



Hearing Transcript

Project:	EN010139 - Byers Gill Solar
Hearing:	Open Floor Hearing
Date:	24 July 2024

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Thu, Jul 25, 2024 4:38PM • 1:05:05

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

area, solar farm, development, speak, documents, consultation, site, hearing, mulaney, country, point, meters, residents, clark, representations, village, solar panels, fields, dco, farm

00:05

Good morning.

00:07

Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me clearly?

00:12

Okay, thanks. Can I also confer with Mr. Joe Shipley that a live streaming recording of this event as commenced? Thank you.

00:24

For those people watching the live stream, can I also advise that you should should we at any point I joined proceedings this morning, we will have to stop the live stream to give us clear recording files. As the results are the point at which we recommence the meeting or restart the live stream, you will need to refresh your browser page to view the started stream. We will remind you of this again, shall we need to adjourn. It is now 10am. And it's time for this hearing. To begin. We would like to welcome you all to this fourth floor, excuse me hearing one in relation to an application made by our W E. renewables. UK solar storage limited who we all we were referred to as the applicant for an order granting and development consent for buyers Gill solar. The development proposal consists of a solar farm with over 50 megawatts capacity, ground mounted solar photo voltaic models and associated mounting structures, inverters, transformers, switchgear and control equipment, a substation energy storage equipment, and underground on an off site cabling. Thank you all for attending this hearing. My name is Alex. Oh, yeah, buddy. I'm a chatter transport planner, employed by the planning Inspectorate. And I've been appointed by the Secretary of State for housing, communities and local government to be a member of the panel to examine this application. I'm now going to ask my fellow panel members to introduce themselves.

02:20

Thank you. Good morning, everyone. My name is Andrea Pinto. 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 is the lead member of the panel to examine this application.

02:38

Good morning. My name is Max Wiltshire. I'm a chartered civil engineer. I'm appointed by the panel to inspect to it, and by the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government as a member of the panel to examine this application.

02:54

Together we constitute the examining authority. And we will be reporting to the Secretary of State for energy security or net zero with a recommendation as to whether the 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 calls. If you have any queries about the examination process or the technology we are using for virtual events, they should be your first point of contact. Their contact details can be found at the top of any letter you have received from us or on the project page of the national infrastructure website. I'll now deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person. Can everyone please set all devices and phones to silent

03:51

the closest toilets are outside of this room through the same door you used to enter the room earlier straight on and to the left. There are no planned fire evacuation tests planned for today. To 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 evacuation assembly point is by the lampposts with the red sign and green sign today is a hybrid event meaning some of you are present with us at the hearing venue and some of you are joining us virtually using Microsoft Teams. For those people are serving or participating 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 in the proceedings, please use the hand raise function. Please be patient as we may not get to you immediately. But we invite you to speak at the appropriate time.

05:00

We will make sure that whichever way you have decided to attend today, you will be given a fair opportunity to participate. In addition to the live stream. A recording of today's hearing will be made available on the BIOSs Gil Sola 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, stating your name and who you are representing each time before you speak. For those at the table, you can do that by pressing the like button at the base of the microphone. If you are not at a table with a microphone, there is a roving microphone, so please wait for one of these to be brought to you before you speak. If you are attending virtually, and don't want your image to be recorded, you can switch off your camera. For those in the room who don't want to be recorded. There is an area at the very back of the room out of the camera shot, please use that area. Because the digital recordings that we make are retained and published. They form a public record that can contain your personal information, and to which the General Data Protection Regulation applies. Only in the rarest of circumstances, might we ask you to provide personal information of the type that most of us will prefer

to keep private or confidential. Therefore, to avoid the need to edit the digital recordings, please try your best not to add information to the public record that you would wish to be kept private or that 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 inspector is practices to retain and publish recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary of State's decision. A link to the prime planning inspector as private notice was provided in the rule six letter alongside the notification for this hearing. I assume that everybody here has familiarized themselves with this document, which establishes how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with these principles set out in data protection laws. Please speak to Janet savage. If you have any question about this. I will now hand over to Mr. Wade chair, who would explain the purpose and conduct of this meeting. Mr. wisher?

07:58

Thank you, Mr. Birdie.

08:01

An agenda has not been prepared for this hearing, because its purpose is to hear the representations of interested parties who have registered to make all representations, elaborating on their written representations to date.

08:15

Open floor hearings, so your opportunity to raise anything directly to the examining authority that is important and relevant, that you think we should know about and consider.

08:28

They're not about a particular location or topic. The topic of your representations about the proposals is therefore up to yourself.

08:37

We will start by calling those interested persons joining us virtually that it informed us in advance that they wish to speak.

