



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Byers Gill Solar
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 4 Session 3 (ISH4)
Date:	16 October 2024

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00:05

Good afternoon. It's 140 and this issue specific hearing three on landscape and visual Matters has resumed.

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I'm conscious we have an hour and 20 minutes left to complete this. And item four, which is the DCO

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part of the hearing,

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we're probably going to have to prioritize things, so I'm going to try and give

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as many people have asked to speak that opportunity, and we may have to make some adjustments to Item four, depending on how long that takes. So my initial request that people focus on the matters of disagreement and make their key points or their key questions stands. I have one brief item I didn't quite get to with Darlington. Maybe it will be quick. I hope so,

01:09

regarding Glint and glare and referencing your local impact report. Rep one, oh, 23, paragraph, 510, four. Have you any specific concerns about the page of power guidance, and if so, could you detail what they are?

01:26

Good afternoon, says Carol Whelan from Dalton Borough Council, our concern really related to impact. Hold on, Minister Whelan, can you pull the microphone a bit closer? Thank you.

01:38

Sorry. Can you hear me? Okay? Now I think so much better. Thank you. Thank you. Are concerns related to impartiality with pager power producing the guidance and also producing the study report for Bayer Gale, we don't have any specific concerns with regard the guidance. Per se, I don't think we're particularly qualified to be able to scrutinize that guidance, but we're just wanting some steer from the examining authority as to whether the page of power guidance should be used when we're considering the glint and glare assessment.

02:17

Okay. Thank you very much. I think I'm right in saying that we've had a response from the applicant on that in which they

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give us some assurance that it's it is a recognized

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document for assessing Glint and glare. And I think if I've interpreted it at that right, that answer. I think we're satisfied that that's acceptable. Sarah

02:48

alexman Hill, next to the applicant, yes, that that is, from my recollection, the gist of the response that we provided in our answer. I don't actually have it turned up in front of me. I don't know if it's going to be helpful and not in time constraints. We have Mr. Qureshi from page of power on the call, if you would like to hear from him directly. But fundamentally, the applicant's position is that the page of power guidance is the industry standard, and it is followed in these assessments. The fact that page of power have been involved in the publication of that guidance that is used in

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these processes, in the applicant's view, lends additional credibility to the assessment work, which is then carried out by page of Power themselves.

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Thank you very much.

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I think considering the time we've got left, I'm satisfied with the arts we've had, and I do apologize for

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getting Mr. Qureshi here unnecessarily, but

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I think we need to move on, and thank you for that response.

04:01

So we, we've, we've finished with Darlington, um. I just want to ask if any of the other local authorities have anything they want to comment on, on what they've heard. Please. Ellen Boston from Stockton Borough Council planning, no, I think we're just going to rely on what's submitted in our local impact report. So thank you. Thank you very much. Miss Boston.

04:24

Thank you. Right. I'm going to now ask the bishop Tom village Action Group given the opportunity to comment

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the Xs noted your very detailed written representations. Reference rep two Oh 42

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and rep two Oh 44 which is the landscape and visual review, as well as the applicant's comments on these at deadline three reference, rep 3005

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in which the applicant stated that the parties had met on the 70.

05:00

September focusing on the statement of common ground,

05:04

in order to make the best use of the time we have available, I would ask bvag to concentrate on the very most important landscape and visual matters and the main outstanding areas of disagreement, other matters of disagreement, or matters that have been discussed previously today can be dealt with in writing. Thank you very much.

05:38

Thank you Good afternoon, sirs, Carly Tinkler, Landscape Architect representing bishopton village's Action Group.

05:48

I'm going to be quite brief, probably to your relief,

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as you've mentioned, we have already had meetings with the applicant, which beefag consider to be very productive. And I don't know whether you're aware, I wasn't here for all of the hearing yesterday, but we had another meeting on the 10th of October, and that was to discuss, if you like, scheme design modifications. And

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Ms Fisher wasn't present at the meeting on the 17th of September, at which we discussed the statement of common ground.

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And as you will have noted from my report,

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what I am hoping is that

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And the applicants, we can either produce a separate landscape statement of common ground, or it can be included in the main statement of common ground. And I'm hoping that we would be able to agree in principle, significant adverse landscape and visual effects, and that that would therefore mean that we don't need to go into the nitty gritty of the technical matters, because I think, as with Darlington, we don't necessarily all agree with the methods for getting there, but I believe that we agree that in principle, there would be significant effects on character and views. And probably we would agree that, I think normally one would say that effects, levels of effects, would reduce gradually with distance. That's what we normally agree in landscape statements of common ground as a matter of principle.

07:38

So what, unfortunately, this was agreed with the applicant at the meeting on the 17th of September that Ms Fisher, Mrs. Fisher and I would speak. Unfortunately, I've been in back to back public inquiries, so I simply have not had a spare moment to contact Mrs. Fisher. We spoke very, very briefly a couple of days ago, and we're both very tied up, as you can imagine. So what I'm hoping is that we would be able to meet separately,

08:14

informally, talk technical, as it were, perhaps run through the applicant's response comments on my written representation report, and then go back to our respective clients and explain what we've come up with. And my anticipation is that there would be very few matters of disagreement. What I may have are a couple of residual queries or matters of clarification, and I may have some residual concerns, which I would ask the examiners to note. But on the whole, I think that we could avoid further technical responses if we can agree that there are significant landscape and visual effects in principle,

09:06

I just feel that the matter of mitigation is the one which needs exploring now and again. I'll be very brief. So I agree with what Mrs. Fisher said this morning that

09:23

in order to achieve more meaningful mitigation and really reduce the levels of adverse effects, it would need what she called, I think, a step change, and also, as Darlington Borough Council's landscape expert has said, It needs a rethinking of, perhaps, approach, in particular, to the settings of the villages. Now, again, that may be academic, if we're agreeing that there would be significant landscape and visual effects that could be covered as a blanket.

09:55

But the points that I that I would make is that first.

10:00

All,

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I don't think that screening by planting is going to make a huge difference in the whole scheme of things. Partly, as you know, I don't like relying on vegetation to screen in the long term. And also, as Mrs. Fisher accepts in LVI a if you screen an open view with planting, then that will result in total loss of a view, which is a high level of adverse effect.

10:31

So and also, screening will not reduce levels of effect on landscape character that's that's also accepted in in LVI a so the only option seems to be to either remove some of the panels or to move or relocate some of the panels and perhaps the infrastructure. Now my understanding is that that can't be done through the DCO process, because obviously one would have to reassess the effects of any modifications in order to establish definitively whether effects were going to be reduced to a level that was considered acceptable, or some other word. And also, what we have to bear in mind is that if panels are moved to different locations. They may have lower landscape and visual effects, but then there could be knock on effects on ecology or hydrology or transport or other matters. So that assessment of effects, my understanding, is that that cannot be done now that we are actually stuck with the scheme that we've got. And so the question then comes, is

11:43

if, because we do seem to be moving towards, certainly, from B fags point of view, places where panels might be moved back in order to reduce some of the visual effects. And that's a process which is ongoing, and as I say, it's been quite productive.

12:02

But how would those modifications, even if agreed in principle, how would they be secured?

