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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:15 - 00:00:14:19

Morning. Everyone can check that. You can all hear me. Okay. And can also check that the recording is now started and the live stream is working.

00:00:17:16 - 00:00:50:26

Thank you very much. Well, it's 10:00, and I'd like to start off by welcoming you all to this, the second issue specific here into the quantum solar project. My name is Rory Cridland. I'm the lead member of the panel of examining inspectors, appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the application and report back with the recommendation. As mentioned a moment ago, a digital recording is being made. Excuse me for a moment. A bit of feedback here. The digital recording is being made, and it would be helpful if you could identify yourselves clearly before you speak. The recording will be retained and published on the National Infrastructure website.

00:00:50:28 - 00:01:04:13

For a period of five years following the Secretary of State's decision on the application. And so I'd be grateful if you could all avoid mentioning anything that you wish to be kept private and confidential. The hearing, as you'll have noted earlier, is also being live streamed on the internet.

00:01:06:10 - 00:01:41:11

Hearing is a blended event, and that means that some of you are joining us in person in the room today, and others will be joining us via Microsoft teams to avoid disrupting the meeting, can ask you all to keep your microphones switched off until we invite you to speak. And this applies to both those of you on Microsoft Teams, as well as those of you in the room with us today, and can also ask you all to switch off or mute your mobile phones, unless you're using them to join the meeting, in which case please don't or we will lose you. And please, could anyone joining via Microsoft teams also make sure that they minimize any background noise? And a couple of other things.

00:01:41:13 - 00:02:18:27

For those of you joining us via Microsoft teams, the chat function has been disabled and so you won't be able to use that to post any comments or get our attention. And we'll only be using the raise hand function at certain points during the agenda. And that's when we invite general comments. And if you're watching on the live stream this morning, then please be aware that if we adjourn at any point, you will need to refresh your browser to review or to be able to view the restarted during. And you'll find it useful to have the agenda that we sent out on the 28th of November to hand, but we will arrange for copies of the agenda to be displayed on the screens in front of you.

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

And for those of you on Microsoft Teams, it will appear on the screen at the relevant point. Now, we're not expecting a fire drill for those of you in person here today. So if the alarm does go off, we should assume it's the real thing. And the assembly point is in the car park up front. This is the first of three hearings this week that will focus on the environmental statement this year, and will look at matters involving the historic environment, agriculture and soils and landscape and visual impact. And then this afternoon at issue specific three, we'll be considering socioeconomics and seeking clarification on various other aspects, including battery safety, waste disposal and biodiversity.

00:03:01:06 - 00:03:33:18

And tomorrow morning we also have a separate hearing on cumulative effects. There are also some other hearings happening this week. On Thursday afternoon at 1:00, we have a compulsory acquisition during and where we'll hear from the applicant on their proposals in terms of compulsory acquisition and from affected persons on how those proposals affect their interests. Then on Thursday evenings, starting at 530, we'll have another open floor hearing where interested parties will have an opportunity to make their views known. And both of these hearings will be held at the showground.

00:03:34:06 - 00:04:04:20

We are keen to hear from anyone who wishes to speak at the open floor hearing, but there is limited time available and so can ask if you haven't already notified the case team, have a wish to speak that you do so as soon as possible, so that we're able to manage the times effectively and make sure that everyone who does wish to speak has an opportunity to do so. We then have the issue specific here and five on Friday morning. This will be a hearing into the draft Development Consent order, and will be considering more of the technical aspects around the drafting of that document.

00:04:05:11 - 00:04:10:18

I'm going to hand over to my colleague now, Mister Henley, who's going to introduce himself and then take us through the next item.

00:04:12:20 - 00:04:45:13

Thank you. Good morning. My name is Darren Henley. I'm the other member of the panel, and I'm going to share some policies to introduce themselves. As has been said, please remember to unmute your microphone when you speak. If you are joining via Microsoft teams and are comfortable to do so, switch on your camera. Please switch them off again. We'll be moved to the next speaker. A roving microphone is available for anyone in the room that we invite to speak, but does not have a static microphone in front of them. It is important that all contributions are made using the microphone, say, or captured for the formal record.

00:04:47:06 - 00:04:49:17

So who's the lead speaker for the applicant, please?

00:04:52:22 - 00:05:27:19

Good morning, sir. My name is Claire Broderick. I'm a legal director at Pinsent Masons LLP, solicitors for the applicant Cottam Solar Project Limited. I'm joined by various members of the applicant team and. We have a number of different experts to deal with the various different environmental topics that are on the agenda for this morning's hearing. I will let those who are currently at the at the table introduce themselves, and then when we swap in, new people will introduce themselves at that point in time.

00:05:27:22 - 00:05:28:12

Okay. Thank you.

00:05:31:01 - 00:05:31:28

Good morning.

00:05:32:27 - 00:05:38:23

My name is Eve Browning. I'm a senior project development manager at Island Green Power, who are the developers of the scheme.

00:05:43:17 - 00:05:52:04

Good morning. My name is Tristan Wilson. I'm a senior heritage consultant with Lamp Row representing the applicant.

00:05:56:11 - 00:06:05:03

Good morning. My name is Alice James. I'm a principle historic environment consultant at lamprey, working on behalf of the applicant.

00:06:11:17 - 00:06:14:09

To the applicant. And that concludes the applicant team.

00:06:15:15 - 00:06:16:07

Okay. Thank you.

00:06:18:13 - 00:06:20:09

And for Lincolnshire County Council.

00:06:22:00 - 00:06:24:01

Good morning, sir. My name is Stephanie Hall.

00:06:25:16 - 00:06:57:11

Happy to be Ms.. Hall. And counsel instructed by Ms. Martha Reece of Lincolnshire Legal Services, who sits to my immediate right. That's my immediate left is Mr. Neil McBride, head of planning at Lincolnshire County Council, and to his immediate left, Mr. Oliver Brown. He'll be addressing the hearing on landscape matters later on. In terms of the Historic Environment chapter, we've got somebody joining us on teams and Mr.

00:06:57:13 - 00:07:06:03

Matthew Adams, who's the historic environment officer at Lincolnshire County Council. I think that completes everybody in our team with a speaking role.

00:07:06:12 - 00:07:09:27

Thank you. Thank you. And West Lindsey district Council.

00:07:10:21 - 00:07:29:20

Good morning sir. My name is shimmer. I'm also of counsel instructed by Ms.. Martha Reese. Simply three seats to my left of legal service. Lincolnshire. To my immediate left is Mr. Russell Clarkson, who's the development management team manager at West Lindsey District Council. And to his left is Mr. Alex Blake, who's an associate director at Atkins.

00:07:34:01 - 00:07:38:05

So just a quick point of clarification. Did you say you're instructed by Lincolnshire County Council?

00:07:38:07 - 00:07:41:12

I'm instructed by Ms. Martha Reeves who's legal services, Lincolnshire.

00:07:41:14 - 00:07:44:14

But but you're representing West Lindsey am yes. Thank you.

00:07:47:04 - 00:07:49:02

Nottinghamshire County Council.

00:07:52:25 - 00:07:59:01

Good morning, sir Stephen Pointer, team manager, planning policy, Nottinghamshire County Council.

00:08:03:16 - 00:08:09:09

Okay. And is anybody else from Nottinghamshire County Council who's in attendance? Mr. Poynter.

00:08:10:23 - 00:08:18:07

Don't think so, sir. I was possibly expecting an archaeologist, but I don't seem to online.

00:08:21:02 - 00:08:24:09

Thank you. Thank you. Intended to join us during the session this morning.

00:08:24:21 - 00:08:27:03

I will, I will find out and confirm. Yeah.

00:08:27:05 - 00:08:27:20

Thank you.

00:08:31:20 - 00:08:32:05

Okay.

00:08:32:21 - 00:08:36:10

And is anyone from Bassetlaw District Council in attendance?

00:08:41:28 - 00:08:48:06

Okay, I'll take that as a no. And finally, similarly Historic England in attendance.

00:08:52:18 - 00:08:54:15

Okay. I'd also take that as a no, thank you.