08:45

We then propose to call those interested persons that have joined us in person to put their points across to the examining authority.

08:54

Once you have spoken, the panel may wish to ask you questions.

08:59

Once all the interested persons have been called, we will then give an opportunity to the applicant to briefly respond to all the points made.

09:08

As per previous hearings, all participants will be asked for post hearing written submission of their all cases. As heard at this open floor hearing.

09:18

The applicant will be given an opportunity to respond to any matters raised once all speakers have been heard either orally or in writing by deadline one, which is the eighth of August,

09:30

falling from this hearing. If any interested person wishes to make written submission you can but please do so by the same deadline the eighth of August.

09:43

Does anyone have any comments to make on this proposed way forward?

09:50

Thank you.

09:52

We have a list of people who have registered an interest to speak this morning.

09:57

When we call your name please turn on your

10:00

Mr. Microphone if you're joining us virtually and introduce yourself and if you are representing someone whom it is you represent,

10:09

if in person when we call you please introduce yourself

10:14

as as and when you come up to speak, and if you are representing someone whom it is you represent.

10:21

We will conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions to be made. And all questions are asked and responded to.

10:29

Can I start now by calling those interested persons who have registered to speak virtually? Please do confirm your name and who you're representing.

10:39

The first on my list is David Clark.

10:45

Good morning sir. My name is David Clark. I'm a local residents I'm I've been walking out of the area of walked around here for all of my life. And I'd like to be addressed as either div or Mr. Clerk. Thank you.

11:00

Thank you, Mr. Clark.

11:02

I'll now move to those interested persons who are in the room and who've registered to speak please do confirm your name and who you're representing. The first I've got on my list is Peter Galvin.

11:21

Thank you Mr. Galvin.

11:28

Okay, thank you

11:34

Sean Anderson, please.

11:41

Speak so you're not down to speak. Okay. Thank you.

11:50

Norma Mulaney

12:04

thank you so much, Mr. Laney and Peter wood, please.

12:13

Good morning. My name is Peter wood. I'm the chair of the charity that is Bishop and Village Hall Association, and a resident of bishopton. Thank you very much happy to be addressed as Peter. Mr. Ward. Thank you. Thank you very much.

12:31

While I'm on that, is there anybody else in the room who intends to speak please do raise your hand?

12:40

Thank you very much.

12:47

Okay, I'm going to turn first to Mr. Clark. And if he'd like to turn his camera on, please, and

12:57

present his representation. Thank you.

13:02

Thank you, sir. Yeah, as I say I'm I've been walking around the area, I've wandered around here all my life. So I know the beauty of the area, and also the wildlife to the area. And I'm not sure whether you guys are aware says that Northumberland water are actually going to be putting the new drinking water pipe through the area, from Washington, Inaka Teasdale. And it will come across over to long Newton, it's going to be kind of the size of the Erawan the corridor, but the need, so that's going to cause an awful lot of disruption in the area. And that's going to start in 2025. So it's going to kind of sever an awful lot of public walking areas. And I go over there are an awful lot and I see lots of walkers. We have cyclist in the area because of all the bridal wares, and also horse riders. So we're going to have disruption from Northumbrian Water. So if this is agreed, and we're gonna get a large solar farm, you know, in the area as well, it's just gonna cause an absolute mayhem for residents. It's good for our public, our personal and physical health and mental health. And also the wildlife is very important. You know, the kind of river skirt and corridor is one of the most important biodiversity corridors in the area in the cutting country, the skirt and runs right through there. And that runs down into the tees. So it's a very well used area. And you don't need me to tell you that you care is one of the worst nature depleted countries in the world. So we need to protect as much as possible. On that side. Food security is very, very important. We only produce about 50% of the food that we're consuming, consuming. Sure. So taking out vast swathes of good food growing farmlands for 40 years plus I think is quite worrying. When when we look at what's going on in Europe at the moment and advice

15:00

kilowatts, you know, we're not going to be self sufficient. These actually six wind turbines not far from this area, it may warehouse farm, behind bumped and village. Now there's only six of them. And they actually produce 12,000 megawatts per year. Now this development taken out massive amounts of farmland is talking about 50 megawatts of power each year. So if 12 if six can produce 12, it's two megawatts per wind turbine. And I read on the internet, and I know you're not supposed to believe everything on the internet. But you know, wind turbines are more efficient than solar farms. And it did say one wind turbine would produce more electricity than seven football fields of solar farms. Now, if we got wind turbines in the area, because I'm all for renewable energy, it's very important that we become self sufficient and produce it. But why not look at wind turbines, you know, if we got 25 to 30, wind turbines in that area, the farmers could still find the one. The wildlife can roam freely. And also the residents still have access to some beautiful countryside, unable to do the near to nature watching. And that's me. Thank you very much.