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Because, again, my understanding is that

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there is only, there would only be a commitment for the applicant to consult on any changes which are made post consent, if consent was granted, and

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then it would be down to the local authorities to to determine, as we say, the other point that I would make, which I think is extremely important, is the Matter of capacity, which was discussed at length yesterday. And in my opinion, we can't look at modifying the scheme in terms of where the panels would be until we've understood or bottomed out this matter of capacity. And as I'm sure you're very well aware, en three does not sanction clipping it sanctions over planting for and allowing for the degradation of the panels the applicant has said 15% over the lifetime of the scheme, which is, I think the average is 10 and 20% so that sounds fair to me, but in my opinion and my experience, it is definitely possible to get a 180 megawatt scheme onto a much smaller site, and that what the applicant has done is based the calculations on the 288

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megawatts that we heard about yesterday in DC. I'm going to leave that there, because I understand that the applicants are going to be providing further detailed information, which we will comment on. But it's the point that can we decide where the where we could pull panels back or change the locations without understanding the matter of capacity? So in my opinion, for now, we can only consider effects on the scheme as submitted, which are, I think we agree, significant adverse and just regarding that there, if I may, and just to finish on that point, that therefore mitigation, in my opinion, is just speculation, and it would have to be dealt with post consent, If I could just briefly pick up three or four points from this morning, the first one regarding the worst case scenario, and says I would ask you to note glva Three para, 4.3

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I

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it, and that says it may be appropriate to consider a range of possibilities, including a reasonable scenario of maximum effects, sometimes referred to as the worst case situation.

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So I'd also.

15:00

Like to disagree with what Mrs. Fisher said about the examiner's question about the numbers of people using public rights of way, and I believe that she said that that wasn't a factor in LVI. A however, I'd like to take you to GL via three paragraph, six point, 22nd

15:19

bullet. Do

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right, and it says the selection of the final viewpoints used for the assessment should take account of a range of factors, including the potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected. And so in my assessments, I always consider the numbers of people, the numbers of receptors,

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I agree with Darlington Borough Council's landscape architect in terms of assessing setting separately from the character of The settlements. And I note glva three paragraph 5.9

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which is talking about links to cultural heritage and historic landscape character.

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And it says in the

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history of the landscape, etc, the surviving features and their settings may be relevant to the LVA baseline studies, as well as the cultural heritage topic. And it goes on to say that there should be close collaboration between heritage experts and landscape architects

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and finally says regarding Glint and glare, I don't have anything to say about that today, because

16:51

my opinions on the flaws in the methods are clearly set out in my report.

16:59

Thank you.

17:02

Thank you, Miss Tinkler for being so concise. I'm going to give the applicant to opportunity to briefly respond to that if they wish to you.

17:25

Mary Fisher for the applicant, I think. Just a quick look at three paragraphs mentioned by closer, Yep, sorry. Just a quick look at those three paragraphs mentioned on the point of ongoing discussions, etc. Yes, that's happening.

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So

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paragraph 4.3, of Bolivia three, I think, was mentioned in relation to worst case scenario.

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I think I would just draw your attention

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to the fact that that is in a section specifically relating to understanding the proposed development I, as I said previously, it relates to worst case in terms of design and understanding the development parameters. So just to understand the context of that comment.

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At 620 we were referred to

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taking account of the number of people using footpaths in relation to viewpoint selection.

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And I mentioned that

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we do sort of look. I did look to see where the footpaths appeared to be used. I wouldn't have selected a viewpoint on a footpath that was totally overgrown that obviously nobody used. But that's

18:52

and that's what that paragraph is about, really,

18:57

rather than counting or attempting to survey

19:01

and 5.9 we were taken to in relation to the setting of villages.

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And again, if we look at the context to that which, as Ms Tinkler referenced, is relating to the links between LVI a cultural heritage and historic character.

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That specific paragraph

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settings may be relevant to LVI a baseline studies.

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Now the guidance allows for if you like, two possible scenarios, one in which baseline studies have already been undertaken by the local authority,

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and therefore the LVA draws on them which the guidance recommends, the LVI a guidance recommends, or there's another scenario in which those are not adequate or not press.

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And at which point the Lvia would have to effectively characterize the landscape from scratch,

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creating a new baseline study where there wasn't one.

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Now

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for this assessment, we were in the first of those scenarios. Darlington had undertaken

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a baseline character study, and that was used to inform the LVA. So

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I didn't undertake an assessment, a baseline characterization study from scratch. I relied on the work that Darlington had done and my own site observations, and took account of what that identified as being important at the time.

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So it's just to understand the context of those particular bits of guidance.

20:53

Thank you for that. I've just got one sub question. Ms tinklers spoke about a statement of common ground that you were hoping to arrive at concerning landscape and visual matters, and whether that should be part of an overall statement of common ground or a separate one. Do you have a view on that? And I think from our point of view, as the XA,

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we would encourage whatever would give us a position statement on that, the sooner. So if doing it separately speeds it up, I think we'd

21:30

encourage that,

21:33

sir alexman and next the applicant, we're very happy to do whatever works best and provide you with the input soonest. Did I sound like the landscaping visual matters in terms of assessment,

21:45

a capable of being agreed relatively quickly. So if you're willing to leave that with us,

21:51

perhaps the best thing to do is to do is for Ms Tinkler and Mrs. Fisher to have the conversation that they've been trying to arrange once they've had that to the extent that we can get a landscape and visual specific statement of common ground worked up quickly, we would look to do that and submit it. If that doesn't prove possible, for whatever reason, I wouldn't want to provide an additional document that isn't serving a purpose, but if it does serve a purpose of agreeing things more quickly. Yes, we would. We would like to do that. Thank you.

22:25

Do either of my panel members have any questions on that?

22:31

Thank you, Mr. Wheelchair, no further questions from me. Thank you, none from me. Mr. Weisha, thank you. Thank you.

22:42

Going to move along the table

22:47

to great state. And you wanted to comment on that. Can you state your name again, please and your question?

22:58

Mr. Martin Silva, great state and parish meeting, 100%

23:08

of residents of great state and are opposed to development buyers. Girl, we were more so mindful that despite how inappropriate the development is for the local area, due to the substantive adverse impact it will have on people's daily lives. Any recommendation not to consent by the examining authority can be overridden by the Secretary of State.

23:30

With this in mind, we have recently met with RWE and Arup to discuss mitigation and priority areas,

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the respective landscape and visual impact assessments RWE zone documentation and statements of common ground all acknowledge that is Gill will have a substantial adverse impact on the residents of great saints, and we have identified land in panel Area D

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which we want removed as a village due

24:00

To the close proximity of the panels to the village and

24:03

residents properties, and

24:06

the extent of the visibility of the solar panels due to the short distances from people's homes and the undulating lay of the land, which means the panels cannot effectively be mitigated with screening.

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When we met with RW Arup, it was pleasing to learn that they had also identified some of the same priority areas in Area D for panel removal.

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However, it was also disappointing to hear that despite these areas being identified as priority for removal,

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that removal would only be considered if improved technology, such as more efficient panels, were available by the detailed design stage of the process.

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Subsequently, this does not provide the residents of great state and any surety or confidence that the mitigation identified by our dairy for these high priority areas in.

