



Hearing Transcript

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| Project: | EN010139 - Byers Gill Solar |
| Hearing: | Issue Specific Hearing |
| Date: | 23 July 2024 |

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

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The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

AUDIO_BYERSGILL_ISH1_SESSION1_23072

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00:05

Hello, good afternoon. Can everyone hear me clearly? Yes. Thank you very much. Can I also confirm with Mr. Trembley that live streaming and recording of this event has commenced?

00:19

Thank you very much.

00:21

For those people watching the live stream, can I also advise that should we at any point adjourn proceedings this morning? Well, this afternoon, we will have to stop the live streaming not to give us clear recording files. As a result it pointed which we recommend to meeting and we start to livestream ruin your day need to refresh your browser page to view the restarted stream. We will remind you of this again should we need to turn it is now 2pm. In this time for this hearing. To begin, I would like to welcome you all to the issue specific hearing one on the overview of the proposed development and development consent order in relation to an application made by RW e renewables UK solar and storage limited, who will refer to as the applicant for an order granting development consent for bio scale solar development proposed consists of a solar farm with over 50 megawatts capacity, ground mounted solar photovoltaic modules and associated mounting structures, inverters, transformers, switchgear and control equipment, a substation energy storage equipment and underground on an off site cabling.

01:30

Thank you all for attending this hearing. My name is Andre Pinto and I am a chartered town planner employed by the planning Inspectorate and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government as lead member of the panel to examine this application. I will now ask my fellow panel members to introduce themselves.

01:51

Good afternoon. I'm Max Wiltshire. I'm a chartered civil engineer and I'm employed by the planning Inspectorate and appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government as a member of the panel of inspectors to examine this application.

02:09

Good afternoon. My name is Alex Abadi. I'm a charter transport planner employed by the planning Inspectorate. And I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for housing, communities and local government to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

02:28

Thank you. Together we constitute examining authority. And we'll be reporting to the Secretary of State for energy security net zero, with a recommendation as to whether development consent order should be made. The case manager for this project is Jenny savage. Jen is being supported here today by Mr. Elliot booth and Mr. Harrison course. If you have any queries about the examination process, or technology we're using for virtual events, this should be your first point of contact. The contact details can be found at the top of any letter you have received from us, or on the page project of the National Infrastructure website.

03:07

I will now deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person. Can everyone as per this morning please set all your devices and phones to silent. The closest toilets are outside of this room through the same door you used to enter room earlier. And on your left in the run no plant fire have a question tests planned for today. Should the fire alarm sound please make your way to the nearest fire exit door and go downstairs to the right hand side of the building fire recreation assembly and point is outside this building just at the entrance.

03:40

Today is the hybrid event meaning that some of you are present with us at the hearing venue and some of you are joining us for actually using Microsoft Teams. For those people observing or participant through teams. Can you please make sure that you stay muted unless you are speaking? If you are participating virtually and you wish to speak at a relevant point of proceedings, please use your hand up function. Please be patient as we may not be able to get to you immediately. But we will invite you to speak at an appropriate time. We will make sure that however you decide to attend today you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate. Are there any questions on what I have to set out?

04:23

In I don't see any hands raised online either for any questions.

04:29

So I'll just move on then. Thank you very much. In addition to the live stream a recording of today's hearing will be made available on the bias Gil solar section of the national infrastructure planning website as soon as practicable after the meeting has finished. With this in mind. Please ensure that you speak clearly into a microphone sitting your name who you are representing each time before you speak. For those at the table. You can do that by pressing the lodge but not the base of the microphone. If you are not at a table with a microphone that there is a role

05:00

microphone, so please wait for one to be brought to you before you speak. If you are attending virtually and you don't want your image your image to be recorded, you can switch off your camera. For those in the room who do not want to be recorded, there is an NDA or an area at the back of the room outside of camera shot, so please use that area.

05:22

Because the digital recordings that we make are retained and published, they form a public record that can be that can contain your personal information, and to which the general data protection regulations apply. Only in the rarest of circumstances might we ask you to provide personal information of the type that most of us would prefer to keep private or confidential. Therefore, to avoid need to edit the digital recordings, please try your best not to add information to the public records that you would wish to be kept private or is confidential. If you feel that personal information is necessary, please provide this in a written document that we can redact before publication. The planning spectris practice is to retain and publish recordings for a period of five years from Secretary of State's decision.

06:09

A link to the planning and practice privacy notice was provided in rule six letter alongside notification for this hearing. I assume that everybody here today has familiarized themselves with this document, which establishes how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the principles set into data protection laws. Please speak to Jenny Savage, if you have any questions about this. This meeting will follow the agenda set out in Annex f of the row six letter.

06:39

It would be helpful if you could have a copy of this in front of you. And I'm also going to ask for this agenda to be displayed on screen now please, and keep

06:49

it

06:59

Mr. Pinto, just a note, we've got sunlight all over our screen. So it's really important to be able to read it we need to if you see a look at the screen now. Yes, I see.

07:11

I mean, it's okay now but

07:13

Well, I'm not really sure that we have a possibility to actually cover that reflection. I just wanted you to be aware of that. So thank you. Do you? Are there any available paper copies that we might perhaps provide to people that are being?

07:35

If he would like he can have my paper copy and I can share with Lisa, she's got it electronically?

07:42

Thank you very much. Thank you both.

07:45

And now the sun's gone in.

07:48

Right? Is there anyone else that does not have an agenda in front of them and I was having problems accessing an agenda.

07:57

Okay, so, I will aim to finish the hearing today at five 530 at the latest with a break if needed around 334 o'clock. Please remember those who are participating virtually to turn off the cameras and microphones during the break. We will conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions have been made in all questions asked and responded to. But if the discussions can't be concluded, then it may be necessary for me to prioritize matters and defer other matters to return questions. Likewise, if you cannot answer the questions being asked or required time to gather information requested, then please can you just indicate that you need to respond in writing and we will advise you when best submit his response.

