



## Hearing Transcript

<b>Project:</b>	Byers Gill Solar
<b>Hearing:</b>	Issue Specific Hearing 7 Session 2 (ISH7)
<b>Date:</b>	27 November 2024

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Welcome back. It's 330

this issue specific hearing number seven is recommencing, in case I forget. At the end, I'd like to thank you all for your forbearance with the chilly climate that we've experienced in here. I know they say the North of England's cold, but it's been pretty bracing the last two days. So I'm, although we're not responsible for the heating in here, I do appreciate you putting up with it.

So moving on then to this is the opportunity for the local host authorities to comment on what they've heard. So turning to Darlington, please, thank you. Lisa Hutchinson, Darlington Borough Council, I'm going to pass over to Steve laws to comment on a number of matters, but just to thank you for the opportunity for us to have a quick pause. Thank you

so Stephen laws, landscape consultants to Duncanson Borough Council.

I think the question

on the agenda is, is asking for our views in relation to the state of the common ground and where we are at the moment,

I would just say that

most of the outstanding issues on the stable common ground

are as they were at the previous hearing when we dealt with landscape visual

but I would say that

Probably the differences that are outstanding are probably due to, maybe our differences in how we've taken account of cumulative effects. And if I could, just by example, if I can perhaps refer to the supplementary information we provided to our local impact report, which was in document re p5 dash, 036,

and that supplementary information, we were responding to questions that were raised at the last hearing, which was in relation to worst case views And setting.

And in that supplementary information, we provided

a photograph from one of the photograph from one of the footpaths at brafferton looking towards Winfield solar farm, which is under construction at the moment.

And on page nine of our supplementary information, you can see that photograph

and the point, Mr. Laws, can apologies to interrupt you. Is it possible for us to actually share that specific image

on the monitors? Please?

Perfect. Thank you. Thank you so much. Apologies, Mr. Laws, please continue. Thank you. No, I think that's useful. You can see where we place the ring on that photograph. That basically is the view, the existing view of Winfield solar farm under construction now in the viewpoint three A in the ES, which is taken from a just very slightly different location, I think it's probably just further

closer to the solar farm, but

and in the view three a there's a haystack with actually screens the view of the solar farm. So the point I would make is that my assessment of the effects on the setting of brafferton and on the character of brafferton, where we have differences of opinion, it could simply be that I've taken no count that you can actually see when Winfield solar farm from this footpath, which then impacts on the setting of

profitant. Now I'm, I'm unsure, from the assessment in the ES based on viewpoint three A and that's the only one provided, I think, in this location, whether the applicant has actually taken that into account.

But it may be that if they haven't, then that and the visibility of that solar farm hasn't been taken into account where it's clearly visible from this footpath, within what I would call the setting of Brafton. Then if that hasn't been taken account, then that would,

to some degree, maybe explain the differences in our assessment, the effects on setting

and

on this, on us on a similar sort of principle, I think that one of the other differences between us is on the.

Effects on the

on the center, what we've termed the central route through the studio, basically is the road which connects all the villages.

And

our assessment, in effect, we did agree with the applicant, and that we said that we agree it's that each section of road the effects would be moderate. But what we did say, and that this is where the difference

applies, that overall, we think, although the although the effects on the road are moderate, the individual section that overall, that should be classes that should be considered as significant. And the guidelines, landscape, visual assessment, specifically state you can consider moderate effects to be significant. And the reason that we came to that conclusion, and it may be again, the difference between ourselves and the applicant, is that anyone driving along that that route, which is the route mainly used by the local community. Anyone driving along that route would interact with a solar farm, including the cumulative solar farms every two to three minutes, and that, we believe is a significant impact on people using that route. So in effect, I've used those two examples, if you like, to sort of focus on

probably our differences and the assessment. And probably they probably do focus on our difference of how we dealt with cumulative effects, how we considered the impact of the cumulative

projects. So

I just want to, I just wanted to raise because it, because it sort of, it pulls together.

It pulls it pulls together our differences in the statement of common ground. It pulls together

issues we had about assessing the worst case. And it also,

it also sort of draws in that

that issue we had about setting and what is actually the setting of the villagers. Because, again, if, if we take account that,

if we take the view that Winfield solar farm falls within the setting of Bradford, and that is a significant impact.

Thank you. Mr. Laws,

Mr. Pinto, are you content with what you've heard so far? Yes, thank you. Thank you. Thank you for that. I'll give the applicant to opportunity to respond if they wish to at this stage.

Mary Fisher, for the applicant, there was quite a lot of information in there, and I think it would probably be better to respond in writing. I think, though, in the overview, I would reiterate that the presence of Winfield solar farm is taken account of in chapter seven

the Lvia for all receptors throughout the assessment,

but obviously we can point out the detail of that in writing.