00:09:01:11 - 00:09:21:02

That interested parties who registered as speakers. Please give your name and explain your interest in the application how you wish to be addressed during the hearing. If you are representing an interest group, please give the name of the group and also advise how many people you're representing approximately. First, I'm going to start with Stoughton by Stowe Parish Council.

00:09:28:01 - 00:09:32:24

Okay. Know, obviously I'm not in attendance. And Elizabeth Garbutt, 7000 acres.

00:09:34:02 - 00:09:35:21

Thank you, sir. Good morning. Um.

00:09:38:12 - 00:10:08:05

No, that's. Thank you. Liz. 7000 acres to be dressed as Miss Garbutt. Thank you. Um, we represent roughly a thousand members, but that's a sort of a vague sort of number at the moment. In the numbers are greater than that, but they're just registered as such. But at the table, we have other members of the team who will be speaking and be able to introduce themselves and also in the audience as the events arise, as they want to speak to that. Thank you.

00:10:09:12 - 00:10:13:05

Thank you. And Simon Skelton.

00:10:15:17 - 00:10:20:00

Morning, sir Simon. Skeleton affected person. You.

00:10:21:07 - 00:10:35:14

Thank you. And an invitation to Group five speakers Alistair Ward, Phillip Raven and Alan Stone. Are any of those in attendance?

00:10:37:22 - 00:10:40:10

Just to arrive in microphone that will come to you.

00:10:48:11 - 00:11:01:11

Good morning. My name is Alastair Wood and I'm planning and development manager for the group of companies, inclusive of aviation and blinds and park driving centre.

00:11:05:02 - 00:11:27:24

Good morning. I'm Alan McLaughlin. I'm the manager of Blind Park Driving Center. Our business is an infected party affected party, not an infected party. Affected party of the Cottam solar project. As we're at the northern end of the project and will impact our ability to operate as we do now.

00:11:28:18 - 00:11:29:13

Okay. Thank you.

00:11:31:02 - 00:11:35:01

And the latter last speaker have registered is a mr. white.

00:11:40:16 - 00:11:41:09

Okay. Thank you.

00:11:46:12 - 00:12:20:14

And that is all the introductions for now. If you haven't introduced yourself, there were opportunities to do so. Later on, if we invite you to speak. So I'm now going to move on to agenda item two. And those of you who have attended or reviewed all the hearings that we held in September or attended other examinations, you may already be familiar with the format of the hearing. But for those who aren't, and for the benefit of those watching on live stream, the hearing today will take the form of a structured discussion led by us based on the agenda we've previously sent out, and also the questions that we will ask.

00:12:22:00 - 00:12:38:07

The purpose of the hearing is to explore some of the issues that arise in relation to environmental matters, and to give you an opportunity to make oral representations on the items listed. Where appropriate, and also to expand on the points that you have made in your written responses to date.

00:12:40:08 - 00:13:13:22

We have structured the hearing today. So you have an opportunity to raise anything relevant to this hearing. When we invite you to speak at the relevant, relevant points on the agenda. Please keep your microphone muted until we do invite you to speak. And also please direct all comments, questions and answers through us rather than directly to any other party. And as my colleague has said, we'll cover the points on the agenda that was published on the 28th of November, 2023. I'm pleased to see the the agendas also already been shared on the screen and that's helpful.

00:13:13:24 - 00:13:14:09

Thank you.

00:13:16:26 - 00:13:25:01

The lastly on agenda item two. Subject to progress. We intend to take short comfort breaks of around 90 minutes or so.

00:13:31:22 - 00:13:47:15

So now we'll start with the main part of the hearing, which is item three onwards. And as we consider necessary, we were raised in responses to those issues and questions. Take further contributions, ask further questions, and also provide the applicant with an opportunity to respond.

00:13:49:06 - 00:14:04:29

As has been said already, please can I remind all parties to keep your microphones muted and the camera off until we invite you to speak? And then each time we invite you to speak, please give your name and then the organization that you're representing so that it's picked up for the formal record. Thank you.

00:14:06:21 - 00:14:15:21

So we're now going to move to the number of areas where we're seeking clarification on where we ask a number of questions. So firstly we're going to start with historic environment.

00:14:18:25 - 00:14:25:01

On the first issue will be the effects on the significance of the Thorpe medieval settlement. Scheduled monuments.

00:14:34:20 - 00:14:47:16

So on this matter, my first question is for the applicant. So can the applicant please explain what is the most up to date position between the applicants and Historic England as regards the approach to safeguarding its designated heritage asset?

00:15:01:07 - 00:15:10:26

That project. The applicant. I'm just going to hand over to Mr. Wilson, who can provide an update on the current status with historic key.

00:15:12:11 - 00:16:14:15

Tristan Wilson on behalf of the applicant. Um. Discussions were undertaken with Historic England during the pre examination stage, and with the intention to identify any potential reduction to the impacts identified. The significance of medieval settlements. Um, details of this can be found in the Statement of Common Ground 065 um the embedded mitigation, um, as we have set out in the um as a cultural heritage chapter of the environmental statement that we suggested was to move the solar panels back 50m from the scheduled monument, um, as well as other measures, um, Historic England, um.

00:16:15:22 - 00:16:26:17

And ourselves have been in conversation through that re-examination stage. And currently the, um, the approach to that mitigation is still under discussion.

00:16:29:13 - 00:16:37:22

And he's got the most up to date position there is. I mean, can you give him any more information about what you know, in terms of what the what those discussions are covering? You know, which direction they may be going in.

00:16:38:13 - 00:17:13:12

Yeah, sure. Mean to I mean think to trust Milton on behalf of the applicant, but to make it sort of, you know, make our point clear, I think it's helpful to have a bit of context to explain our understanding of the, the, the asset, really. And so, I mean, to summarize the heritage statement, 1 to 5 to 1 to 8 was undertaken and was carried out and that subsequently informed and was appended to appendix 13.5 of the Environmental Statements.

00:17:13:14 - 00:18:02:00

Chapter 13 Cultural Heritage 048. And this was compliant with the local and national legislation and guidance, and it was informed by the National Heritage List for England and the Historic Environment record. Um, whilst there were, I think it's important to note that there were no designated heritage assets identified by the local authority. Of note, Historic England and its role at that point did identify, um, um in the response to the scope and report, which is appendix 13.913, three and nine assets and their settings for consideration for medieval settlement being one of those assets, um, through for thorough assessments and discussion with and design proposals considered.

00:18:02:02 - 00:18:34:00

The application appears to have largely addressed the setting of designated heritage assets and earthwork monuments of equivalent value, aside from Thorpe medieval settlements. The scheduled monument. Um. This included all of the assets, all of the other assets Historic England drew attention to in their response to the scoping report. Um. Think to explain our understanding of the significance of thought. Medieval settlement. And this has been assessed in paras 3.2.

00:18:34:02 - 00:18:40:04

15 to 3.2. 19 of the Heritage Statement, one two 5 to 1 two eight.

00:18:40:18 - 00:18:53:09

Just to intervene there. Obviously I've read the documentation aware of what you said. Think what particularly I'd be interested in is what how the 15 meter buffer was derived and how that relates to the to the significance.

00:18:53:13 - 00:19:32:21

Okay. Um, the just to very quickly set out the key significance that we identified for the, um, for the asset. We believe that in terms of setting, which will be the which would be the impact here, we believe that relates to the visual relationship to the surviving elements of the medieval landscape that surrounds the, um, the sites of the north, particularly the field boundary to the east and west of the field to the north, which the applicant believes represents the sort of medieval field system.

00:19:32:27 - 00:20:03:18

And we also feel that that the other key aspect is the historical relationship to the medieval, um, sort of medieval landscape to the north, as well as all around the, the, the settlement, and how that illustrates the historical use of the landscape by the occupiers of the village. So, um, the mitigation that was recommended within the environmental statement, chapter 13, Cultural Heritage App 048.