16:17

Thank you very much, Mr. Clark.

16:21

I think one of one of my colleagues has a question for you, Mr. Clark. Mr. Pinto?

16:28

Thank you, Mr. Wiltshire. Thank you very much, Mr. Clark, as well for your participation today. Can I just ask a quick question based on the relevant representation that you have submitted to us in writing previously? In it, you mentioned

16:45

scenic areas like Kent. Country, I just wanted to clarify that with you. And just wanted to check exactly which area you mean, in relation to that comment, in terms of the scenic area, and obviously landscape and visual impacts that you are signaling on your relevant representation. Yes, of course. It's known locally to us as catting country and other farmers will call it catching country. And if you look at a map, you'll see the river skorne kind of sneaks through the area. So anything north of the skorne is actually catching country, as well. thermistor, we had the world famous cat in knots, there are mocks that was actually bred in the area by the Colin brothers. So you know, if you look at the lookup kit in Durham ox, it's a well firmus area, there's actually walks in the area that are used quite regularly, one of the walks actually featured in the best walks in the country. So it shows how scenic the area is and how well it is used. And more importantly, it's a massive wildlife corridor. Because once we get over the river skorne it's just a vast array of, you know, wildlife areas, there's no roads apart from farm trucks. So to take all that out, is, you know, really going to be quite bad for four years. Yes, we will still have some walking routes, but walking alongside a two meter three meter security fence with CCTV cameras that follow your along isn't going to be the same as walking along hedgerows. And you know, seeing the wildlife be able to move freely. Country is that area.

18:24

Thank you very much for that clarification. Mr. Clark. Thank you. I'll hand over to Mr. Wheelchair now. Thank you.

18:31

Thank you, Mr. Clark. As I said in the introduction, it would it would really help us that you submit a written version of what you've just told us because there's some detail in there that

18:43

I would just like to pick up in terms of how things are spelt and to be able to to identify them exactly on the map. But we've got the broad

18:54

swathe of what you're saying but I just encourage you to send that in by deadline one. Let me so thank you. Thank you

19:11

Thank you very much. Okay, I'll now move back to the

19:17

people in the room. So the next person on the list is Peter golden, please

19:23

um, you need a microphone. So if you want to come to the desk, that's probably the best thing to do.

19:45

Yes, Peter Galvin and Arizona my wife and family

19:56

I'm speaking on behalf of our family and

20:00

I have a specific interest in this because

20:05

the solar farm development is in very close proximity to our property.

20:13

Before I go into the details of what I'd like to address you with,

20:20

I would like to point something out, which is a very, we feel very personal about. And that's about when we first met

20:29

the project manager and his team at bishopton Village Hall.

20:34

And that is we met Mr. Michael Becker. And I'm addressing this question actually to him.

20:42

Though, I don't know whether these will have the opportunity to reply to this question, or they will just note it.

20:50

Am I in a position to put this to you? You can put it to us. Yes. And the applicant has an opportunity to respond later or or in writing. So yes. Okay. Let's try. Right, I'll go ahead.

21:05

In our first meeting, my wife and I were present. And

21:10

you,

21:12

Mr. Baker, told me that it was Mr. Hugh Watson's decision as to which fields were to be used for the solar panels at Hawksley farm. And yet on speaking to Mr. Hewitson, he told me that it was

21:32

his decision, Mr. Baker's decision as to which fields were to be used.

21:39

And I would like to know who was telling the truth.

21:47

I've got further questions as well, which I'd like to post them. But Mr. Baker, and that is,

21:54

was our request

21:58

to use different fails ever considered.

22:05

That is on the Moxley farm development.

22:11

Going on from that, I've got a question for the landscape consultant, Mary Fisher,

22:19

when she came to visit our property, which is some months later, this was on a site visit.

22:29

And she was adamant that the two fields in question which are the front of our property,

22:38

that could not be changed to alternative fields? Because she said it was too late in the process.

22:49

Is that correct? Was it too late in the process?

22:56

Going on to the actual consultant. App pepper is the documents issued by jpm. There's two of them. The first one was issued in May to June

23:12

of 2023. And then there was a letter one issued

23:19

on the first consultation document.

23:24

When you look at Hawksley farm

23:29

as a blue color, just correct that on the amended consultation map for Hawksley farm as a blue shaded area, which indicates that panels will have been removed.

23:44

However, on the original consultation document, these fields were not indicated

23:52

to be a proposed location.

23:56

Now we're a bit confused about that.

24:01

I've got both these documents in front of me so I can indicate exactly where we see this problem.