Thank you. I think I'm writing assuming at the next deadline, we're expecting an updated statement of common ground, or some document from yourself, from the applicant and

Darlington Borough Council on I think it's particularly action points from the last hearing, and to bring some of these matters to where you stand on them In terms of disagreement or agreement,

I said, over the applicant, I think that was the intention. So to try and get updated, send a common ground back to your deadline six, which is next Friday, and hopefully that will cover the landscape points that we're talking about now

and other matters as well.

Okay, so we should see a bit of movement from when we last spoke about this.

Okay? Thank you.

Yeah. Mr. Pinto

Thank you. Mr. Wiltshire, apologies. I can I just ask a quick question following the intervention that we just heard from Mr. Laws, one of the things that Mr. Laws mentioned was the fact, please correct me if I got you wrong. But it's it seems to mention, anyone driving on the route, which is that route that connects the main villages very close to the panels, will interact, will interact with several solar farms. And it's how the impact has been considered, which obviously is very much linked with cumulative effects. Is there anything that you would like, is there anything that you can say about how that has been taken into consideration from the perspective of people and users of the road

in relation to cumulative effect?

Today considering the topic of this hearing.

Thank you, sir. I believe we've already responded to this question. I think in the response to the local impact report, I'd have to check but I'm fairly confident we have already answered this question

in writing,

perhaps, however, would you feel comfortable in explaining the situation now for the purpose of this hearing,

or would you just revert back to your written response? I just don't want to contradict myself accidentally,

but the basically, we have taken account in assessing effects on visual receptors of what they might see moving along the route. And there was, as I say, I'm fairly sure we provided a detailed response on that in in writing to when responding to the local impact report.

But there were a couple of points raised by Mr. Laws, firstly, that he thinks that the moderate effects identified should be considered significant and that you can do.

The answer is yes, you can do. But what the guidance actually says is that any assessment should be clear which effects are considered significant or not which, and in the methodology set out in the ovia, moderate effects are not considered significant.

So

and adding up the effects along the route doesn't amount to a greater effect. The certain forms along that route are Winfield and the proposed development others don't feature, really,

it might not, but it would amount to a different cumulative assessment, and a cumulative assessment that surely the applicant would like to consider, and only to consider,

I'm not quite sure, sorry, So I don't follow. So we have gone through early in this hearing today about the short list, the long list, in the short list of projects that you have considered as part of your cumulative assessment. So if someone is using one of the main routes that actually connects the main areas that are key for the proposal

and will experience views from several other solar farms that are located within the area. Those are certainly

significant enough for you to consider them as part of your cumulative effects, because you have gone through them, and you have actually taken them into consideration in terms of your zone of intervention. So what is the effect? So it seems to me that that effect will be important and relevant. So I'm not really sure that I understand why you have just mentioned that that would not necessarily lead to a different effect. I

thank you, sir. Mary Fisher, for the applicant. So firstly,

I think one question is, is it several other solar farms? I believe the route between Braverton and Bishop Turn, which I think is the route being referred to, only passes and has views of Winfield. And the proposed development,

a lot of it is headlined, and there's occasional glimpses out,

but the nature of cumulative views is quite limited.

There are other proposals at a distance. I believe

I'd have to revisit what I've written in detail to go back to it, which is why I'm a little hesitant in answering off the cuff, as it were,

and the bulk of the effects will arise from the proposed development and Winfield. They're the quads that are close to the root.

And

because of that, adding in others doesn't make a difference, because they are existing and consented already, and therefore included. The effects of the development are the primary effects. It doesn't add up to a greater effect if you take account of more distant developments.



Okay, I think it might be useful for us to take this in specific parts then. So if I could revert this back to your document, a, PP, 103, which is environmental statement, figure 13.2, short list of community developments.

So that lists a series of different developments within the vicinity of your proposed development, which you have identified as relevant according to your ES analysis in.

We have the different buffers in terms of the distance marked within that figure as well. There are several different applications within identified as relevant for your short list of cumulative developments that might relate to solar farms or not. I know that some of them do relate to solar farms? I cannot precise them. Now, at the moment, I don't know if Darlington Borough Council can actually precise them. At the moment, I can't, but I know that some of them relate to solar farms.

The question remains in terms of the experience of who is driving along the main road that connects. It's part of this influence area, and it's within this buffer that you have identified and connects different villages where the proposed development is going to happen. So if anyone driving on that route will interact with several other applications, some of them being solar farms. I think that we can agree on that some of them are solar farms.

How has the applicant then considered cumulative effect of the proposed development with other projects as part of that experience of all of the road users going through this particular stretch of road.

Thank you, sir. Mary Fisher, for the applicant, I think part of the difficulty here might be, do we both? Are we both talking about the same stretch of road?

I was talking about the stretch of road between braffton and bishopton.

I'm talking about somewhere else.

So I'm talking about the stretch of road that leads the main villages that are going to be affected by this proposal. So it leads breferton to great Stanton. It then turns into the green by by the time that we get to bishopton, and then converting to the High Street, I'm following Google Maps at the moment,

and then goes all the way to red Marshall. So it is that stretch of roads that it's reasonable to expect that a lot of the residents within those villages will be using on a day to day basis.