25:00

Will take effect, resulting in prolonged anxiety and stress for residents,

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when considering the substantial adverse impact on the residents of Great Satan and given that the portion of panel Area D that we have identified to remove represents a very small proportion of the overall buyer skills development.

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This would appear to be in line with the policy discussed earlier this morning,

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where a small reduction in function produces a significant benefit,

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but the benefits in this case is reduction in exam anxiety and stress for the residents. So in this respect, we would like to request that high priority areas that we've identified in panel Area D, are removed from the scheme in the event the planning consent is

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granted. Thank you, sir.

25:58

Thank you, Mr. Philpott,

26:02

does the applicant wish to respond to that?

26:07

Yes, sir. Thank you. Alex man, hennick, for the applicant, both, Mr. Philpot, Mr. Have referred to

26:15

a meeting which took place last week, now on the 10th of October, between the applicant and representatives of those areas, those villages, those action groups, the

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conversation that you're hearing relayed by the representations of these parties reflects broadly the conversation which took place during that meeting. So what RWE has identified is that there is obviously significant concern in the local community around the impacts of the project on those communities, and it is listening to that concern, and it is considering where there is anything additional that it can do to try and offer

27:05

some additional mitigation in respect of those concerns. So the

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I suppose the starting point here, sir, is that the scheme which has been applied for is the scheme which is before the examination for consideration, it's the scheme in respect of which the environmental impacts have been assessed and the

27:32

effects to which the mitigation hierarchy has been applied by the applicant in the formulation of its design and any relevant mitigation that it can offer as part of this scheme, whether that is planting mitigation or some other form of mitigation. And the applicant has put forward the scheme in its current state, and we have had a conversation in a hearing yesterday about some additional information that the applicant is going to provide in relation to the land take which is

28:06

required to deliver the benefits of the scheme, which is the export capacity.

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We also spoke very briefly yesterday, Mr. Pinter in particular, raised questions around the possibility that more efficient technology might emerge in the future, and the possibility that that future technology is then the technology that is used as part of the scheme. Now taking account all of that context, the applicant has been talking to affected parties about two key

28:40

things that might be done to change the existing scheme. So the first of those would be whether there is any scope within the existing footprint of the development and the existing development which has been put forward for examination to include additional mitigation or different mitigation to the mitigation that the applicant has designed and put forward, and you've heard from Mrs. Fisher on some of the matters that go into the design of mitigation in these areas and how the screening relates to the panels and so on and so forth.

29:14

There is, I understand, potentially some flexibility in terms of

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more mature planting, for example, or landscape bunding, small scale landscape bunding, which might be capable of fitting within the existing parameters of assessment, isn't the applicant's preferred form of mitigation, but to the extent there is flexibility in there, it is something that is very happy to talk to local communities about, and take those conversations into account in the final detailed design of the scheme. So that's one category of potential future changes which to reiterate the point would happen after the DCO has been granted.

30:00

And would operate within the parameters of the DCO as granted. So it's not been proposed as a change to the DCO or the DCO application. It's an element, I suppose, of the sort of thing that might happen in the detailed design process, which is controlled under requirement three

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and has oversight from the local planning authority in due course. The second area that the applicant has identified there might be potential to engage on is this concept of priority areas. So I suppose, just to set the scene slightly if it were the case that there is more efficient technology which is emerging. And if it were the case that use of that technology is available to the applicant in the detailed design of the scheme, and if it were the case that using that technology means that some of the land which is currently envisaged to be necessary for the scheme isn't, in fact, required for solar panels, and if there is no opportunity to use any additional export capacity which could be generated, if there is no benefit of the sort that the scheme is delivering, which could be taken up with the use of those panels

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in the ordinary course of events, RWE, as a commercial operator, would not be incentivized to provide panels that have no beneficial purpose if they're not able to export the electricity. And in that situation, it is, it would be at the detailed design stage, naturally looking at what the layout of the scheme was, and it may be that there is some excess land, or there is some land which becomes excess land and is therefore no longer needed for the scheme. Now, if that is the case, what the applicant has been explaining to the affected parties, to the community interest groups is that it would be willing to take into account their views as to where those areas should be focused, what the priority areas should be for consideration of that process.

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That's the conversation which has been had

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for reasons which will be apparent, it's not something that has been put forward by the applicant today in the examination on the basis that the application that has been examined is the one that has been brought forward and has been modeled by the applicant. And in particular when it comes to the use of technology and the land implications for the use of technology, we're conscious that that is something that we've agreed to provide more information on as an action point from one of the previous hearings yesterday. Hopefully that explanation helps. Obviously, very happy to answer any questions.

32:59

Thank you. That's very helpful. Mr. Mahinik, I would if we had time, and I'm sure Mr. Pinto would have first follow up question about whether any of that would be secured as part of the DCO, but I think we'll deal with that in writing,

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next hearing,

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in the next hearing. Thank you very much.

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Ms Tinkler,

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thank you, sir. Just to clarify, I wondered whether it would be possible

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for the applicant to explain whether it may be possible, not talking about removing or reducing the number of panels that is applied for, but relocating panels within the DCO area. So in other words, at the moment, it would be the same number, but looking at different areas, I think that the local groups, I mean, this may just be for discussion as we go, but I know the local groups had identified certain sites which they felt they could take panels out of one area and put them in another to reduce levels of effects.

34:05

Thank you. Mr. Mahinik,

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sir. Mr. Manhini, for the applicant, I'm afraid that's not going to be possible.

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The scheme which has been put forward by the applicant makes the best use of the land available to the extent that there are areas within its DCO application boundary, which aren't currently shown as being used for solar array. It's because the areas which are shown as being used for solar solar array are more appropriate than those other areas.

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It's it's, I'm not proposing to go through the whole of the red line, but like I say, the applicant is not proposing to change the scheme which has been submitted, and that includes moving panels from one area of the red line to another.

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Thank you for that.

34:57

Mr. Pinter, thank you. Mr. Wiltshire.

35:00

Can I just clarify very quickly, Misty in terms of your your contribution just now, when you mentioned removing panels and changing them from one area to another area in light of the applicant's response, did you actually mean changing it from an area where

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it's linked with areas designated as pink within the work plans, which is where the panel areas are to somewhere that is

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linked with works number one, which will be green infrastructure, which is mainly linked with and the mitigating measures that the applicant is proposing. Can I just clarify that you meant that, or did you meant to switch within areas that have already identified as being suitable and proposed for solar panels.

35:51

Thanks. So if I could give you an example, in Area C,

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you have a property which is called the mount

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and

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Miss Tinkler. Can I just ask you to repeat that please? You mentioned Yes, Area C, and it's on the western central side of Area C.

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So I believe that. I believe that within the works plan that would probably be

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sheet six, yes, I believe it is perfect. Thank you.

36:42

The

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and on the I think that it is on the environmental

36:56

plan that explains that there are no panels proposed west and north of the property called the mount, in order to alleviate adverse effects arising on them from panels.

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However,

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I don't know whether this was mentioned yesterday, but there are concerns about the also the location of the substation. And so the local communities were wondering whether there could be adjustments in terms of moving the substation

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over towards the mount and then putting panels in the areas which are currently proposed for mitigation. And we understood that there would be a problem with doing that, because there's a little site of special scientific interest. It's of the little triangle of land to the west,

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just below the bridal way. But that's only a hay I mean, I say it's only a hay meadow. It's a really important remnant hay meadow. But I'm not convinced that I'm not an ecologist, so, but it seems to me that there wouldn't be a disadvantage in putting panels around the mount and relocating things around there, that that was an example. So in other words, it's not reducing the amount of panels proposed. It's just moving them around a little bit in some of the infrastructure.