24:12

We run boarding kennels

24:15

outside and we're licensed by the local authority

24:20

and we must follow the welfare of the dogs and comply with legislation under the Animal Welfare Act of 2018 which is set down by Defra.

24:34

We believe that if this project goes ahead, this will have an extremely detrimental effect on the dogs and our business due to the noise level of construction

24:48

of this project for up to two years.

24:53

And the boarding kennel block and the exercise paddocks are in places less than three meters

25:00

As a way from the proposed site

25:09

we have raised concerns on this matter with Defra. And we've yet to receive a reply.

25:18

I do have a copy of the email, which are forwarded to Defra. Should you wait, should you wish to read it?

25:30

I believe yesterday,

25:32

it was mentioned that the nearest distance of a solar panels

25:39

in this project

25:42

was 300 meters from the nearest residence.

25:47

Well, I would like to point out that on the document here, the web document

25:54

and report that was done by the landscape consultant,

26:00

she refers to

26:03

the nearest solar panel from our property has been 125 meters.

26:10

Now, I will not disagree with that. I've not measured it. However, if you look from our property to the south, look in Juba south across a yard, sorry, Mr. Galvin, I think that you've got a lot of points to raise there, I think it might be worth you putting them into writing some of them. Because otherwise, it'll be going on. Okay, because you have so many valid points they have. So I think we'd be beneficial, it will be beneficial to

26:47

submit that as a written document.

26:50

But but in the meantime, we would urge you to continue with Mr. Webb either is completely correct in terms of

26:59

asking at the end of your submission to as well ask everybody to actually submit comments in writing. But please do continue for the time being.

27:10

Please continue. Mr. Calvin, please. Yes, the only the only final thing I would like to say is

27:17

this project if it goes ahead, and

27:22

as I said, it will have a devastating effect upon us as a family

27:29

in terms of the the inconvenience and the visual aspect.

27:38

That I'll have to say thank you. Thank you. Um, can I just ask you a couple of questions, please. i It's points of details. So I just was rereading your your representation. I was just keen to get a

27:55

more it within that you you spoken about the panelists being 15 to 20 meters from the back border of the kennels. I think you were saying in your what you've just said that you were talking about three meters. So

28:10

how far as far as you're aware from the documents you see in our the panels to your property

28:27

I can see there's a border perhaps a pathway or a roadway, around the edge of the candle,

28:36

the edge of the solar farm

28:40

there is a hedgerow quite a high hedgerow separating out of the body and cattle exercise pens, and the remainder of field. There's quite a high hedgerow, which is maybe two and a half meters in height and about two meters in in depth.

29:04

But the actual

29:06

the boundary fence for the

29:10

the potting kennels block

29:14

is approximately three meters to the fence, and then another two meters of hedgerow and then the failed the solar farm failed.

29:26

Okay, thank you. We did drive along the road that goes past your property when we did the accompany site inspection so

29:34

we are able to sort of visualize what you're talking about. So that's really helpful. And as Mr. Birdie said, if you could write these things down and those references, documents, if you could either make a copy of those and submit those it would be really helpful to us. Would you require any

29:55

photographs or

30:00

So if you if you have those new feel that they

30:05

enhance what you said we'd be more than happy to receive them. So yes. Okay, then if you can submit those by deadline one, I think it's the eighth of August, that that would be most helpful. I don't know if Mr. Pinto has any questions. Thank you, Mr. Wiltshire. No, I just I just wanted to just pick up on what Mr. Wiltshire just said, it would be really good if the documents that you are referring to, if you could actually confirm the date when

30:39

of the version of the document, just so that we are sure which version of the document you're talking about, because obviously, you mentioned some documents that were the tools. So during the consultation, period, and obviously there is a concern in terms of is easy to delete this information. So we'll have to obviously be be able to check that. So if you could, as part of your submission, mentioned any date in the documents that you can pick up linked with when the documents were produced, that would also be very, really helpful. Thank you, Mr. Gavin. That's okay. Yes. Okay. Thank you. Thank you that that's been very informative. And

31:20

thanks for coming in. And yeah, good luck with that. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

31:28

We'll now move on to Mr. Mulaney, please.

31:47

My name is Nolan millennia, I will be speaking as a resident of bishopton.

31:58

I've written down most of my comments so I intend to submit these comments at the end of the meeting.

32:08

Propose solar farm which forms a subject of this DCO covers a very large area

32:15

and is called passive battery storage unit solar panels and a lot of associated structures, very tall structures.

32:25

It it's difficult to assess the number of solar panels that will be installed

32:31

and the actual arrangement raus

32:35

the panels due to the lack of detail designed to date

32:40

the solar panels as a battery storage units, the best units that is and associated structures will be enclosed within fences within all the agricultural fields making up the site.