Could we zoom in on the map a little

so that we can see that length of road.

So if we work,

can I just clarify before we answer. Mrs. Fisher, can I just clarify with barley, with Duncanson Borough Council, that that is the stretch of road as well that you mentioned on your intervention. It is. Thank you, if

you'd like to continue. Mrs. Fisher, thank you. If we work left to right, west to east, as it were,

we can see that the developments that somebody driving that route would pass would be by skill solar and Winfield, which is DM 21 etc,

and then nothing for a little while to great Stanton. It's still by as Gill continuing towards bishopton, it's still higher skill

then I believe, to the south of bishopton, that 21 etc, is the

proposed holiday lodges, which Are development.

And

then continuing on to red Marshall,

which I haven't previously considered in my written response, we have project 22 etc, which is another solar farm.

So there are three developments to consider along that route. Others are more distant and less visible.

Okay, so if we take the example that, if we take the example that we were just discussing just now with Mr. Law's intervention on behalf of Duncan Borough Council in terms of wind fuel solar farm, which we were able to identify there, from a cumulative effects perspective,

can I ask the applicant to clarify its approach in terms of the experience of the users of that specific stretch of Route, going through driving through that specific stretch of Route, from.

From a cumulative effects perspective in the changes that are proposed and how Had that been taken into consideration by the applicant.

Thank you, sir. Mary Fisher, for the applicant, so in reporting effects arising from the proposed development, the LV IA

take assumes that anything consented is already present. So in other words, the base, the future baseline, the baseline away against which the assessment is undertaken, is that Winfield, for instance, is there and can be seen.

And then the effects of the proposed development are reported against that baseline. So moderate effects are identified

with Winfield in place.

Okay, so in your view, then the applicant believes that it has taken into consideration, from a cumulative effects perspective, the experience and the changes of proposed development and the changes to the experience of the drivers and users of that specific stretch of road. Okay, yeah, thank you.

Can I ask if Duncan Borough Council would like to reply as well? Yes, sir. Thank you. I would just like to point out that it isn't necessarily just the change. Is not necessarily just, can you view the solar farm, it's also the mitigation, because there will be the mitigation that is being proposed for wind, for the actual cumulative solar farms, and also for this development, for buyers go, and at one point we did ask the applicant, are you proposing to increase the head the height of hedges along the road? And the initial response we got was no, that there was no such proposal. But actually the final proposal to do show significant sections of hedgerow which are now going to be managed at, I think, over three meters high.

Now my concern about that along the along substantial sections of the road, is that the amenity of that road depends in an undulating landscape is, is

is affected by the nature of the views. Of course, we've got an ungilling landscape which

offers some long distance views, and views, for instance, of great Stainton, which, as we know, is one of the key characteristics of the local landscape types.

And so I was concerned in that if that road was going to, in effect, become

enclosed by substantial high hedges, then that, in itself, is a significant effect that needs to be taken into account. It wouldn't be an issue if we were talking about some different in different parts of the country, where high hedging is typical, it's not typical along this section road, and it's one of the it's one of the reasons why

the views from that road do contribute to The local amenity, and it's one of the reasons why I asked the question at the previous hearing is, where are the key views, and have you understood where have you affected the key view? And I don't think we actually have any evidence to suggest that the applicant has understood that. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Los, I feel that that's extremely helpful in terms of understanding your view. I think that we are starting to veer a little bit more towards landscape and visual solely assessment. I would like us to keep on track in terms of cumulative effects. But I thank you for your intervention in terms of considering how wind fill solar farm is an example, alongside others that we have seen will be considered and taken on board by the applicant. So I take your comment on board, and I would urge you to actually submit that in writing as part of your

post, hearing submission to us in terms of a landscaping visual perspective, and then we can take it forward in writing. But for the time being, I would like to slightly separate that a little bit, but obviously taking into consideration what you have just said from landscape and visual perspective, but how it interacts with other projects, which is obviously very relevant for cumulative effect. But thank you.

I can ask if the applicant would like to intervene or comment on

this point.

Is that, on The Key views,

sir, is that the point? No. It was just if you would like to add anything else, follow.

In the intervention from Darlington Borough Council, which, as I have explained, I think, is now veering a little bit more towards pure visual and landscape. But I wanted to give you the right of reply, yeah. That's why I was a bit confused, because I thought you wanted to move off that topic. Yeah.

Okay, so you are happy, yeah, for us. Okay. Thank you very much for confirming that. Over to you. Mr. Wiltshire, thank you.

Thank you very much. I'm conscious as hands up in the room, we're nearly to you. We're just

finishing with the local authorities, and will soon be to the people sitting further back in the room,

just to emphasize the landscape and visual questions have not come to an end because of that, they're just parked for today.

I'll give Stockton Borough Council the opportunity to intervene if they wish to at this stage.

Miss Boston.

Hey, thank you. I think we're just happy to rely on what comments were split in our local impact report, I don't think anything's been submitted that would change our previous view.

Thank you very much.