00:20:04:03 - 00:20:36:14

And the mitigation was recommended to set back the solar panels 50m to the northern edge of the monument. Um, and we also proposed the planting of a field boundary immediately north of the scheduled monument. And the intention of this suggested mitigation was twofold. So, firstly, we intended to provide a buffer. And that illustrated the, um, you know, distinct differences between the, um, land occupied by the solar panels and the monument.

00:20:37:02 - 00:20:47:29

Um, the the second element was to provide a strip of land that demonstrated the agricultural use of the former field. Um. The.

00:20:49:29 - 00:21:24:25

We suggested that was appropriate mitigation. However, within the environmental statements and the mitigation was not deemed to reduce the residual effects on medieval settlements. And as even with the proposed mitigation, the solar panels in the field to the north would change the nature of that field to a degree and would obscure views towards the monument and, well, sorry, would obscure the

visual relationship between the scheduled monument and the fossilized field boundaries to the east and west.

00:21:25:21 - 00:22:18:01

Therefore, within the environmental statement, we did recommend that Historic England was consulted in the examination period with the view to identifying a design that would reduce the impact. Um, so to sort of further develop on that point and. To sort of explain that the point that Historic England stated during this. During this consultation, Historic England suggested that the solar panels would be set back well, could be set back further to the north, and this was suggested to run along the position of a former east west field boundary, and they also suggested reinstating the former post field boundary, which we as the applicant believed to be post-medieval.

00:22:19:03 - 00:22:53:20

Um, in in terms of our understanding of that view from taken by Historic England, um, although we appreciate Historic England's position and understand that the former east west field boundary to the north of the village, um, does contribute to an extent the significance of the of the monument. And we do think that that post-medieval now removed field boundary represents the um represents the post-medieval element of the landscape.

00:22:54:04 - 00:22:54:19

Um.

00:22:56:15 - 00:23:03:21

The applicant believes that the east west field boundary as belonging to that post-medieval or early modern landscape, and.

00:23:05:10 - 00:23:55:07

The reason we believe that it belongs to that landscape is because it's it's that kind of landscape is characterized by small enclosed fields and sort of the shape of that particular remove these boundary that is visible on cartographic maps and is reminiscent of post-medieval field boundaries as well, rather than medieval and medieval landscape, which is larger and sort of reflects strip fields. And we also think because the, the scheduling of the Thorpe and the Fellowes or the Thorpe medieval settlement shed, your monument pertains to the medieval village rather than the post-medieval landscape, and we feel that it's appropriate to try and respect the medieval landscape as far as possible.

00:23:56:04 - 00:24:37:03

Um, therefore, the applicant respectfully disagrees with the deduction that the former east west field boundary, um, makes a contribution to the significance of the monument larger than the medieval elements of the landscape. Um, I think it's important to note as well, um, that the aims of the mitigation proposed by the applicant, um, which, as said earlier, were to provide a clear delineation or distinction between the area occupied by the solar panels and the scheduled monument, as well as providing that strip of former agricultural land to illustrate the former agricultural use of that field to the north.

00:24:37:05 - 00:25:06:20

We believe, um, those aims are achieved by both sets of mitigations. And Historic England's proposed mitigation would still include solar panels within the field to the north, which would change that character and affect the sort of historical relationship. And it would also still obscure views towards the fossilised medieval field boundaries to the east and west, in the field to the north, and.

00:25:08:21 - 00:25:44:19

Think. Therefore. Both. Both. Sets of mitigation in our in our opinion, um, would not be sufficient to reduce the residual effects from moderate. Um, think one thing that we did discuss with Historic

England as well, and think it's important to note, is that following the decommissioning phase, um, Historic England's proposed reinstated field boundary would still be present and would still obscure views towards the fossilized field boundaries to the east and west, and

00:25:46:06 - 00:26:16:12

as will our proposed field boundary. But because of the position of Historic England's proposed field boundary, this will bisect the field to the north, whereas our field boundary sits just north of the scheduled monument. And therefore, once the solar panels have been removed with Historic England's field boundary, you won't get an appreciation of the full extent and proportions of the medieval field system. Whereas we believe or the applicant believes that our proposed field boundary would.

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

Thank you. You said there that the the former east west historic east west boundary contributes to the to the significance to an extent. Can you kind of clarify what you mean by that, please in terms of what it does contribute?

00:26:33:06 - 00:26:40:25

Yeah. And the the contribution is limited as it. Um, illustrates

00:26:42:16 - 00:27:00:03

a historical use of the land, but it's not illustrating the medieval use of the landscape, which we believe, or the pre-modern, um, use of the landscape, which we believe is the key element of significance of the medieval scheduled monument.

00:27:03:27 - 00:27:14:12

So in terms of the the extent of the setting then of the assets in that direction, does does that include, would you say both boundaries, both yours and what historical England have referred to?

00:27:15:16 - 00:27:17:14

Uh, yes. Yeah.

00:27:21:13 - 00:27:28:03

And how would the solar arrays then relate to the to the boundary which historically England have referred to the historic East-West boundary?

00:27:28:27 - 00:27:37:09

It's my understanding that their proposed solar arrays would sit just north of their proposed field boundary. But I believe you would.

00:27:38:28 - 00:27:41:19

Probably need to seek clarification from Historic England on that.

00:27:50:28 - 00:28:06:04

And my last question in relation to this, um, you mentioned the boundary treatments you proposing? Um, can be quite useful to explain that in terms of what, what that is. And also if, if that has a bearing in relation to the significance as well.

00:28:11:23 - 00:28:15:14

Just need to. In my notes very quickly on that.

00:28:30:05 - 00:28:52:14

And Justin Wilson on behalf of the applicant. So. I believe this is a reinstated hedgerow, but for the exact makeup of the, the hedgerow would sort of defer to my landscape colleagues and we can provide that information sort of in writing at a later date if that would be appropriate.

00:28:55:25 - 00:29:06:18

Okay. Does that have any bearing in relation to the significance though, in terms of what is proposed, you'll be aware of what is proposed. So how does that have a bearing relation to the an effect on the significance.

00:29:07:20 - 00:29:34:27

Um, to the extent that the views out from the monument towards the um. The field boundaries to the fossil. Fossilized field boundaries to the east and west would be obscured, and also the solar panels would be obscured. Um, but think, you know, it's really about that visual relationship. So, um. The.

00:29:36:16 - 00:29:47:10

The. Suppose the facts of the field boundary existing and sort of obscuring those views to a degree is the important thing there, rather than the exact makeup of the field boundary.

00:29:52:15 - 00:29:57:00

Okay. Thank you. That's my last question on the medieval settlements.

00:30:00:27 - 00:30:20:16

I just have one quick follow up question. Mr. Wilson, thank you very much. Um, if you were to include the additional buffer and additional mitigation suggested by Historic England that this might not be a question for you, it might be that you need to bring someone else in, but I'd be interested to know what impact that would have on the scheme more widely, for example, in terms of capacity.

00:30:35:24 - 00:31:21:17

Tristan Wilson on behalf of the applicant and. He would refer to the answer we gave to the first written response. And so the first response to the examiner's first written questions, which states the removal of the solar panels between Thorpe Medieval Settlement Monument and the former field boundary would result in the loss of approximately 4.2. 4.75MW power of installed capacity and 5.5MW our year of energy generation loss, based upon the indicative layouts that the environmental statement was based upon, this figure is subject to change dependent upon future advances in technology.

00:31:21:19 - 00:31:31:25

Furthermore, the generating capacity of the scheme is not capped. So that's my understanding. But as you alluded to for a fuller

00:31:33:16 - 00:31:41:03

explanation of that effect, I think you would need to speak to one of my colleagues who have a better idea of that element.

00:31:44:11 - 00:31:45:13

Like Mr. Wilson.

00:31:49:06 - 00:32:18:22

Okay. I'm not going to move on to the scheduled monuments and listed building. Um. The applicants identify a direct effect on scheduled morning stimulation to traffic movements and the stone boundary wall, um, which also from what was observed from the submissions and also my site visit, also acts as a retaining wall as well. Um, so is the potential for the associated burial land on the inside of the wall, which also falls in the scheduled monument to be impacted if the wall was hit?