32:54

The development requires a number of structures the size of tall shipping containers.

33:01

So some of would be in a group next to a new substation. Within the number areas here to F and wood house lithium battery storage units. The remainder will be dotted throughout the sites and wood house transformers inverters to turn low voltage, direct current into high voltage alternating current suitable for the National Grid.

33:24

Access trucks will be provided around the sites, they're not shown on any drawings we have to did.

33:33

We accept acknowledge in fact, there is a pressing need to increase renewable energy generating capacity in this country. And solar farms would bring important benefits in reducing carbon emissions and assisting with the security of supply

33:50

when surprisingly, a solar farm of this scale proposed in this DCO

33:57

is capable of genuinely generating a large amount of electricity for new renewable sources. However, the never double consequence is that a very large area of land is required.

34:12

In this case, this land which natural national policy dictates should be kept permanently free from development.

34:24

At this local level projection of the ruling variable and the environment and the Greenbelt are fundamental to the vision and objectives of Darlington Borough Council logo plan

34:37

it would be a considerable advantageous position proposition to build wind turbines instead of solar farms. Wind turbines be in three to four times more efficient in producing power.

34:53

The area is also designated a Blue Zone which shows which indicates a low level of

35:00

on light.

35:02

In fact, he references the amount of sunlight hours per day per year.

35:11

The government has made it clear that proposals for all types of renewable energy development remain subject to existing Greenbelt policy.

35:22

There are a number of material deficiencies in the application. And the consultation process included

35:31

in the design proposed cast out on the installed capacity of the site, which he stated is only an 80 megawatt

35:40

and it's well normally industry there's circa 100 Acres is required to achieve 49.99 megawatt.

35:50

The government has made it clear that all the proposals for all types of renewable energy development must remain subject to the existing Greenbelt policy.

36:01

I believe that approximately four to 500 acres would accommodate all the required solar panels.

36:10

Meaning the proposed development is capable of achieving a value well over the capacity that they require.

36:19

significant emphasis is also placed on the temporary nature of the development. Yet new information is included on how the site will be returned to agricultural use

36:32

in the form of end of life, infrastructure removal and site restoration plan, and who will have responsibility for that activity and how it will be funded.

36:44

In case of a problem with noise, the noise report produced fields to assess any noise associated with a converters best cooling, and transformers associated with solar panels. significant amendments have been made from the previous design, and no mention is made anywhere in the JCR regarding excessive noise from both best storage converters, construction machinery, construction traffic

37:11

and 132 kilovolt transformers during the 12 to 18 month construction period.

37:19

Whilst the project is applied standard assessment criteria many reports the criteria are only applicable to appropriately cited developments. And they don't therefore do not fully assess the impact of this proposed development.

37:37

The IWA GVM statement of con community involvement

37:42

overstates the opposition. Only a few days notice were provided by the developer for their consultation event on the application. With invitations sent by leaflet contained in an unmarked envelope or email or by telephone. The developer continues to fall short of the most basic consultation standards KBM failed to provide community consultation throughout the pre submission stage and prior to DCO. Most residents of the opinion who was poorly managed, or even intentionally mismanaged by JVM, or for GBM benefit,

38:20

when presented during the supplementary consultation early in 2020.

38:26

When Jr wa jpm carried on with a conversation consultation, despite the COVID 19 pandemic

38:35

plan consultant consultation events were cancelled.

38:40

Deposit locations for information were closed, yet still wa JVM considered acceptable to continue with consultation rather than waiting until it could be held adequately and safely.

38:56

A large amount of concern is being is being raised by the residents and local population. As regards Beth Bess and lithium battery fires,

39:09

which are currently being regularly reported in the US

39:13

do not appear to be any realistic design reports on fire, fire brigade response, fire brigade access for vehicles and fire crews. Methods of response for a system with a history of overheating fires toxic gases and explosions from lithium batteries. In the developers developers submitted DCO all of which represent a serious and possibly fatal threat to the health and well being of the local population.

39:47

The developers suggested a design proposal to mitigate the issues associated with the likelihood of lithium generated chemically driven fires and it will not provide safety to read

40:00

Residents who live within this vicinity of the best storage unit. gases produced by the fires are harmful and health threatening in various degrees for a distance of up to five kilometers from the fire and to various degrees from fatal to permanent damage to lung function. This has been identified by several prominent professors from Oxford, Cambridge and Newcastle University's in published papers and documents. Together with various documents published by the Isle of Wight, and Hampshire fire services.

40:37

The government is to us to date failed to provide any guidelines for best design and manufacture to ensure good safe good and safe practices.