I will now ask the parish councils the opportunity to comment.

So firstly, in no particular order, bishopton,

do you wish to say anything

normal learning for Bishop and parish council? Actually, most of the topics that have been discussed have COVID and crowned out. Wanted to cover excellent so thank you. Thank you.

So I'll move swiftly on to

great Stainton.

Colin Taylor, great Stainton parish meeting.

Can I first of all thank you, Mr. Pinto, for your questions and for Mr. Law's comments as well, because you will obviously draw your own conclusion from what the applicant's information has been.

My own conclusion,

based on a career of dealing with evidence, is that the short list at 13, point 5.4

is quite a short list, and appears to be out of date in relation to all the developments that have been granted since January 2024

so if you take that short list, I can understand the conclusion that the applicant has come to.

However, I think in terms of the parish meeting, we would disagree significantly and find the conclusion to be incredulous, that there's no significant impact. You've obviously been and visited the village, you've seen the views, you've seen the limited impact that mitigation will have on the views from the village and the landscape

in terms of the cumulative effect. The only way you can avoid the cumulative effect is if you go in your house, draw the curtains and put the television on, and then you won't see it, because if you leave the house, you'll see it well. You'll see it from your windows. You'll see it from your garden. You'll see it from the public rights of way which you walk on. You'll see it when you drive, and there's no way you can miss it. And the idea that

that more than that multiple

farms or aspects of farms don't add to the cumulative effect is laughable.

It just it's incredulous. So we would certainly my comment, my conclusion is that the the applicant has been very selective in terms of the evidence it's presented to reach the conclusion it has

I'm going to hand over to my colleague and friend,

Martin Phil Philpott, a great Stainton parish meeting.

Through these hearings, we've heard much about the high volume of solar farms locally, which, due to the Norton grid collection, has led to severe concentration and clustering solar farms.

This clustering of solar farms compounds the adverse effects on the community from loss of amenity, increased adverse visual impacts. Adverse impact is on villages, heritage assets, residents, mental health and well being and.

Although the solar farms are generally described as temporary as they will revert back to agricultural land at the end of the life they were generally planned to be operational for a period of 40 years, which for many in the community, will make them a permanent feature for the remainder of their lives,

whilst little can be done about those solar farms that are already operational or have passed planning

and due to be constructed, it is essential, through this planning process for buyers Gill that if passed that we have done everything practical with respect to mitigations to reproduce the adverse effects on the community. I

would like to refer to my previous written submission, reference, R, E, p4,

dash, oh, two, two,

in which we advise the residents of Great Satan identified and prioritize land and panel Area D, which they want removed as a village due to the proximity of the panels to the village residents properties, and the extent of visibility of the solar panels due to short distances from people's homes and the undulating land via the land, which means the panels cannot effectively be mitigated with screening,

O, R, W, E, agreed with the priority areas that we had identified for removal. They could not or would not

make a commitment to remove them.

Yesterday, we revised that the panel coverage of buyers girl is 1.6

and comparable solar farms are now typically working on a coverage of 1.2

which, if applied to buyers girl, could result in a reduction of circa 170 acres of land the same planned megawatt output.

With this in mind, it would now appear to expect

RWE, as responsible developer, to make a firm commitment to remove the areas of land previously identified and requested by all the villages that will be impacted by this development if passed. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Mr. Philpott,

I'll move on to Bishop and village action group if they

wish to make a comment. Yeah. Mark Smith, on behalf of Bishop and villages Action Group, many of the comments that I was intending to make have already been made, but what I would like to do is elaborate on the hypothetical journey that we sort of discussed, moving from Newton, aircliff in the West to Stockton in the East. And detail the farms that will you will see from each other. So the first one you'll come across is, as we've already discussed, wind field. You will then come to bayskill in its



various sites. You'll then, from buyers guild, be able to see long pasture and Gately mower. Then, as you progress through bishops and now it was also mentioned that you won't be able to see

Gately mower from the modern Bailey castle in bishopton, which you most definitely will. It's only meters away at its closest point. So moving on that hypothetical journey a bit further after you've passed Gately mower, you will then come to California farm development,

which is not quite visible from

Gately mower, but very close to being visible. And then you will arrive at the substation at Lech lane. And at that substation, there are further best developments adjacent, directly adjacent to the substation. And from that said substation, if you then look north, you will see the other developments that have also been mentioned, which are connected to the Cowley House farm, which you mentioned earlier on. And those three developments are linked and do tie back into letch lane, solar state substation, just to elaborate on those, those points that were already made.

Thank you very much. Mr. Smith,

Mr. Pinto, you and your microphone on Thank you, Mr. Smith, I just, I just wanted to, just for the record, also confirm that the sites and projects that you have mentioned on your submission to us now were, I believe, is well,

mentioned on your submission to us,

before which I think I believe, it's rep, it's PDA, 004,

I believe. But I just wanted to highlight that it did inform our accompanied site visit, and it was mentioned within that so we have actually.