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Thank you for that clarification.

38:31

So in light of that, can I ask if the applicant would like to

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reconsider their position or not,

38:39

sir, thank you. Alex Minh and the applicant will certainly take away the information that Ms Tinkler has put forward in that particular location and look at it and consider whether there is anything that can be done. I think Ms Tinkler has highlighted in identifying this location some of the constraints that exist in that area, which I will have to consult with the environment team that I expect are going to be problematic, but we will take the point away and look at it and consider

39:08

it, just to clarify. Then it does seem to me that it's not necessarily switching in a very basic term, the area that is in the works plan

39:19

highlighted in pink to a green one. It might be that it's not as simple as that, and therefore there might be some move to maneuver and to reconsider things within the red line boundary that you have already drawn.

39:34

So thank you. Yes. This particular proposal would involve the relocation of the substation, which of itself would be a fairly major undertaking, which is one of my reservations with we'll explore the answers as possible, export the options, yes. Thank you.

39:52

Over to you, Mr. Wilson, thank you. Thank you for that. I'm going to move along the table. I'll give you a quick time check it's.

40:00

20 so we've got 40 minutes left, and I know there's a number of people sitting behind you, Mr. Mullaney in the room. So if you could give your representation on behalf of bishopton parish council on anything that's important that has been discussed today that you feel needs to be raised. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Mullini, on behalf of bishopton parish council,

40:29

I wanted to talk in the DCO element about the battery storage system or the best system. Can we we are going to do the DCO separately. Can I restrict you to landscape and visuals? We will come to that, I assure you, even if it's not today. Okay? Is that all right? That's fine. Do you want to is that all you wanted to speak about? That's all I want to speak about today. Yes, okay, well, thank you for that. We've noted that. Okay, I'm going to ask for the mobile microphone to be made available. And as Jen's at the back of the room, so to not prioritize anybody, if you can put your hands up in the back, the back section if you want to speak,

41:14

you'll find a microphone will come to you. If you could state your name,

41:19

please. And then what you want to ask a question about. Thank you very much.

41:28

Hello. Melanie Turner, great. Stanton, just, I just want to do a very, very quick one. I did have a long thing to say, but I'll send it in as a submission. One was a question. I did have my hand up yesterday, it just requires a really quick yes or no from the applicant about the workers on site. Are they likely to be local or not local? So it's a simple yes or no.

41:52

And also

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and on the local impact report, the original one by Dartmoor Council,

42:00

it states there's 57 field end closures. Could you clarify how many entrances there will be within the site? I'm obviously going off Winfield, which is local to us, and that has an entrance to every field. So I just wanted to confirm what the quantities were on there and which document that would be in.

42:20

Thank you very much. Miss Turner,

42:25

I asked the applicant if he could address the two points on where the workers for construction would like to come from and the entrance question please,

42:36

sir. Alex Manick, for the applicant, we

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don't deal, perhaps, with the point about the entrances first. So there are various drawings in the application documents that show where access to works will be taken from.

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I will double check and we will be able to report back what the correct reference for that document is,

43:04

I just want to make sure that I've got the right one. They are also listed in schedule six to the draft development consent order,

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the latest application document reference for which

43:20

is rep two, zero to nine.

43:27

There are relatively

43:30

few accesses to works. There are six different panel areas, and there's in the order of one or two access points per panel area. So that's that should give an idea of the rough number

43:47

when it comes to the location of the workers. I am aware that that has been dealt with in the socio economics and land use chapter of the environmental statement, and I don't immediately recall what the assumptions that were made in that chapter for the purposes of that assessment were, but we can certainly take that point away and come back and report on that as an action point coming away from the hearing.

44:17

That's obviously the assessment that has been made by the applicant for the purposes of its environmental impact assessment, and that would then flow through to the appointment of the eventual contractor for the project. Thank you very much, Mr. Mohinik, so if we could record as an action to reference those two

44:38

the answers to those two questions, that would be very helpful.

44:42

So we're going to move on to the next hand up, please.

44:48

Hello, gentlemen. My name is Suzanne Springer from great Stainton. I do have rather a large submission, which I will put in in writing, but there were a couple of points that I would like to make.

45:00

We're the only property which would be in extremely close proximity to the location of the on site substation. It has been very difficult for me to work out the precise location of that substation. I have tried on Google Earth to find the meter Ridge from our boundary and our property, but each map produced to date shows the substation in a slightly different location. I would really urge the examining authority to obtain clarification on this point.

45:31

That would be much appreciated. There is no doubt at all that because of the large scale of the substation itself, it is going to be extremely visible from the roadside. And the point that I tried to make this morning, and I appreciate there wasn't the time for me to speak, but the photo montage that was put up on the screen this morning, and Mrs. Fisher was commenting on that, showing the site of the substation from the highway. If you look at that in detail, there is no image of the potential substation on that photo montage. It's just not there. And if it was there, it would be extremely visible. It's going to be the

46:22

last is going to be 15 meters high. The substation itself is, I understand, 70 by 30 meters, and a car park as well in front of it. And as I say, the exact location just alters every map we see. They haven't specified exactly where it's going to be, but in any case, it's going to be within only a couple of 100 meters wild property. So we are extremely worried about that aspect. Our site itself is classified as a local wildlife site. It used to be an sncl,

47:01

and that site itself is within four meters

47:06

of the boundary of where the panels are going to start. And our local wildlife pond is within just a few meet feet of our boundary. And to me, that is an important aspect, and I feel that the panels themselves and the substation and the battery storage units should be moved further away from that site. Local wildlife sites fill an important gap not covered by other designations, and are vital in maintaining the full range of wildlife across the country.

47:41

I do feel that as the construction starts, our site would be solace for a lot of the local wildlife.

47:51

Thank you.

47:53

Thank you. Miss Springer and I know we're going to visit your property during the accompanying site inspection tomorrow.

48:03

Mr. Mehn, do you wish to respond to those points on the location, the substation, the photo montage in the local wildlife site? Please?

48:13

Thank you, sir. Yes. Alex menick, for the applicant.

48:17

So the latest situation where

48:23

Mrs. Springer can see the location of the substation is on the latest version of the works plans, which are in the examination library on the planning and spectros website. And the relevant reference number for those works plans is as hyphen, 013,

48:44

so that's as 013,

48:49

and that is where she'll be able to see the location of the substation compound, which is identified on those works plans.

48:58

When it comes to the

49:01

visualizations. So we looked at certain visualize, visualize, it

49:08

visualizations in this morning's session, and the relevant reference number was app

49:16

073,

49:20

it's the applicants positions so that the substation is is identifiable on those draw on those montages, including the Met mast, which the communications mast, which has been referred to.

49:37

They are

49:40

fine scale drawings. The mast is not particularly visible against the backdrop of forest,

49:48

but if Mrs. Springer wanted to approach the applicants team, would very happily show her where we're seeing that on the drawings.

49:57

Thank you for that. I.