40:49

I've got a we've got a problem with the biodiversity calculations, the based on a flawed calculation method.

40:56

And it will turn out to be a negative not a positive

41:01

value at the end,

41:04

developers designed first outline sites been included in this biodiversity diversity.

41:11

But some of them are 20 miles distant from bishopton. And from rich Denton and from didn't Stanton, and even further from graviton.

41:23

There's no direct benefit, currently available low population of the four village has been damaged by this development.

41:33

The application does not drill address health issues which have become an inherent part of all planned applications for this type of development.

41:44

And the UK has failed to implement any type of investigations into the possible side effects on the human population. Although there are reports of results available in the USA, a country does answer solar far longer than the UK.

42:02

mental wellbeing is also not been included. But there is a large amount of anxiety and hang anguish forming in the part of the potential impact Korea generated by the poorly located solar farm.

42:19

That gets us on the accumulative effects. They've been dismissed by IWA, they seem to think that if it's not been approved for development, it shouldn't be taken into account. And that has been noted in one of their responses. In the early days.

42:39

We have in the area.

42:41

We had we thought we had 11 solar farms within a four mile radius of bishopton. It now turns out was another one added yesterday. So now it's 12.

42:54

I don't doubt that by the time you get to the end of the six month assessment, there will totally be useless added

43:07

on top of that, we have to work in

43:11

fully operational wind farms want to

43:15

submerge, which is South mu house and wanted stillington which is lungs Hill.

43:28

Mr. Mulaney, you've obviously got quite a lot written down which you said you're going to fit

43:35

you able to pick the main headings and just to summarize them. Yes, please. We will okay, we carry on without them.

43:45

There is their issues. The concern the residents regarding construction, and construction traffic management.

43:54

I mean, yesterday we talked about middle lane, mid lane is a single track road.

44:00

And that's true of the road that goes up to stillington. From the Crossroads at the

44:07

west end of the village. It's a single track road. The road that goes up CoBank is a single track road.

44:18

The size and location of development is a major major concern. It is being dropped in far too close to what is it conservation village a need.

44:31

further consideration there's a significant negative visual impact on residents because of that and where the site boundaries are. And we asked the question yesterday was the 300 meters start at people's property boundaries, or does this start at the back of their houses?

44:52

It wasn't answered yesterday.

44:56

The solar farm significantly and adversely

45:00

impacted the character and appearance of the landscape.

45:05

It will affect

45:07

the conservation village itself. And as one resident put it, the mood in the village because he wanted to bring his daughter up in what was a very attractive village. And he's going to end up being a prisoner in a village if all of this goes ahead.

45:27

The loss of

45:29

productive arable land is another major problem because it's obviously food security.

45:36

downlands farm they used to grow potatoes farm on that farm. So the quality of the land is such that it must be good because potatoes won't grow in poor soil that's been built on.

45:57

The loss of local wildlife is another major concern. We have a number of protected species species more than four. We have curlers, geese, lapwings, foxes, but I was Badgers, several types of deer

46:16

in the area, and they're all coming under threat, and Miss development.

46:24

noise and vibration is another problem. When all of this construction traffic starts to Thunder through the area.

46:32

It could have an effect on the properties in the village, most of which were built. They don't have foundations. They have a particularly Victorian style foundation where the brickwork just flares out at the base.

46:47

And a lot of the older properties and some of them

46:51

are sort of 600 years old

46:58

require a lot of very expensive maintenance at this moment in time. They suggest add to that

47:06

the school is a major concern. It's everything is going to be far too close to the school, to the school playground, to the school playing field and to bishopton Playground itself.

47:18

And

47:20

in fact, there are on one of the drawings showing best units lined up along the fence line.

47:30

Tourism and local business and the

47:33

expansion of local businesses is an integral part of darlin Buddha councils plan for the area.

47:41

That would be

47:43

common to

47:45

serious attack. If this was to go ahead, because who would want to go on holiday or visit an area where you're not looking at Grass you're looking at Black class.

47:58

The temporary basis for the development

48:05

is of serious concern.

48:07

It's 40 years it's going to last for 40 years that's not temporary.

48:12

And is to consider a piece of period of time that the people in the village and the area and the other villages have to live with it.

48:22

Will it ever be returned to its current state that's in serious talent.

48:28

And it's generally thought that LendUp becoming because it becomes those areas of the farm that have been made into solar farm.

48:37

It's been industrialized. When it's finished, the local Borough Councils could say well, you can build anything on its a brownfield site. That's a major concern to the residents.

48:54

The

48:56

developer poses several cross legalistic justifications for the development including a material impact to the openness of the Greenbelt for a period of 40 years does not impact on its openness.

