

Cottam Solar_ISH6-CAH2-OFH3_28 Feb

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:18 - 00:00:08:05

Good morning everyone. I'm just checking. You can all hear me.

00:00:10:15 - 00:00:11:21

Yes. So we can hear you.

00:00:12:09 - 00:00:16:05

Thank you. Simon. And can I check? The recording started as well as the live stream.

00:00:17:00 - 00:00:17:17

It has.

00:00:18:07 - 00:00:57:06

Thank you. Thank you. Simon. Well, it's 10:00, and I'd like to start off by welcoming you all to this, the final set of hearings for the Cottam 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 a recommendation. The other panel member, Mr. Darren Henley, is also present this morning. Now, these hearings relate to the applicant's request for changes to the proposed development and are being conducted on an entirely virtual basis. If you participate in today's hearings, it is important that you understand that you'll be recorded and that you can send to the retention and publication of the digital recording to avoid disrupting the meeting.

00:00:57:09 - 00:01:29:04

Please, can I ask you all to keep your microphones muted until we invite you to speak? The chat function on Microsoft Teams has not been enabled and it won't be in use, so please don't try to use that for any questions or comments. And if you're watching on the live stream, then please do be aware that it will be stopped during any adjournment and you will need to refresh your browser page to view the restarted hearings. Now you will all find it useful to have the agenda that was published on the 20th of February to hand this morning. So moving swiftly on to item two.

00:01:29:06 - 00:02:03:27

The purpose of the hearings. Today's hearings are held under regulations 14, 15 and 16 of the Infrastructure Planning Compulsory Acquisition Regulations 2010. It consists of an issue specific hearing, compulsory acquisition during and an open floor hearing, and all three of those hearings will be running concurrently. Now, as was set out in the notification letter that I issued on the 2nd of February this year, the hearings will be held primarily for the purpose of hearing from those who wish to be heard in respect of the applicant's proposed changes to the application.

00:02:04:23 - 00:02:14:21

I'll shortly be asking the applicant to provide a summary of those changes and how they impact on the applicant's case. But first, could someone from the applicant please confirm who will be speaking on its behalf?

00:02:19:06 - 00:02:41:04

Uh, good morning, sir. My name is Claire Broderick. I'm a legal director at Pinsent Masons, solicitors for the applicant, Gotham Solar Project Limited. And we have various members of the applicant's team available for the virtual hearing today. But I suggest they introduce themselves when, if and when that topic comes up for discussion.

00:02:42:02 - 00:03:09:09

Good morning, Mr. Project. Thank you very much. Um, yes, I agree. If, um, if anyone else wishes to speak on behalf of the applicant. It'll be easier if they introduce themselves at that point. So thank you very much. I will be asking any additional affected parties or additional interested parties who are in attendance to introduce themselves. I'm not sure we have any, but if they do, I'll ask them to introduce themselves when we come on to agenda item four. Um, in the meantime, are there any local authorities present who may wish to speak?

00:03:11:24 - 00:03:29:01

Don't think we do have any. But again, if if anyone does wish to speak later on, then you can introduce yourselves at that point. So that brings us on to agenda item three. Um, could the applicant please explain the changes and how they impact on the applicant's case, Mr. Broderick?

00:03:38:09 - 00:04:10:12

That project the applicant? Yes. So there are five, um, changes that are being, um, uh, proposed. I shall go through and explain each one of them. Um, briefly, um, further detail on each of the changes that out in the, uh, change application and consultation report, which is document reference as 063. At change. One is an extension of the order limit to the South road.

00:04:11:06 - 00:04:51:05

Uh, it comprises, um, uh, as I say, land to the south of Taxi Ferry Road for works to construct and operate the underground grid connection cables. Um, the grid connections for this scheme, um, together with two other solar projects, the Gate Burton Energy Park project and the Tilbrook Solar Park are all located and being connected into Cottam Substation, which is on the former Cotton Power Station site. There have been ongoing discussions with EDF Energy and Uniper, who own have a leasehold interest in the former cotton power station site and have apparatus located there.

