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Hearing Transcript

Project:	Mona Offshore Wind Farm
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) – Part 7
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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:04:25 - 00:00:18:09

Okay. Good afternoon. Now I'm down and welcome back. The time is now 1:30 and time for this hearing to resume. And I'm now going to deal with good design, which is item nine on the agenda.

00:00:19:28 - 00:00:56:09

And we've had one request from Mr. Hussey to speak on this item. But anybody else who does also wish to speak, please also indicate when you wish to speak Again, the questions for this agenda item will mostly be for the applicant. So I'm going to ask you to expand on what you've described in your landscape assessment, your design principles documents and the outline landscape and ecology management plans, with some questions related to how good design principles have and will influence the layout and final design choices for the onshore substation and mitigations.

00:00:57:15 - 00:01:14:04

So to start, I would like to consider to consider the onshore substation site. And so could I ask the applicant please to describe how the site for the substation was selected with regard to good design principles and to avoid visual effects?

00:01:26:15 - 00:02:04:21

At Fillory, Williamson, on behalf of the applicant and lead for the onshore substation site selection process. Um, so the identification of the onshore substation site, uh, started with the national grid identification of the bottle with bottle within National Grid substation as a point of interconnection through the holistic network design process, and from there, excuse me. From there we identified an initial um, five kilometre radius within which we would look to site an onshore substation.

00:02:04:23 - 00:02:47:05

So that represented the potential length of 400 kV cable to connect from the onshore substation to the National Grid substation. Um, we identified guiding principles for the substation site selection as per the site selection and consideration of alternatives as 016, uh, of an economic and efficient grid connection, which basically means as close as possible to the national grid connection point. Following the Horlock rules adopted by National Grid electricity transmission in 2003, to avoid key sensitive features where possible and where not, ensure mitigation of those impacts, minimise the disruption to populated areas and accommodate the range of technology solutions sought within the design envelope.

00:02:48:24 - 00:03:21:09

So within that five kilometre search area, we identified a long list of options. We identified 17 options for consideration. Those 17 options were assessed under an initial engineering feasibility assessment, and then ten options were taken forward for a medium list for consultation with our statutory consultees. Seven options were taken forward from that to form the shortlist, and that short list form the basis of targeted consultation in autumn 2022.

00:03:22:16 - 00:03:48:08

Following that consultation and the feedback received, we identified our two options that were taken forward for the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and were consulted on as part of our statutory consultation in spring summer 2023 and following that, statutory consultation and further technical assessment work. The the onshore substation site was selected as the option to which is the onshore substation site that is included within the application.

00:03:51:28 - 00:04:12:03

Okay. Thank you. And um, within the dimensions there, the whole lock rules and then the search area that looked at, um, yeah, it's part of obviously then refining through the options, they can get into the final option, which you've considered, um, elements such as, you know, kind of the natural screening around the substation, um, you know, the landfall, many natural obstacles.

00:04:18:17 - 00:05:02:25

Um, Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicant. Um, so though the, uh, the siting principle for to avoid key sensitive features and minimizing disruption as much as possible is reflected in the parameters that are identified within the black red amber green assessment, and that considers a variety of of that has a variety of considerations, one of which is natural or existing landscape features within which to seek to minimize potential landscape impacts. Um, alongside that we have we applied uh, buffers to existing uh, residential or buildings, I should say urban development, um, to conflate to noise and visual impacts as well.

00:05:03:06 - 00:05:03:21

Um,

00:05:05:06 - 00:05:12:17

sorry. Just going back to your original question, I think the answer is yes. We did, um, within our siting principles.

00:05:13:14 - 00:05:32:09

Okay. Thank you. Um, and then following on from this, um, how did this then inform or how did you decide on the the outline layout or general arrangements, if you like, for the site? So I'm thinking, you know, for example, the orientation of that platform was that itself, um, you know, kind of a product of this process.

00:05:34:13 - 00:06:09:13

Phil Williamson for the applicant. Um, yes. It was, uh, so the initial site for the option two has moved from the initial location that was identified at the very outset of of the onshore substation site selection process. It was refined for um at pier um sorry preliminary environmental information report and

refined again at application which included the reduction of the onshore substation footprint, site size from the EIS footprint down to a GIS footprint.

00:06:11:00 - 00:06:17:18

Um, and therefore because of that, an orientation and layout adjustment, um, associated with that with that change.

00:06:18:05 - 00:06:18:20

Thank you.

00:06:29:17 - 00:06:30:05

So. Yeah.

00:06:32:11 - 00:07:00:18

Uh, Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicant, just to to add that on, some of my colleagues have reminded me. Um, part of the reason for the orientation of the onshore substation footprint is so that it currently aligns with the national grid overhead lines. Um, there is an appropriate stand off. Uh, but it is aligned to push up as close as possible to that. Um, and also to work with the existing topography, to work with the slope so that we can cut into the slope, which provides an additional screening effect as much as possible.

00:07:01:24 - 00:07:02:26

Thank you. Claire. Thank you.

00:07:06:12 - 00:07:36:00

Um, so the next question is, again, it's about the layouts. Um, so this is described, um, both in the US and obviously secured in the DCO. Um, a total surface area of 65,000 meter squared, which I think you just mentioned too. Um, and so am I right to think that this obviously, this description of this parameter is to allow for flexibility in this overall general arrangement of layout. And could you perhaps explain why you might need such flexibility if that's the case?

00:07:46:25 - 00:08:07:09

So for the onshore substation, sorry, Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicant for the onshore substation site, it is to offer the maximum flexibility for the electrical components. Um, and yeah, as I say, as we've said previously, the detailed design has not been undertaken. Only preliminary engineering and electrical layouts have been provided.

00:08:09:19 - 00:08:10:04

Thank you.

00:08:10:27 - 00:08:44:21

Paul Carter, on behalf of the applicant. I might add that that the worst case that we've assessed, which is the use of the full 65,000m², is a realistic worst case in that all of that space could be built depending on what the final electrical layout of the substation is. So when we talk about flexibility, we're talking about flexibility in the way that the layout within that 65,000 square meter area might be

placed. There isn't flexibility about where it would be placed within this, sorry, where the fence line would be placed within the work area 2280 that we've described.

00:08:46:03 - 00:09:25:29

Thank you. Unless done on behalf of the applicant, I'll just add one more thing in. You may have noticed that, um, if you've, uh, looked at other offshore wind, uh, development consent orders and, and substation arrangements at, the applicant isn't seeking flexibility as to whether to install er, insulated switchgear or gas insulated switchgear. So if er insulated switchgear is used and that was one of the options uh, at statutory consultation and as part of the preliminary environmental report that has a bigger substation footprint, because, um, elements of the of the infrastructure are outside rather than inside.

00:09:26:01 - 00:09:44:19

So you have you tend to have a bigger footprint. Um, for in order to reduce impacts, the applicant has committed to gas insulated switchgear, which means more of the equipment is inside a building which reduces the footprint. Um, the The overall footprint of the of the substation.

00:09:45:15 - 00:10:00:24

Thank you. So if I understand, then you're essentially saying that through that process that we've been through, through site selection and then the choice of gas insulated switchgear, then the onshore footprint, the footprint of the substation is if we just start to as much as it's possible.

00:10:01:24 - 00:10:25:17

Phil Williamson on behalf of the applicant. Yes. So we reduce the size of the onshore substation footprint by committing to gas insulated switchgear in response to section 42 consultation responses. Okay. Thank you. The local authority's requesting that the the size of the infrastructure was reduced as much as possible, and the project made a commitment to do that by committing to gas insulated switchgear.

00:10:26:11 - 00:10:47:11

Thank you. And are you able to provide, um, kind of a notional idea of that 65,000 meter squared? Um, you know, obviously on the the plans you've shown in the diagrams, the sort of sort of rectangular shape, um, is the footprint, you know, were you able to provide any outline dimensions or, you know, sort of length, width.

00:11:01:23 - 00:11:07:17

Valerie Williamson, on behalf of the applicant. Can I just clarify what dimensions you are referring to?