00:32:25:13 - 00:32:40:14

I think to to answer that question and think again, it's important to have a bit of a bit of context there for that site. Um, and I think, as you pointed out, the. The.

00:32:43:02 - 00:32:59:03

Both the monument and the listed building were assessed within the environmental statement within their Cultural Heritage chapter, and they were also included in the heritage statement within the scoping element where we identified that.

00:33:01:12 - 00:33:40:09

Setting. Due to the sort of limited nature of visual relationships towards the site and out to the local area because of the location of the monument, listed building was a um was a sort of limiting factor in the potential impact on those assets from a settings point of view, so they weren't continued for further assessment within the heritage statement, although as you identified, because of the potential for direct physical impact, they were taken forward to the chapter and in terms of the potential effect.

00:33:41:10 - 00:33:48:29

Um. For direct fiscal impacts. We've identified those impacts to be related to.

00:33:50:20 - 00:34:23:12

That direct physical impacts caused by the proximity of abnormal loads. And that is set out in the environmental statement. And that relates to potential impacts to that all. And that's that's the element we were looking at rather than to the burial specifically beyond, because we don't know the exact nature of what that impact would be. Um, however, I would add that in the. He proposed mitigation.

00:34:23:14 - 00:35:00:27

We did suggest the provision of a suitably qualified Bankston to closely monitor manoeuvres and ensure adverse impacts are avoided, and this proposed mitigation was acknowledged by Historic England in their response to the examiner's first questions. 2084 and they stated that this had had the capacity to address the risk of impact or strike and excess vibration or loading, etcetera, by reduction in driver error, vehicle speed and sudden braking and so on.

00:35:01:15 - 00:35:22:12

If a movement management plan is secured against a clear requirement covering its content, purpose, approval and monitoring. Historic England were also happy that this had the potential to reduce the potential for impacts and therefore we, as the applicant, believes that that proposed mitigation is appropriate to manage the potential impact of that location.

00:35:24:06 - 00:35:38:19

And how will that term mitigation practically work in terms of vehicles negotiating that roadside bend and including, as you say, the use of the banks to avoid damage to the wall and the burial ground? How will that actually work in practical terms?

00:35:41:24 - 00:36:12:22

And. The. It would be in relation to the provision of a suitably qualified batsman. And so that's relating to experience and knowledge that they would understand how to maneuver such abnormal loads in those sorts of locations. Um, obviously we would expect to. Provide something along the lines of a toolbox. Talk to just explain the significance and what's of most importance there.

00:36:13:05 - 00:36:21:25

But also as, as I said and in relation to Historic England suggestion and. This would need to be sort of.

00:36:23:11 - 00:36:31:07

This would need to be secured with a movement management plan that would be produced by the the the qualified banks.

00:36:35:22 - 00:36:36:09

Thank you.

00:36:41:08 - 00:36:48:29

And in relation to the movement management plan. How will that be secured? What mechanism are you proposing to do that?

00:36:52:20 - 00:37:32:14

Back to the applicant and the outline or construction traffic management plan. The most recent version of which is rep 2-017, refers to the deployment of banks and accesses, and also abnormal loads. However, in light of the response from Historic England at Deadline two and the applicant is proposing to update the Construction Traffic Management Plan for deadline three to include a more specific reference to the deployment of a bank in this particular location.

00:37:32:21 - 00:37:33:28

And then the

00:37:35:14 - 00:37:51:18

construction traffic management plan is secured by way of requirement. And and so there would be and therefore that sufficient clarity and confirmation that that would be in place during construction of the scheme. Okay.

00:37:52:27 - 00:37:55:09

I'm sorry. I'm not sure

00:37:56:25 - 00:38:03:13

what the updated plan. Also include reference to the movement plan that Ms.. Wilson has just mentioned as well.

00:38:08:01 - 00:38:17:25

A clever trick for the applicant. Yes, albeit. Think it will be a reference to the movement plan being part of the final

00:38:19:13 - 00:38:25:23

TMP that's approved, rather than necessarily at this stage, setting out the detail of that movement plan.

00:38:25:25 - 00:38:32:20

You mentioned that it would refer to the bank statement, but think it would probably need a reference to the actual plan as well. Thank you.

00:38:48:28 - 00:39:06:00

Okay. I'm not going to move on to the archaeological remains and the amount of trial trenching and evaluation. Um, so again, firstly, I think use with the applicant firstly and ask Lancashire County Council the same question, um, what the date position is as regards the approach of safeguarding archaeological remains.

00:39:10:14 - 00:39:45:03

And Alice James on behalf of the applicant. So, um, so we've we've undertaken a whole array of assessment works, which we believe to be in line with NPS one and three and the Central

Lincolnshire Local Plan in particular. Policy 57. Um, so in the first instance, we undertook desk based assessments. And these can be found in app 109 um, um and a geo archaeological desk based assessment.

00:39:45:05 - 00:40:18:11

This is app one two, three. And these kind of pulled together all of the available data sources that we have available to us. So this is um, um, the historic environment record, the Portable Antiquities Scheme, historic landscape, character, um, national record of historic environment, National Heritage List for England, um national Mapping programme information, cartographic information. Um included a whole different range of site visits over different kind of seasons.

00:40:18:20 - 00:40:51:19

Um, and during those site visits, we kind of tried to pick out topographical information, um, that we'd kind of identified, um, um, you know, via kind of online sources and so on, and also pulled together all available geo archaeological and paleo environmental information, um, as kind of a first guide to what we thought the historic resource looked like within the both the scheme and the area surrounding it. And we then undertook non-intrusive evaluation.

00:40:51:21 - 00:41:24:05

So this included geophysical survey, the results of which are in app 1102, app 122 and um, a commissioned air photo and LiDAR analysis. This is in app 124. And um, the results of all of these were kind of layered together. So often in archaeology, what we try to do is um, gather lots of different techniques and layer up the information so that we can try and identify where we think concentrations of archaeological remains are.

00:41:25:00 - 00:42:15:29

Um, and depending on the information we get from, um, the kind of the baseline and non-intrusive techniques kind of give an idea of what we think the archaeological, you know, interest or what the type of archaeology we're looking at. Um, with these in mind, we then undertook a programme of intrusive evaluation and by that mean evaluation, trial trenching, um, the results of which can be found in app 1292, app 130. And so, um, for our solo sites, um, um, we undertook a programme of informed evaluation, trial trenching where we were trying to target areas where we'd found archaeological remains, but also to test the results of the, um, specifically the non-intrusive evaluations, as well as, um, the baseline areas where we hadn't found archaeological remains.

00:42:16:01 - 00:42:47:26

So these often get called blank areas. Um, and then on the shared cable routes. So this is the cable route, which is proposed to be used by multiple schemes, which runs across into Nottinghamshire. Um, we, we, we undertook both targeted um, trenching, but we also did a kind of a more blanket sample. So covering as all the areas which were accessible along the route.

00:42:47:29 - 00:43:27:08

And this slight difference in approach for the shared cable route was um, for three reasons. Firstly, the fact that this was possibly the highest area of impact from the scheme, um, so the cable route is, is likely to cause total destruction of the archaeological remains where it's going straight through and by and large, with the exception of, of where we're directionally drilling. Um, the fact that the, the archaeological remains were identified from baseline information and the non-intrusive evaluation had kind of suggested there were some fairly sensitive archaeological remains to be present.

00:43:28:05 - 00:44:00:16

Um, and also the fact that, um, where we're kind of coming along, um, the, the River Trent, there's the potential for alluvium and other paleo environmental deposits, which might have the potential to mask archaeological features. So they there is the potential that we, quite frankly, might not have found them in the results of, let's say, a geophysical survey. So we just wanted to create a kind of a bigger

test as possible to make sure that we could be confident in the results of our non-intrusive survey techniques.