00:04:51:18 - 00:05:24:13

Um. There are plans for redevelopment of that site following the decommissioning of the power station. Uh, during these discussions, um, in relation to voluntary land agreements and protective provisions with both EDF and Uniper, uh, both parties um indicated a preference for the cables to enter Cottam substation from the south, and therefore the applicant put together, in collaboration with the gate Burton Energy Park until bridge have, uh, relocated the route of the cables so that they can connect from the south.

00:05:24:15 - 00:06:08:26

And the change being proposed here. There was a similar change that was made, um, for the gate Burton Energy Park DCO application, and that was similarly accepted and examined as part of that examination. Change to um is a related change and relates to the extension of the order limits to the East and West Ferry Road, and to land to the north of Torquay Ferry Road, and this is to accommodate access during construction, um, for the majority of the roads and for some part of the road access during operation um, the land to the north of Torquay Ferry Road, which is an access point into EDF land, is only for um access during construction.

00:06:09:14 - 00:06:42:26

Um, the reason an alternative access route is being proposed here is due to, um, concerns raised by EDF that access through the power station site, through the cable route corridor, um, could have an impact on their demolition works and future redevelopment plans, depending on whether the timings

of those two sets of works overlap. Again, this change mirrors, um, change too. In the change application that was similarly submitted and accepted and examined in the gate Burton DCO application.

00:06:44:16 - 00:07:28:12

Um. It should be noted that part of Ferry Road was originally included within the order limits for the scheme. It is an extension to the east and west that's being proposed as part of this change application. And change three is an extension to the order limits along the A1. Five six High Street in Manhattan. Um, and that relates to construction access point reference AC 108. And the review of the construction access points was taken in collaboration with Gate Burton to try and achieve alignment between the construction access points, um, for both um for the shared cable route corridor in this location.

00:07:28:22 - 00:08:25:24

Um, and as part of that exercise, it was identified that a slightly longer visibility splay was required in this location. Um, the extension of the order limits here means that the order limits for the scheme match those of the gate. Burton Energy Park. Um, dco in in this location. Change for is an extension, um and removal of the order limits at Normandy by sto. Um. The examining authority may recall that there were a number of comments raised at the open floor hearing and submitted into the examination by landowners to, uh, who live in dwellings at West Farm and West Farm Cottages, um, expressing some concerns about the proposed route, um, along an existing access track between their properties and a strong preference for the cable route to be relocated to the south of those properties.

00:08:25:26 - 00:09:03:21

Um, the applicant, um, has the ease with those landowners and the agreed a new road route which will run from the crossing of the river trail in a southwesterly direction, um, crossing Normandy Road approximately 100m north of the junction with Coutts Lane, and then rejoining the existing cable route corridor approximately 500m to the West Normandy Road, and this has resulted um in a increased length to the cable route corridor in order to accommodate this, by ultimately 950m is the extension, the extended route.

00:09:03:29 - 00:09:45:28

Um. As part of this change, the original um. The order limits for the original route have been removed. So it's a removal of the original route and then the new relocated route that's proposed as part of this change. And then finally change five is a small extension to the order limits, um, at Stone Pit Lane in Willingham by stove. Um, and this is to facilitate the normal abnormal load access. 13 um discussions with the landowner here are ongoing, have been ongoing, and the landowner has indicated that there is the presence of underground storage tank and apparatus within his field.

00:09:46:00 - 00:10:23:17

However, the exact location of this, um, it's not currently known. Um, and the landowner is not able to provide details. Um, the landowner is concerned that the construction of the abnormal load access, um, could potentially pose a risk to any underground apparatus, and therefore agreement has been reached with the landowner so that a tentative route within his land, same field to the east of Stone Pit Lane, could be used once um surveys have been carried out pre-construction to determine the exact location of the underground apparatus.

00:10:23:19 - 00:10:56:11

So this change is to give flexibility for the access route within that field. Once the exact location, um, of the underground apparatus has been determined at pre-construction. So that's a brief summary of the, um, five changes that have been proposed. Um, and uh, more detailed, uh, information is available, um, on the drawings, uh, the amended works plans and land plans that were submitted as part of the change application.