00:11:07:26 - 00:11:16:00

So for example, an outline general arrangement. So something like um, you know, you have the length of the, the footprint itself.

00:11:16:22 - 00:11:53:18

And Phil Williamson on on behalf of the of the applicant. So within the indicative layouts that you see, um, that is the 65,000m² and uh, which is reflected in the design principles document, the

65,000m² is also, uh, represented by work number 22, a, um, we have demonstrated an indicative layout for visual and noise purposes. There are I mean, it's obvious on the on the figure that there are open spaces within that, but those are for roads, parking as required.

00:11:53:20 - 00:11:59:15

And we have not illustrated those because this is an illustrative document for the purposes of landscape and noise.

00:12:00:09 - 00:12:11:24

Okay. And that's 65,000m, um, square meters. So would you be able to say if that's something like, you know, 65 times. Yeah, 1000 or is it. Don't you see what I mean?

00:12:14:24 - 00:12:30:11

Paul Carter, on behalf of the applicant, we're aware we need to update the, um, indicative layout within the Design Principles document with annotations so we can put dimensions on there of the, um, length and width of the substation platform as well.

00:12:30:13 - 00:12:33:26

Okay. that's very helpful. Thank you. I'll take that as an action to do that, please. Thank you.

00:12:42:13 - 00:12:53:11

Okay. And then concerning good design again. Could I ask how you have incorporated good design principles into the onshore substation building design and layout as well. as.

00:12:59:08 - 00:13:30:01

Lasdun. On behalf of the applicant, that that's the next stage of the process and why the applicant has, um, has, uh, submitted the outline or the design principles document setting out how that process will be undertaken. Um, and uh, that links into requirement five of the um of the Draft Development Consent Order, which requires details of the substation itself to be approved by the relevant planning authority.

00:13:30:03 - 00:14:04:13

That will be Denbighshire County Council. And that will determine things like the layout, scale, finished ground levels, hard surfacing dimensions, colour and materials used for building security, fencing, access and services. Um, uh, and that those, um, are the, the requirement is that those must be substantially in accordance with the design principles documents, so that those elements of detailed design are secured as, as the next stage of the process in accordance with those principles that are set out.

00:14:05:18 - 00:14:06:06

Okay. Thank you.

00:14:06:08 - 00:14:49:26

Paul carts from the captain. I had obviously, a level of design has gone into determining the size of buildings and the number of buildings required that are represented within the indicative layout, and that design is based on the technical requirements that we need in order to deliver the project. So

based on the number of circuits we have, based on the electrical equipment that's required, based on talking to the supply chain about what the technology would look like in the infrastructure requirements. So there's been a level of functional design that's gone into determining the layout that you can see such that the envelope that we've included there allows us to deliver a functioning project that conforms with all of the required standards that we have to do in order to, to build an onshore substation.

00:14:50:21 - 00:14:51:06

Thank you.

00:14:51:15 - 00:15:14:11

I could just ask a quick question, and we're going to come on to the design principles documents in a moment. Um, you talk about requirement five, obviously a lot there for the the local planning authority to, um, determine at a later date. To this point, have you had much input or feedback from the local authority on any of the design matters?

00:15:15:26 - 00:15:51:09

Uh, Paul Carter, on behalf of the applicant, we have engaged with the local authority at all opportunities. Um, they've been present at a number of expert, uh, working groups through our, um, pre-application process. Um, and in a lot of areas have provided very good technical input and engagement. Um, that includes ecology. And obviously ecology has been relevant to some aspects of good design that we're going to talk about in terms of the ownership. Um, they don't have a landscape officer and haven't been able to provide feedback in that area despite us presenting to them at every opportunity.

00:15:51:11 - 00:15:57:25

So and there has been a limitation to what they've fed back in terms of design and in terms of, um, landscape.

00:16:00:00 - 00:16:03:02

They don't have a landscape officer does that.

00:16:04:18 - 00:16:10:07

Does that mean they're going to have issues in discharging requirements relating to design and landscaping.

00:16:10:16 - 00:16:43:26

For Carter on behalf of the applicant? We're talking with the local authority about support for them and have done for a number of years. Um, we've tried to put something in place and struggled. We are now getting some traction with that. And, um, if Mr. Thomas from Conway was here, hopefully he'd agree that we're moving forward, both local authorities, about putting some support in place, um, for the short term, but also for the long term. And, um, uh, that would mean that we would have the or the local authorities would have the required resources to be able to competent and needless to charge the.

00:16:45:14 - 00:16:46:29

Uh, Miss Cressy.

00:16:51:23 - 00:17:13:28

On that issue from Welsh Government. Um, in terms of the substation, uh, I couldn't find whether the various options, whether there's any information on the emissions attached to the various options in terms of its effect on climate change.

00:17:18:04 - 00:17:43:00

I think there was a mention earlier about, um, that the smallest version meant that you were using a certain technology. So I was wondering whether there's been any, um, consideration on the various options in terms of climate change, but this might be picked up under the good design later on, and I'm happy to wait for an answer.

00:17:44:07 - 00:17:55:16

So just so I understand this question, are you asking the question? Um, that it does the gas insulated design have a greater impact on climate? Yes.

00:17:56:12 - 00:17:59:19

Or any of the design options they've been considering? Okay.

00:18:03:07 - 00:18:35:17

Cool. On behalf of the applicant. Um, so we've got a, um, the document number eludes me, an SF six statement within the application that talks about the optionality for technology to deliver the gas insulated design. Um, clearly, we haven't made a decision on the precise technology that will be used within the substation. That will be part of the detailed design. So there is the opportunity, um, to understand the supply chain and understand what commitments we can make, um, as we move towards the detailed design.

00:18:35:19 - 00:18:38:28

And that is app 080. Thank you.

00:18:42:26 - 00:18:43:17

Okay. Thank you.

00:18:45:17 - 00:19:14:23

I'm just coming back to then where you discussed earlier about, um, the, uh, final layouts and buildings being influenced by the technology, obviously. Um, so required. Have you then considered as part of that as well for their buildings and layout? Um, certain guiding design principles, such as the clustering or spacing of buildings, um, and how they might sort of integrate into the landscape is that, is that sort of design being undertaken yet, or is that, as you have said, perhaps set out to be set out further?

00:19:20:05 - 00:19:46:23

I'm Jess Furlong on behalf of the applicant. One of the principles in the Design Principles document is the layout, and one of the principles within that is that aim setting will be considered to minimise impacts such as landscape. So potentially, as we were discussing earlier at the moment on the layouts,

the buildings are in the most prominent place and it could be looked at. We'd try, if it's feasible, from electronic point of view, move them to a better place where they'd be better screened.

00:19:47:27 - 00:19:53:02

So then one of the principles then would be essentially screening. That's coming through. Okay. Thank you.

00:20:00:27 - 00:20:21:09

And then within the design principles documents, um, I think it's paragraph 3.5.2.1. So the state that there will be one larger, multiple smaller buildings in the substation substation. So again, this, this um flexibility such as that required then because of technology requirements or.

00:20:30:06 - 00:20:56:15

Forecasts for on behalf of the applicant. That's correct. It needs to be determined through the detailed design. Clearly, there are a number of different suppliers who can design and supply equipment in different ways, and we would need to be able to have the flexibility to go to the market to look at those different options, and that would determine the actual final dimensions and number of buildings. Hence the comment there about how it could be delivered through one larger one or multiple smaller.

00:20:56:26 - 00:21:04:20

I mean, are you are you able to say at this stage, if either one of those is likely, that typically one larger building or multiple buildings? Um.

00:21:06:12 - 00:21:09:09

I don't think we are able to say that stage. Thank you.

00:21:18:03 - 00:21:32:24

So then not this touched very briefly back to back to the landscape assessment. And those visualizations, I think they show you about four buildings which are represented. And again with the notional layout in the Design Principles document. Um,

00:21:34:15 - 00:21:45:29

so I'm guessing I'm asking in this case then, you know, we can assume then that would be a worst case scenario. And obviously something like four buildings would sort of be at the upper end of how many buildings you may see on the substation.

00:21:50:24 - 00:21:54:12

The layouts assessed are the worst case. So yes. Thank you.