50:00

The comments regarding the local wildlife site. Did you want to say anything about that?

50:06

Thank you, sir for the prompt. We don't have our ecologist here with us today on account of this being the landscape and visual

50:14

meeting.

50:16

But sir, I'm not aware that any effects or concerns have been raised in that regard, and the applicant's environmental assessment work to date,

50:26

but we will take that point away, and to the extent that there is anything that we think it would be helpful to identify where provide that in writing, if that's acceptable to you, sir, okay, I will note that down as an action to respond to that question.

50:47

Moving on, please to the next person.

50:54

Hello. Philip Watson, speaking.

50:58

Bishopton is a designated conservation area due to its historical and architectural interest, I therefore ask, are visual receptors giving more consideration if they lie within the conservation area,

51:12

the design is unsympathetic to vision conservation area, and Certainly I've seen no evidence of cumulative, cumulative effect, taking into account this site,

51:25

existing approved schemes, and certainly schemes which Mary herself has worked on.

51:33

Mrs. Fisher made a statement that a small amount of panel reduction can give a huge reduction on impact

51:41

due to the impact on bishopton and the conservation area.

51:46

Removal of area F now a much smaller area than planned due to one of the landowners pulling out of the project, is a huge benefit for what is now a small percentage of panels on the overall scheme, I would request request that the inspectorate and rwie Consider the area f removal seriously to give the huge reduction on the residential impact and amenity impact of that area, ie mill lane,

52:12

area e should also be considered

52:16

based on its Conservation Area receptors, I think between the two that would reduce a huge amount of impact for a relatively small amount of loss of panels.

52:31

Thank you for that comment on that question.

52:36

Mr. Mohinik, do you wish to say anything about the impact of on the conservation area and on area f please,

52:44

sir, thank you, and thank you to Mr. Watson for his comments.

52:49

I'm aware Mr. Watson wasn't able to attend yesterday's hearing, which was when the Conservation Area was considered in quite some detail, together with the applicant's cultural heritage expert, who provided his input to that conversation.

53:06

If it's not inappropriate for me to do so, sir, I'd encourage Mr. Watson to watch the recording of that hearing, which would be available on the website in due course,

53:18

where the applicant set out its position that it has adequately assessed the impacts of the project on that conservation area

53:26

and reported on those in its environmental statement,

53:30

the question of the removal of area f and area d and the reference to

53:38

the words that Mrs. Fisher used in

53:43

her reporting to the hearing earlier today,

53:47

she was, of course, referring to the guidance document, which is where those words come from, rather than them being her own words. And the preface to that guidance document is that there may be exceptional circumstances

54:05

where

54:08

a small reduction in pattern, small change in a scheme design, may result in very significant benefits. It's the applicant's position, as explained during the course of this hearing this morning, that those

circumstances don't apply to this scheme, that there is no situation where exceptional circumstances have been identified,

54:31

nor an opportunity where a small change could make have a very significant benefit on the

54:39

in terms of the overall bundle of effects of the project.

54:47

Thank you for that response. Mr. Fisher,

54:52

thank you, sir. I was just hoping to add in relation to

54:56

how the presence of the conservation area is taken account of.

55:00

The Lvia? Yes, it is obviously a heritage designation, however, and if one takes a look at the chapter seven, which is app 30, the Lvia, if you compare and contrast the assessment of effects on great Stainton and bishopton, you will spot a key difference. So at 710, 92 in relation to great Stainton, it notes that views in great state of novel are of community value.

55:36

So we've discussed the evaluation of value of views and character before and in the earlier session. And that's a great statement. Doesn't have a conservation area. If we then turn to look at bishopton, which the equivalent paragraph

55:53

is at 710, 101,

55:57

you can see that views at bishopton are attributed regional value, recognizing the importance of views in the village in relation to the conservation area.

56:11

Thank you for clarifying that

56:14

if we could move on to the next person that wishes to speak, please.

56:22

Robert bows, bishops and village resident. So the point I would just want to raise is on the document, rep 2024,

56:31

this was the public right of way in particular points 42 and 43 where we're moving it from grade cent and across the field, around the perimeter of the field. So just to quote the applicant there, using their detailed local knowledge, they were going to use the existing hedgerows

56:51

and then plant further hedgerows to mitigate the viewpoint well, to mitigate the loss of views due to the panels.

57:04

My local knowledge of the area will highlight that there isn't any existing head draws around that point.

57:11

And I understand that the applicant is using desktop analysis to identify the head draws. My basic desktop analysis using Google Maps clearly shows that there isn't an existing head draw there. So I understand that's a very small point that I'm raising there on a very specific area, but if I can find that point there,

57:35

I'm just questioning the rest of the the applicant's methodology in determining exactly where the existing hedgerows are, because, again, to quote the detailed local knowledge of the applicant, it doesn't seem to be correct in this instance. I just wondered if the applicant has got a response to that.

57:59

Thank you, Mr. Bowles.

58:01

So would you like to adjust the point he's made about the public rights of way, the hedgerows and the methodology that you've used?

58:10

Thank you, sir. Mary Fisher, for the applicant,

58:14

yes, he's quite right. Actually, there isn't a footpath on the eastern side. Sorry, there isn't an existing hedge on the eastern side of that field, but there is one on the southern side, so I was dealing with a situation with differences

58:26

and not correctly identifying the separate sections of the footpath. Does

58:32

that make sense? Did

58:39

that answer your question?

58:43

Maybe, okay, all right, thank you,

58:47

gentlemen in the front row,

58:52

thank you. I'm not sure that answer did actually answer the question. My name is Peter wood, resident of bishopton.

59:01

Basically she accepts. I think that she was wrong. I would like also briefly, very briefly, touch on public rights of way, as yourself and Mr. Pinto picked up on Mrs. Fisher's submission this morning. The the applicant said they couldn't mitigate the severe and large scale effects on public's rights of way, excuse me, and receptors, due to the large size of the development doesn't that basically say at all. It's too big. They admitted that they've basically given up on mitigation around the public footpaths, instead of us enjoying open views. We're expected to walk down closed avenues of high hedging, potentially overgrown, as your colleague confirmed, on footpaths 42 four to 43 and 44 that is only one snapshot of the whole 1200 knot acres of.

1:00:00

Of the whole site. This is replicated elsewhere. The applicant says they're not willing to reduce panel areas to keep their power generation levels. So does that simply mean that their profit earning potential outweighs our rights, our lifestyle and our amenity values? Thank you.

1:00:24

Thank you. Mr. Wood

1:00:27

does the applicant wanted comments further on public rights of way and mitigation,

1:00:35

sir. Alexman henek, the applicant, I think the points about what the applicant has done and what it's able to do in relation to impacts on footpaths, and the effects which have been assessed on footpaths, was

1:00:51

covered in the hearing this morning. So I don't think the applicant has anything to add on that particular point. I suppose the only, the only point to add, generally to Mr. Woods, comments are that the

1:01:09

the need for the scheme and the National Planning Policy which supports that need and the clean energy generation

1:01:19

has been something that we've we've addressed in some detail in the application documents, and there's been the subject

1:01:26

of various comments during the hearings and remains the driving force for the bringing forward of this application.

1:01:36

Thank you. Miss mehnick,

1:01:39

gentlemen to your right, Jennifer in the room.