08:44

Does anyone have any further questions?

08:48

Can I check if everyone online if anyone online has any questions?

08:56

I can't see any hands raised so I'll move on. And I will now hand over to Mr. wheelchair who will do the introductions. Thank you. Thank you Mr. Pinto. I know we've been through these this morning. But this stands as a separate meeting. So we're going to have to do this again. So I'm going to ask those who are participating in today's meeting to introduce yourselves. When I state your organization's name. Could you introduce yourself stating your name and who you represent and which agenda item you wish to speak on.

09:26

If you're not representing an organization, please confirm your name, summarize your interest in the application and confirm the agenda item on prom wish you wish to speak. And could you tell us how you wish to be addressed? le Mr. Mrs. Miss, et cetera. So can we start with the applicant please and any of their advisors. Thank you, sir. Good afternoon. My name is Alex Minh INEC. I'm a partner solicitor at Burgess salmon and I am here representing RW e renewables, UK solar and storage, the applicant for this DCO I'm joined

10:00

To my right your left by Miss law ribbing who was a planner Eric will be in control of sharing documents on screen. immediately to my left is Mr. Michael Baker, who is the development project manager at our W E to Mr. Baker's left is Mrs. Mary Fisher, who is a partner at amps align consultant. She is the project's landscape architect. And to Mrs. Fisher's left is Miss Tamsin Seeley, who is a principal planner at error and has been leading the planning inputs to the project. We were due to be joined by Mr. David Brown, also Aveiro, who unfortunately is unwell and is therefore unable to join us.

10:50

I failed to mention this during the preliminary meeting that the as the African we are likely to contribute on most dry items. Thank you.

11:00

Thank you very much Mr. Maha Nick.

11:03

Now,

11:06

can we move to the organizations and individuals have given notice of their intention to speak.

11:13

So starting with the local authorities.

11:19

Darlington please. Thank you, sir Lisa Hutchinson Development Manager at Darlington Borough Council. I don't intend intend to speak on anything. But if there are any questions, I'm here to answer those. Thank you. Okay.

11:31

Thank you.

11:33

Helen, Boston, principal planner Stockton Borough Council. Again, no specific issues can be addressed. Thank you.

11:42

Thank you very much.

11:45

Is there anyone in the room who wishes to speak today? The tight sorry, I should ask for the interested persons.

11:53

Account, Steve rose on the client to bishops and parish council and I'll be representing their views. I'm happy to be known as Steve. Although Mr. Mr. I'm joined by the chair of the parish council, Mr. Norman Mulaney, who may however, wish to speak as an individual.

12:11

I don't know what I put in the application about what I speak on. But if I may respond to issues if they arise. I haven't really got anything specific to add to that. Thank you. Thank you very much.

12:25

Moving on.

12:34

I would like to talk about the components

12:40

at some point.

12:42

Thank you.

12:47

Moving to your left.

12:52

Okay, thank you.

12:56

Yep. My name is Mark Smith, chair of the Michigan and villages Action Group.

13:01

didn't register speak at this event now.

13:04

Thank you very much.

13:06

Is there anybody else in the room who wishes to speak?

13:12

No. And anybody on line, who wishes to speak please do raise your hand.

13:24

Miss Teasdale?

13:29

Yes, still the principal planning officer with Durham County Council here observing and here to answer any questions if necessary. Thank you.

13:39

Directly is Miss Teasdale as well. Thank you.

13:44

Thank you very much. Anybody else virtually?

13:50

Thank you.

13:55

I will now hand back to Mr. Pinto, who will lead us through item two on the agenda.

14:04

Thank you, Mr. wheelchair.

14:07

So item two purpose of the issue specific hearing. The purpose of this issue specific hearing is twofold. Firstly, for the examining authority to explore the overarching guiding principles that underpin the development proposal. Its main components aims and objectives. And number two for the examining authority to explore the applicants intentions and approach to the identification of land within the order, as defined in the land plans originally referenced a PP zero 10 But now superseded by as zero 15 and how it relates to the articles included in the draft dcl a PP zero 12. As previously mentioned, the agenda for this meeting was set out in Annex f of the row six letter.

14:51

Today's hearing will be a structured discussion discussion led by the examining authority. Please be assured that we are familiar with what you have already

15:00

submitted to us. So you don't have to repeat in length anything that you have already put to us in writing submissions carry equal weights, regardless of the format in which they are put to us. If you do refer to any documents this afternoon, it would be helpful if you could give us the correct examination Library Reference number. Please do try to avoid using any acronyms as people who might be watching it I might be in room may not be as familiar as some of us with those terms.

15:30

Are there any comments anyone would like to make on item two of the agenda?

15:37

Can I ask if those joining us virtually would like to comment?

15:47

I don't see any hands raised. So I will move us on to Item three components of bias skill solar.

15:57

Before I start asking questions, it might be useful for me to provide some context in relation to the key documents that form the base of my questions and decide them today. So they'll focused mainly on

chapter two of DS the proposed development that will be a PP zero to five figure 2.2 general arrangement scheme wide that that is IPP 040

16:25

Yes, fifth es figure 2.3 to 2.8. So that's general arrangements for panel areas A to F in that will be a PPS 0412, IPP 046 es figure 2.9 cross section of a typical fixed solar panel that that is a PP 047

16:47

Yes figure two point 10 Typical inverter transformer and B E S S arrangement that is IPP 048. Figure two point 11. Typical excess in supporting infrastructure in layout a PP 0492 point 12 Typical switchgear a PP zero 42. Point 14 Typical substation IPP 045 To

17:14

figure two point 18 Typical storage container that's AP p 046. And then applicant submission of new and revised information, particularly document 2.3 streetworks. Rights of wire Nexus plans that is a s 014. Document two point fall and plans that is a s 015. And then II s figure two points 13. underground cable routes accepted at the examining authorities discretion as 019.