00:22:04:25 - 00:22:06:23

Mr. Hussey. Thank you. Yeah, sorry.

00:22:06:25 - 00:22:25:14

I was intending to try and keep quiet, but I just wanted clarification. If I can, please, Mr. Carter. Uh, you mentioned on several occasions and your colleagues that the buildings are in the most prominent

place. You've taken the worst case scenario. Can I ask when you say the most prominent place, the most prominent place for who?

00:22:30:19 - 00:22:39:19

Three plays done on behalf of the applicant. We're not normally directly asked questions. Um. It is. Would you like us to answer that question?

00:22:39:21 - 00:22:40:29

I'm happy for you to answer that.

00:22:41:08 - 00:22:41:28

Thank you.

00:23:08:15 - 00:23:36:09

Pronounced the coroner demo for the applicant. We have used the layout that is the most prominent in the sense that it is furthest north, so away from, um, the actual ridgeline or the ridge of, uh, Kevin Murdoch. And, um, we have so it is the most prominent from all the viewpoints and also into the landscape.

00:23:41:12 - 00:23:55:12

Just before we resume, Mr. Hosie, please don't feel that you. You can't speak at the hearing. The hearing is for everybody. It is not just for between us and the applicant. The purpose of these teams is for everybody to have a say. So, you know, if you do wish.

00:23:55:14 - 00:24:01:28

It's probably cognizant of that. It's just that I have so many issues. I don't want to clog this meeting up, okay. It needs to get through. Thank you.

00:24:05:21 - 00:24:30:29

Okay. So my next question, um, I'm not going to is about um, there's a number of other buildings which have been described in the design parameters, and it does explain that these could possibly take the form of containers. But I've just wondered if you're able to, to describe these containers and perhaps in more detail. So, you know, perhaps they sort of. Yeah, I think it may be shipping containers, but would they be, you know, the type of form or colour?

00:24:46:07 - 00:25:10:03

Placed on on behalf of the applicant. Um, I suggest when we annotate the the diagram, we demonstrate where, where those things are. I suspect the references to structures over bits of equipment and and matters like that. We've we've provided the indicative layout. If we annotate that layout to demonstrate what the various elements would be, it should provide some more clarity in respect of that.

00:25:10:12 - 00:25:11:27

Yes. Yeah, that'd be helpful. Thank you.

00:25:14:08 - 00:25:38:18

Um, so I'd now like to consider the facade treatment of the substation. Um, and in your design Principles document stated that the facade treatment for the substation will mainly be for suppression and suppression combined with integration and destruction, and this is to mitigate the visual impact. Um, I wonder if you could describe perhaps this in more detail and how these will work together for the substation.

00:25:50:04 - 00:26:25:24

Corona demo for the applicant. Yes, we can use color in a number of ways. Um, and we propose to do facade options report on this. But you can use color, um, as you say, suppression. So more sort of camouflage, muted colors. Um, we can use it for, um, integration. And that is what we really sort of the way that we'll use it is, is integration into colors and materials already in the surrounding area and suppression to, to, to keep it sort of muted.

00:26:26:07 - 00:26:57:17

Um, we we don't, but you can, um, use, uh, distraction sort of color targets, or you can use creative expression. Color is used as a design element. Um, we, um, if you haven't already visited, uh, willpower, which is, um, Sylvia Krauss. Um, uh, I say masterpiece, but she had an influence on it. You will see that the color there is used to break up the structures. So the different structures are used in different colors as well. So that actually slightly different colors.

00:26:57:19 - 00:27:17:18

So that breaks up the sort of the whole bulk of the uh, the power station. So, um, do you know that that that's what we're looking at at the moment. So there might be slightly different muted colors so that you're not seeing one big, you know, gray block, which is what we've modeled and assessed obviously as a worst case.

00:27:20:01 - 00:27:42:08

I think in your design principles document, you talk about, uh, reference to guidance, uh, by the Welsh Government, which includes environmental colour assessment, is the commitment to undertake an environmental colour assessment as part of these works. And, um, is that not something that could have been done at this stage, even even before detailed design, to at least give an idea of colours? colors.

00:27:44:20 - 00:28:02:10

Green. A demo for the applicant? Yes, that's part of the design. Um, facade options that we will do and we will go through. So not at this present moment. We couldn't do it because we don't know, um, who's going to be supplying it or. But but that is something that will commit to.

00:28:03:21 - 00:28:20:21

I think I understand environmental color assessment assesses the surrounding colors. and it looks at sort of existing vegetation of the buildings that that type of type of thing, so that there wouldn't be anything preventing something like that being done at this stage, even before detailed design, to provide a list of colors, perhaps.

00:28:21:13 - 00:28:49:14

On behalf of the applicant. Clearly the the final nature of that color as mitigation will be based on the final layout and final design, um, size of the buildings, the optionality to use different colors on those different buildings, and the placement of those buildings, and the context of those buildings where they are in the layout and where they are in relative to the planting mitigation. So it has the potential to change. So you couldn't really commit to that now. Okay. Thank you.

00:28:55:08 - 00:29:08:10

Yeah. Yeah. It would be a Would we be able to see any potential color palettes? Um, in in a sense, you know, notional colors that you may use or some of them which may be perhaps even standardized across this type of infrastructure.

00:29:10:05 - 00:29:16:03

Caucasian. Half of the applicant. Yes. We could submit something on an indicative basis in terms of possible color palettes.

00:29:16:05 - 00:29:17:16

Yes, please. Yeah. Thank you, thank you.

00:29:29:03 - 00:30:02:01

So I'm now going to ask some questions about the role of the good design champion, which you've outlined in your design principles documents and also the design guide, which can then be used to inform the final detailed design for approval board Denbighshire County Council. So in your Design Principles document and you describe the role of the design champion. But I'd just like to know a little bit more about how this role will be undertaken. So could you explain what skills and experience the design champion will bring to the role, please?

00:30:05:23 - 00:30:38:11

Uh, Paul Carter, on behalf of the applicant and um, the design champion, uh, is the project director, currently the project director for our project, and has been, uh, the project director. Uh, sorry, has been on the project for a number of years. Prior to being project director, was the technical lead for the for the project. Um, the the role, um, is not one that will be undertaken in the future. It's one that has been undertaken in the past, is now and will be in the future. So designers sort of been central to the development of the of the project.

00:30:38:27 - 00:31:10:00

Um, the project director has um, an overview of the technical team as well as the consents team, and therefore it's able to bring forward, um, multidisciplinary meetings and discussions so that there's an interface between the evolving design and mitigation from a consensus point of view in terms of site selection, in terms of evolving mitigation and the technical design from the technical teams, so that the two can talk together and aren't developed in complete isolation. And that's been an important part of that role and something that they will continue to do.

00:31:10:02 - 00:31:29:06

So clearly as our outline plans develop, as we're talking to our key stakeholders, as we're discharging conditions that will be reflected back into the technical design process so that the two worked

together. And we've got a deliverable project, but also one that we know we can mitigate through the final plans that we're putting forward for discharge.

00:31:30:11 - 00:31:51:03

Okay. Thank you. And you said that the design champion has a I think it's an overview between the technical team and the consents team. And I just wonder there is that mean, you know, the design champion have, you know essentially authority over what's produced in that respect from those teams? Or is the role perhaps slightly more sort of a guidance or guidance role in it?

00:31:51:19 - 00:31:57:27

In in the design champion's role as the project director, they obviously have authority over those ultimate decisions.

00:31:59:11 - 00:32:36:16

I think my understanding of m one, that sort of, um, encourages having a design champion on board is the idea behind that is that you have someone who has experience in good design, someone who's going to bring that to the table, not just someone who brings together people or a coordinator ensuring that everybody's, you know, on the same page. Um, I think the whole purpose of Ian was encouraging sort of design champions and design panels is that you? You have somebody there with the relevant skills and experience in good design to ensure that good design is incorporated throughout.

