

TRANSCRIPT_EASTYORKSHIRE_PRELIM_SESSION1_21052024

00:00

All right. Good morning, everyone. It's just about 10 o'clock. So I think we'll open this meeting which is a preliminary meeting for the East Yorkshire solar farm project. Can I just check that everyone can hear me? Okay at the back? Yeah. can also confirm with Simon Rainwood that we're live streaming and recording. Charlie good. My name is Simon water. I'm the appointed, been appointed by the Secretary of State as the single examining inspector to examine this application. And you'll probably also hear my role referred to as the examining authority. A few housekeeping matters that we need to deal with before we make a substantive start. Please make sure that all mobile phones and devices are switched off or turn to silent. You may have seen that there are toilets and including disabled toilets. Through the lobby to my left, there's also water available in the lobby outside just the lobby and outside. There's no fire drill planned for today. So if the fire alarm does go off, a member of staff will come in and let us know what we should be doing. However, we should be ready to evacuate and the evacuation route is through the doors to my right, we turn right down the stairs. And around the outside of the building. The rendezvous point is the flagpoles at the front of the hotel. So today I'll aim to keep things as focused and and efficient as possible. And in to assist in that. I've issued something called the introduction to the preliminary meeting process. And that was Annex B of the letter which are invited everyone to the meeting. That's the letter dated the 23rd of April. And you'll also hear that referred to as the Rome six letter. It includes a number of annexes going up to h I trust that everyone has read it as I've only be providing a summary this morning as we go along. You'll also find information about the application on the planning inspectorates national infrastructure planning website. And again, I'd strongly urge you to familiarise yourself with this because it is the main means by which will communicate. And it gives everyone access to all the documents throughout the examination. Today's meeting is being done in a hybrid way, which means there are obviously people in the room with us today. But some are also joining virtually on teams, and they will come up on the screen in due course. I will do my best to make sure that however anyone who attends today, you're given a fair opportunity to participate. It's important to say that there will be a recording of today's meeting. And that will be on the East Yorkshire solar farms section of the national infrastructure planning website as soon as practicable after the meeting has finished. With that in mind, can you please ensure that you speak clearly into the microphone, stating your name and who you're representing and do that each time before you speak. The microphones have an on off button and over suggest that for those people who are close to a microphone, they keep it switched off unless they're actively participated in the app in the discussion at that moment. If you wish to speak and you're not at a tie under the table there we are roving microphones which will be brought around so please wait for one to be brought to you before you speak. A link to the planning inspectorates privacy notice was provided with the rule six letter. And again I'm assuming that everyone has read it and familiarise themselves with the document because that establishes how personal data of our customers will be handled in accordance with the principles set out in data protection rules. Again, please speak to Simon rude if you have any questions about the

privacy aspects of that. The meeting will follow the agenda as set out in Annex A of the rules six letter be helpful if you have that to hand and perhaps again, I could ask the case team to to put that on the screen when it's available. But just to explain briefly the purpose of the meeting this morning and that is to focus on the way in which the application will be examined. And so on that basis, I'll only be inviting discussion on the procedural aspects of the application if the examination the purpose of the meeting is not to discuss the merits, or any concerns that you may have regarding the application. Those things will be considered when the once the examination of the application begins. And that only happens following the close of the meeting this morning. So, good, thank you for your cooperation in advance on that point. Now going to come to those participating today and ask them to introduce themselves. When I state your organization's name, please could you introduce yourself, stating your name who you represent? Which item on the agenda you wish to speak on? If you're not representing an organisation, please confirm your name and summarise your interest in the application. And again, confirm the agenda item we wish to speak on. So with that in mind, perhaps we could start with the applicant.

06:09

Thank you. Good morning, sir. My name is Amy Sterling. I'm a Senior Associate Solicitor at Pinsent Masons. And I'll be representing is East Yorkshire solar farm limited to the applicant for this scheme. I'm joined today by fellow colleagues and representatives of the applicant. However, I do anticipate that it will only be me who's speaking. So if anyone else does require to speak or suggest he can introduce himself at relevant time.

06:32

Thank you. So we now move on to the councils and other organisations. We've asked to speak starting with East Riding of Yorkshire Council and I think John Marshall is participating virtually. Smash.

06:58

Yeah, thank you. Thank you. Yeah.

