methods and that you are able to visit my property and others to see firsthand the blight that will be caused by the sprawling cotton sides.

00:56:00:27 - 00:56:33:18

I've spent 37 years in the power industry and would like to mention a few things about ground mounted solar in this country to generate 100% of the UK's power from nuclear or even gas for that matter, would mean the loss of not much more than 3000 acres of land. Yet the Cottam Solar project will cover around 3000 acres of land. And generate only 0.17%.

00:56:34:13 - 00:56:40:12

Of the UK's electricity and arguably at the wrong time of day in year.

00:56:42:14 - 00:56:50:08

Stating that solar schemes will produce large amounts of low carbon electricity is misleading and totally without context.

00:56:52:09 - 00:57:03:17

Sizewell C in Suffolk, when built, will produce 7% of the UK's power and only cover 170 acres.

00:57:05:13 - 00:57:19:06

In relation to national need. The Cottam Solar project would not produce large amounts of low carbon electricity, but it would consume large and proportionate amounts of farmland.

00:57:24:21 - 00:57:53:03

To further highlight solar's extremely low power density. And purely, purely hypothetically, solar would need to cover 1.7 million acres of land to generate the UK's annual 300 terawatt hours demand, and again, its supply would be totally out of sync with demand. Ground mounted solar is a criminal mismanagement of farmland and cannot be justified.

00:57:54:27 - 00:58:09:09

This mindless inefficiency is clearly not in the nation's best interests. Solar is far better suited to Rooftop Mountain, where it has an undeniably efficient and important function.

00:58:14:03 - 00:58:26:27

The visual impact of this ill conceived project is significant. The devastation on the landscape and the harm to rural communities will not be tolerated for such little national gain. Thank you.

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

Thank you.

00:58:35:22 - 00:58:37:01

Katrina Morton plays.

00:58:59:07 - 00:59:03:14

Think you'll have to switch the microphone on if you press that. That's it. When the red light comes on, it's working. It is.

00:59:03:16 - 00:59:08:06

Thank you very much. Katrina, A resident in this area,

00:59:09:23 - 00:59:10:13

the Examining.

00:59:10:15 - 00:59:11:19

Authority and Planning.

00:59:11:21 - 00:59:12:14

Inspectorate, is.

00:59:12:16 - 00:59:14:04

Clearly aware of the other nationally.

00:59:14:06 - 00:59:15:11

Significant infrastructure.

00:59:15:13 - 00:59:17:25

Projects that are being proposed for West.

00:59:17:27 - 00:59:53:01

Lindsey, as well as the others in and around the county of Lincolnshire. Island Green Power is the company behind both Cotton, Solar and West Burton projects. Representatives from the Planning Inspectorate for Expediency and Administration has facilitated meetings with a company behind these projects, as well as having meetings where representatives from all four applicants have been present. Pinsent Mason is representing all four applicants in a document regarding the applicant's approach to written submissions to examination.

00:59:53:08 - 01:00:24:14

Pinsent Masons suggested all applicants work collaboratively where possible. The rationale given was to ensure the responses are aligned. The same information is submitted into each examination and the risk for inconsistency is reduced. This applicant has worked with you on the proposed solar projects to coordinate work in such areas as construction, phasing, grid connections and startup operation. When Cotten Solar registered as an interested party.

01:00:24:25 - 01:00:58:07

Part of the rationale was the commonality of certain stakeholders and the potential for similar or cumulative in Vermont environmental effects and coordination of mitigation measures. There is a clear interrelationship with the applicant and the other national infrastructure projects. The Island Green Power have been able to make two separate submissions. All four proposals are to be examined by a different examining authority who will only have responsibility for examining their own case in isolation.

01:00:58:09 - 01:01:37:20

All of these projects may meet this requirement. However, should the proposals be given the green light, this would result in many thousands of acres of agricultural and recreational land in West Lindsey being covered in millions of solar panels. The construction of battery energy storage systems and the reconfiguration of a landscape for at least 40 years. My objection is that the clear interrelationship between these projects and the cumulative impacts of them all is not being considered as a whole by the Planning Inspectorate and representation produced by Solar Media Limited 20 2022.