17:52

I would like them to start by asking the applicant to first of all present the proposed developments in how it considers that it meets the criteria for a national significant infrastructure project.

18:06

Mr. Mechanic, sir, thank you, Mr. Waxman INEC for the applicant, my client, Mr. Baker has a presentation, which he is going to run the room through. We are intending this to put this up on the screen. And we will obviously submit electronic copies of this as part of our deadline one submissions. I'm also conscious of the patch of sun on the screen. So we are having copies printed, which

18:39

I'll do to take five to 10 minutes. So hopefully during the course of the presentation, if anyone is struggling to see anything that is on the screen, there will be a paper copy available for those in the room. If that's an acceptable approach for the examining authority. I think that considering the time that we have today, I think that I would like to press on if you feel that it will not undermined your position to not have those documents. No. So I think broadly speaking, the screen will be legible. If it becomes illegible at any stage and there's a bit of detail that can't be seen. Hopefully by that time, the documents will be available. So

19:17

hopefully that will work for everyone in the room. And I think it's the best way forward. Thank you Mr. Munich. I'm also going to suggest if anyone else in the room is struggling to see then maybe if you actually come on to the angles on the site of the of the show site that we have, you might be able to see it on screen see on the floor. So if anyone is struggling, we can be able to you'll be able to do that as well. And you welcome to join us a little bit closer

19:44

if that helps as well. Thank you. So

19:47

very sensible suggestion. Um, so before I pass over to Mr. Baker, the the only

19:56

point that I wanted to set the scene where there's the inverse

20:00

wants to order agenda items for this afternoon's hearing, we have obviously prepared a short presentation to try and guide the panel and the room through the points of which which had been identified in the agenda. We obviously haven't had the benefit of any specific questions being tabled ahead of this hearing. And we will, as a team, obviously do our best to address any specific questions that arise during the course of today. To the extent that we need to take any of them away and come back in writing, I think you indicated in your introduction, that would be an acceptable way forward. And I just wanted to explain that that's the approach that we may need to take. But we will obviously do our best to deal with things as they arise.

20:46

I will accept that within the constraints of the information that we have provided regarding this agenda. There might be specific questions that you will need to come back to us. What I would ask for you is to actually flag that up so that we can inform you of the appropriate deadline to come back with those answers to us, please. Thank you. Thank you, of course.

21:06

And without further ado, I will pass over to Mr. Baker.

21:10

Thank you, Alex. Thank you for Michael Baker speaking for RW E and the project manager for this project. And I'm employed by RW E. Thank you for the opportunity to set out the components of bicycle solar farm. I'm going to run through the technical components of the solar farm. Starting with the ground mounted solar PV areas A to F we've turned the balance of the solar plant as well. So that's the inverters the Transformers in the switchgear, the battery energy storage systems, the 33 KV cable

21:45

from the switch gears to the on site substation, the onsite 132 KV substation itself and the 132 KV cable from the onsite substation to north and sort of station. When I say KV, I mean kilovolts. That's the voltage of those cables.

22:03

And we'll also have a quick look at the connection at Notting Hill Station. And then I'll hand over to my colleague, Mary Fisher, who will take us through the mitigation and enhancement proposals.

22:13

I'm sorry to interrupt you at least glimpsed Rebecca, but are you planning on touching at any point around construction compound and can't see, we didn't include that in this presentation, but lightnings, in which I might be able to answer in outline here or follow up in writing. Okay, thank you, please continue.

22:31

So in terms of the solar panels themselves, they convert energy from the sun into direct current electricity. Typically, each panel is around 2.2 meters by one meter. They're also by facial which means that they can generate energy on the back and any light reflected up from the ground also generates electricity. In this case, they're fixed to a mounting structure. And for basketball, this is a fixed structure, which is going from east to west. The panels themselves once they're on the mounting structure are connected electrically in strings to each other. And this can define the length and shortness of each row.

23:14

These strings then go into what's known as a combiner box, and then they're fed into central inverters across the project. The picture on the slide shows an artillery project, which is currently under construction in Devon, and those are the panels that have been fixed to the mounting structure.

23:34

This plan shows the panel areas as they were at the statutory consultation and those areas that were removed in response to the cat statutory consultation and further landowner engagement. So at the statutory consultation, the panel areas,

23:51

if you counted within the fence line of where the panels would be not the total redline boundary acreage, the panel areas would have taken 941 acres following the DS following this actually consultation and in response to the issues raised, we've reduced the panel areas to 739 acres across the site. And you can see that the main area where there's a fee removed is the south of grace data and to the north of bishop to the middle lane.

24:18

Sorry, Mr. Becker. Could I just ask you to point out within the image that we are seeing now, the color of the areas that were reduced from the original application to what you have submitted? Yes, so the the color in purple is it's a purpley color with it with a dark outline. Those are the areas that have been removed following the statutory consultation and the plan, which is shown as the plan that was shown at the statutory consultation. So it's not the plan that was submitted the DC application.

24:52

Right. And are you intending within your explanation to provide a little bit more detail in terms of what

25:00

iDose areas were removed from the application or we had referred to but I mean, in broad terms, we

25:10

will the consultation rates that people felt that the panel areas were close to Bishop turning and close to the south gate state and integrates Dainton. We were also negotiating with a landowner that hadn't signed off at that time

25:25

for some of the areas that you can see on screen. So after the statutory consultation, we stopped in engaging with that landowner and dropped those areas, because they also corresponded with areas that had been highlighted as an issue in the consultation. So the reason why those panel areas were removed, were in response to the issues raised in consultation. Right. And in terms of your approach to that strategically, what were the key factors that influenced your decision for you to be able to say that those were more problematic areas? So was it just as a result of consultation, or was it as a result of any environmental factors or impact that have not been identified, it was also taken into account advice from advice from Mary Fisher in terms of landscape advice as well. But it was a mixture of those things.