00:32:38:01 - 00:33:07:07

Pool carts on behalf of the applicant. No, we appreciate that. And as I outlined earlier, um, prior to being project director, the design champion was the technical director. So has a long period of experience and expertise in technical design, which is a key part of the design of an offshore wind onshore substation, where functionality and adherence to technical standards is a key part of the design process.

00:33:18:14 - 00:33:25:25

Will there be any, um, accountability authority over the final design details that are submitted, um, to Denbighshire?

00:33:32:03 - 00:33:33:05

Sorry, could you just.

00:33:35:12 - 00:33:36:29

Sorry. Could you just repeat the question?

00:33:37:07 - 00:33:46:26

I'm just trying to get clear in my head the sort of level of authority if you search for accountability for final design details, which may go to. you for approval.

00:33:48:08 - 00:33:56:15

Broadcast on behalf of the applicant. He would be fully involved in the process of signing off a design that would be put forward for discharge. Okay.

00:33:56:17 - 00:33:57:02

Thank you.

00:34:13:13 - 00:34:18:09

I will be, um, design champion form part of an overall panel.

00:34:29:23 - 00:34:57:14

I am Jess Furlong, on behalf of the applicant. Um, it's our view that we wouldn't have a formal design panel because quite a lot of design work has happened pre, um, application. So we've engaged with the Design Commission for Wales for independent advice already as part of the design review. And as we've stated in the design principles, we intend to engage with the Design Commission for Wales again and Denbighshire County Council. Um, and obviously we'll have our design champion with that overarching role.

00:34:59:21 - 00:35:06:19

If I could just, just come in there. Just how does that accord with policy E-m1, which does state that you should have a design champion and the design panel.

00:35:10:16 - 00:35:48:04

Is done on behalf of the applicant. Um, the design champion is, is, is obviously there and is being proposed. Um, and there is a process through which the design will be considered by various parties. I think it's important. And the national policy statements do note that in respect of electricity infrastructure such as substations, there is actually quite limited, um, design that can be done around the functionality. They recognise that the functionality and safety and operation of those substations is is primary importance.

00:35:48:18 - 00:36:21:27

Um, what we're what what's being looked at here? Having made the commitment to gas insulated switchgear, um, is likely to be the the points that that we've already discussed around the sighting of those buildings, but they will be primarily driven by a technical on or technical basis. Those buildings have to be in the places, um, they need to be in order for the substation to function. Um, and so, um, what what generally will, will end up being things that are being considered will be the finish of those buildings.

00:36:22:06 - 00:37:03:17

Um, um, and, and potentially something around the arrangement of them. But, but with functionality and operation being the driving, the driving, um, issue there. So, um, I appreciate, um, the, um, the wording in the national policy statements and that the applicant team are very aware of that. But I think it's also really important that expectations are managed around what actually can be done around good design. The the policy around good design in particularly in one is around all electricity infrastructure and, and projects and uh, onshore substations are a part of that.

00:37:03:19 - 00:37:48:01

But that's also in relation to, to other elements and other types of, um, other types of electricity infrastructure. And this the substation is a part of that. But as I say, the functionality, the operation of that substation will have to be the principal driving factors in how that is designed. So. So potentially

what's being looked at is, as I say, the finishes of some of those buildings. And I think the applicant has made clear that those elements around the finishes, the colour palette, um, whether they're recessive or whether they, um, how they, how they are used are things that are already embedded in the design principles document.

00:37:48:22 - 00:38:21:03

Is that and I take what you're saying functionality is of primary importance. But I do think, um, you know, the recent publication of Ehrmann has put even more emphasis on good design. Um, I think in the past, perhaps it has not been seen as, um, as important in national infrastructure projects as now. And we're very keen to ensure that it does form part of these of these projects. We talk about the design panel. We talk about the fact that it's a substation. I will add more. For example, does have did propose a design panel.

00:38:21:05 - 00:38:27:19

So what what is the difference between our Wilmore and this project is they're both substations.

00:38:33:15 - 00:38:57:25

Paul Pull carts. On behalf of the applicant. We can go back and and revisit what was, um, secured through the animal development consent order. My memory is that design panel is internal, not external. Um, and whilst it's not explicit in our design Principles document, we will clearly have an internal design panel. So we can look at whether we can put that into an update to the document.

00:38:57:27 - 00:39:11:10

Yeah, certainly. And just just to follow up on some of these edits, your intention to involve the Design Commission for Wales is actually an intention to. And doing so a very different things. Will you be involving them.

00:39:12:20 - 00:39:23:18

Forecast on behalf of the applicant. We will make every effort to engage them. Clearly they're an organisation that would have to respond to us. So we will we will be engaging in whether we.

00:39:23:28 - 00:39:30:15

Get mentioned by intention. You're going to try. You can't promise that they'll respond, but you will make the effort to engage. Yes.

00:39:40:21 - 00:39:41:06

Okay.

00:39:41:08 - 00:40:03:25

And now I'm just going to ask a few questions just related to this about the project design guide. You've also mentioned. Um, so I would just like to understand a little bit more about this. Again. So will this design guide be embedded for example, into inputs material that's used for detailed design. Um, or will it be something that sort of, you know, perhaps a bit more satellite to that?

00:40:17:28 - 00:40:36:00

Jasper long on behalf of the applicant. So the design guide would be completed post consent to take the principles and the Design Principles document and explain the approach we're going to take to each principle, which would then be used as part of detailed design to make sure those principles are carried through into the detailed design stage.

00:40:40:15 - 00:40:44:10

So would it form, you know, set of, you know, input data as such then? Yeah.

00:40:44:23 - 00:40:47:20

So is that the in-between step? Yes. Okay. Thank you.

00:40:51:24 - 00:41:19:15

Please, Don, on behalf of the applicant, it's worth noting, um, that paragraph 4.1.1.2 of the Design Principles document, um, talks about engagement with Denbighshire County Council and Design Commission for Wales on the emerging design there. So it is it is sort of set out and committed to within the design Principles document and would therefore be taken that input would be taken into the drawing up of the design guide that then informs the final design.

00:41:19:27 - 00:41:32:12

Thank you. That answers the question I had there. Yes. Thank you. Um, and are you able to provide any sort of notional contents or material for the design guide. So, so we can see perhaps what that may or may not look like even in principle.

00:41:43:01 - 00:42:01:25

Forecasts for on behalf of the applicant. It will essentially be formed from the principles set out in the Design Principles documents, so it would, at this stage, with no detail, to go against those principles. Because we haven't done the evolving design, it would just be a repetition of the principles that we'd be looking to accord to with the evolving design.

00:42:05:24 - 00:42:38:06

Just I've got my understanding right. I'm just looking at requirement five of the the draft DCO. Um, I think a lot of the design principles documents relate to requirement five. And you. So my understanding is you've got the Design Principles document, which is in essence an outline design guide. Is that what you're trying to say? Yep. And then um, in requirement five, uh, we have um, that the details submitted under paragraph one have to be substantially in accordance with the design Principles document.

00:42:38:08 - 00:42:47:19

Should that actually be the design guide, rather that it should it be the design guide, which should be substantially in accordance with the design principles document lays.

00:42:47:21 - 00:42:51:22

Down on behalf of the applicant? I suspect you're right, but we'll take that one away and confirm.

00:43:10:13 - 00:43:23:14

Okay. Um, well, thank you for your contributions. And I've asked most of my questions now. Oh, yes. And that was the moment that I was going to bring in, um, anybody else who wish to speak or comment on what they've said. So, um. Is it, um.

00:43:25:12 - 00:43:55:18

Martin Barlow community council? Um, just a couple of questions to the applicant, if I may. Um, questions that residents tend to ask councillors like myself from the community council. Um, and the context is that with this current, uh, substation and all the more and the three existing substations, we have five substations in a five square mile area with two more to come.

00:43:55:20 - 00:44:37:22

That's the national grid extension and the Maras, which as we know, is not at this stage to discuss, really, but referring back to the five kilometer, three mile distance from the National Grid substation that was, uh, at the start of this discussion. Uh, one of the questions is, you know, what's the determinant of that five kilometer, three mile perimeter? Um, it's been said that it's costs that it's to do with the fact that if the applicant goes over, uh, five kilometers, that, um, national grid themselves become liable for costs and are resistant to that situation.