01:01:38:09 - 01:02:10:26

It shows of the planned solar capacity by region, which is non LPA. East Midlands has 5.3GW. This is the biggest capacity hosted by any region in the United Kingdom. Much of this would appear to be in Lincolnshire. We have four in this district believe this is a disproportionate burden the communities of West Lindsey would have to bear. I believe the cumulative impact of these projects would result in the industrialisation of this rural landscape.

01:02:11:11 - 01:02:48:12

The wide open spaces of this area enjoyed by myself, other residents and visitors to the area would be lost to a sea of panels for 40 plus years. Hedging that over the years would be allowed to grow to five metres to provide screening fencing around areas that would cut off access to wildlife and restrict their movement. Significant impact on views from the 1513 98 The Cliff Road. I've travelled the cliff road for many years and it is genuinely uplifting to be able to look out across the valley and see the landscape and the sky scape running away from you.

01:02:49:10 - 01:03:25:26

A previous hearing for gate, bird and Solar, A representative for the applicant claim that the landscape was already industrialised due to West Burton Power Station being visible on the distant horizon. The structures that currently make up West Burton Power Station seem to be dismantled are a more distant landscape that sits in a more compact area. This solar project, along with the other three projects, will dominate the land falling away from the Lincoln Escarpment. This earlier claim sounds to me like a case of clutching at straws and hope this applicant doesn't consider using this same feeble point.

01:03:26:18 - 01:04:03:18

Cotton, Solar and an environment statement refer to planning practice Guidance three in which it states that green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides mutual benefits at a range of scales for communities. These benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling and the management of flood risk. This natural asset we have and the benefits it will bring will not be enhanced by significant period of construction and millions of solar panels.

01:04:04:16 - 01:04:38:21

Cottam Solar has made the argument that many of their mitigation impacts will be beneficial. An example is Cotton one with year 15 mitigation measures where it states. It is anticipated that the overall scheme of mitigation will reinforce the landscape character where this has been lost or eroded in the last century to intensive arable farming. The new and enhanced hedgerows around the boundary of the cotton. One site will help to define the historic field pattern and screen views towards the new panel's areas from the adjoining areas of great landscape value.

01:04:39:22 - 01:05:16:16

I would suggest that residents enjoy and appreciate the landscape character as it presently is. The land is managed and cared for by farmers, residents and families. Why do we need to define an historic field pattern? We live in the 21st century. I would suggest that residents enjoy the forgive me This proposed development, along with the other three applicant applications, would result in a whole scale alteration of this rural agricultural landscape. It's not repurposing of land, nor should 40 plus years of construction and use be considered temporary.

01:05:16:24 - 01:06:05:22

And I truly doubt that the current land will be reinstated at the end of the project. I would respectfully ask the examining authorities for this application, as well as the examining authorities for the other proposed projects. To make a request for the production of an aerial landscape view of panels and buildings in situ for this and the other three projects that are being proposed. They have collaborated greatly and in other areas. I don't see why this can't be achieved and I'm not referring to figures in documents which you have a series of dots or marks which are flat on the the page nor photos which are shot at eye level, but an actual mockup of what millions of solar panels and bests will look like from an elevated position such as the 1398.

01:06:07:10 - 01:06:46:05

In addition, would ask all the examining authorities to use their discretion within the time frame allowed to have more time available between hearings of all the project applications to allow ordinary members of the public to actively participate in this hugely important process. It may assist certain stakeholders who have a team of people working on application on an application, but this truncated process does not provide sufficient time for many of us to read, absorb and understand new information and to make a meaningful contribution whilst juggling work, children and home life.

01:06:46:29 - 01:07:18:14

In the national policy statement in one paragraph 4.2.6, it states that the Secretary of State should consider how accumulation of and interrelationships between effects may affect the environment, the economy or community as a whole, even though they may be acceptable when considered on an

individual basis. With mitigation measures in place. I hope the Secretary will do this in considering the impact of the fall and CIP in West Lindsey.

01:07:18:28 - 01:07:19:18

Thank you.