00:44:00:18 - 00:44:44:15

So in total, um, um, we undertook for the for the solar sites, we've undertaken a sample of about naught point. 35%. And for the share cable we believe we've taken. We've undertaken a sample of about 0.73%. So that's like increase in trenching of the cable route is for the reasons I've suggested. Um, so in terms of what we were finding, um, when we compared all these data sets together, the results of the evaluation trenching, um, confirmed the the our non-intrusive survey techniques were very reliable in identifying the absence and presence of archaeological remains.

00:44:44:17 - 00:45:22:29

And often they were also the geophysics in particular, was proven to be quite good at identifying the extent of where we had concentrations of archaeological remains. Um, on top of that, the evaluation trenching also offered us vital information in terms of what the character of the archaeology is and its significance, um, its preservation, its depth. All of this information, which we can then feed into a mitigation strategy. Um, and ultimately, um, kind of have, have given us the information to kind of inform the design, the application and ultimately the, the archaeological mitigations.

00:45:23:01 - 00:45:53:03

So pulling this back in terms of the guidance we follow. Um, so, um, the Chartered Institute for archaeologists, their definition of an archaeological field valuation is a limited programme of non-intrusive and or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence, absence of archaeological features and if such archaeological remains of presence, their character, extent, quality and preservation. So we believe, are all of the work we've undertaken to understand the archaeological resource has, um, fulfilled that.

00:45:53:09 - 00:46:24:28

Um, it also it's in line with guidance in three. Um, but we also believe that it's in line with policy, um, 57 of Central Income plan. And um, the section 5.9 of the intrusive field work predetermination of the Lincolnshire County Council archaeological Handbook, which states, um, that if the non-intrusive valuation techniques suggest the potential for archaeology but do not provide enough information about form, significance or rarity, it may be necessary to carry out an archaeological field evaluation.

00:46:29:05 - 00:46:39:21

Okay. Thank you. Um, same question for Lincolnshire. Really? Um, again, what's your most up to date position in relation to the the approach of safeguarding archaeological remains?

00:46:43:10 - 00:47:32:05

So thank you. Stephanie Hall, Lancashire County Council. I'm going to bring Mr. Adamson in a moment, but just just a kind of headline from me in terms of document references, first of all. So you'll have a rep to 73, which is the Lincoln County Council's response to the first written questions. And so your question, 1.9. 14 is probably the most up to date written position. I don't think very much has changed in substance since then. It's more an evolution of that debate, but the substance is the same, that we're not satisfied that what the applicant has done complies with relevant guidance, or indeed, so it gives you sufficient information to determine what the likely significant effects are, because they haven't they just simply haven't done enough trial trenching.

00:47:32:07 - 00:48:06:13

And in layman's terms, they are required to describe the effects that the project is likely to have at the moment. What they have done is a is a small proportion of checking in the real world what the desk base analysis tell and the geophysics tells them is is potentially there now. We know that the two don't always align, and that's why you have to go out and check by digging a trench to see whether what your is in your desk base assessment telling you is is accurate.

00:48:06:15 - 00:48:40:12

And Mr. Adams will tell you that there are instances, even on this site where they have found things in trenches that the geophysics would be surprised to have you found. So this isn't an academic exercise that there are real world examples of where the desk base assessment hasn't turned something up. When we've gone out to look in a field, we found something. So it is important. And so you'll be aware from app 1 to 9 the the results survey from the trial trenching.

00:48:40:14 - 00:49:12:17

They found 24 burials. And they found an awful lot of other things that haven't been assessed yet. So we don't know how significant those things are. But they found an awful lot of of pottery and other remains. So this is a site where we are finding remains, and it is important to know how much is there and how significant it might be. So that's the context I'm going to pass over to Mr. Adams just to to kind of put put the detail behind that if I can. I'm hoping that the teams link will work.

00:49:17:26 - 00:49:53:17

Matthew, Lancashire County Council. Good morning sir. Um, yes, I think, um, our council has outlined it. Um, very well. Um, the desk based assessments, the geophysical surveys are, um, have been undertaken by the applicant. Um, although I'm not sure that part of the corridor linking the main sites has been surveyed. Maybe it has. I will check, but, um, the non-intrusive surveys are very informative. They're very helpful. But these techniques are not definitive of of the archaeological resource across the site.

00:49:53:19 - 00:50:25:08

It does need checking with evaluation trenching. And this is an approach that we've we've used in archaeology for um for the last 30 years. Um, so geophysics will we'll identify some sites. Um, some sites don't show up. Um, um, we have numerous examples of that, um, in Lincolnshire and across the border in Nottinghamshire, where geophysics just simply hasn't identified, um, um, significant archaeological sites and settlements.

00:50:25:18 - 00:50:37:06

Um, and so we advise that, um, a programme of trial trenching should be undertaken across the entire impact zone and the order limits, um.

00:50:38:24 - 00:51:11:27

A currently the applicant has undertaken. Think about some. They've assessed about 17% of the site, 17.5% site. So there's still 80% or thereabouts of the site that hasn't been trialed trenched, and therefore they cannot describe the impact to their development on on 80% of the site which which we feel is not a or is an insufficient level of work to inform this, this application. And that's essentially where, where, where we are with our trenching at the moment.

00:51:13:18 - 00:51:24:13

And Mr. Adams, in terms of your experience and your sort of local background knowledge at this part of Lincolnshire is an area which is deemed to be archaeologically sensitive in, in your view?

00:51:27:01 - 00:51:57:03

Um, yes. Yes it is. Um, I mean, this scheme and others have have identified previously unknown, um, settlement activity just down the road, we have a Anglo-Saxon Camry, and we have an Anglo-Saxon burial grounds that was recently discovered again, has changed our understanding of of how, um, how quickly or how early this part of the country was, was settled during that period. Yeah.

00:51:57:09 - 00:52:20:15

There is an extraordinary amount of archaeology from from all periods across across this area, um, not least the Trent Valley as well, where, where is extraordinarily sensitive, extraordinarily complex archaeology that, um. Often requires a very, very detailed and um approach and mitigation.

00:52:24:08 - 00:53:03:10

Okay. Thank. Thank you. Um, Mr. Pointer. See, you have your hand raised. Um. And I would be interested in terms of your view of this. I'm going to come back to the applicants in a moment, but I would be interested in relation to your response. While you're Nottingham City Council County Council's response in its first written questions, that would also refer to to archaeological sensitivity to the west of the Trent, and also the issue of lack of lack of of charter, in your view. So I think it'd be useful if the council, Nottinghamshire County Council, can explain to me in your response what your concerns are in that regard.

00:53:05:00 - 00:53:28:24

Thank. Thank you. Sir. Um, I mentioned at the beginning that we may have our own archaeologist present, and she's been able to join the call somewhat late, but it's a Cilla Spence who is the archaeologist for Nottinghamshire. So if you don't mind, I'd like to bring her in to answer that point, if I can. Thank you sir.

00:53:29:17 - 00:53:30:12

Yes. That's fine.

00:53:33:02 - 00:54:14:26

Good morning sir. Sorry about my late arrival. Technical glitch. Um, yes. I would like to concur completely with Matt Adams. Um, comments. Um, there are a number of reasons why the level of trenching that's taken place on the Lincolnshire and also, I have to say, also on the Nottinghamshire side, that is not adequate. I'm speaking with a background of 30 years of working in Nottinghamshire as county archaeologist. That's 30 years of knowing the Trent floodplain in detail. Geophysics does not work and should not be relied on in its entirety for defining either the level of archaeological sensitivity or the nature of mitigation as a region.

00:54:15:05 - 00:54:50:16

Um. The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers likes to see evaluation turn out at about between 3 and 5% of the site. Now, you heard Matt say that so far 80% of the site has had no trial trenching at all. Therefore, there can be no way on the Lincolnshire side that they can decide what adequate measures should be used for mitigation. And I have to say, I would share Matt's concerns that some of the mitigation measures that have been proposed on the back of inadequate information, um, are not probably fit for purpose.

00:54:51:00 - 00:55:08:08

I've think in, in, in respect of the the recently discovered burials on the Lincolnshire side, um, the kind of ground anchors they're proposing to use would be very damaging. So there's a number of reasons why this is such not a good precedent for the region.