00:44:38:16 - 00:45:24:25

Um, and the second question is related. Really? Um, it's that all the five substations on the new ones to come are all within Denbighshire County Council now, the five kilometre range, because of the location of the National Grid substation, takes goes well and beyond the Denbighshire boundary into the Conway County Borough Council boundary. Um, and I suppose the question that comes from that is, is there any particular reason why all these substations are all within Denbighshire County Council when they could feasibly be in Conway, even within the five kilometre rule.

00:45:25:02 - 00:45:36:20

Is it to do with, I don't know, um, administrative issues, that sort of thing? Um, and just as a sort of comments that mention was made of the

00:45:38:07 - 00:46:05:18

um, staff situation, Denbighshire County Council's planning department, this is a great concern to, uh, residents of Cavan and I'm sure residents of Denbighshire as a whole. But the planning department does seem to be well, is extremely short staffed at the moment, having lost several specialist planning officers who would normally be dealing with applications like this. That's just the point. I'm just wanted to go on record. Really?

00:46:06:14 - 00:46:06:29

Thank you.

00:46:07:02 - 00:46:08:27

Would the applicant like to respond to this? Please.

00:46:20:06 - 00:46:50:08

Fillory. Williamson, on behalf of the applicant. Um, with respect to the five kilometres and the definition of the five kilometres, we do have an explanation within the site. Selection and

consideration of alternatives chapter and section 4.9.6, which identifies that initial onshore substation area of search. I mentioned when I was talking about the site selection, that we use the Horlock rules as a guiding principle for the selection of the onshore substation, and the Horlock Rules do say that the consideration must be given to environmental issues.

00:46:50:18 - 00:47:20:25

So I should cut. It's a very long quote. Apologies. Consideration. An early point of the study should be given to place in the electrical infrastructure as close as possible to the existing national grid connection point, if feasible, in order to minimize the landscape and visual effects associated with introducing new electricity infrastructure to the environment. As a direct quote from the Horlock rules. Um, initially we set a three kilometer buffer, um, and then extended that out to five kilometers, uh, so that we encompassed a wider range of potential options for onshore substations.

00:47:20:27 - 00:47:41:06

And this ties in with your point about Denbighshire and Conway. That five kilometre buffer did take us into Conway, and I believe that there were at least one. I apologize, this is off the top of my head, but at least one option was very close to the boundary of Conway. But that's primarily driven by the proximity to the national grid border with an substation.

00:47:52:24 - 00:48:26:10

Because from behalf of the applicant, it's also worth noting that as well as the Horlock rules, which Mr. Williamson outlined there in terms of determinant of proximity to the substation, there are technical reasons why proximity is preferable in terms of additional equipment that might be required, and reactive compensation and other things which both adds requirement for equipment and therefore space, but also adds cost. And cost is a relevant factor in terms of being an economic and an efficient operator or designer of a transmission system, which is part of our obligation under Ofgem requirements.

00:48:28:12 - 00:48:32:00

Thank you. Do you have anything to add to that, sir? Let's come back. Thank you.

00:48:32:11 - 00:49:09:03

I would just like to come in and say, um, I appreciate your concerns about the the local authorities ability to participate. It's something that we share as an examining authority, uh, as well, I think as we we've seen this week, uh, we only had, uh, Mr. Thomas here who was only really here to observe, um, having the local authorities participate in the examination is extremely important for us as well. But we do appreciate that they obviously have resourcing issues. You obviously talking about, um, landscaping and I'm, I'm guessing that you're you're looking at some sort of PPA with the local authorities.

00:49:09:05 - 00:49:10:10

Is that is that correct?

00:49:10:23 - 00:49:41:20

Cool. Customer. On behalf of the applicant, we we've been approaching the local authority to get a PPA in place for quite some time and haven't had traction with that for a number of reasons. I mean,

partly because of a lack of resource to even be able to look at it and consider a PPA in the first instance. Um, so in the short term, we've agreed, um, support, which will allow them to get as far as they need to submit a local impact report. And I think Mr. Thomas mentioned yesterday the involvement of Arab and we're supporting them with that.

00:49:42:01 - 00:49:58:03

Um, clearly we're in their hands to some degree about how would they want to continue that, um, support, and we will be talking to them throughout this process, both for the examination period and for the post consent discharge period about the required support to ensure that they've got the right resources.

00:49:58:12 - 00:50:08:05

That's extremely helpful to hear. Obviously, it's not something that we we can insist on or but it's really helpful to hear and good to know because it's really important that they are involved in the examination.

00:50:08:07 - 00:50:13:29

As an applicant, we completely appreciate that and something we would encourage, but obviously something we can't make happen either. Unfortunately.

00:50:15:15 - 00:50:16:23

The PPA.

00:50:17:25 - 00:50:29:18

Uh, planning performance agreement. Yeah. Um, an agreement between the applicant in the. Sorry, I did tell people off. I did tell people to not use acronyms. I just used one myself.

00:50:31:13 - 00:50:33:06

Is that with both councils or.

00:50:34:07 - 00:50:41:16

Focus on behalf of the applicant? Yeah. The, the um, agreement that we've got for Arab support is with, with both councils. Thank you.

00:50:44:06 - 00:50:59:29

Okay. Does anybody have any final, um, points they wish to raise before I hand over to the next item? No, I can't see any hands on mine. Um, and in that case, I will now hand over to Mr. Rowlands, who will deal with the next item on the agenda, which is onshore ecology. Thank you.

00:51:08:20 - 00:51:20:12

Shall we just pause for a minute so that you can get the relevant parties to the front desk? But yes, this is agenda number ten, which is the onshore ecology.

00:51:35:15 - 00:51:36:00

Okay.

00:51:37:09 - 00:52:07:18

So if we can start with baseline data. So yes onshore geophysical survey report. And that's app one for five identifies cloud boundaries across the survey area. These boundaries are common to North Wales and consist of an earth bank encased by drystone walls, dug into the ground either side of the bank.

00:52:08:00 - 00:52:16:22

Can the applicant advice if this type of feature has been included and assessed in the environmental statements?

00:52:39:10 - 00:53:00:10

Based on on behalf of the applicant, can I just check this? This might be something we need to take away and check if it is in respect of ecology, yes, it will have been assessed. If it's been picked up through the baseline report, it will have been picked up and taken through if it's in respect of it as, as a sort of historical feature or something else like that, we'll need to check.

00:53:00:15 - 00:53:03:05

It's in regards to ecology.

00:53:03:07 - 00:53:04:02

It's in regards to.

00:53:04:14 - 00:53:31:15

So, um, yeah, if you think it's been assessed. It would be helpful if you could signpost to where. And then in terms of the features that you're looking to address, obviously you've covered, uh, items such as hedgerows. Uh, it doesn't seem to me from reading the application that you've actually put forward any measures regarding clothing or clothes.

00:53:33:16 - 00:53:35:05

So if it's.

00:53:35:13 - 00:53:36:06

Um, can you just spell.

00:53:36:08 - 00:53:36:23

That for me, please?

00:53:36:25 - 00:53:37:23

Sorry. Jo Atkinson.

00:53:37:25 - 00:53:38:14

Speaking on behalf.

00:53:38:16 - 00:53:39:01

Of the applicant.

00:53:39:03 - 00:53:43:23

So clothes is a cl a w double D.

00:53:46:17 - 00:53:59:21

And it's referenced in app Dash 145. So its existing features within the study area, which is different to Hydro's. And it's a common boundary feature in North Wales.

00:54:01:12 - 00:54:13:02

It's done on behalf of the applicant. I think I've picked it up. There's a there's a section 15.2 that talks about in the in that baseline report. So we'll just need to check those. We'll need to just check and confirm okay.

00:54:13:04 - 00:54:27:22

So if you could come back and it's that something you can do or what. When can you maybe come back. Because obviously it's quite important. Is that something by deadline one able or.

00:54:34:12 - 00:54:39:28

Less done on behalf of the applicant. Definitely by deadline one. If we can do it sooner than that, we will. We will aim to.