01:07:24:21 - 01:07:57:06

Thank you very much. Was just going to come back on 1 or 2 brief points. One, in terms of the interrelationship between the different projects, if you were present or viewing the preliminary meeting this morning, that is something that did come up then. I just wanted to reiterate what we said earlier on, and that is that we will be looking at that matter as part of our examination, as will the other authorities. And so we will be looking at how those projects interrelate and the effects of those projects interrelate with this one as part of our examination. The second point wanted to come back on.

01:08:03:04 - 01:08:04:11

You went with me for a moment.

01:08:10:07 - 01:08:16:20

Oh yes. It's to do with the. The other point that came up this morning is that we will we did agree to go away after the hearing after the

01:08:18:11 - 01:08:37:29

preliminary meeting this morning. And we will have another look at the timetable to see whether or not it's possible for us to accommodate some of the issues that were raised around having the hearings back to back. And that's something that we'll be looking at after the sessions this week. And we will notify people when we write out our Rule eight letter. Thank you.

01:08:41:12 - 01:08:42:05

Pauline Organ.

01:08:42:07 - 01:08:42:22

Plays.

01:08:59:24 - 01:09:00:24

Pauline Organ.

01:09:00:29 - 01:09:05:29

Local resident and farm some of the adjacent land to proposed.

01:09:08:06 - 01:09:08:21

So

01:09:10:04 - 01:09:29:05

my greatest concern is about sustainable food production. If you look at it worldwide with increased desertification, flooding, hurricanes. Shortage of food. Prime Ford is going to be UK's greatest asset.

01:09:30:20 - 01:09:31:05

Um.

01:09:31:15 - 01:09:50:19

It may appear to be in a long, distant future, but think not. They say it has been graded as not the highest quality land, but anybody who has seen the thousands and thousands of tons of grain that came in off this land this summer will realize how, in fact, very productive it is.

01:09:53:02 - 01:10:09:08

My second point is the overall impact on carbon footprint. If you start with the manufacture of the panels, the energy required to mine the metals, metal components, the transport.

01:10:11:20 - 01:10:56:14

Firstly from other countries, then within the UK bringing them to the site, all the fossil fuel that's going to be used by the vehicles which install them. And then come to the other end of their life. What are you going to do about disposal of them? Australia is already having problems with disposal because they started having widespread solar panels 30 years ago or so and they're going to have to go to landfill. If you look at the entire carbon footprint of these projects and compare it with the carbon footprint reduction, which has been so very, very ably discussed by the last few speakers.

01:10:57:14 - 01:11:05:04

I think there is probably very little gain. And rooftop solar panels would be far, far better use of the space.

01:11:07:04 - 01:11:25:12

When it was first mooted, we were led to believe it would be fine. There would be grazing underneath. Be quite nice, really could have your cake and eat it. But actually we now discover that grazing by sheep is not going to be possible. This was raised before.

01:11:26:17 - 01:11:27:02

Um.

01:11:27:12 - 01:11:34:09

It'll be managed for wildlife. Anybody that's tried managing anything for wildlife as we have.

01:11:36:13 - 01:11:45:18

Knows that it has to be managed. Just leaving it to go natural really does not lead to an increase in biodiversity.

01:11:48:25 - 01:12:20:27

It is a great concern that and I was very pleased to hear you say in the last few moments that you are going to look at the synergistic effect of all the proposed developments. Because while each 1st May not appear to be too awful, as long as mitigating them, there's mitigation in place put together, they really do have a vast impact. This has all been said before, so I'm going to be a little more specific now.

01:12:21:10 - 01:12:51:10

I'm a resident of Normally Barstow, and I'm just going to mention if this goes ahead and I want to ask a few questions about cable routing, we look very carefully at the site, the plans and. The recommended distance as far as we can make out is ten meters from high voltage cabling to dwellings, and that's a minimum. The magnetic fields don't reduce very much.

01:12:53:18 - 01:13:15:29

The cable route comes up between dwellings, it's going to affect 7 or 8 potential dwellings very closely on the route this is brought. There are alternative routes only about 100m away, which does not go near any dwellings. And goes through farmland.