26:19

We reduced it in terms of where we thought it felt there was impact on specific receptors. So if you see to the lot of the west where the smaller areas have been removed,

26:30

around Hawksley farm, they were directly as a result of, you know, impact on receptors adjacent to that, properties adjacent to that to those areas that were removed.

26:43

And then also, in response to broadly the feeling that the consultation, the scheme was too big, so we reduced as far as possible while still trying to generate the required electricity. I can see that I have a hand raised. I'll just make a note that you would like to intervene. But if I could just let Mr. Baker then finish a little bit more presentation please. Thank you, Mr. Mica, please continue.

27:11

So in terms of the balance of the solar plant, this is largely the inverters the Transformers in the switchgear, the way that it works is that the the panels are generated in direct current, and then the electricity from the solar panels are converted to alternating current, which is a type of electricity current used by the National Grid. Once that electricity has been converted to alternating current in the inverter, then moves on to the transformer.

27:42

The transformer increases the alternating current electricity from nought point six nine kilovolts to 33 kilovolts and these are placed adjacent to the inverters and then these connect across the site to the switch gears as they are available. What the switchgear does is combined the electricity from each of the inverters and transformers to transmit down the 33 KV cables to the onsite substation. And the switchgear also includes a circuit breaker that allows the panel area to be switched off or isolated from the rest of the proposed development.

28:19

So this slide shows, on the left hand side you can see an inverter and a transformer within the frame of a container. So this is where the sides of the container taken off, with the inverter on the left and the transformer on the right.

28:35

And it also shows the hybrid layout as submitted in the DC application of these alongside the battery energy storage systems and the DC to DC converters.

28:46

There isn't really any material difference between the containers that were container, an inverter and the container that were concertina batteries, they're both similar scale.

28:57

Can I just ask what sort of height those are? Because I can't quite read that. Yes, so they are a maximum of three meters, but they, yeah, a maximum of three meters are no higher than the panels.

29:10

Thank you.

29:16

In terms of the battery energy storage systems, the purpose of the battery energy storage systems are best is twofold. So it's to capture excess energy generated by the solar panels. And it's to help the balance the national grid by storing and storing and exporting electricity at times when it's needed. So for example, generating electricity in a day and being able to release that energy electricity into the national grid or tea time when everybody's using more electricity and the demand is higher.

29:45

The batteries in our case are dc to dc coupled which means that they're charged directly from the solar panels and are located across the site rather than in a central compound as most of you seen in other projects around the country. And

30:00

So the kitchen, the picture shown on the slide is of a best which is from a manufacturer's catalog.

30:07

And the diagram here shows the highlights the root of the electricity in relation to the best. So it's generated in the solar array. And it can either go straight into the grid through the AC to DC inverter, or it can go through the DC to DC inverter and into the into the battery. The personal purpose of the DC to DC converter is just to keep the electricity level as it's going into the battery summit to make sure it's not going up and down as it's going into the battery.

30:40

In terms of the 33 KV cable from the switchgear to the on site substation.

30:47

From its switchgear, the 33 KV cable connects to the on site substation, and the arrows on this slide show the flow of the electricity so everything's going from all the other areas towards Area C, which is where the on site substation is highlighted in a small yellow box on the slide.

31:10

we've retained options for laying the cable on road or off road and we maintain a preference for going off road where possible, and this we've been subjected to, as well as compulsory acquisition powers are subject to landowner agreements, where we get those landowner agreements in place, we'll remove areas

31:30

of on road cable cabling.

31:36

So Mr. Becker, can I ask you to go back to the previous image, please?

31:42

Thank you for explaining the directions in the arrows in terms of circulation of energy. But in that case, can I ask you to then make reference to the linkage please? To substantially Norton? Oh, that's that's in a slide after next. Yep. So. Right. Okay, thank you. This is panels to the on sites of citation. And then in the next slide, I just like to explain the onsite substation, right, which is 132 kilovolts. And the purpose of this is to increase the voltage from 50 kilovolts to 132 kilovolts for the national grid. This is necessary to reduce losses when moving energy over long distances as well as being matching the connection to the national grid. And early stage of the project, we did consider a few locations for this for the substation, and chose its current location on the basis that was furthest away from people.

32:43

And then on the next slide, we

32:46

this is where we look at the cable from the onsite substation to the Norton substation.

32:53

So again, we the electricity is going from area C, and then down towards notes and substation. And we've retained options in the application for laying the cable again, on road or off road,

33:09

and subject to land London agreements. So for example, in Bishop turned away, we had an on road offer option and enough for adoption to the south. Because we have signed an option for easement to the south of the village, we now know that we're able to avoid going through the village with the cable,

and we've removed that from the red line boundary of the project. And we'll continue to do that with other areas of the project where we can.

33:35

And then, in terms of the connection to notice, not in substation, it connects to the northern power grid at night and substation, and the northern power grid, then transfer this energy to the national grid transmission wasn't going to spend too much time on that because it's all activities within the existing substation. But this image provides an overview of the electrical elements of the of the project.

34:03

And this slide provides a summary as well as what we've just discussed in outline, and I would like to pass over to my colleague, Mary Fisher. Okay. Before we do then, can I just ask the gentleman that raised his hand, would you like to ask your question now please, gentleman on my left to my left.

34:31

My name is Peter Ward representing bishopton Village Hall, and I'm a resident of Bishop and I just wanted to take issue with the first site plan which was colored in green and pink. If it was possible for us to turn that back up.