00:54:40:00 - 00:55:12:15

So obviously, if you think in the context of, say, the outline landscape and ecology management plan, you address hydros. So I would expect if you've identified colonial or Cloud, um, what is your approach to that particular feature. Okay. Thank you. Um, can I now move on to, uh, uh, the. Yes, for tree surveys and agricultural impact assessments? Um, part four.

00:55:12:20 - 00:55:43:14

Um, and that's app Dash 163 on um, that particular, uh, appendix identifies that for around a quarter of the onshore cable route. No tree and wetland surveys was undertaken. Come. The applicant therefore describe its approach to address gaps and surveys, and whether it would alter the environmental impact assessments.

00:56:07:27 - 00:56:21:24

Uh, Joe Atkinson, speaking on behalf of the applicant. Um, it's not uncommon to get restrictions on access for surveys, um, particularly on a larger scheme such as this. Um, and the impact assessment has considered the worst case scenario.

00:56:22:29 - 00:56:33:08

So you're saying that there would be no, um, change in the environmental impact assessments as a consequence of those gaps in survey data? Yeah.

00:56:36:04 - 00:57:02:29

It is Is done on behalf of the applicant. I think what Mr. Atkinson is saying is that where we haven't had access to trees for survey, we have assumed, based on other data, presents of protected species based on the environment, other areas that we have been able to and therefore the mitigation that is being proposed is is assumes that worst case of presence rather than absence.

00:57:03:06 - 00:57:05:10

Okay. That makes sense.

00:57:05:26 - 00:57:46:29

What I will just add is that, um, um, prior to, um, and we we've talked about this over the last few days about the need to do pre-construction survey. Um, assuming the development consent order is granted, it will give rights across the cable corridor to undertake pre commencement survey. Um, and therefore um, any uh, any gaps in uh survey coverage at this stage would be able to be picked up at that point and that information would then feed into the schemes that are, um, discharged in respect of those, um, in respect of those particular areas, having taken account of that, uh, additional survey material.

00:57:48:14 - 00:58:13:00

Okay, so I'd like to follow this thread just a little bit more if I can, where we have gaps. And the example I would like to use uh is a bar now. So um, in RWA and it's relevant. Repp expressed concern that no barn owl surveys were undertaken for breeding and or foraging barn animals.

00:58:15:14 - 00:58:55:23

It can be noted by the applicant relevant representation response and that's PDA 008. That's an assessment for impacts on barn owl was not undertaken as no barn owls were recorded during the surveys. Obviously I've highlighted this a quarter of, uh, of the length of the scheme where you weren't able to, uh, gain access. And it appears if you look at the northern and eastern side of the proposed onshore substation, that you didn't have any access for the tree and woodland survey there.

00:58:57:22 - 00:59:25:18

As you're aware, um, under the environmental impact regulations, um, that the relevant consenting body must be informed of the likely significance of facts before reaching a decision on whether to grant consent for a project. So, can the applicant advise what the likely significance effects on Bar will would be as a result of the proposed development.

00:59:33:12 - 01:00:11:07

Plays done on behalf of the applicant. Um, I think it's important to clarify that whilst the applicant did not have access to survey in this area or the area you're referring to for trees, there was access. There has been survey access for other purposes. Um, so those areas have been um, there has been access to undertake, uh, environmental surveys. Um, the my understanding is that through those surveys, there has been no, uh, no, um, indication of any suitable barn or habitat within that area.

01:00:11:09 - 01:00:25:10

And therefore that was why, A barn owl assessment has not been undertaken, um, further going forward because effectively it was scoped out based on suitable habitat at that point. Um, this is um,

01:00:26:26 - 01:00:58:03

there is um, within the outline landscape and environmental management plan. Um, a uh, appendix E uh, talks about, um, uh, breeding bird mitigation reports. So there will be ongoing survey in respect of, um, of relevant bird species. Um, I think I will, um, save our ecologist in that she's not an

ornithologist either. So in respect of actually, um, matters relating to barn owl, they're probably not matters that we can deal with other than in a very broad sense.

01:00:58:05 - 01:00:59:02

Um, today.

01:01:00:22 - 01:01:33:12

Um, Joe Atkinson, on behalf of the applicant, just to follow on as well. Um, with regards to the point about survey access around the, uh, the onshore substation, um, excuse me. Um, we've had ecologists out on site in that area doing a lot of other survey work in the period since the documents were submitted because of the access is now being granted, um, in particular, surveys for great crested newts. Um, and they're on site kind of in the evenings in the, in the early morning periods when barn owls would potentially be spotted.

01:01:33:14 - 01:01:48:00

Um, and ecologists by nature are a curious species. Um, and if we'd had any incidental records of barn owls, they would have been immediately reported back to us, um, through those channels, even though they weren't specifically looking for barn owls during those surveys.

01:01:50:12 - 01:02:20:19

I don't want to labor too much on this particular thread for now, but it's likely to come up again during the examination. What I would like to know is that if you think about the surveys that even the take on what you said about suitable habitats. So barn owls, for an example, um. Um roosting sites. It could be looking at structures or trees and they would roost in trees.

01:02:20:21 - 01:02:56:12

Something where the, the, the width is, um, greater than about half a metre. So if you haven't had access to look at, say, a quarter of the habitats along the routes, it's difficult for me to fully understand how you've been able to exclude trees that I haven't been able to view. Uh, the second thread for this is there's a lot of public available information out there. So, um, I'm and you are probably aware as well as the owl and more.

01:02:56:27 - 01:03:19:12

And what was the conclusion of the survey results for our lemma in the context of barn owls? So those are two points I want to put to you. Um, I won't labor on it any more, but be mindful that, um, there are issues concerning barn owls that we will need to address during this examination.

01:03:21:15 - 01:03:22:00

Um.

01:03:24:03 - 01:03:33:18

I'll ask if any party is here. Has any observations to make regarding a baseline data on onshore ecology.

01:03:37:11 - 01:04:02:00

Uh, Mr. Hussey. Sorry. Martin Hussey. Um, probably not a point as such, but I would appreciate it through, um, Paul or his colleagues if there is nighttime activity within the area of the onshore substation, perhaps local residents could be informed, because I nearly called the police the other week with, uh, traffic going into the fields, and it was only the farmer who stopped me.

01:04:06:28 - 01:04:09:23

Can I ask if the applicant would like to respond to that.

01:04:10:18 - 01:04:19:03

Forecast on behalf of the applicant? We can take that away and consider that with our land agents who engage with the landowners about about access can consider that point.

01:04:20:21 - 01:04:22:01

Thank you, Mr. Hersey.

01:04:22:15 - 01:04:43:27

It's just to let local people know if there are people out and about in the rural area, particularly late at night, um, which is not normal. So you don't want to negate worrying people, thinking that there's sort of a. activity going on that might be of a not not a innocent nature.

01:04:46:08 - 01:04:49:10

Okay. Thank you. Your point has been noted. Most of the.

01:04:50:13 - 01:05:14:14

Commissioners just like to second that, really, because deer poaching is quite a common problem around the area. And, um, you know, the first reaction of a lot of people is just to call the police. So if there's perfectly innocent activity going on, it's after the hours of darkness. It's as well to, uh, somehow notify the local residents.

01:05:15:14 - 01:05:22:15

Thank you. Thank you. Uh, we've got a show of hands as well. Virtually. I start, Miss Staples.

01:05:24:11 - 01:05:42:03

Thank you. Yes. Louis Staples from the NFU. Sorry, I just wanted to follow up that point. Is there a local community or parish magazine or some contact? Because otherwise I'm not. The agents acting for landowners are going to be able to let the local people know.

01:05:43:13 - 01:05:45:12

Can the applicant respond to that.

01:05:47:03 - 01:06:01:02

Cast on behalf of the applicant? Um, apologies. As far as misunderstood. I was saying we would talk to our land agents. Um, rather than talk to the land agents of the affected parties about communications. Um, as I said, we will take this away and look into the matter.

01:06:02:10 - 01:06:04:04

Thank you. Okay.