01:13:18:06 - 01:13:48:24

Which would be think we're going to hear some more about that in a few minutes. There is a question, a very in there. We have pedigree Aberdeen, Angus cattle. These things have to be fed. Their manure has to be removed. That cable route goes right down the lane, which is constantly used by tractors into our buildings. To help these cattle look after these cattle. There is no other way to get there.

01:13:49:11 - 01:14:08:06

Now. Um, further questioning brought up the question of directional drilling. Now, if I've understood it correctly, this is what may be something similar to Moline. Where? By you can. Um, take out. Take out a.

01:14:09:24 - 01:14:10:15

The ball.

01:14:11:18 - 01:14:24:23

The pool big enough to take the cable from a long distance away so there is no surface disruption. Could ask now if that is possible. Does that actually happen? So if you've got something that

01:14:26:16 - 01:14:30:25

I've got to get from me to you to feed the cows with a tractor.

01:14:33:14 - 01:14:37:15

What do you do? This directional drilling. Could you expand on the polis a little bit?

01:14:38:16 - 01:14:52:12

I'm awfully sorry, but we're not in with the examining authority, so it's not for us to answer those questions. I can see the applicant taking detailed notes at the back and perhaps they'll be able to respond to you either later on today or in writing on those particular points.

01:14:52:24 - 01:15:12:16

Yeah, these are technical points, yes, but they're very valid. And when the does seem to be an alternative route, what drives the choice of route? It would not appear to be looking at the plans. You would not appear to be the most direct route. Is it somebody's financial interest? I don't know. These are questions. Um.

01:15:14:04 - 01:15:25:00

The other thing is that some of these things are called temporary and they are going to impact for 50 years. Landscape will probably never be returned to how it is now.

01:15:27:01 - 01:15:38:11

I'm concerned about the. Fencing that's going to go round them. What if wildlife gets stuck inside? They're very good at jumping over things, even very high things, and burrowing underneath.

01:15:40:02 - 01:15:40:17

You're good.

01:15:42:02 - 01:15:48:16

It's going to be very unpleasant and very sad to see things stuck inside this fencing.

01:15:50:15 - 01:16:00:13

How is it going to be managed if you can't raise it? How are you going to stop the solar panels very quickly being swamped by hawthorn trees, which grow very fast?

01:16:02:26 - 01:16:15:19

Thing seems to raise so many questions and they would appear to be so many better ways of approaching it on a smaller scale. On a more careful scale.

01:16:17:21 - 01:16:50:00

Than this blanket approach. Sunak did say proportionate and pragmatic. With words he used in relation to reducing the carbon footprint proportionate. We've heard about the area of Lincolnshire, which in this area is going to be covered proportionate, pragmatic, pragmatic. Is it really the best, most efficient use of what resources we have?

01:16:52:10 - 01:17:00:10

Thank you. And thank you very much to all the previous speakers who have put in so much detail. Very, very helpful. Thank you.

01:17:01:28 - 01:17:18:19

Just wanted to come back to you on one of the points that you made. In fact, possibly two, but one of them was on in relation to alternatives of things like the cable route. Just wanted to let you know the alternatives will be something that we will be looking at in the examination. And so there will be some questions, no doubt, to the applicant on those on those points.

01:17:18:21 - 01:17:24:16

That would be great because it's really you wonder how they arrived at what they do arrive at.

01:17:25:01 - 01:17:48:05

And the other point is more general in terms of questions. I think you made the point that it raises a number of questions. Nationally, significant infrastructure projects generally do raise numerous questions. And Mr. Henley and I do have a number of questions that we'll pose both to the applicant and other interested parties as we move through the process to help our understanding more widely of what's being proposed and the impacts that it will have on the community.

01:17:48:08 - 01:17:55:09

I'm very pleased because you do need to ask questions. They need to be asked. Thank you very much. Thank you. Okay.

01:17:55:28 - 01:17:58:27

Thank you. Patricia Mitchell, please.

01:18:18:11 - 01:18:20:12

She switched on, isn't it?