34:48

If you believe what Michael Becker said at face value, he says that the pink areas were removed after detailed public consultation. I'm afraid that's not true.

35:00

Have the truth of the matter is very, very small areas may have been removed, adapt where, but the large pink areas, both in the middle of the screen and to the far right of the screen will remove unilaterally by the farmer owner who's a close personal friend of mine, because he decided he could no longer work with GW and because of their business practices, and he unilaterally removed it from miskeen. It has nothing to do with public consultation. Thank you. Thank you very much.

35:38

Just just before can I just give the applicant a chance to respond to this comment? And I'll come back to you in a moment. So at the point where we would go into public consultation with the reason why this land was included in the project is because we were in heads of terms in terms of the land agreement with

35:56

the landowner in question. And we did say to the landowner, we are going to include this in the statutory consultation and gave him an opportunity to not include that. And that was intent in anticipation of signing an option. Maybe after the after the consultation, we set a deadline for when we would want to know an answer from him, which was in the summer after the consultation of when we would want to sign that option by following the consultation, we stopped talking to have both parties stop talking to each other. But we also made an active choice not to pursue that land, because we'd already modelled the the project on the basis of not including that land. We don't we because we hadn't

had a signed agreement. And following the consultation, we thought it was appropriate to have a smaller project anyway. So I think there is, you know, and I respect that the landowner may never have come in on the scheme, and that might not have been in our control. But we we did also make an active choice at that time ourselves not to try and pursue the landowner agreement.

37:02

Sure, but in terms of your presentation earlier, you did say that that was mostly based on the fact that you have done an assessment. And there was some constraints with that site, following consultation. So although I do accept that the land was removed, I think that what we have to we after he is trying to understand the justification for why the land was removed.

37:30

Yeah, so we stopped talking to that landowner in response to the consultation, because we thought the smaller scheme was more appropriate. And then other areas of land were removed as well on as you can see on the plan, so so just to clarify, Mr. Baker, so what you're saying is that, actually, it's got to do with consultation and land not being available to the applicant, rather than any specific environmental issues being identified.

37:56

That could be said, Yes, yeah.

38:01

Okay, thank you for confirming that. Right.

38:04

One moment, please. Can I just ask gentleman to my right, you raised your hand earlier, if you'd like to ask a question.

38:11

If I could ask you to identify yourself first, please. My name is Chris wells on the local resident visionary.

38:20

Concerning this particular slide as well, our web identified a number of criteria that applied to the purple areas that had been removed. I'd be interested to know how those criteria apply to the existing all the remaining elements. And I wondered if they could lay that out maybe in a written answer, because I understand that might be quite difficult to cover in detail. But I'd be interested to receive that as a written answer. Thank you. Thank you can ask the applicant to reply to that?

38:59

So Alex mineka, the applicant fraud WA,

39:02

I think so just perhaps rounding out all of these questions which have been raised by members of the public who have an interest in proceedings and listening to the statements that have been made and the comments, your comments, sir and Mr. Baker's responses?

39:22

It? I'm going to agree so that I think the best action here would be for us to provide a short explanation of the reason why these different panel areas have been removed from the scheme. But I think the point that I just wanted to make was, I hadn't understood Mr. Baker to be saying that environmental considerations were the only reasons for any particular panel areas to be removed.

39:52

I think there has been a combination of factors which has been taken into account the extent to which environmental factor

40:00

Has have been considered and the removal of panels are certainly something that we can look at. And we can address in a written summary. I don't know, practically whether it would be possible to present a like for like assessment of any given past. So as against every single other area of the scheme, you know, practically taking into account the number of variables that exist with environmental impacts arising from any given area of panels.

40:30

I don't know how possible that will be to do but certainly with reference to the likely significant effects that have been identified in the environmental statement, we can certainly have a go and see what that looks like. Right. Thank you for that clarification. Mr. Mechanic, I think that I think that for the DSI, it would be very useful to actually have some further certainty in terms of what guided that decision, because obviously, we would be keen to scrutinize the general principles that led to the limit to the elimination of those specific sites, and actually check if we apply those principles to all of the land that has been identified within to order. If if we agree with the assessment that has been presented to us by the applicant, or if we have any further questions on that assessment to the applicant. So I think it would be really good to clarify that situation, so that we can actually understand what what criteria that presided that decision. So I do accept that there might have been a multitude of criteria.

41:36

But it would be really good to actually understand what those criteria were. And I'll just ask Mr. Wheelchair to intervene now.

41:46

I just wanted to be clear on what Mr. Wood had your Mr. Wood? Mr. Woodard said, you can answer it in the written answer, whether the pink areas were substantially taken out for business reasons. As opposed to environmental constraints, I think it'd be useful for us to know that specifically.

42:13

This was,

42:15

I knew I've known this farmer for many, many years, he's been asked for productive meetings with myself and be back on several occasions, since he removed his land. I hear what Michael said, saying that they decided to stop talking to each other. The other side of the argument is a very vehement one, and that he was grossly upset in their business practices. And so I won't say I won't use coercion, but business practices. And he, the family had a meeting of several generations, and decided they could no longer work with them, and took those two,

42:57

two or three large pink patches out of the scheme. It has nothing to do with environmental or any other reason other than sharp business practices that forced the farmer to to act in that way. And

43:12

thank you, Mr. Woods. Right. I'm mindful of time. So I know that there are some people that have raised their arms that would like to ask some questions. Mr. Wells, I believe Steve rose from bishops and parish council is with these answers that are gonna come in, can we be assured that we will receive those answers? So if we need to do another response back when when the answer so for example, the construction compound that you raised earlier on, we set a very, you set a very strict timescale this morning, are we going to weaken and other stakeholders are going to receive those responses in time for us to be able to respond within the timescale? So in terms of your first question, yes, you'll definitely will have access to that. As I said earlier today,

44:02

that information will be published on the national infrastructure website, on the bio skill solar page. So all of the correspondence in all of the documents that we will receive from the applicant will be available there. In terms of the deadline for that I haven't actually set that yet. I might set that by the end of this meeting. Or I might actually set that in writing at a later stage. But when we published the action list for today, but that deadline will be set so everyone will know when there was an expectation for us to receive a response on that specific point. Thank you. Okay.