1:01:44

Thank you, Mr. Wilshire, Sean Anderson, this morning, Miss Mrs. Fisher mentioned, described the design process, and she talked about excess in terms of land availability and how excess land was piece by piece, discounted, primarily due to the fact that panels were visible from the road

1:02:09

mill lane, in particular, to the north of mill lane, all of the panels will be visible, and that area of land rises in excess of 10 meters from Mill Lane up to its summit.

1:02:24

How is that not? How is that area not being discounted in terms of excess? And I would urge you tomorrow on your visit to view that area, because you will be going past it. Thank you.

1:02:37

Thank you. We will

1:02:39

be passing there, Mr. Anderson, and we will look,

1:02:43

I'd ask the applicant if they want to comment on that particular point regarding visibility

1:02:50

from for the panels for middle lane,

1:02:55

sir, no, nothing to add to the narrative that Mrs. Fisher provided in this morning's session on the approach which has been taken to

1:03:04

design iteration of the project. Thank you, sir.

1:03:10

Thank you for that.

1:03:14

Any further comments in the room? There's two hands up, one, no, three. Probably

1:03:22

Alan Pilkington, resident of bishopton. I'll

1:03:26

try and be quite brief and cut out some of this.

1:03:32

The two points really. One is about the general location of the solar power station. The second is about the cumulative effects on the location.

1:03:45

It's clear,

1:03:47

if we seem to heard today, there's visual immunity. It's crisscrossed by paths. So the main question is, why choose this location? I've asked this before. I've not got a straight answer.

1:04:01

The suspicion, of course, is heat maximizes profit. I would appreciate RWE confirming that. And if there's another reason, I'd be glad to hear of it. I've been told before, we need solar power. Of course, we need solar power. The question is, why put it there? Why should not put it somewhere more appropriate.

1:04:23

My second point, regards to cumulative effect, it got a brief mention, but I'll say a little bit more.

1:04:33

As we all know, it's not got much of a mention today. But Castle Hill, I live in buchadon, quite close to Castle Hill, an ancient monument, a prominent position

1:04:42

where, in medieval times, an enemy could be spotted from afar,

1:04:49

and the local residents would gather for protection. Some things don't change that much.

1:04:56

It has a 360 degree panorama.

1:05:00

Allow me to take you up there and invite you to look down around the surrounding countryside, just the closest three kilometers. So we're not using binoculars.

1:05:10

A clear day, no problem. Fields, hedge race, hedgerows, some farm buildings, cow, sheep, horses, the village, church and green. 360 degrees of English countryside,

1:05:24

if this proposal goes ahead, on top of the others already approved of the 360 degrees of arc, in your view, 272

1:05:36

degrees of them, 272 out of 360 will fall upon the black sheen of solar panels.

1:05:43

To the north,

1:05:47

one five degrees

1:05:50

to area f,

1:05:52

the right way to the west,

1:05:55

45 degrees areas d and e

1:06:00

to the southwest,

1:06:05

40 degrees for long pasture.

1:06:09

To the south, east,

1:06:14

right, 84 degrees of Gately, more

1:06:19

less than 25% of the view will be unaffected.

1:06:23

The largest window of clear countryside to be seen from the top of Castle Hill will be a mere 37 degrees of arc to the north east, you

1:06:34

will need blinkers to appreciate that view.

1:06:38

Please do not let it happen. Thank you.

1:06:44

Thank you, Mr. Pilkington,

1:06:48

there were comments about the location with regard to the footpaths that crisscrossed the proposal and cumulative effects, especially the landscape and visual impacts from Castle Hill. Do you wish to respond to that now?

1:07:07

Sir, thank you. We

1:07:10

have,

1:07:15

we've, we've been through the slight site selection process on a number of occasions in hearings, the applicant has explained it in the application documents, in particular, Chapter Three of the environmental statement. I'm not sure there's much more that the applicant is in a position to say at this stage,

1:07:36

when it comes to Castle hills, as my understanding is that this relates to the motto Bailey, scheduled monument on the southern edge of bishopton, which again, we spoke about in terms of potential impacts on that receptor

1:07:56

during the Cultural Heritage hearing, which happened during yesterday morning, and you heard from the applicants, cultural heritage expert on their views and the respective positions of

1:08:10

Darlington Borough Council in particular, and

1:08:14

Historic England. And

1:08:19

I wasn't planning to repeat those, sir, but that's the applicant's position on on that matter. And then that has also fed through into the cumulative assessment work which has been carried out across all manner of impacts relating to the project and reported on in the cumulative chapter of the environmental statement.

1:08:41

Thank you for that. Mr. Henck,

1:08:44

next question, please, if you could raise your hand,

1:08:50

thank you.

1:08:52

I'm Susan knobbs Sue knobs and I'm a resident of great Stainton.

1:08:59

I probably along with others sitting on this side of the room, are convinced that the location and design of buyers Gill is based on the willingness of landowners to lease their land and the proximity of the substation in Norton,

1:09:17

In fact, to support that back in May 9, 2023

1:09:23

when we first learned of the development, a member of the team at bishopton Village Hall who represented RWE

1:09:32

told us that a circle of 10 meters was drawn around the Norton substation, and sites for the panels were looked for within that circle.

1:09:45

So my question is, having heard what we've heard, does this really suggest that good design principles have been adhered to?

1:09:57

Because in one of the reports I read from.

1:10:00

The Darlington Borough Council consultant,

1:10:04

their conclusion was that, looking at the area, the undulating topography, presented a challenging landscape in which to locate a solar farm. The development would be highly visible from elevated land and visibility on local ridges would also be evident with a large variation in reflective light caused by the undulating solar panels.

1:10:34

The same report, to add to what Philip said, identifies the number of other renewable energy schemes that we are already

1:10:44

either looking to have developed, because there are proposed, or they're already under construction.

1:10:51

The buyers guild development seems to have just filled in the gaps and would compound the impact on the area

1:11:00

you're going to visit my property tomorrow, and I'd like you to look out of our property to appreciate what we will see from our property looking east towards the area of footpath that you identified earlier, and the fact that where the panels start is indeed along one of These local ridges, so three and a half meter panels sitting on top of a local ridge. Thank you.

1:11:28

Thank you. Ms knobs, does

1:11:31

the applicant wish to say anything further on, any of the points that were raised there regarding good design?

1:11:41

Sir? Alex, the applicant. No, I don't think there is anything to add to existing oral and written submissions that the applicant has made during the course of previous hearings and in responses to questions. So

1:11:54

thank you. Move on to the next hand that's up.

1:11:59

There's one to the left of you.

1:12:04

Hi. Pete laden bishopton, the resident.

1:12:08

It's well documented fact that anxiety and depression has reached high levels since covid It's also well documented by the medical profession that is recommended that these aspects of mental health can be greatly improved by connecting with the outdoors, the countryside and the natural environment.

1:12:29

Solar panels, on such a large scale, substantially diminishes the therapeutic impact that the natural world could have on our mental well being.