01:18:20:21 - 01:18:21:08

It is, yeah.

01:18:22:05 - 01:18:53:07

I'm Patricia Mitchell, the local resident. I do want to say that, first of all, I concur with everything that has been said by everyone so far. Um, mine is a little bit simpler than theirs, but nonetheless, it's heartfelt. And I've witnessed flooding of my village again and again, including the many 1500s where the river runs beneath it. The primary school has had to close during such times. In the fields and roads around the cotton. One scheme were last flooded.

01:18:53:10 - 01:19:29:05

Residents, including me, had to abandon their cars on the outskirts of the village as the police closed the roads while drivable routes to our home, which is on higher ground, were inaccessible. There is much photographic evidence among residents in the village to validate such flooding over the years. Transport is home also on the same flood plain, severely affected when a number of fields belonging to the charity were under flood water in November 2019, they had to move 100 of the 450 animals to an alternative site.

01:19:29:21 - 01:19:41:00

A number of planned fundraising events were cancelled and they suffered losses of about £200,000. Flood water rendered these fields of neighbours pork raising for the horses.

01:19:42:21 - 01:20:12:25

Here's the emotional distress. When a home is flooded, the wildlife lost and roads no longer visible as they become part of the flood plain. Hedges Underwater, the village seat at the junction of Fleet Road and Thorpe Lane underwater. There will be substantial runoff from 4.5m tracking solar panels during heavy rainfall, standing on concrete slabs. The river two runs through the villages of Barnsley. Fallows And across the field, setting a road.

01:20:13:02 - 01:20:13:17

On the.

01:20:13:19 - 01:20:49:02

Outskirts of Stowe, but more importantly, right through the centre of the Cotton one scheme. The scheme alone indicates the removal of 35 miles of hedgerows and the same for West and solar. Why it is folly to remove established 30 plus year old hedges and replant with whips that would take 15 years

or more to establish and attempt to disguise a mass millions of solar panels. Neither could it lessen our awareness of the whole scheme when driving, walking or cycling and genuinely just enjoying nature.

01:20:49:04 - 01:21:20:20

The peace, the inner calm and feeling of freedom the countryside brings. Once the leaves have dropped from the native hedgerows, the entire scheme would still be visible and saw for half of its lifetime. Pray, tell me, where does the word screening actually fit into the narrative? On the one hand, we have the government seeking to improve Hedgerow protections with a consultation launched in June 2023 to help make commitments to support farmers to create or restore 45,000 miles of hedgerows by 2050.

01:21:20:22 - 01:21:52:28

And on the other, these full solar schemes, removing them hedgerows, make an incredible contribution to halting biodiversity, biodiversity decline and tackling climate change. They are crucial for climate adaptation and storing carbon. Hedgerows are the very essence of our countryside. Important boundary features hope to manage livestock, slow soil erosion and water runoff and crop support pollinators for food production. They also provide vital resources for mammals, birds and other species.

01:21:53:15 - 01:22:35:14

They act as wildlife corridors, allowing species to move between isolated habitats and can also have a beneficial insects that predate crop pests, thereby supporting an integrated approach. And they add to the beauty of our Lincolnshire countryside. The communities of 30 villages will be affected, including mine, which will be completely surrounded and overwhelmed north, south, east and west for miles. Whichever road I travel daily and also along the narrow intertwining country lanes between these villages. It is unimaginable having to consider living with this level of industrialisation up to 10,000 acres of countryside for 365 days of the year for up to 60 years.

01:22:35:24 - 01:23:08:15

No escape encircled, imprisoned by four solar projects of this enormity a few miles from each other with oddly horrendous hardware. Whichever direction we look as cotton, West Burton and Gate Burton are going through the examination process now until which soon to follow. These four schemes are collaborating on the cable route, possibly more, and really should be considered as one. Notwithstanding any of the aforementioned, there is loss of food and crop production when there is scarcity both nationally and globally.