Seen that submission and taken those developments into consideration. Thank you. Thank you for that. Yeah, just to on sort of I believe his behalf, all of these developments are listed in their short list, so they have considered them.

Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Smith,

Mr. Tinkler, you got your hand up.

Carly Tinkler advising bishopton villages action group. So if I could just deal with the

cumulative effects and landscape and visual effects,

the first point is that I don't entirely understand the reasoning behind the approach that has been adopted by Mrs. Fisher in terms of separating out the cumulative baseline in the LVI a chapter seven,

which covers existing developments in the baseline, and then in chapter 13, cumulative effects, dealing with the landscape and visual effects of proposed developments. In other words, they're separate. And so if I could turn to the guidance for landscape and visual impact assessment, paragraph seven, point 13, it's quite brief, if I may read it out.

It says taking the project to mean the main proposal that is being assessed. It is considered that existing schemes and those which are under construction should be included in the baseline for both landscape and visual effects assessments the Lvia baseline. So that's correct. However, it goes on to say the baseline for assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects should then include those schemes considered in the Lvia and in addition potential schemes that are not yet present in the landscape, but are at various stages in the development and consenting process.

My second point is

that if the proposed development is likely to give rise to significant adverse landscape and visual effects, about which I believe there is total agreement between the parties, then it is inevitable that, in combination with other schemes, similar schemes, the level of effects is going to be even higher. That's that's a truism. The other point that I would ask the inspectors to take note of is that cumulative effects on landscape, character and visual amenity must be assessed separately, as they must be in LVI a and therefore effects on character, direct effects on character, that would occur, cannot be mitigated by screen planting in character. Just because you can't see something doesn't mean it's not there. It is there. It has changed the character of that landscape, regardless of whether you can see it or not.

My fourth point, I think, sirs, you have already pointed out that the loss of an open view to screen planting results in a major negative adverse effect. That's the total loss of a view. So either you see the the development or you don't see it, but either way, it's it's a major negative effect.

The other thing that I believe you pointed out, which is clear again in GL via three, is that if one effect is not considered to be significant. That in combination, especially with inter project effects that they can accumulate to become significant, that's a very, very important point.

Finally,

in chapter 13, so the landscape and visual conclusion is that cumulative landscape and visual effects would not be significant.

But there's no the overall level of effect is not provided. It's not stated whether that would be major or moderate or whatever. It's just that it would not to be significant. Now this is important, because what I've realized is that in the Elvis so sorry to interrupt you. Can I just clarify because I was not following your train of thought completely? Now,

when you just said that it's not identified as

significant, you meant purely on landscape and visual or cumulative effects. That was not clear to me. Sorry. Sorry, sir, thank you. I meant that in chapter 13, cumulative effects, the cumulative landscape and visual effects, are reported as being not significant,

right? Okay.

So cumulative. Thank you. Thank you. Apologies. Mr. Singular, continue, however, so that, but the overall level of effect is not provided. Now you have to in environmental impact assessment, you have to state the threshold for significance. So is your level of significant significance set at moderate or moderate to major. Now in the Lvia, in chapter seven, the threshold for significance is set at moderate to major.

Everywhere else in the environmental statement that I can see, including in chapter 13, cumulative effects, including in chapter four, which is the approach to the EIA, including in the heritage assessment, that the threshold for significance in all of the other chapters is moderate. So my question

is, why does the Lvia take a different threshold for significance when in fact it should be consistent throughout the environmental statement. And my second question is that in chapter 13, where we have the not significant landscape and visual cumulative effects, is that based on a moderate negative effect or a moderate to major negative effect, and in which case, which threshold should be applied? Thank you.

Thank you very much for that.

I'm sure you'll submit that as an all representation of this hearing that would that be helpful? Thank you.

And now going to open the questioning up to people within the room. Please, if you could put your hand up, somebody will come to you with a microphone. If you could please remember to state your name and who you are representing, if it's not yourself,

we Got a microphone, please.

Hello. My name is Robert balls. I'm a resident of Bishop and village. So today I'm going to be speaking about the cumulative effect of buyers. Gill. I've got a couple of documents that I'm going to be referring to. I wouldn't mind if they were put up on the screen. The first one is a PP, 102,

such figure, 13.1

if that would be possible. I

yep, that's the one there. Thank you.

So what I'm going to be talking about here is just the wider view in terms of cumulative effect

in relation to the wider area. So if we're looking at the black line, which isn't too clear on there, but that's the 10 kilometer buffers on around the buyers Gill site. So that represent, well, that covers County Durham, Darlington and Stockton

counties.

The point that I just want to highlight there is you can see the concentration of developments around the buyer skill side, in comparison to the outer edges of these counties.

So if you're looking at the red spot, the red outline of buyers guild,er,

I think it's around about 90% of the very close developments are

solar farms that have been passed

within the last 30 months. That

was all I wanted to highlight on that one. If we could just go in a bit closer and just pull up a PP, one, zero, well, AP, 103, just a short list. That's fine. You can just use that if you like, because

I'm just going to talk about just within the purple

line, which is the five kilometer buffers on I.