00:55:11:02 - 00:55:27:10

And think, think. There's probably going to be several conversations being had like this at other meetings. And because we do seem to be having a nasty outbreak of doing inadequate work and having too much reliance on geophysical work, actually giving us the results.

00:55:29:09 - 00:55:37:04

And Sammy Spence, what would you consider would be adequate in terms of an applicant carrying out such such trial changing?

00:55:38:08 - 00:56:11:05

In sensitive areas. Well, all the Trent floodplain. I'd say I'd agree with Matt again. All of Lincolnshire and most of Nottinghamshire, three 3 to 5% of an overall site should be drenched. And that should include blank areas. In some cases, it is possible to possibly get away with doing less evaluation on the areas where geophysics has worked, but only to actually ground truth. The collaboration between the what the geophysics has shown and what is actually discovered.

00:56:11:07 - 00:56:42:10

I'd agree with Matt completely the number of times we geophysicist and then excavate it and find that the office has only found has only found a percentage. It will particularly pick up linear features such as ditches. It will probably not pick up discrete features, and it may not pick up earlier features, particularly in a landscape as dynamic as the Trent floodplain, where layers of alluvium can cover archaeological features very, very quickly.

00:56:43:20 - 00:57:01:15

So between 3 and 5% is is what we should be seeing. And think if you compare the cable trench on that was done by the icon under the icon. Consultants think it was about 3% and still had some issues with that on the Nottinghamshire side.

00:57:05:15 - 00:57:09:16

And thank you. And does the applicant wish to come back on any of those points.

00:57:10:16 - 00:57:21:05

Before you do? Can just confirm with. You say the icon assessment. Can you just refer refers to that specific assessment? Is that in the document or is that a different proposal?

00:57:21:15 - 00:57:28:26

It's a different proposal. Matt, can you can you remind me which one that is? Because I'm sure I've got my Burtons confused.

00:57:31:03 - 00:58:03:19

Matt Adams, Lancashire County Council. Yes. The, the the current applicant and some of the other schemes. The gate Burton one certainly maybe some of the others are sharing part of their cable route corridor, um, to their grid connection point and the, the think gate. Burton used A.com for their consultants. Um, they undertook the assessment on the on the Nottinghamshire side of the cable routes in collaboration with the, with the current applicant as well.

00:58:03:21 - 00:58:36:23

But they produce they I believe they're um archaeological contractors undertook the work on that route. So although it is also part of a different scheme, um, that part of the cable route, I think it's actually part of the next to Martin, the Stowe Road. Everything's south of there or everything west of there to the grid connection point has been was undertaken by, by the Aecom, um, consultants and their team.

00:58:37:09 - 00:58:42:13

So it does form part of the scheme as well, but it was undertaken by a different scheme.

00:58:43:27 - 00:58:45:11

Thank you, Mr. Spence.

00:58:47:11 - 00:58:49:26

And so with the applicant, let's come back on. Any of those matters?

00:58:51:01 - 00:59:47:08

Project the applicant. Just before this. James comes back on some of the detailed comments. And I think it's important just to refer to the statements made in the national policy statements in relation to the level of assessment that is required by an applicant for a nationally significant infrastructure project. And when I'm referring to both NPS one and NPS in three, I'm referring to the paragraphs in the recently published November 2023 versions of these documents, which are currently laid before Parliament and anticipated to be adopted on the 16th of January 2023, unless adopted earlier and for the purposes of the paragraph referencing numbers, on the basis that those replace the March 2023 draft versions.

00:59:49:00 - 01:00:27:24

So in one paragraph, 5.9. ten states that the level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets, and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Paragraph 5.9. 11 says the applicant should carry out appropriate desk based assessment, and where such desk space research is insufficient to properly assess the interest of field evaluation. 5.9. 12 says the applicant should ensure that the extent of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of any heritage assets affected can be adequately understood from the application and supporting documents.

01:00:28:01 - 01:01:03:05

Then, looking at NPS three and paragraph 2.10 0.113 states that the applicant should submit an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. 2.10 .114 goes on to say in some instances, field studies may include investigative work and may include trowel trenching and to assess the impacts of ground disturbance such as proposed cabling, substation foundations, or mounting supports for solar panels on archaeological assets.

01:01:03:17 - 01:01:32:17

2.10 .115 states that the extent of investigative work should be proportionate to the sensitivity of, and the extent of, the proposed ground disturbance in the associated study area. And Ms.. James will go on to explain why we consider the approach taken by the applicant to be proportionate, but thought it would be helpful just to refer to that and what the level of assessment is required under the National Policy Statements.

01:01:35:24 - 01:02:05:24

Alex James on behalf of the applicant. Several points were raised there, so I'll try and work through as best I can. Um, starting with the, um, the cable corridor that runs between the different, um, Cottam sites. Um, geophysical survey was undertaken of a 100 meter corridor. Um, it was also subject to, um, photo and lidar analysis, interpretation and desk based assessments. Um, as I've explained previously.

01:02:05:26 - 01:02:42:16

So a full raft of assessments has been undertaken for that cable corridor. Um, using the references I've previously supplied. And these have all been I think they're all available on the pins website so are available for to to review. Um, in terms of the burials. Um, so the burials were identified within cotton. One parcel. Um, the the reason we or the reason we had an indication that the rock remains in this area was a series of ditches that were picked up by geophysical survey.

01:02:42:25 - 01:03:18:25

Um, so what we had were a series of ditches which we thought were belonging to enclosures. And we laid down trenches targeting these ditches. And in the middle of them we found some burials. Um, and it's not uncommon, I would suggest, for burials to be found in association with other archaeological features. So, for example, a cemetery might come with a boundary ditch running around it, or they might be found next to something structural. So in this case, although yes, arguably we weren't expecting to find burials in this location, we definitely were expecting to find archaeology.

01:03:19:02 - 01:03:52:18

Um, so the um, so it's um, uh, the other thing I would add to that is in terms of the ground anchors and burials, um, this this area is not proposed, um, for any ground anchors. In fact, we've suggested that we undertake open excavation to basically, um, record the burials. So excavate record, and then we can analyze them. And in this case, I'd actually highlight the the benefits of a solar scheme.

01:03:52:23 - 01:04:33:26

Um, so when we, um, when we found the burials, we found that they were in a very poor preservation, particularly the, the we had adults and children. The children in particular were very fragmented. Um, and this is largely due to plough activity. And this is something that's highlighted in N3. Um, is that um, um, solar schemes actually offer us the potential to preserve or protect archaeology from damage that is caused by agricultural activity. So in particular, where we have large arable landscapes like you see in Lincolnshire, um, ploughing after decades and decades basically starts to dig into archaeological remains and turn it up.

01:04:33:28 - 01:05:06:29

And where we have sites like burial sites. Um, they don't stand, I guess, much chance against a plough. So on this occasion, um, the scheme has offered us the mechanism to both identify the burials and then, um, well, record them. But an alternative to open excavation could be preservation in situ. We take it out of the scheme, in which case, again, they'd be preserved. So either way of the scheme, the burials are going to be, you know, protected or recorded in one sense or the other. Um, um, um, I'm sorry.

01:05:07:01 - 01:05:23:06

Mr. James can just come in on that point. You say they'll be protected one way or the other, but when when you're talking, you're talking about the cable corridor and then think you're moving on and talking about the panels separately in terms of the panels, the piles that are driven into the ground will they will will they have potential to damage? No.

01:05:24:08 - 01:06:08:21

Um, apologies, Alex Jones, on behalf of the applicant. No. Because we there's two options. The one we've proposed is open excavation. So before we the the piles get kind of installed. Um, what we would do is we'd go in with, um, strip the area back with, excavate it with, lift all the burials so that they can go off and be analysed. And then once that area has been cleared of, of archaeology, um, and this would all be done. Um, um, you know, in consultation with the, the, the various county archaeologists, um, once that area's been cleared of archaeologists and we're all agreed that it's, it's now, um, you know, the archaeology has been successfully mitigated.