01:23:08:23 - 01:23:40:23

Loss of amenity, cultural heritage impact and tourism effects on the economy, including jobs and those businesses associated with agriculture and much more. That's not all of the land in the UK is suitable for growing crops. We should be protecting the land, which is. No one has ever lived with so long term where they are surrounded with up to 7 million panels, security fence and dangerous best batteries, the size of shipping containers, substations and associated paraphernalia in a populated area.

01:23:41:03 - 01:24:12:08

What do we really know of such EMF effects or other effects on people and wildlife on this scale? How can any of you here today be absolutely certain we will not be harmed in the long term? Solar farms on the gargantuan scale of these projects combined are away from populated areas in other parts

of the world. Many are in deserts. Butler Solar Park in India, the largest solar park in the world in 2023 and covering an area 56km square kilometres is in the desert. We are a tiny island by comparison.

01:24:12:20 - 01:24:47:03

The largest solar farm in the UK in 2023 was built at 250 acres. There were the solar farms around the UK on a much smaller scale of 25 acres or less. But there has been a mad rush to destroy Lincolnshire's agricultural farmland and the countryside with inefficient, colossal scale ground mounted solar. With the right initiatives from the government, we can turn the rooftops of warehouses and car parks across the country into clean power stations, cutting carbon emissions, slashing energy bills and protecting our countryside.

01:24:47:18 - 01:25:38:06

The government target to ensure that a significant portion of newly generated solar power comes from the rooftops will be critical to generating power closer to people's homes and businesses, which is also a key way to ensuring the transition to net zero is more local, thus avoiding large swathes of the UK's countryside being used for ground mounted solar. Cotton West Burton, Kate Burton to bridge solar will cover an area the size of the city of Lincoln and beyond. It is vital that the government supports a national rooftop solar target, ensuring that at least 60% of the national target of 70GW of solar by 2035, as recommended by the net zero review, is delivered to the lowest cost opportunities for rooftop solar installations on newbuild homes, commercial buildings and car parks.

01:25:38:16 - 01:26:14:15

What I and others know is cutting one, two and three, and the further three projects are causing mental anguish, stress and internal physical harm to residents in these affected communities already the object to these schemes. I would like to point out that don't know what we do about evidence here that you say think cotton. Perhaps if we said that there wasn't any issues with flooding, but has photographs here and I'm quite sure I can produce many more showing what has happened to Barnsley Horses home and our own village still.

01:26:15:09 - 01:26:48:06

Um, the also issues have over some of the photography that's been taken to illustrate winter and summer and the angles that have been taken which show in this particular case here that this one was taken in the summer showing the full landscape, this one here, which is also meant to be the same one. It's taken in the winter and it's pointing directly at the hedge, this pole, which shows that there's a pool there.

01:26:48:08 - 01:27:24:10

So they're not even on the same angle that have been taken. And I've noticed this on quite a few of the photographs that I've been looking at. So I'm not quite sure what they're trying to present here as to whether it's mitigation or what. But I object to what they're showing so far as being inaccurate. Uh, I do also want to ask a little bit more and think you've also mentioned this about the protective provisions specifically relating to the cable route and does this reciprocal protective provision which they've all signed up to in their relevant representations for the Burton project.

01:27:25:02 - 01:28:01:00

Um, does this collaboration cover all of the parts of the schemes under discussion now in the future? During the examination examination process? Or purely is it just a reciprocal protective provision required for the cabling? If so, then at what point does extensive collaboration between the parties of the four schemes activate these applications as one complete solar scheme? Because if they're collaborating on all aspects of their schemes, then they surely should be considered as one, not as individuals.

01:28:01:26 - 01:28:16:14

I also would like to know which outside body would be responsible for monitoring any new collaboration not previously raised or under discussion between these parties and aspects of these schemes commencing after the examination process is finished. Thank you.

01:28:18:26 - 01:28:27:14

Thank you. We'll take one more speaker, then we'll have a short a short comfort break after that. Um, so Geoff Summers, please.

01:28:45:23 - 01:28:55:27

Thank you very much, Chairman. Um, my name is Jeff Summers, retired ECS farm manager, agronomist, and West Lindsey District Councillor.