Um. So in this song, we can, again, we can see the the Durham County Council, Darlington Council and Stockton county council, again, just highlighting the high concentration of always existing solar farms that are within those three counties.

So I'll just quickly run through and count your Durham. You've got two,

two solar farms there within this is all within the five kilometer buffers on right. So we've got

two at Durham, 49.99 megawatt. That's Cowley Hill solar farms that's in current construction now. So that takes out just shy of 90 hefters. Then we've got wind field

that's 31 megawatt. That's 42.3

hectares of landscaping now. So in total, and counted dome there, we've got 81 megawatt of solar energy being produced across 130 hefters. So then we move across to Stockton council. So again, within the five kilometer buffers on,

we've got high meadows, two which is 10.8 megawatt, 15 hectares of land. Then we've got Thorpe Bank, which is 32 megawatt, 38.5 hectares. Low middle field farm, 10 megawatt, 28.6 hectares, California Farm, which is now being all joined together as 140, 9.99 megawatt, 87 hectares. And then there's another one which isn't actually on the RWE list, which is high middle solar farm.

So my point that I want to make from the for the Stockton on tees Council, if the if they wouldn't mind responding to that, is in the local impact report, section 7.7,

they said that none of these add to the cumulative effect

in relation to buyers Gill so just to reiterate on that, two of the solar farms that I've mentioned within the stock Montes Council, within 500 meters from the buyers guild boundary.

So if Stockton Council could just clarify as to how that

doesn't contribute to the cumulative effect of development,

bearing in mind that this isn't taken into consideration any of the other developments, such as your housing, pipelines, etc. So that's just one point for Stockton county council there. So moving on. So there's another solar farm that straddles both Stockton and Darlington. Starts Gately Moore, 49.99 megawatt. 124

hectares of land being taken out of production for that one,

moving completely into the Darlington Council. We've got long pastures. So that's 49.99 megawatt, 104.5

hectares of land being taken out for that one. And then we've got burtry Lane solar farm, which is 49.99 megawatt, 62 hectares of land. So that complete list of solar farms that I've mentioned there is all within five kilometers of Bayer skill.

To summarize that

1482

acres of of land being taken out for solar farms. So that provides the three counties with a total of 345

megawatt of energy. So using the RWE estimations,

this would power over 150,000

homes.

So just doing a bit of desktop research into this, the

population of Darlington County is 110,000

people, which is roughly 90,000 dwellings. Stockton is 74,000 dwellings. So I haven't counted counted dome, because,

well, just those two alone

will be able to be completely powered by all of the solar energy produced within that five kilometer areas, nearly powered by all of us so.

So going back to the My first initial point of the first diagram showing the wider area of all of the counties that are involved in the bioskiller project. Darlington County has a land area of 358,400

acres. Stockton has a land area of 49,000 area, 49,000 acres. So this is just total land area, not taking into consideration any of the urban area.

So that's a total 407,400

acres across those two counties.

A point is, why do we need to have every single solar farm

for both of those counties within a five kilometer radius of the buyers get?

Project.

Also, within that five kilometer radius, we have all of the wind turbines that Stockton county council has,

disregarding anything that goes further out to the east there, but

it's also roughly about 50% of all the wind turbines in the Darlington county council.

So within this five kilometer radius,

we are providing an awful lot of renewable energy.

Two points that I need to make with my own desktop research. There are no solar farms that are nationally significant infrastructure projects in the UK right now

that are surrounded by as many smaller solar farms that are under the 49.99



megawatt threshold. So why here,

my point, second point is how much more renewable energy in such a small rural area provide for the wider area in those counties. Isn't it time for the other areas in the combined counties to do their part?

That's all I've got. Thank

you very much. Mr. Bose,

there were other hands up in the room. The microphone will come to you if you can introduce yourself, please.

Hello. My name is Jacqueline Stevens. I'm a resident of great Stainton. When you were discussing the road from

Newt native through to red Marshall, and that every three minutes you would be passing a solar farm, don't forget that there already exist two wind farms along that road which make it even more industrial.

Thank you.

Thank you very much, Miss Stevens, is there anybody else in the room who wishes to contribute? There's a hand up at the front on my left. Thank you. Applause.

Good afternoon.

My name is for Crompton, down farm Bishop.

I'd just like to put forward what comes to mind and how I feel about this project,

what I should say first was, I don't mind being called Paul,

or in their case, sir,

final chance to put my opinion forward. We now found ourselves in a terrible position, and after fight for what we already own,

after two years of deliberation, we are no nearer the decision

on this application without immense work done by Peter Norman, Mark and Sean, without them, we wouldn't have got this far.

A lot has been said

about the damage this will cause farmland and surrounding villages, but nothing has been said about the people within these villages and how it will affect them.

Should this application be granted.

We've been misled, pushed from pillar to post, and indeed treated as an important little problem.

Have to excuse me a shorter breath.