44:37

We have one more question, please, if you could identify yourself as well for the record. Thank you, Sean Anderson, Bishop subdivision village Action Group. I have two questions actually. One was in relation to the land that was taken out. I understand that there was some concerns about the responsibility the residual responsibility for land drainage after construction.

45:00

Has that been addressed? And the second point I would like to make, if the reasons for taking out the pink area of site F are valid, then surely the balance of site f should receive consistent treatment. Because it's virtually the same piece of land. The only difference is a two different landowners. So we'd like to see in the assessment, that some some comparison comes from comparison between the two parts of the same site.

45:30

Thank you. Offer to the applicant to respond, please.

45:36

Sir, thank you, Alex 100 for the applicant. I'll come back on each of the last three speakers in turn, if I may. Just an observation. Mr. Wood is making lots of comments about a close family friend, I think he referred to him as another landowner who is not here today, we're not hearing directly from the person involved is casting

45:58

doubts around the business practices of our web which are entirely refuted and rejected. And I would just like that position of RW e to be on the record.

46:13

In relation to Mr. Rosen his request, the information would be made available to the public. So you've already answered that question. With the response been Yes, it will be made available on pincers website. The other point that I wanted to answer that is that there is already a degree of info, there's a large volume of information available about this project, the project description, the location of the construction compounds, the outline, construction, environmental management, plan, solid and so forth. There are lots of documents already available on the project website, which is what I would expect any response to any detailed questions to be signposting and cross referring to.

46:56

So there is lots of information out there already, which is available for public review. To the extent it hasn't been already.

47:05

Then, in respect of

47:08

Mr. Anderson's comments about the removal of land around area f.

47:16

Again, so I've already explained that it might not be possible to conduct a like for like comparison of any given panel area or part of a field

47:27

has between those that have been removed and those that have remained, we will take that point away. And we will look at it and present as good an explanation as we are able to take an account of the overriding objectives of the project to deliver renewable energy from renewable sources in accordance with government policy.

47:50

Right. Okay. I'm very keen for us to move on from from this specific point. But would you like to ask I will allow that question now. But I will then after this question, like first move on, yep. Okay. In my mind, Mr. Wells, I commented earlier.

48:10

I'm, I'm a chartered engineer, I've worked on a number of projects. I've also been a health safety and environmental manager. And just to say,

48:19

don't see that there would be a difficulty in doing a comparison that you mentioned, I think

48:28

it seems perfectly feasible to me to be able to do that comparison.

48:33

We wouldn't want it in a huge amount of detail. But I don't see why a comparison shouldn't be able to be done.

48:41

Mr. Mechanic, would you like to reply?

48:47

Yes. So I would

48:51

I think we've missed him in her neck for the applicant, we have committed to try and carry out that obligation within the policy context as best as we are able to. Right. Okay. Thank you very much. I think that I think that we will just then press on from this point. Mr. Baker, would you like to continue?

49:11

Michael Baker can I'm gonna hand over to my colleague, Mary Fisher to continue talking about mitigation and enhancement.

49:23

So we've been touching on this in the discussion afternoon, Mrs. Fisher, if I could ask you to introduce yourself, first of all, and just confirm your name, at least thank you, Mary Fisher, of epsilon.

49:37

So we've been touching on one of the primary mitigation areas, which is land included and excluded for development.

49:45

Now, that process started

49:49

very early on prior to the acquisition, and as part of the site search continued through the scoping design, where further areas were excluded. And then we've just been looking

50:00

At the last stage where areas were excluded, which was post consultation.

50:05

That's one of the primary mitigation measures is obviously avoiding particularly sensitive areas. Other aspects in which mitigation has affected the design of the components either through their sighting or their nature or their scale includes offsets of the panels within the development areas. So for instance, eight meters from watercourses.

50:29

The supporting infrastructure such as the best is cited throughout the panel areas.

50:35

But within that there are certain restrictions on where some components are. So for instance, the best is cited at least 300 meters from residential properties to mitigate noise impacts.

50:49

sensitive equipment has been located outside of flood zones.

50:55

In terms of materiality,

50:59

the fencing around the panel areas will be deer fencing, which is wooden post and wire with a maximum height of two meters.

51:09

And the on site substation is located in a low lying area of land with some existing screening to help mitigate the visual impacts of what is one of the largest structures within the scheme.

51:21

Post consultation the panel heights were reduced from 4.35 to 3.5 meters.

51:29

Sorry, can I just miss Mr. Anderson? Can I just ask you to? Oh, yes. Okay, I can hear I sound really loud to me sorry.

51:47

Okay.

51:50

Did you get that well enough? I do. Do I need to do it again. Okay.

51:55

In terms of looking at planting and ecological mitigation field, many margins will be enhanced for biodiversity. The areas beneath the panels at the field margins will be so with grassland wildflower mixes, existing hedgerows will be gapped up where this boss

52:13

and new hedgerows will be planted where they are absent.

52:20

Revise management for the existing hedgerows will allow them to get a bit taller to provide additional visual screening.

52:29

We're also proposing tree planting along the northern boundaries. And the reason for using the northern boundaries only is because in other boundaries, they would shave animals. Whereas along the northern boundary that won't happen.

52:40

And that obviously helps to reduce visibility from visual receptors to the north of the panel areas.

52:48

There are mitigation areas for wildlife throughout the design. You can see examples of those on the slides here, which are the sort of dotted areas as opposed to the striped ones.