01:28:58:14 - 01:29:09:15

These are basically my reasons to refuse solar farms. And in the September edition of arable farming, which is only just a week old,

01:29:11:16 - 01:29:39:19

the number one issue addressed was titled Concerns over Energy Infrastructure Schemes. The first paragraph read Farmers affected by the rollout of new electricity infrastructure must be fully consulted, unfairly treated. With the impact on their businesses and food production taken into consideration, especially those long term tenants who stand to lose their source of a livelihood.

01:29:42:21 - 01:30:02:03

Also using data for 20 2223 showed a wheat export. Our wheat exports totaled 1.576 million tonnes. Boat exports for 2223 were almost 172,000 tonnes.

01:30:03:29 - 01:30:05:12

Roughly with.

01:30:07:05 - 01:30:08:28

£300 million.

01:30:10:26 - 01:30:23:11

Food which has been delivered to countries across Europe, Asia and Africa, feeding millions of people directly and indirectly, those unable to feed themselves.

01:30:25:11 - 01:30:30:08

Thousands for solar farms on this scale will mean a reduction in food production.

01:30:31:24 - 01:30:57:29

It will create a detriment to the health and wellbeing of people living nearby. It will amount to the destruction of our rural economy. A significant loss of rural employment opportunities. It will create unnatural rural vistas. A negative tourism impact, a negative impact on food and energy production.

01:31:01:23 - 01:31:12:13

UK is only approximately 55% self-sufficient in food production. Food shortages in 2023, of course, inflationary pressures on the economy.

01:31:14:00 - 01:31:17:27

These types of proposals are overwhelming in size and scale.

01:31:19:17 - 01:31:31:26

There was insufficient use of the platform. Sorry there was insufficient use of other platforms, i.e. millions of acres of industrial and house roofs standing idle.

01:31:33:13 - 01:32:08:04

More food imports and less exports will adversely affect our balance of payments. Solar panels only produce electricity for an average of nine hours per sunny day. Cloudy days only produce one third of power. Nothing produced at night. 66% of the year. They are working below optimum stroke. Not at all. Coastal barrage and wave power equals 22 hours per day every day.

01:32:09:07 - 01:32:10:20

Every day of the year.

01:32:12:24 - 01:32:20:17

Every day, even bank holidays. When you're sleeping and in winter when energy is most needed.

01:32:22:18 - 01:32:48:15

UK agriculture is already playing, playing its part in energy production by growing crops as a feedstock for plants producing electricity and gas. This form of green energy does not put farmers out of business. It is part of a sustainable rural business which supports farmers, workers and communities. Plus the HMRC.

01:32:52:02 - 01:32:52:17

My gosh.

01:32:53:21 - 01:32:57:14

Where is the proven need for such a proposal?

01:32:59:21 - 01:33:05:08

Will there be an adverse environmental impact? Yes.

01:33:08:05 - 01:33:28:19

Will there be an impact on local communities? Yes. Will there be visual impact for the district? Yes. Will there be detrimental impact on local communities? Yes. Do local communities support the application? No.

01:33:31:00 - 01:33:35:02

West Lindsey District Council support the application? No.

01:33:37:02 - 01:33:42:14

Does MP Sir Edward Lee support the application? No.

01:33:45:23 - 01:34:10:24

Whilst almost all countries around the world are either burning up with fires or burning up with drought. Losing significant tonnages of food production and resulting in hundreds of thousands of people starving. We in Lincolnshire are in the top echelons of food productivity around the world.

01:34:13:11 - 01:34:22:26

Why are we under attack from speculators? Answer Because of a cheap construct. Connection to power stations.

01:34:25:05 - 01:34:32:20

We won't interfere with new generators, generation plants being installed at West Melton or Cottam.

01:34:34:08 - 01:34:55:20

So don't you interfere with our rural economy. That is my clear message. On that basis, Mr. Chairman. How on earth can this application be approved under UK planning guidance? The guidance we are all expected to work to. Thank you very much.

01:34:58:03 - 01:34:58:27

Thank you.

01:35:00:13 - 01:35:12:20

As said previously, will now take a short adjournment. The time is now, 25 to 5, and so this hearing is adjourned until 10 to 5. Thank you.