What is amazing is ridiculous comments are made by the applicant, in particular about the sheep. How ridiculous is that

the sheep will be frolic and grazing in the sunshine underneath the solar panels

the new sheep will be is putting the wool over our eyes and

the parents of the local school

have been asked how they feel about

well this being around their school. Most of them were very upset. The majority of them said

that if this application is granted, that they would consider taking their children out of school

and take them somewhere safer.

You take the children out the school, the school closed down.

The school closed down. You're ripping the heart out of the out of the village.

Village,

you are destroying our village with this application

and the community,

when you've gone, we will be left with 40 years of carnage to our surroundings,

we will not gain any benefit from this project at all,

just the destruction of our tranquil village. Perhaps you could give that some thought in this application.  
Thank you. Applause.

Thank you, Mr. Crompton, for that.

Is anybody else in the room who wishes to speak?

Okay? I believe there were

few people online who wish to contribute. If you can put your virtual hand up, please, I'll come to you now,

Mrs. Maloney, please,

good afternoon.

I'm Susan Maloney. I'm, excuse me, I've got a bit of breath problem at the moment. I'm a resident of bishopton village.

A lot of what I wanted to say this afternoon has been covered, but

I am now feeling extremely worried, extremely worried about the cumulative effects that this is going to have on our communities and our villages, but more importantly, as a receptor. And I refute that I'm not a receptor. I'm a human being, and this is going to affect me, my friends, my family and other villagers. Massively, I cannot accept this assessment that they have put forward,

that an assessment that's taken from surveys, from policy guidance, from studies, from modeling. It's not real. It's high in the sky. As far as I'm concerned, it's not about our lives. We stand to lose so much if this goes ahead, we've got we're going to lose good farmland. We've got farmers now in this village who were proposing to lease their land, who are now wanting to protect their inheritance, and they still are all talking about food security and food poverty.

It's not right. It's not right. We're going to lose community recreation areas. We have losing public rights of ways there is significant losses to our way of life. I don't think there'll be a road that we can come into or out of our village that we can drive without seeing. So the panels and I think great Stanton will be in the same position if this all goes ahead. There's a map somewhere, and I haven't found it yet.

I can't find an official one anyway, that shows the distribution of solar farms in the UK. I do think this area is getting more than its fair share, and the concentration in this region is unprecedented,

unprecedented,

and for what, for what to get the best effect on the perfect summer day from a solar panel in the middle of June? No, that's not acceptable. That is not acceptable, and please don't talk to me about temporary, temporary effects. This is going to last for decades,

decades.

That's all I want to say.

Thank you.

Thank you very much. Mrs. Mullaney,

anybody else online, please?

I can't see another hand up.

Thank you very much.

I will give the applicant an opportunity at this stage to respond if they wish to.

Sir Alex menck, for the applicant, I think the

the the first one to.

Sarah is that the applicant hears the statements, has heard the statements that have been made by the local community today and previously, and the applicant acknowledges the strength of feeling that exists within the local community about this project.

So we have, over the course of the last 45 minutes or so, heard

a large number of very detailed points from a number of different speakers, and so I don't think we can reasonably expect to respond to them in turn on a detailed basis during the course of this hearing. So I'm going to suggest, if it's acceptable, that we consider the points that have been made and provide a written response at the next deadline.

That said, there are a few points that I think it might be helpful to pick up on in the here and now, which will be captured in that written response, along with additional responses to other points made. And Mrs. Fisher, I don't know if you wanted to start with a general description of the nature of landscape and visual effects that have been assessed in your in your assessment.

Mary Fisher, for the applicant,

the

this is just to return to

the nature of the assessment provided and how it responds to guidance, particularly in response to the points made by Carly Tinkler.

Carly Tinkler referred to paragraph 713, of guidance for landscape and visual impact in questioning the approach to cumulative assessment.

And I just wanted to return to that point and explain how that plays out in the assessment provided

so paragraph 713,

has Mr. Tinkler read out says that the baseline for the main Ipa should include existing schemes and those which are under construction. Now, the baseline isn't the list of effects that should be assessed. The baseline is the landscape that you assess the change to.

So then, if we move on that same paragraph, then goes on to say, the baseline for assessing cumulative effects should then include those schemes considered in the LVA and potential schemes that are that are not yet present, but in the consenting process,

and

that is what has been done in the LVA. So chapter seven includes in the baseline those projects which are operational and those which are consented, and that is a minor variance from what it says in COVID Three, because that is the direction provided by pins advice note 17,

which says that consented projects should be taken account of as part of The dynamic baseline.

So those projects in the main LVA are considered to be present in the landscape baseline, and the significant effects arising from the proposed development are reported against that baseline. So taking account of the presence of operational and consented projects, there are significant effects arising from proposed development which are reported in terms of both on landscape character and visual receptors.

So in effectively, when Mr. Brown was describing some of the other assessments, such as climate change, as being inherently cumulative. The main LVA is, in itself, inherently cumulative.

Think that was the main point we wanted to address.