53:01

And lastly, they provide ground nesting habitat for birds foraging habitat for birds, and bats. And in archaeological, archaeologically sensitive locations, which is not easy to say. There we are graph above ground foundations used to avoid disturbance to the archaeology.

53:22

And then finally, in terms of measures in relation to amenity, there's a proposed community orchard adjacent to Bishop term recreation ground school, which I think is shown on the slide on the left hand side. And that includes a sensory garden and car parking for the school. There's also an amenity area not shown on the slides within panel area II which will include heritage based interpretation relating to the former airfield in that location.

53:53

And throughout the scheme, some public rights of way will be rerouted around field margins where they would have passed between panels, the idea of being taped to take advantage of the existing hedgerows around the head around the edges to mitigate views at least in one direction.

54:14

And there are also permissive routes proposed again in various places throughout to help improve connectivity because some of the public network footpath network is quite fragmented right this area. Thank you for that Mr. Shaw, I do I did.

54:30

I did have some further queries regarding

54:37

and needs. So under actually the next item regarding what has been presented as project benefits. So some of the items that you have mentioned, might ask some further questions on the next item of the agenda, so pack those for now.

54:56

But can I ask if you are finished with

55:00

Your presentation. Yes, thank you. Yes, you are. Right. Okay. I have a couple of questions that I would like to ask and then I will come to the room for any further questions. My first question is actually linked with the panels themselves

55:18

and the information provided. So

55:23

if we turn to chapter two of the yes, that is a PP zero to five, the applicant confirms its intention to use solar for photovoltaic panels and in table 2.1 module design parameters. Don't worry, I don't think that we need to actually have these tables visible just to provide context in terms of the question.

55:48

The applicant does provide some further information regarding the design of the proposed panels.

55:54

However, there isn't a lot of information provided in terms of technology being used more specifically. So I would ask the applicant if you can provide us with any further information regarding the technology that you propose to use within obviously, the different technology that is available within solar for photovoltaic panels.

56:17

Sir annex minex and the applicant? Are you talking? Is your question aimed specifically at the panel's themselves or typically at the panels themselves? Thank you.

56:45

So, Alex veneks, the applicant, we don't have a huge amount of detail with us here for this hearing, would also note that the choice of eventual panel module or manufacturer, if that is what the question is aimed at, is something that wouldn't be settled until we get to the point of detailed design after the grant of DCO.

57:11

I think that, I think that that might be part of the question, but I'm more interested in more than the manufacturer themselves, actually technology that is used. So my understanding is that, for example, you can have monocrystalline and polycrystalline panels, that is my understanding of situation, and that they actually provide completely different ratios in terms of energy efficiency. So I wanted to just understand in a little bit more detail to technology that you are proposing to use, because obviously, this will be quite key for the exercise in order to understand fully the merits of the application in terms of technology that that you are using. And although I accept that you might not have an answer ready at the moment, considering that at several different points within the documents that you have submitted, you have mentioned.

58:07

You have mentioned

58:10

50 megawatts capacity over, I actually want to understand in a little bit more detail how you actually came to that calculation of the 50 megawatts

58:24

if it is over 50 megawatts, how much over it is the 50 megawatts? And also, if I'm not mistaken, the Constitution reports. You mentioned power up to 70,000 homes in store excess energy generated further supporting the growth of renewable energy production UK, so there must be some sort of calculation that you have done in terms of energy generation from this amount of panels. So I want to actually understand how that calculation was carried out, based upon technology.

59:00

So yes, absolutely. That is something that we can provide a response to, but if it is permissible, we're not to do so in writing, please. Absolutely. I'm just clarifying what we actually want really from from from the applicant. So can I please get an action on this specific point for the applicant to provide further evidence to the exci regarding the technology proposed to be used and what technology was used in order to calculate and underpin any

59:31

assumed capacity of energy production within the project?

59:42

Right, I would like us now to actually talk through apologies. Would anyone like to ask a specific question on this point? Yes, Mr. maleeni.

59:57

aren't going to simple one.

1:00:01

whereas the 132 substitution located is not shown in your joints

1:00:09

can ask the applicant to apply to this, please. It's showed on that slide. It's a small square on that slide in Area C, and it was included in all drawings for the statutory consultation and DC application.

1:00:24

Visit the small orange.in terms of Michael Baker for the applicant. This in terms of the presentation, it's the small orange dot Yes, but it's been included in our materials up till then. Right.

1:00:41

Okay, environmental. If I may ask Mrs. Bing. I think that perhaps to assist on this point, it might be worth showing the general arrangement scheme wide figure that you'll have which I believe is referenced. Let me just check that moment.

1:01:04

AP p 040. I believe

1:01:08

if we could share that on the screen that might assist Mr. Melanie.

1:01:17

So if we could zoom in on Area C, which is by the number 34? Exactly. So Mr. Melanie, I believe and I will ask the applicant to confirm the situation. I believe that we are looking at the substation there can ask the applicant to confirm please. So Michael Baker for the applicant. That's correct. The yellow box on the area where the mouse is showing is the one to two KV substation. Right. Thank you very much.

1:01:45

And I would like us to then, as I mentioned, I would like us to move on from this specific point now. And I would ask us to have a look. Apologies, I am trying to find my notes. Yes. So figure 2.2 general arrangement scheme wide IP. So exactly this figure that we are sharing now. In Can I ask how the applicant has come to the proposed arrangement, including reference to the supporting infrastructure. So I was wondering if you could talk us your approach to that, in terms of the location of all of the infrastructure outside of the solar panels.

1:02:29

Michael Baker for the applicant. So I'm the project manager, and I'm a town planner by background and supported within our web by a design team who our design engineers

1:02:43

when they are issued when when they receive and when we have confirmation of the available land, either at an early stage and as we go through the design process, consultation process and environmental assessment process, they will amend the design in line with the constraints that we put on the on the plan for them. So they begin by drawing the panels on the plan. So it's a computer program that calculates that for us.