1:12:39

Can you reassure the room reassure the room that the hidden aspects of the proposal has been given sufficient and substantial consideration from a Medical viewpoint,

1:12:54

slightly straying off topic, but I will give the applicant A moment to respond to that about the health implications,

1:13:04

sir, thank you. The impact, the potential impacts of the proposal on the health of local residents, is certainly something that has been taken into account in the scoping of the environmental statement, and the information that has been put forward in the environmental statement is in accordance with the scope that was agreed with the planning Inspectorate as to how that information should be presented to support the application. I believe sir. I don't have the references immediately to hand, but I believe sir in the applicant's response to relevant representations, which is document, rep, 1004,

1:13:49

this issue has been addressed. But I will take a moment, so if I may, to double check that reference is where I'm that I'm recalling accurately where the point has been addressed by the applicant previously, if I may, yes. If you come back to us before we close, that'd be helpful.

1:14:05

I think I saw one more hand at the front of the room. Yes.

1:14:10

Bishopton Village Action Group.

1:14:20

Yeah. Good afternoon. Thanks. It's Mark Smith speaking on behalf of bishops and villages Action Group. Much condensed version of what I was going to say, but it supports a lot of the comments that have already been made, and it refers to a specific document in the that's been considered. So the document is the Darlington Borough Council local impact report, specifically referring to page 22 sections 564, to 565,

1:14:45

in this document, which was submitted in August of 2024,

1:14:50

and was referenced in our own submissions following the examining authority's rule six letter in July the

1:14:59

to gain a better.

1:15:00

At understanding of the scale of the developments. The local impact report quotes that in a 25 square kilometer 25 square kilometer geographic area, the total coverage of panels will be 20% of all land,

1:15:16

and that's taken directly from Darlington Borough Council's documents. Since that was submitted, there have been another few developments which have been put through planning and approved. So I would suggest that that figure of 20% is somewhat higher.

1:15:33

That's that's really what I wanted to say. Thank you very much. Mr. Smith, just before I give the applicant a chance to come back. I'm conscious it's five to three if I run on till 10 past just to close this off without rushing us too much. Are there any objections to finishing at 10 past three?

1:15:58

No and none online, so that you get a chance to have a go as well.

1:16:05

Okay, thank you. Over to Mr. Mohinik to comment on the point that was made about Darlington Bower Council's local impact report. It's

1:16:16

certainly applicant's position is that the potential for cumulative effects with other developments which are coming forward, has been assessed within the applicant's environmental statement.

1:16:29

Thank you for that. Is

1:16:31

there anybody else in the room I've missed?

1:16:36

No, so you've been very patient online to does anybody who's sitting online wish to speak?

1:16:49

I'm not seeing any hands up,

1:16:54

so I'm going to finally hand over to Mr. Pinto, who will lead us through item four on the agenda.

1:17:03

Thank you, Mr. Wheelchair.

1:17:06

So item four on the agenda

1:17:11

is development consent order,

1:17:15

and a list of the key written submissions that will inform my questions has been included in the agenda published in anticipation of this hearing. As it is, along with list. I do not propose going through it in detail now, but can ask if anyone has any comments they would like to make on the list that was circulated beforehand.

1:17:36

No comments on that list. In the interest of time as well, I will prioritize

1:17:45

important questions that I might want to actually

1:17:49

raise now in issues that perhaps I want to raise now for the awareness of all of the the applicant and all of the examining party, and I'm also mindful that we had a request to actually speak on this particular topic.

1:18:10

And I think it was just one request from Mr. Milani.

1:18:18

Can I just confirm with you? Mr. Milan, did you still want to actually speak on this specific item of the agenda, Item for the development consent order?

1:18:30

It was about the battery energy story. You still want to ask a question. I think it's very important part of the TCO. Thank you. Thank you. I will, make sure that you have time to actually do that.

1:18:53

So as I said, in terms of prioritizing my questions, I'm actually going to just focus on a couple of of issues that I wanted to raise more for awareness and the examining authority might actually come back to the applicant on written questions and to other interesting parties on this specific issue, but I would like the applicant to please

1:19:20

touch on the issue of the off road and on road cabling option.

1:19:25

And again, I'm going to actually change the order from the agenda because of restrictions of time. So we'll try and make it as succinct as I possibly can. I would like you to touch on that issue of the off road and on road cabling

1:19:39

and how does the applicant predict that that

1:19:48

component, which is an optionality component, is going to be addressed within development consent order, and how the development consent order is going to actually be able to provide a.

1:20:00

A right type of assurance in case one of the options that the applicant is looking for on specific cabling,

1:20:10

considering specifically that on road cabling is not a desired option, an actual desired option is your road cabling. How will that be reflected in the dcl,

1:20:28

sir. Thank you. Alex Min hinnock, for the applicant

1:20:35

before answering the question, sir, there were a few miscellaneous points from agenda item two, that I'm afraid I can catch your attention on before you brought that agenda item to an end. My fault, if possible, I'd like just to run through them at the end of this agenda item, briefly, I expect there's no more. I second, we have another agenda item, item six, which is a you'll be maybe I suggest raising it there. Perfect. Thank you. I shall do so. So in respect to your question and on road and off road

1:21:03

cabling the so the principal

1:21:08

mechanism by which that would be controlled through the development consent order is requirement three, which is the detailed design approval requirement The applicant would envisage that by the time it gets to that detailed design stage, it's in a position to confirm one way or another which approach it is intending to take.

1:21:33

I'll continue to talk about on and off road as binary options, but I think when we've spoken about this in previous hearings, we've explained that in all likelihood, it will be a combination of off road and on road, which is the eventual cable solution that is settled on

1:21:50

the applicant's preference has been explained previously, and is set out in the application documents, is that It would be the the off road

1:22:01

cable routine, which is the preferred approach, and the

1:22:07

that's that's informed by the potential environmental impacts of the two competing options. And as has been explained in a number of application documents, the applicant's view is that the benefits which are secured in terms of avoiding traffic impacts by delivering the capable off road

1:22:27

are informing its preference to take that off road approach. That approach is obviously contingent on securing land rights, and the applicant has obviously included potential powers of compulsory acquisition to provide those land rights for the off road cable routes. Should it become necessary to exercise those rights, but to answer the question? So the primary mechanism would be that requirement three by which the applicant would submit

1:22:59

their final layout for the scheme, which would include the cable routes that cable routine,

1:23:09

sorry, the the approval to be submitted under

1:23:13

the details to be submitted for approval under requirement three are to be informed by the design approach document, and indeed, there is commentary in the design approach document about the approach to the on road off road cable question, as those options become firm through the course of the examination, how would those options be updated within the documents? Particularly looking at updates from the red line boundary within the order,

1:23:47

sir, thank you.

1:23:49

The applicant has already

1:23:53

been able to amend the red line boundary in respect of one particular area of cable as it loops around to the south of bishopton, and as a consequence, it's it's removed the on road option through bishopton that happened around the time of the last hearings, when we were last here,

1:24:13

the applicant is continuing to try and secure those Off Road land rights on a voluntary basis, and is keeping that position under review, and to the extent that it becomes possible to remove additional red line, additional land from the order limits as a result of those voluntary negotiations during the course of examination, it will look to do so. And is the applicant looking to expand that after the examination, or just finishing that sort of approach within the examination, because obviously there is a process for that to be updated within the examination, but after the examination finishes, there will not be such an easy process to update that no sir, absolutely understood the applicant.