49:11

The Perforce development is a different type of built form to houses and and such like immediately adjacent to the site. And so it has no impact on the Greenbelt or current nature of the area.

49:27

The claim that the development has been planned sensitively, is clearly when it is clearly not these arguments really should be dismissed.

49:44

Basically, the rest of us all of you will see when I submitted a series of issues that need dealing with So in conclusion,

49:55

the applicant places emphasis on the temporary and reversible

50:00

Nature the proposed development, which could and should be secured by a planning condition if it was granted,

50:08

the parish council was assessed the scheme on the basis it would indeed be reversed after 40 years. Although the other parties have observed there are numerous scenarios in which that might not happen

50:20

in any event for years is a considerable period of time,

50:24

and will be perceived as effectively permanent by those living in the area.

50:30

Most of the possible reversibility of the proposed game should be taken to account, it does not alter the balance to be struck.

50:38

And parish council therefore would ask, that kind of vision is refused.

50:45

We also would reflect on a project that is poorly designed and allowed to be assessed in the first place that are glaring mistakes, not addressed issues throughout the documents. And we believe it should never have been put forward in the first instance.

51:00

Lastly, the rush to meet the solar targets could result in the worst possible outcome

51:07

and a situation that the country in the country has never seen before resulting in massive cost to the taxpayer.

51:15

And that's me. Thank you. Mr. Maloney. Just one point of detail, please, you referenced a 12th

51:23

solar farm that you're aware of in the last week of your name

51:29

called Kelly, Kelly, County County.

51:35

Thank you.

51:39

Do you have any further questions? No further questions. Thank you, Mr. Wiltshire.

51:45

And no offense. Mr. wisher. Thank you, Mr. Maloney.

51:52

Okay, we'll move on to Mr. Peter wood, please.

52:03

Good morning, gentlemen. My name is Peter would be sure to the President and Chair of the bishops Village Hall Association. I will restrict my comments today just really on land quality, and how it will affect our full security. I'll be as brief as I can.

52:24

My family have been happily farming the bishop dairy for over 150 years. And to this day, still farm three or four farms in the immediate area. So I have an intimate family knowledge of the quality of land. Now, I know that the grading of agricultural land is basically done on an arbitrary basis, almost a desktop basis by the government historically. And I am aware that samples have been taken. But having been in professional practice for over 45 years and then employed many, many consultants in that time. I think we all accept that there are tolerances in the way reports can be written so that sometimes there may be couched in a way that the perhaps the peer Master is wanting. I'm going to speak from personal local, real knowledge, not arbitrary desktop studies.

53:26

In the last harvest we had in 2023.

53:30

I know from family and relatives and friends, that the average production of crops wheat in the fields around our area was over four tons per acre.

53:44

Now on a 759 acre site, that's almost 3000 tons of wheat lost on one installation. I'm bearing in mind, the problems we have in Ukraine and Europe that you know, food security is important. I am a fully aware that the government has an emphasis on food for security, food security, and also on net zero. But the left hand doesn't ever seem to be talking to the right hand. And at one stage, we have got this headlong rush for solar farms when wind farms will do, as has already been mentioned. But on the other hand, we have all of the problems emanating out of Europe, and we need more buy more food security.

54:34

If you look across the 12 sites that are around bishopton at over 10,000 tons of wheat lost. That is a small, small proportion of this country.

54:48

We are rolling out solar farms to the detriment I know. We've got a different political climate at the moment. And this is like Sonica which had better grades

55:00

The plant that we have around here was arbitrarily passed, which seems a complete fallacy

55:07

that particularly one of the local farmers has mentioned that the field that is going to be covered by

55:15

area f, is well known in the area has been one of the best potato growing fields in the area. It is a good grid. I know the consultants with the soil samples have downgraded it. But this is what we're faced with. I can only speak from personal knowledge of accrued over 150 years. This land is good, productive land. And we're losing it unnecessarily. Thank you.

55:45

Thank you, Mr. Maloney. Sorry, Mr. Wood. I do apologize.

55:51

Last my colleagues if they have any further questions, Mr. Abadi?

55:57

Yes, that's Mr. Witcher.

56:00

Mr. Wood, you did say that.

56:03

You've been a professional practice for 45 years. In terms of the

56:09

land classification, land grading.

56:13

Maybe you have experience in Darfur, I'm just wondering whether you're submitted, made written submission of your own personal assessment of the land grading.

56:28

I think I did cover that. There were was a position, a submission in my own name. And then it was a separate submission made under the bishop village Action Group. And I think I did cover most of that, but I'm happy to add to that.

56:44

Please do if you can, please. Be very helpful. Okay. Thank you very much.