01:06:06:14 - 01:06:25:01

Uh, as we haven't got any of the local authorities here today, I'd like to place an action. Um, Conway County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council, but they confirmed their position regarding baseline onshore ecology data.

01:06:27:04 - 01:06:43:20

Thank you. Now, if we can move on to clarifications. Uh, be grateful if the applicant could just briefly, uh, display table 3.34, which is on app Dash zero 66.

01:07:18:16 - 01:07:38:09

Thank you. So, um, can I. It's okay. So I'll just continue here. Um, so we'll notice in the Significance of Effect column. Um, so, uh, there is no change for temporary permanent loss on tris pension.

01:07:40:14 - 01:07:53:18

Um, but then if there is no change to the significance of effect, the residual effect is minor adverse. Can the applicant just maybe clarify that point?

01:08:07:14 - 01:08:23:01

Um, Jess Furlong, on behalf of the applicant. Um, we've noted this, and there are a couple of, um, typographical errors in the main assessment body of the assessment. It confirms the residual effect would be no change. Um, and we can deal with this and an Arata sheet for the chapter and. Correct.

01:08:23:03 - 01:08:32:24

So it's a correction that you'll do. Okay. Thank you. And similarly with where that scenario uh occurs within that table you'll address the others. Okay. Great.

01:08:34:26 - 01:08:54:24

Um can we now if you can put the table down. Thank you. And, uh, I think what would be useful now if you were able to put sheets 11 up, um, which is, uh, on the tree and hedgerow plan, uh, which is AP zero 19.

01:09:17:20 - 01:09:28:20

Um, would it be possible, um, just to maybe zoom into the center? Um, around maybe. Hydros. Two. six, 1262 and 263.

01:09:34:04 - 01:09:43:02

And you'll notice from those hedgerows, um, that, um, not, uh, indicated as important hedgerows.

01:09:46:06 - 01:09:49:23

So 261262263.

01:09:51:15 - 01:10:20:12

However, if you compare this information with, um, the desk based assessments related to historic environment, which is app 143, um, those particular hedgerows are deemed to be historic hedgerows.

So can the applicant explain why we've got historic hedgerows which are not deemed to be important?
Hedgerows?

01:10:22:21 - 01:11:02:27

Joe Watkinson, speaking on behalf of the applicant. Um, I think the slight confusion is because there's different ways of looking at hedgerows from a historic importance and then from what I would look at for an ecological importance. There's different features. I'm not a heritage. um, I'm not a heritage specialist. I know they look at more historical mapping issues and where they are in relation to county boundaries, which from a pure ecological perspective, we have different criteria. Um, so I think that's probably where there is a little bit of confusion, um, with regards to the difference between how a historic hedgerow is deemed important from a heritage perspective versus whether or not it's ecologically important.

01:11:03:07 - 01:11:14:03

Is it possible, as an action, that a clarification note could be introduced into the examination library just to describe all the differences?

01:11:16:01 - 01:11:20:12

Yes, it is done on behalf of the applicant. Yes, we can do that one by one. Deadline one.

01:11:20:14 - 01:11:21:18

Thank you. Thank you.

01:11:26:21 - 01:11:40:03

Can we, um, now move on to environmental impact assessment methodology and its application? Um, that's recorded in, uh, app Dash zero 52.

01:11:42:11 - 01:12:06:28

So paragraph 5.3.55 within that document highlights that the proposed development's first measure is to avoid the impact and then reduce and then mitigate. So I'd like to, um, clarify with some examples how the proposed development has applied this approach.

01:12:08:27 - 01:12:21:12

So is it possible to, uh, refer to, uh sheets 35, figure 1.37. And that's up 1 to 2.

01:12:36:27 - 01:12:49:08

I'm Joe Atkinson, speaking on behalf of the applicant. Can you just clarify what you are asking in terms of how we've applied that hierarchy? Is it in relation to a specific part of that diagram.

01:12:49:10 - 01:13:22:28

Yeah. So for example, if you can zoom in to say the bottom left hand corner where we've got the woodland and you'll notice from that, um, the order limits go through the woodland. That's quite correct, David. Which is an ancient woodland which is bottom left. So you can. Yeah. Are you able to see it? So if you consider your methodology, I would ask if you could explain why. Could you have not avoided the orderliness going through this particular, um, woodland.

01:13:24:04 - 01:13:56:02

Just along on behalf of the applicant. So it was one of the um principles during site selection to avoid ancient woodland in this particular location, we've had to include a clip of the ancient woodland, because just further west is an area of ancient, not ancient, sorry, historic mine works. So in this area, we will be doing a trench crossing in accordance with the crossing schedule, and in order to fit the angles in, we have had to clip the ancient woodland. But it will be trenching underneath it so there won't be an impact, so it has been avoided.

01:13:56:20 - 01:13:59:22

When you dig down into the details of what will happen in that area.

01:14:01:12 - 01:14:01:27

Okay.

01:14:03:09 - 01:14:34:06

So if Hillary Williamson, on behalf of the applicant, just to piggyback on top in terms of the site selection, this area in particular had two route options available, um, one of which was to um, pass beneath. There's two there's there's an ancient woodland and also a woodland block. Um, so it was to run sort of directly west to east. Um, and the decision was made to not take that route because it required trenched techniques of two quite significant woodland blocks and also historic landfill.

01:14:34:20 - 01:14:50:05

Um, that coupled with the mining works which which Miss Furlong mentioned, uh, meant that we, we tried our best to avoid including any ancient woodland in the in the order limits, but the commitment has been made to trench less if we do need to take an alignment beneath that ancient woodland.

01:14:53:22 - 01:15:27:19

That's done on behalf of the applicant. I just say that I think when you apply that methodology, it has to be applied across the whole route. Um, so, so the starting, um, as, as I'm sure the examining authority will be aware. Um, there are a number of options. You start with a offshore wind farm, uh, location. You then have an onshore substation location, and then you have to determine through all of that, um, where the appropriate landfall is, and then the cable corridor from that landfall, uh, from offshore and then from the landfall to the substation location.

01:15:27:21 - 01:16:00:17

And those broad principles about avoid, reduce and mitigate have to be applied across the whole corridor as you as you were doing that, which means, inevitably, that there will be sections where if you're chosen another area, you might have been able to avoid it altogether. But taking the route as a whole, you are seeking to do those things. And where exactly? As Miss Furlong's explained, you have an area where you can't avoid that. You then you then put in place either reduce or mitigate by, for example, committing to to trench less crossings in those areas.

01:16:00:19 - 01:16:03:10

So you are avoiding impacting on those features.

01:16:03:29 - 01:16:24:25

Okay. So rather than um, have the order limits going around the perimeter of the ancient woodland to avoid impact. The applicant has decided to have the old Dolomites go through the woodland, but then to mitigate by having trench loss. Books.

01:16:46:18 - 01:17:04:00

I'm dancing is. Yes, but we're avoiding the impacts through the trenches crossing. It's also worth noting that didn't say earlier that if whole road needs to go through this area, we have got the commitment to the buffer from the ancient woodland 50m to protect it from that element of the construction. Okay.

01:17:04:02 - 01:17:19:03

It's helpful for me to have clarity on the decision making process and that I'm clear, especially if it's an issue that's progresses along in the examination. So thank you for clarifying that. That's appreciated.

01:17:25:14 - 01:17:39:22

Um, I think what would be helpful? Um, just one other thread that I can double check with him. Um, again on the, uh, tree and hedgerow plan, which is up dash zero 19.

01:17:41:14 - 01:17:44:28

Um, that would be sheets. Uh, sheets eight.

01:17:54:13 - 01:18:09:13

No, no. Sorry. Can I, um. Yeah. PTA zero 25. That's probably easier to see it on on this figure 1.62. So PDA zero 25.

01:18:13:17 - 01:18:16:12

And figure 1.62.

01:18:33:27 - 01:18:56:08

Um, what? I would ask the applicant if it's possible. Um, if you can zoom in to where we have. Is it the, um, the trench less, uh, color coding there? Um, which is indicated as green showing, uh, the, uh, I can't remember what you called it yesterday. Uh.