1:25:00

And will continue to try and seek those rights on a voluntary basis. It's in the applicant's interest to do so. It is practically more straightforward to acquire land on that basis, rather than having to exercise compulsory acquisition powers. And the applicant is in active negotiations with the majority of the landowners, as set out in the last scheduled, the last schedule of negotiations with landowners

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to the extent that it secures any additional rights after the close of examination and before the Secretary of State has

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made their decision on the DCR application, my expectation is that the Secretary of State might not look to take that into account. I think they obviously take your recommendation report and occasionally have consultation queries for parties to examinations before reaching their decision. But we can't be certain if that would or won't happen. It would be at the discretion of the Secretary of State. So the applicant is seeking to do as much as it can before the end of examination. Its effort won't stop at that

stage, albeit by the time we get there, we recognize that the proposal will be for that a little bit more in the next hearing, where there is a little bit of little bit of overlap between this hearing and next hearing.

1:26:26

I'm mindful of Mr. Malani coming in in time, so I just want to give an advance warning to all the parties part of the examination that you have mentioned

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requirement three in quite some detail, I would just like to say that

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the x I will come with several different comments on that specific requirement for your consideration in the future, particularly relating with how the components of The on road and off road cabling will be addressed within the detailed design approval,

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but also how

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it can anticipate the need to consider new technology and how this can be clearly set out within those requirements. And that actually follows from the conversations we had earlier today, where that was part of the issues that we have touched on the previous item of this hearing. Now over to you, Mr. Malani, I understand that you had a specific question on this item, item for development consent over there,

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I did. Thank you. Can I please ask you to be quite brief, as we did promise that we would finish by 10 past so we have three minutes. I'll do my best to be as quick as possible.

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I wanted to raise and this is on behalf of all residents who live within the area covered by buyers, Gill

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solar farm project. We all have major concerns in relation to the lithium ion battery energy storage system

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proposed and its proposed use and locations.

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Everybody is aware there is an increasing number of battery energy storage sites, or best sites across the country. These are susceptible to thermal runaway,

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where energy stored is released in uncontrolled fashion as heat leading to major fires and vapor clouds.

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Lithium ion battery insulins can be catastrophic, resulting in combustion of nearby structures, and most alarmingly in the emission of large quantities of highly toxic life threatening gasses such as hydrogen fluoride. And anyone within five mile radius of an occurrence will suffer lung damage, and within half a mile irreversible lung damage and possible fatalities.

1:29:03

There are approximately 10 gasses produced when this occurs, thermal runaway and in addition, there are eight other chemicals.

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Basically all of them are flammable.

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In the event of a fire, an extremely toxic gas, hydrogen fluoride is released

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and in a system of that proposed by Gill solar farm, potentially in large quantities,

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hydrogen fluoride goes easily into the skin. It goes very quickly through the skin and into the tissues of the body. It damages cells and causes them to malfunction. The gas, even at low levels, can irritate the eyes, nose, respiratory tract. Breathing in hydro hydrogen fluoride at high levels can cause death from irregular heartbeat and from fluid buildup in the lungs.

1:30:00

At lower levels, breathing gas can damage lung tissue. Eye exposure can cause prolonged or permanent defects, including blindness.

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People who survive this may suffer ongoing chronic illness. I am extremely concerned that the potential hazards of such a large best project posed an unacceptable risk of death, a long term illness to residents, and lack any procedure to protect residents' health and wellbeing.

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With the above in mind, it is not acceptable what has been proposed by the applicant.

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Generally, we're looking to see some kind of indication that the applicant intends to put measures in place beyond just stopping the fire using gas, because when you open the door, because it's not a standard combustible fire, and in fact, is a chemical reaction, it would just reignite. Thank you, Mr.

Malani, I think we, I think we got the gist of your of principle points of your representation. If I could ask the applicant if they would like to comment on how battery fires will be dealt with.

1:31:23

Thank you, sir, yes.

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The the applicant's position, sir, is that any risk that there is associated with the potential for battery fires

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is adequately managed by the proposals that they're putting forward.

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The particular mechanism that that would work through his requirement 11 of the draft DCO, which requires a battery fire safety management plan to be submitted and approved by the relevant local authority. The applicant has submitted a draft outline battery fire safety management plan on which it has been consulted with relevant technical stakeholders during the course of the preparation of the DCR application. The reference number for that outline draft plan is a PP hyphen, 117,

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I'll say that again, a PP hyphen, 117,

1:32:19

and that shortly is the applicant's position on things. Thank you very much. And thank you very much, Mr. Molani, for your presentation. I will now hand over to Mr. Wheelchair, who will lead us through item five of the agenda.

1:32:34

Thank you very much. So item five is the issues and actions and arising. I'm aware that the case team and the applicant have been taking notes of those so if that's all right with the applicant, they will exchange those actions and publish them.

1:32:54

Sarah Alexander for the applicant, yes, sir, we'll get those actions over to the case team as quickly as we can. Thank you very much. Item six is any other business. We have one item that I'm aware of that Mr. Mohiniks can to give us those references to that question that was asked earlier.

1:33:11

Sir, thank you. Yes, I have two references. I'll also come back to an action point from Mr. Pinto if I may, during the course of discussion of the design approach document and the question as to who within the applicants team could speak to that I appreciate, sir, that we're running out of time during the course of this hearing, but the I suppose the slight disjunct that you had when talking to Mrs. Fisher earlier is a result of the fact that that document was prepared under the early adopters program that this scheme is

part of with the planning Inspectorate. It's been put together. It's pulled input from a number of different authors within the applicants team. But we do think so that we have the relevant people in the room today. If there were particular questions that you wanted to raise on it, I'll leave that. So I appreciate we maybe have, I think we have run out of time for that today, but thank you very much. We'll come back to that in writing if we have to. Thank you. Thank you, sir, in which case I then just have two references for those who raised questions previously, firstly for Mrs. Springett, who mentioned the car house local wildlife site.

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So we've been able to identify in the interim that that is addressed in chapter six, which is the biodiversity chapter of the environmental statement, as a potential receptor of impacts. The reference number for that chapter is a, PP, zero to nine, so that those, those potential impacts that Mrs. Springer was referring to have been picked up in the applicant's assessment work to date.

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And then the second reference is, I believe it was Mr. Latham who raised the impact of potential impact.

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To the property of the scheme on human health, in particular mental health. And so it is the case that it's the applicant's comments on relevant representations, which is the place that Mr. Latham can go to see the detail of what the applicant has said there. And the reference number for that document is rep 1004,

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and the relevant section of that document is two point 14. So that's 2.14

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Thank you, sir. That was everything from me.

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Thank you. Is there any other business within the room?

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Virtually?

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Thank you. I move on to item seven, which is closing. I want to thank everybody present for their contributions.

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Today, we will consider all submissions made carefully, as you know, tomorrow, we meet at nine o'clock at bishopton Village Hall for the accompanied site inspections, and the details of that are published on the project page of the planning Inspectorate website. Future dates, if required for further compulsory acquisition hearings, issue specific hearings and open floor hearings during the week

commenced on the 25th of November, will be notified to you by the planned inspector website. The time is now 1516,

1:36:28

I thank you for your patience with us, with overrunning and issue specific hearing four for the bioskill solar energy project is now closed. Thank you. Applause.