56:51

Mr. Pinto, do you want to ask any questions? Thank you, Mr. Wheelchair. No, no further questions for me. But thank you very much, Mr. Woodson. Thank you. Hand over to Mr. Wiltshire. Thank you. Or I did ask at the beginning that I'll ask one more time, as we've got

57:07

further time is there anybody in the room who still wishes to speak.

57:15

And we haven't been joined by anybody virtually. So I'll then invite the applicant to respond. Mr. Henick, I assume.

57:38

Good morning to the panel. And good morning to everyone else in the room. The applicant has obviously heard everything that has been said as part of this hearing. And they are grateful for the comments that have been made by those in the room. So I do have two or three specific comments that I wanted to make mostly with an aim of providing a stellar or clarification on particular points of fact, that have come up during submissions that have been made.

58:08

There are also two broad points that I wanted to start with, which are firstly, that from the applicants perspective, in respect of many of the concerns that have been raised during the submissions,

58:24

adequate and extensive assessments have been carried out of

58:31

the potential impacts of the project. And those are all described at length in the environmental statement, which has been submitted as part of the application and supporting appendices. And the scope of those assessments was settled on through a process of consultation with relevant statutory stakeholders as part of the scoping process. So that's the first general point. The second general point then is in relation to comments, which should be made in relation to the consultation process. I would encourage those involved in the application to look at the consultation report, which again, is an application document and has extensive evidential appendices that can be looked at.

59:27

Turning then to specific matters which had been raised I think there are only four or five points which I'm on wanted to pick up on.

59:36

The first relate to comments made by Mr. David Clark, who we heard from First, he referred to a new drinking water pipe, which has been promoted by Northumberland water.

59:50

We just wanted to reassure Mr. Clark that the potential cumulative effects of that pipeline have been addressed in the applicants cumulative

1:00:00

assessment

1:00:04

Mr. Clark also referred to the potential generating capacity of the scheme, in comparison to potential wind turbines with wind turbine has been rated at two megawatts and the scheme being rated at 50 megawatts per year I think was the expression he referred to the the generator of the likely generating capacity the scheme should be considered to be the 180 megawatts which is identified in the application documents.

1:00:37

Mr. Clark also referred to some details of the scheme in relation to security fences and CCTV cameras, which would follow you along as you walked alongside them. I just wanted to reassure everyone that the scheme description describes the security fencing as deer fencing which would be up to two meters in height, and I believe all of the security cameras are directed to face into the area of the panels.

1:01:12

Turning then to Mr. Galvin.

1:01:17

Mr. Galvin, referred to commentary in yesterday's hearings where Mr. Galvin said the solar panels would be 300 meters away from properties. I believe Mr. Galvin may have misheard the commentary which took place in the hearings yesterday, the reference to 300 meters was to the location of the battery energy storage

1:01:46

facilities and the inverters and the switchgear and those those those supporting solar plant been located 300 meters away from residential properties where possible, it wasn't in relation to solar panels.

1:02:07

Then, just

1:02:10

two or three more very

1:02:14

brief points.

1:02:16

Mr. Mulaney made a number of references and his representations to the protection of the greenbelt and the impact of the scheme on the greenbelt and policy in relation to Greenbelt.

1:02:30

The, the the documents supported in the documents submitted in support of the application explained that none of the area that is affected by the scheme, so none of the red light none of the land within the order limits is a Greenbelt land. So, I think those comments may be

1:02:52

slightly mistaken, in that respect.

1:03:02

And then, finally, sir, the the final comment that I wanted to make specifically on what we've heard today, again, Mr. Mulaney, referred to as units been along the fence line of the school and playground.

1:03:18

I don't know, specifically, which drawing Mr. Maloney was referring to, and hopefully he'll be able to include a copy of that in his written submissions. But the current general arrangement drawings don't show as units along the fence line of the school or playground. So I just wanted to make that point of clarification.

1:03:41

So with my thanks for

1:03:44

allowing the applicant to short response in this hearing, if there are any further points of detail, which emerge, haven't reflected on what we've heard, we will will of course, include those in our deadline one submissions.

1:04:00

Thank you, Mr. Mechanic.

1:04:03

Okay, I'm gonna hand back to Mr. Abadi now

1:04:07

tells me that we're here.

1:04:10

Thank you all for contributing so fully and usefully to this meeting. We have found it extremely helpful, and we'll consider all submissions made carefully. Can I just

1:04:25

submit your post hearing submissions, including written submissions of oral cases by deadline 1/8 of August 2024. Can I also remind you that next meeting is the open floor hearing to assist o'clock today. The time now is 11 05 and open floor here meanwhile, for the bass Gil solar energy is now close. Thank you