Thank you, Mrs. Fisher. So there are just two more points that I wanted to pick up very quickly

by way of summary, because I think they're probably quite useful to help set the the wider context. I think Mr. Mr. Philpott referred us to a discussion which took place during one of yesterday's hearings, and some detailed information which was put to the applicant about a comparison of this project with

the ratio of land taken to deliver another project. In that case, it was the East Yorkshire solar farm. And so as the point that has been put is that the over planting ratio for the.

Orchard solar farm was identified as being at a ratio at a scale of 1.2

as compared to the ratio for this project, which is has has currently been described in previous submissions, is at 1.6

now the applicant is obviously looking at the comments which were made during the course of yesterday, but and we will supplement this in written submissions. But the one point we have been able to identify immediately is that the technology which has been used for the East Yorkshire solar farm is tracker technology, whereas the technology that has been used for the buyers. Gill solar farm is fixed panel technology. Now each of those technologies brings with it slightly different technical considerations, which relates to

the basis of land taking over planting ratio that may be needed when the

the East Yorkshire solar farm minutes papers that we were referred to yesterday

identifies a figure of 1.3 for bars Gill as a point for comparison. Having looked at the information that has been available, or having having looked at information which has been available between now and then, or between then and now, we've been able to identify that that point of comparison was probably with earlier environmental information, which was available about the buyers guild scheme when tracker technology was being considered for this scheme as well. So the, I think the short point says, is that the comparison of 1.2 with 1.6 is it's not comparing like for like. It's comparing two different technology types. And we'll provide more information about that comparison in written comments. The final points that I

intended to make, and in regard to the comments that have been made, is in response to the

the contribution that the local areas is making to renewable energy, with buyers Gill and other Potential schemes and

the examining authority will be familiar with the national policy statements and what they have to say about the current demand for renewable energy and how that is a that is a national demand. It's not one that has been limited with reference to any particular area. And so as I gave you some very specific references to parts of that policy which the applicant says are relevant, and they are summarized in

our summary of previous oral submissions, the reference number for which is rep 1006,

and I won't repeat those sir, but the applicant would refer you to them in response to those points. Thank you.



Thank you, Mr. Mendek,

so I'm going to move us on to Item four on the agenda, which is review of the issues and actions arising.

And we'd like to confirm the actions, please. So

if you'd like to go through the actions, we'll just confirm. We've got them agreed.

So if possible, if I can take a couple of minutes just to run through the list quickly with a colleague, and then back to them, if that's permissible, thank you. Applause.

Uh, Mr. Manhinik, apologies to to to interrupt now, just considering time and in speediness and having, uh, checked this issue with Mr. Wheelchair, maybe what might be beneficial to do is just to pick up some actions that came out of this last round of intervention with several different IPs that I just wanted to make sure that we do capture, and I have just taken note of two actions that I wanted to make sure are registered officially as actions, and that would be an update for the applicant, if the applicant agrees to submit an update of the list, particular separating

the list of projects that are being considered as part of the cumulative effect assessment, separating solar farms from the other project.

So if you could resubmit that, we have had a lot of debate from IPS and questions being asked and raised about that, so I think that some confirmation from the applicant on that will be beneficial, and the other action would be just to submit in writing

your response that you have just provided now Mr. Mcinnich in relation to

why the applicant believes that the 1.6

ratio of planting is justified in suitable for this proposal, rather than the 1.2

so it was just those two actions that I was a little bit concerned might have gotten lost within the discussion just now,

sir, Alex and helik for the applicant, thank you for clarifying those two particular points. So yes, we will make sure that we pick those up and we will collate any other actions which have arisen during the course of this hearing and submit a list of those as

quickly as we can after the hearing.

Thank you. Mr. Minhinik, over to Mr. Wiltshire, thank you. Thank you for that clarification. So

I know you've been taking notes of the actions, including those two that Mr. Pintos

detailed for us. So we will now be circulated as soon as as soon as this is finished, and there's the opportunity to circulate that list,

I'll move on to Item five, which is any other business I've had no matters notified to me under this agenda item that Peter will wish to raise at this meeting, I assume there is no any other business.

I can see no hands up, so I move on to the last item, item six, which is closure of the hearing again. Thank you for your contributions, which have been full and useful to us,

including those from the virtual participants. We do value them, I can assure you of that, and we will consider all submissions made carefully,

the procedural decision made by the EXA on the first of November 2024 reference. PD 009 include a revised timetable in accordance with the rule eight of the examination procedural rules published to provide certainty to all parties involved in the examination and to make Express provision for procedures that are required to examine the proposed changes under the compulsory acquisition regulation. If those changes are accepted in it, the XA has confirmed that dates have been reserved for the following hearings, if required, an open floor hearing, a compulsory acquisition hearing, an issue specific hearing on the change application, and any other additional hearings. We will notify details of these in advance via the project page of the planning Inspectorate website.

The time is now 1643, and issue specific hearing for the bioskill solar energy is now closed. Thank you.  
Applause.