01:19:02:12 - 01:19:04:15

Is it possible for you to zoom in? Can I?

01:19:25:18 - 01:20:10:03

So this. This figure, obviously, uh, identifies obstacles. I think that was the phrase you used yesterday. And in that particular area, you'd be looking to undertake a trench less. But if you do a cross reference, then, um, with the, uh, the tree and hedgerow plan, um, it appears that it is an important hedgerow. But then if you look at to, uh, the schedule 11 in parts, two in the DCO, uh, that particular important hedgerow has been indicated for removal.

01:20:10:18 - 01:20:18:25

So what I would ask is if you can do a cross check to make sure that everything, uh, relates and aligns.

01:20:19:20 - 01:20:20:17

Yes, sir. We will do.

01:20:20:27 - 01:20:23:20

Okay. Thank you. Uh, you can put that down now

01:20:25:05 - 01:20:37:15

if we can go on to green corridors. Um, uh, can the applicant summarize its approach to preserving and improving connection of green corridors?

01:20:49:27 - 01:21:01:00

Please, Don, on behalf of the applicant. Can I just be clear in terms of green corridors? Are we talking about the national policy statement references? What do we mean by green corridors?

01:21:02:06 - 01:21:05:12

Um, can you maybe elaborate on what you mean by that?

01:21:05:27 - 01:21:38:27

So, um, having had this agenda item, we tried to, um, establish what, um, it might be referring to. And, um, the national policy statements, um, talk about wildlife corridors. They don't talk about green corridors. Um, and, um, uh, uh, we had discussed green infrastructure as part of our biodiversity and green infrastructure statement. But again, we don't talk about green corridors. And I just wanted to ensure we knew what we were talking about when we were talking about green corridors.

01:21:38:29 - 01:21:39:16

Sure.

01:21:39:24 - 01:21:45:21

Um, shall we, in the context of onshore ecology, use wildlife corridors. Would that be great?

01:21:46:27 - 01:21:50:09

So wildlife corridors, in the context of the national policy statements.

01:21:50:11 - 01:21:52:12

In the context of onshore ecology.

01:21:52:22 - 01:21:55:27

And the tests in the national policy statements.

01:21:56:04 - 01:22:02:01

Um, not not for now. I just like to get a better understanding of wildlife corridors.

01:22:07:11 - 01:22:54:11

I'm Jess Furlong on behalf of the applicant. So, um, we avoided impacting woodland in the main, apart from an area of ash dieback at the substation that we're going to take out to allow it to regenerate

without the disease trees. We've then got our hedgerow crossings, we've which we've tried to minimise through using the trench less crossings of important hedgerows where we do cross hedgerows. Every effort will be made to limit that impact and hedgerows will be replanted following construction. We've then also got as part of our biodiversity benefit statement, ten hedgerows along the corridor that are currently in a poor condition that we're going to look to enhance, to improve connectivity between blocks of woodland to help those species such as bats and dormice move between habitats.

01:23:00:13 - 01:23:23:07

Thank you. So, um, would it be possible to have, um, an example up on screen? So I'd like to refer to figure 1.14. Um, and that's in app Dash 122 and it's, um, wildlife corridor near Nantes for Nantes Canal.

01:23:26:10 - 01:23:32:07

So app 121, two, two and figure 1.14.

01:23:52:04 - 01:23:59:06

So yeah, if you can maybe just zoom in to, um, where the watercourse crosses.

01:24:01:09 - 01:24:06:25

Um, the cable corridor route. Just slightly more, please, if you don't mind. Thank you.

01:24:11:13 - 01:24:22:18

Um, so there appears to be a loop. Uh, um, like an ear type of access, uh, to this, the left hand side. Could the applicant explain the purpose of that?

01:24:28:09 - 01:25:06:04

Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicant. Uh, so in this particular instance, uh, we've committed to, uh, tarantulas techniques, uh, through the onshore cable corridor to go beneath the watercourse and hedgerow. The route that you see to the west, the kind of loop is targeting an existing gap in that hedgerow, and a crossing point of the watercourse that's currently used by the landowner. So we would use that access to take our whole road around the watercourse and so around the trenches technique that will be used.

01:25:06:06 - 01:25:11:00

And it means that we will not run our whole road across the the features at that location.

01:25:11:18 - 01:25:16:14

So the whole road has to cross a watercourse.

01:25:17:18 - 01:25:25:08

In this location. It will cross the watercourse. Yes. At um where there is an existing crossing as identified by that loop.

01:25:25:17 - 01:25:29:25

Um, the existing crossing for the watercourse. Um.

01:25:31:29 - 01:25:43:11

We as an exa haven't had, uh, the opportunity to visit that particular site, but is there a current bridge there to cross the watercourse?

01:25:47:28 - 01:26:08:08

Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicant, I would need to go away and provide you details of that crossing. Um, because it would be a whole road crossing of a watercourse. There are details included within the outline construction method statement regarding watercourse crossings, and there may be a requirement to set up an appropriate crossing for the haul road.

01:26:09:08 - 01:26:22:21

If I was trying to identify in the application the locations of where the applicant is likely to put a form of crossing like a bridge. Is that somewhere that you can direct me to so I can.

01:26:32:25 - 01:26:47:00

List on on behalf of the applicant. This particular um loop is, um, work number 12 a yeah. Um, so and and it's specified as it is only access within that area. Um.

01:26:48:12 - 01:27:00:06

Um, looking obviously, um, it's better for me to check your interpretation if that's deemed to be, first of all, a form of a wildlife corridor.

01:27:16:25 - 01:27:21:23

Joe Atkinson, on behalf of the applicant. Um, yes, we would of course, consider that to be a wildlife corridor.

01:27:21:25 - 01:27:22:14

Okay.

01:27:22:20 - 01:27:46:11

And then you're introducing a form of access that goes across it And then you're looking possibly to put a bridge so there could be different species, um, going up and down the wildlife corridor. So I'm trying to gauge what the impact would be in the proposals that you have there.

01:27:55:15 - 01:28:36:12

And then if I can maybe just follow this train of thought slightly. Um, you mentioned you need access, uh, to the north side and to the south side of that watercourse, because you want to put in a trench, plus works. And then where you come further south, there's a is that a highway whereby you're looking to put a trench less, uh, underneath the highway? So the question is, if you're looking to avoid, is there any reason or what would be the reason not to have a trench less from the northern side of the watercourse and then the exit point being on the southern side of the carriageway?

01:28:37:28 - 01:28:48:02

So again, it's in mind the avoid, uh, you know, approach that you've, um, publicized in your documentation.

01:28:49:17 - 01:29:24:04

Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicant. Uh, we do retain the optionality to do a longer trench, less technique to, to do that what you've just suggested there. So from the north of the watercourse to the south, below the public highway. Um, I think believe in the crossing schedule. It does identify that it's trenched or trench less. Um, depending on on the option. Decided whether we pop up and then and then go back down again. Um, I do want to reaffirm that the, the loop which you've identified there, there is an existing gap in that hedgerow, which is why we have identified that the haul road might pass through there.

01:29:24:19 - 01:29:36:21

Uh, we have also not identified whether we would cross watercourses with bridges or piped culverts, and that selection will be part of the detailed design and obviously factored in with minimising our impact as much as possible.

01:29:37:17 - 01:29:43:15

And the gap is sufficiently wide for the type of vehicle that would utilize the whole road.

01:30:01:01 - 01:30:12:06

Phil Williamson, on behalf of the applicant. We'll take that one away and provide your answers on, on each of the each of these areas where we identify where Hall Road exits the onshore cable corridor.

01:30:12:28 - 01:30:40:07

Thank you. It might be useful in terms of an RSI as well, that we might be able to visit, and that might deal with a few other questions that we might have on the particular thread. Um, I'd like to see if anybody here, um, has any questions on onshore ecology. Uh, before I, uh, bring matters to an end on this particular, uh, agenda item.

01:30:43:28 - 01:30:58:04

I'm not seeing any show of hands, so I think we'll break for 15 minutes. So the time is 3:00, so we'll come back at 3:15. Thank you.