01:06:08:23 - 01:06:18:16

It could then be, um, put forward for development. So, um, the burials would hopefully be gone before the piles were installed.

01:06:18:18 - 01:06:21:22

And that's across the entire entire site you're talking about.

01:06:21:27 - 01:06:52:26

That's that's across the area where the burials are and any kind of associated features with them. So we based on the in that area, we've undertaken geophysical survey and we've also undertaken. Program evaluation trenching. So we've worked out where the error is. So we would based on that area, we'd undertaken excavation. And I believe it's Lincolnshire's policy to have a 20 meter buffer. So we'd extend it beyond the 20m to make sure we have captured all the archaeology.

01:06:52:28 - 01:06:56:15

And then that area is basically, um.

01:06:57:21 - 01:07:11:00

Isn't that just in relation to where you've already identified archaeology? And if understand correctly, the council's point of both council's point is that there's a large area of the site where that hasn't been undertaken. So what happens on those parts of the site where you're driving into the.

01:07:11:04 - 01:07:55:03

So in the areas where we haven't undertaken evaluation trenching, we have undertaken other forms of evaluation. And what I would highlight with the scheme is the results of the geophysics. You know, we've tested them for evaluation trenching and that's proven that. So in reference to the comment that substantial archaeology was identified, um, in our scheme by trenching, um, I'd have to ask to be pointed where the substantial archaeology is because, um, the only archaeology we found outside of the concentrations identified by non-intrusive, um, survey techniques, um, were either, you know, an isolated pit or an isolated ditch.

01:07:55:06 - 01:08:35:27

Um, so I would suggest that based on the baseline information we have and the non-intrusive evaluation that the potential for, um, kind of substantial archaeology outside of the areas we've already identified is very low. Um, there may be the potential for the odd isolated feature. And we do know from my experience of working on other solar schemes we do occasionally find outside of geophysical survey, you know, um, pits or a ditch, um, that, um, um, that haven't been identified through geophysical survey, but generally in these cases, the, the, the archaeological interest of them is fairly low and generally no mitigation is actually requested from them.

01:08:35:29 - 01:08:38:09

I mean, I would also highlight that before.

01:08:38:11 - 01:08:47:28

You do presumably responded to Miss Hall's point at the beginning where she said that archaeology had been found in areas where the geophysical surveys had not identified it. Is that.

01:08:48:12 - 01:09:24:09

That's true? Yes. That's correct. Um. And the other thing I was going to add was that think we, um. What's worth highlighting again with a solar scheme is the level of impact is fairly low. So if you think about the piles and the disturbance they're going to cause is, is is fairly low in terms of the archaeological record. And again, as I've previously said, it's it's we're dealing with areas that are already being quite disturbed by the current land use. So this change actually, um, I would say, you know, the impact of, of the piles is, is negligible.

01:09:24:11 - 01:09:41:06

So if we do have isolated features that we haven't detected, I'd suggest their archaeological interest is potentially like and the disturbance is also low. So, you know, um, um, um, um, so I'd, I'd like that, um, the I'm sorry, can.

01:09:41:12 - 01:09:52:18

Just before you move on to a different point, um, in terms of what you've said about piles and their impact on buried archaeology, does this imply if you were to install tracker panels on concrete foundations?

01:09:54:03 - 01:10:40:18

And so in terms of the concrete foundations, we have suggested concrete feet across this scheme. And generally these are in areas where we've both undertaken intrusive and non-intrusive evaluation. So

these areas we have trenched. And generally these areas contain ditches and other features that we think are um, a. Less likely or not to be substantially impacted upon by compaction and these things which have been raised, um, I'd point you in the direction of the guidance issued by Cornwall Council by Brie, who who kind of advocate that concrete feet are a good, um, design mechanism to dealing with sites of archaeology.

01:10:40:20 - 01:11:03:28

And this is also referenced in Historic England guidance. Um, so um, and likewise, um, it's concrete feet are used, um, not necessarily in Lincolnshire but in other regions where again, archaeological remains have been identified. Um, and um, it's as a mechanism to, to, to safeguard and protect.

01:11:04:16 - 01:11:20:08

Um, notice you've said obviously in your submissions about this that they've been used elsewhere but mean in this case. So what gives you the confidence? Obviously it's not Cornwall, it's not somewhere else. It's part of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire. You know what gives the confidence they can be used in this case without causing on duty servants to archaeological remains.

01:11:21:18 - 01:11:55:21

And again guess it's it's comparing the archaeological sites often admit you have to deal with each archaeological site in independence of itself. So it can be tricky taking one site and comparing it. And that's even within the same county, because obviously we have a lot of different variables. You know, this can be from anything from geology to the depth of the archaeology type of archaeology and so on and so forth. But what we have seen, I guess, across the country is on different sites with different, um, kind of background information.

01:11:55:23 - 01:12:27:27

I guess concrete feet have been accepted. Um, and certainly in terms of the features we're looking at here, we believe that they are, you know, suitable for concrete feet. So, for example, you know, going back to the burials, I'd argue they're not acceptable for concrete feet because obviously, um, you know, they're fairly shallow and just the by nature of what a, you know, the material of a burial versus the material of a ditch, that very different kind of types of archaeology. Um, so guess I put it down to professional judgment and experience of, of working on other schemes.

01:12:28:06 - 01:13:03:21

Um, unfortunately, um, I guess and this, this is probably on both sides of the argument. There's no real evidence to suggest there would be, um, impaction, nor is there any. You know, this is probably like a PhD thesis for someone to go and look at in terms of soil behaviour and soil modelling to see, you know, what the, um, if compaction happens, you know, to what extent. So what are the thresholds and so on and so forth. Um, but what I would presume is when you're using concrete feet, you don't necessarily want them to slip or sink into the ground because obviously you want them to be as stable as possible.

01:13:03:23 - 01:13:13:15

So I presume once you lay them the they're not going to, you know, start digging in because that would by default undermine, you know, the structural integrity of them.

01:13:16:09 - 01:13:52:12

That project the applicant just before we carry on, and we can provide more detail in our written summary. But in terms of the level of work undertaken by the applicant, the applicant, as part of these ongoing discussions with Lincolnshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, we have looked and done a review of over 300 solar farm planning applications, you know, sort of Town and Country Planning Act applications over from 2017 to October 2022, to see what the approach has been across the industry in relation to trial trenching.

01:13:52:20 - 01:14:33:09

And we also looked at those projects in Lincolnshire and where we found that there were approximately nine, none of which had undertaken trial trenching. And similarly, we looked at Nottinghamshire, where there were a number where it was only geophysical surveys undertaken, and charging was typically less than what is being asked for. So think to provide some context. We don't believe, as the applicant that a requirement for between 3 and 5% trial trenching to be normal either in this area or generally across the country for these types of schemes.

01:14:33:11 - 01:15:17:25

Noting that NPS does specify that it should be proportionate to the extent of proposed ground disturbance. So we're not comparing this project with another type of scheme with extensive below ground works and foundations, for example. And we're also, we haven't heard, believe any information or evidence has been supported or put forward in writing to support claims that this area of the country is any is particularly different from other areas of the country, where there are sensitive archaeological assets that would necessitate a different approach being considered to be proportionate.

01:15:17:27 - 01:15:39:25

Note it was referred to as this area being extraordinary, and the applicant's position is that it's not. There are plenty of other cases places in the country with similar levels of sensitivity, and Ms. James can perhaps provide a bit more information on that point, but we do need to be considering it as to what's proportionate for this type of development. Thank you.

01:15:40:28 - 01:15:41:28

Ta ta.

01:15:42:22 - 01:16:09:16

Don't know if you have a follow up question for this project, but do Miss Padraic, how does. You mentioned that it's the comparison that you've undertaken doesn't come close to the 3 to 5% that Nottinghamshire has and Lincolnshire have mentioned. How does the analysis that you've undertaken compare to what the applicant has actually done? I think we heard earlier that it was 0.53 and 0.73 along the cable route.