1:03:15

And they then put the access routes onto the plan to make sure that all panel areas are accessed. And then the supporting infrastructure such as inverters, transformers, switch gears,

1:03:31

are placed throughout the product throughout the proposed development.

1:03:38

Usually in relation to the amount of megawatts each of that piece of supporting infrastructure can handle. So for example, through an inverter, it will have a capacity of say eight megawatts, and therefore, it will need to be in every interval, if you like the design, every time there's eight megawatts worth of panels. So that's what the design team will do on an engineering lead basis. They're then informed by our consultants, they the advisors on the environment and the landscape design. And we will adapt the solar area to those constraints that are identified through environmental consultation. Thank you for that, Mr. Baker. My concern is also linked or My question actually, is linked with also the battery energy storage. And my understanding is that this technology actually can produce a series of different effects, if you'd like that are significantly different from solar panels, for example, noise. So have those considerations. How have those considerations been taken into

1:05:00

count as part of the location of support infrastructure, Michael Baker for the applicant. So we have a number of design principles as well, which supports the design engineers, in particular, for battery energy storage systems, they are at least 300 meters away from residential properties where that's possible. And we try and make that possible in all cases. So that's how we deal with that specifically, on the right. Is it possible for me to then ask for the applicant to actually pardon me submit a little bit more detailed information on this specific point, I will confirm the deadline, either with the other actions or at the end of this meeting.

1:05:41

To clarify the specific issue and to give the xi, some further insight in terms of dose criteria.

1:05:53

Ceramics for the applicant? Yes, we can certainly do so to the extent that the information isn't already available in the application documents, or I believe there is.

1:06:05

There are various locations where some of this information isn't included, we will go away and we will review those because that's yes, sample I appreciate your your tilt to that information, then thank you,

and I appreciate your asking the question means that we may need to include more information, we will certainly look at that and include it to the extent that we are

1:06:28

able to Okay, thank you very much.

1:06:31

White Wood. Yes, Mr. Wells, Steve rose, Bishop and parish council, just maybe it's their legal friend, maybe to answer this, what's the status of the word try? In this this process? If someone tries and fails, they've at least made a good effort. But we would say 300 meters should be a minimum, not a try. I just wonder what the status is the word tries, in the context of this consultation,

1:06:59

can ask the applicant to reply to this point, please.

1:07:04

So I'm very happy to answer this question. But I just want to stress that we have had no request for cross examination of any of the witness teams are available here today. By convention, you will appreciate that when questions are not asked directly by members of the public to the applicant or their team. I entirely acknowledge and understand that we will have more experience of how this process works than those members of the public who may not have participated in a process of the sort before. Thank you. But I think it might help them. So if you can explain how this is intended to operate, please. Yes. So

1:07:44

what I would suggest, Mr. Rose, is that you submit? If that's okay, that question in writing, and the applicant will then have access to

1:07:57

its full team in order to reply to that question more fully.

1:08:02

So that would be my suggestion in terms of the way forward?

1:08:06

Yes, Mr. Melanie?

1:08:12

No Maloney, we shouldn't punish counsel.

1:08:16

Can I ask for some clarity on this 300 meters from a dwelling? Is it going to be from the boundary of the dwelling or from the actual property itself?

1:08:27

Thank you for that, Mr. maleeni. Mr. maleeni, our woods again, please ask you to actually submit that question in writing. There will be a record in any case of the questions that were asked today. And the applicant will then have access to its full team to reply to that information. Now, I'm just mindful of time. So if we could actually press on to another series of questions, please.

1:08:57

I would also like to very quickly if the if I may.

1:09:03

The applicant has submitted some new or revised information that was recently accepted, accepted by the exci. Particularly regarding the on road cabling option that was mentioned, I think currently by Mr. Baker.

1:09:18

Is there anything else that you would like to add regarding that specific request? That specific information that you have submitted to us in terms of explaining what it has allowed you to do?

1:09:45

Sir, thank you. Yes, as

1:09:48

Mr. Baker, I believe explained when he was introducing the cable routes and to remind the room there was the image of the outline of the scheme with

1:10:00

pinkies lines and purple lines which corresponded to Off Road and on road options for parts of the cable that are needed in relation to the scheme.

1:10:12

The applicants preference has been explained to be to use off road cable routes, wherever possible.

1:10:21

It's that that preference is explained in the environmental statement and the statement of reasons. And there are a number of factors which have influenced that, but one of them is the impact that carrying out on road cable works might have, from a construction perspective, for a period of time.

1:10:43

In relation to the cable routers that come through Bishop turn,

1:10:50

the African has now been able to secure an option for the off road cable route to the south of Bishop turn, which has allowed it to remove the cable route, the on road cable route as it runs through Bishop tunnel. So that's what the effect of the the amended drawings that have been submitted would achieve.

1:11:14

The final point to say is that the applicant is continuing to try to secure options for off road cable routes wherever possible. And hopefully that will be successful during the course of the examination. And whether that is the case and then enables further on road cable routes to be removed from the scheme. further changes to reflect that situation would be sought by the applicant. Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Min Henyk.

1:11:47

I think that you asked him for the questions that I had. And at this point, but considering time, I propose that I actually defer this to written questions. And we press on I'm also conscious that I did mention that we might have a break at around half past three and now appears to me at the end of the site and item three appears to me to be a good time for us to take a break. So I was going to suggest that we perhaps take a break now and return at half past three and resume the meeting there. If there are no objections can ask you for have any objections on

1:12:29

on anyone joining us online.

1:12:36

No, I don't see anyone raising their hands in the for them. I will adjourn this meeting now and we will resume at half past three. Thank you very much.