00:10:56:19 - 00:11:34:25

Um, accompanying the change application was a supporting environmental information report, which is document as 064. Um and that assessed. Each of the changes, um, on a topic by topic basis to determine whether there were any, um, changes to the assessment conclusions that formed part of the environmental statement submitted, uh, with the DCO application and section five of that um supporting environmental information report, uh, sets out the conclusions.

00:11:35:05 - 00:12:13:12

Um, and. States that for all, uh, topic matters, with the exception of Elvia, no new or different significant environmental effects were identified. Um, in respect of landscape and visual impacts, um, new significant effects for transport receptors. 2083 and 2085 um were identified um relating to the temporary removal of sections of hedgerow for the construction access during the construction phase, and at year one of the operational phase that hadn't been identified in the environmental statement.

00:12:13:14 - 00:12:25:29

However, those hedgerows will be replaced and um, over time, those significant effects will reduce. Please let me know if it would be helpful to provide any further information changes.

00:12:27:08 - 00:12:47:07

Thank you, Mr. Porter. Yes, that was very useful and a good summary of the applicant's position in respect of the changes. I think you'll be aware that Mr. Henley and I have already issued a number of questions on those changes, and so I don't have any additional questions on what you've said today. Uh, Darren, do you have anything that you'd like to pick up on?

00:12:47:23 - 00:12:49:27

Um, no, not in terms of the change request. No.

00:12:50:08 - 00:13:13:04

No. Okay. Thank you very much. Well, in that case, that brings us on to agenda item for additional effective persons and interested parties. Now, we haven't received any requests to speak on this item, but if there is anyone present who does wish to raise anything under this agenda item, now is the time to do so. So is there anyone who would like to raise any issues under item number four?

00:13:19:02 - 00:13:35:12

Nope. Okay, well, in that case, I think we can dispense with item five, which was responses to item four and move directly onto item six. Any other matters? Is there any other business which any party president wishes to raise within the scope of these hearings?

00:13:39:22 - 00:13:41:03

Miss Broderick, do you have anything?

00:13:44:11 - 00:14:18:20

A project for the applicant. No, I appreciate, um, you won't have yet to have the opportunity to review the deadline. Five submissions made by the applicant. Um, including the sort of responses to the questions that you raised in relation to the change application. Um, we've also provided, just as a general update, um, a. An update on the status of. As part of the deadline, five submissions, an update on the status of negotiations with landowners and statutory undertakers was provided.

00:14:19:01 - 00:14:50:07

Um, there are we are expecting potentially some further updates, um, on statutory undertakers and also the section 135 um consent prior to the close of the examination next Tuesday. Um, so it was just a to mention that we're hopeful we might be able to have the the section 135 consent, um, by the close

of the examination. Um, a number of signed statements of common ground also submitted as part of the deadline five submission.

00:14:50:21 - 00:15:18:28

Um, with the exception of the um, uh, statement of case with Lincolnshire County Council, however, that is, um, very far progressed. Um, and it was just being, as I understand it, reviewed by Neil MacBride at Lincolnshire County Council this morning with the hope that it can be signed and hopefully submitted in advance of the close of the examination. But that's just a brief update for you, conscious that you didn't haven't yet seen what was submitted yesterday.

00:15:19:15 - 00:15:35:22

Thank you, Miss Broderick. Thank you. I think Mr. Henley and I have looked over some of that material, and we had picked up on the Lancashire County Council draft statement of Common Ground, and that you had intended for it to be submitted before the close of the examination. So thank you for the update. Darren, do you have anything you'd like to raise under this item?

00:15:36:29 - 00:15:38:15

Um, no, I don't know.

00:15:39:15 - 00:15:54:03

Okay. Well, in that case, is there if there's no one, no one else, I think that covers everything on the agenda. Quite a short set of hearings. Um, Miss Broderick, if you could perhaps provide us with, um, posture and submissions at deadline six as we got in the, um.

00:15:55:25 - 00:16:22:24

An examination timetable. Presumably they'll be rather short, like the Turin. Um. Just as a reminder, we are due to close next week. Um, we will be expecting summary statements from parties regarding any matters that they've previously raised during the examination, but which have not been resolved to the satisfaction prior to the close, as well as comments on deadline five. Um, it's now 10:15 and unless there's anything else. Decisions are now closed. Thank you all very much.