01:16:12:00 - 01:16:59:04

A clever applicant. Mr. James can perhaps provide some more detail, but think the research has shown that we have done more to our trenching than is than has been done for the majority of schemes, it's noted. Obviously other schemes have offered to do more. However, we don't believe that it's proportionate in this particular case for this scheme and think what is important to note is that obviously what we're looking at is what is proportionate for the purposes of undertaking an environmental impact assessment in order to understand significance, likely significant effects of the project, and also what is proportionate in order to put together the mitigation that is appropriate for this scheme.

01:16:59:06 - 01:17:29:29

And so what we are when we're looking at the information that's been done so far, and that has led to. The conclusions in the environmental statement, but also the establishment of the Archaeological Mitigation written Scheme of investigation, which is Dash 131 and the table. In their sets out the list of mitigation measures that are proposed for each field within within the scheme.

01:17:30:01 - 01:18:01:23

And that's been based on the combination of death based assessment and the trial trenching. And the applicant's position remains that the information that has is sufficient and proportionate enough to provide confidence that the mitigation that's being put forward is appropriate. We don't consider that

there is a need for the amount of trial trenching that's been put forward to be undertaken in order to establish the mitigation measures that are proposed in the written scheme of investigation.

01:18:01:25 - 01:18:05:06

But I'll pass over to Miss James in case she has anything else to add on that point. Thank you.

01:18:05:08 - 01:18:27:29

Mr. Broderick did have one more follow up, though. Before you do, you mentioned that it compares favorably to the other schemes within the counties that aren't nearby. Have you done a comparison on I think you mentioned it compares. You've done a comparison to schemes in other areas outside these counties as well. And so my question is how does it compare in a wider sense?

01:18:42:12 - 01:19:05:28

A clever trick. The applicant and we have all of the detailed information which we can provide in writing. We don't have all of the statistics here, but we can provide that in writing. But my understanding is that we've done more to our trenching. And our understanding is that even where nationally significant infrastructure projects have done more to our trenching than the applicant, that they haven't

01:19:07:26 - 01:19:11:17

done up to 5% or the numbers that are being quoted in today's hearing.

01:19:12:08 - 01:19:16:12

If you are providing statistical information, can we just have a summary of that as well rather than just.

01:19:20:19 - 01:19:52:25

And Alice James on behalf of the applicant. I have looked at other schemes, for example, um, some of which are in the examination phase in Lincolnshire and some of which have actually been approved. Um, so, for example, if I draw attention to those that have been approved. So we've got long field solar farm, this was undertaken in Essex. Um, and that undertook a 0.08% um evaluation sample of trenching. Um, we have a little little crow.

01:19:52:27 - 01:20:35:19

So little farm that's in North Lincolnshire, um, that undertook 0.47% trenching. Um, and then based on um, again, this is all based on available information in terms of the reports that are available and so on. Um, nearby gate Burton um solar farm that's currently in examination phase, like us. Um, based on the information we've got to hand, we believe that's at 1.16%, um, trenching. Um, um, interestingly, there's also Heckingbottom fen, um, which I believe for the main sites is 1.63 and the cable route is two plus two, so that's 2% and then a 2% contingency.

01:20:35:21 - 01:21:07:14

So often we'll have trenches held back in case archaeology is found. Um what's interesting with Hacking in Fen is and again this is in Lincolnshire is um, because of its location in the Fenland and it has a completely different geological makeup. So I think the geophysics in this area didn't identify, um, a variety of archaeological features due to geological responses, masking, potential archaeological remains. Um, um, and I think the geophysics had a lot of paleo channels and things like this.

01:21:07:19 - 01:21:48:12

And the thing again, would come back to and highlight is compared to think Gate Burton had a similar ish. We're in a relatively similar area, but in terms of the geophysics results we've collected from our scheme, um, you know, there's sometimes telltale signs in terms of geophysics, when you

look at the data and you're trying to ascertain whether it's been successful in identifying buried archaeological remains, you look for certain things. So for example, ridge and furrow, um, is is a personal favourite because if we found the ridge and furrow that suggests the soils are magnetically conducive to a magnetic survey technique, and it suggests that there's other infill features, we'll pick them up too.

01:21:48:24 - 01:22:24:20

Um, um, but also looking out for things like, uh, geology or modern activity, which has the potential to mask, um, potential archaeological features. In terms of the data we're looking at, um, the we don't really have any areas where, um, of a kind of, um, like modern agricultural or geological has lost features, but also we've got really good strong contrast between, let's say, background readings and those of the anomalies which we identify and then try and characterise as potentially being archaeological.

01:22:24:22 - 01:22:51:20

So, um, and then going forward and testing that with the trenching we have, which is both targeted, you know, concentrations of archaeological remains and blank areas, um, we we've kind of improved our confidence in, in kind of looking at this as a reliable data set that we can use to basically determine whether we've we've done, you know, an appropriate and proportionate amount of, um, evaluation works to, to inform the application.

01:22:55:19 - 01:23:17:10

Okay. In terms of the written scheme of investigation, um, does that guard against potential damage to remains in areas which haven't been trialled, trenched, or the means of mitigation in there to to deal with that particular situation? If you do find somewhere for example, at that stage which was more sensitive than you thought, and how would that be dealt with through through that scheme of investigation?

01:23:18:25 - 01:23:56:13

So the written scheme of investigation sets out several different options of mitigation depending a on or mostly on whether we think there is an archaeological potential. So, you know, if I refer you to the cable route, um, we've undertaken where we've undertaken various evaluation works, we've identified a potential for archaeological remains to be located. We've suggested a strip map and sample. Um, but where we haven't identified any archaeological remains to be identified with, uh, we've we've suggested a watching brief or archaeological monitoring.

01:23:56:16 - 01:24:34:19

Um, and if, let's say during the archaeological monitoring, we then find some unexpected archaeological remains, I would suggest that based on the information we have, we think this is probably going to be low. But let's say, you know, something comes up. The WSI does provide the mechanism for this then to be elevated, um, um, into um, strip, map and sample or provides enough time for the archaeology to then be properly mitigated. In terms of the main sites, um, we we proposed mitigation in areas where um, archaeology has been identified.

01:24:34:21 - 01:25:13:15

We've also proposed mitigation in areas where there's high impact. Um, so, um, you know, you know, the battery site, substations, things like this, but in areas which are just proposed for, um, solar panels where the information we have, um, has, has identified there is a low potential for archaeological remains to be present. And as I said earlier, admittedly, there might be the odd isolated feature, but from my experience, generally no mitigation is is required for these types of features due to the fact that the level of impact from, you know, occasional piling is is fairly low.

01:25:14:19 - 01:25:21:17

And if you did find one of those areas, would that have the potential to strict provision of the solar arrays? Will only change the cable route.

01:25:22:24 - 01:25:45:24

And again. So in terms of the cable route, if we needed to, we can go around or we can record. And I think there's also an area in the cable route where we're going under on the shared side, three directional drilling so that there's, you know, there's the potential. And likewise where we've forgot to mention, we've also suggested some informative trenching. These are on

01:25:47:13 - 01:26:08:08

some kind of some anomalies which are based on the information we have. We think that it's, it's the possibly more likely to be geological or agricultural, but we wanted to fool proof and test to make sure they're not archaeological. If they turn out to be archaeological, then the site provides a mechanism for them then to have mitigation. Um.

01:26:20:18 - 01:26:24:24

I'm sorry if you can bear with us for a moment. We seem to be having some sort of technical difficulty.

01:26:49:19 - 01:27:19:20

Unfortunately, everyone, we've just been told that we are having a problem with the internet connection and the live stream and so we are going to have to adjourn. I think we were coming up to a point where we were going to adjourn anyway, so hopefully now will be a good time. Mr. James, had you finished your last point or we did you have anything else that you wanted to say? The reason I ask is because if you do, then we'll pick it up straight away when we come back. So it's now 1127. We're going to take an initial adjournment of ten minutes and then hopefully we'll be back online.

01:27:19:24 - 01:27:24:27

But if we need a little bit longer, then I'll come back and let you know. Thank you all very much. The hearing is now adjourned.