07:14

Thank you. I'm sorry, I understand that. Mrs. Beckett have beckoned and Milan wishes to speak.

07:28

Good morning, sir. My name is Sally Beckett and I'm helping Becky's Macmillan families. I'd like to speak on Item five.

07:36

Item five. Thank you.

07:45

Michael fields in this field.

07:49

Good morning, I'm speaking myself. I'd like to speak in item six, raising concerns about the way the procedures really based on previous experience, way examinations gone. Maybe there's some improvements.

08:14

We weren't expecting, I think and rather than force them, but I understand that she is not now participating. Is there anyone else in the room today? who wishes to speak on the items on the agenda?

08:34

Good morning, Michael Rennels, North Yorkshire counsel. And Jenny time and assistant principal Planning Officer, but just to speak if required.

08:48

Sorry, I didn't quite catch the last bit.

08:51

There aren't any specific. So Michael, then I was analysed. Yes. There aren't any specific items that were that we want to speak against just if required. Okay,

08:59

thank you. Right? Is there anyone participating virtually, who hasn't registered wishes to speak

09:17

can't see any hands going up on the sign on the screen. So if you do wish to decide that you wish to speak, for example, to make comments on contributions, which emerged during the course of the meeting, you may still do so. So just please raise your hands or if you're participating on teams, use the hand function on teams. Any other comments on item one before we move on?

09:52

Yes, sir. Me standing on behalf of the applicant and it's just a request. I think the microphones around the room are pretty low. And I think because some people are potentially struggling to hear so just requested the AV team, if they could increase the volume slightly, they're sure that everyone in the audience can hear

10:10

that, is it possible to do that? Is it me or other people?

10:18

Can you stepping on behalf of the African? I'm struggling to hear other people around the table when they speak by can hear you clearly, sir. Okay.

10:30

Yes, I think if everyone when they do speak, just you perhaps need to be a fraction closer to the microphone than you have been up until now. Okay, we'll move on to item two on the agenda, which is the examination process. So again, in order to streamline the running of the event, and XP, the rules six letter sets out and an introduction to this meeting, and the examination process, and it explains how the examination will be conducted, and how you can participate. Again, for expediency, I'm assuming that everyone has read this, and therefore I'm not going to go through it all. Now. However, it is important that people understand the process clearly. Therefore, if there's anything you're not certain about, or need further clarity, this meeting is your opportunity to ask. So on the basis of the information set out of there next be Are there any questions regarding the weights proposed to examine the application? If you've got specific points related to the timetable, including the site visit, we'll cover that underwriting fine. But anything else that anyone wishes to raise this stage?

11:53

Yes. Could we have a microphone for the lady at the front?

12:08

I'm sorry, I need to be able to land. But I have to ask myself, what are we doing in her time in ASHRAE, when the subject is what we're discussing, is trusting our men how inspiring more I can can't help but think it's to keep it off as

12:32

the issue there was because this is a fairly rural area, that God's too many options in terms of suitable venues to accommodate the number of people that could potentially participate and provide all the facilities that go along with that. I think two options performance.

13:02

Microphone that needs to be turned off somewhere.

13:18

Okay, there were two options put forward by the applicant. I think another one was a school. But that turned out not to be available on the particular dates that the meeting was to take place. I can assure you it's not a matter of trying to exclude anyone. The whole process of the national infrastructure project. system is to make it as inclusive as possible. It's simply a question of the the logistics of finding somewhere suitable in the local area. Mr. Sterling, have you got anything to add in terms of the process you use to look for alternative sites, alternative venues?

13:57

Ms. Sterling on behalf of the applicant? No. So just to concur with what you've said. Obviously, there is a checklist of things that need to be taken into account in terms of particularly accessibility, disabled access, etc. Would all factor into the decision on where to hold these meetings? Yeah.

14:15

Okay. So we'll move on now to item three on the agenda, which is the initial assessment of principle issues. These are set out in Annex C of the rule six letter. And as that NSA explains, the principal

issues are not intended to be a comprehensive or exclusive list of the issues to be subject to examination, and inevitably, some will overlap and interrelate but I will have regard to all of the important and relevant that is during the examination. And when I write up my recommendation report for the Secretary of State the list of issues is currently on the screen. There was one request to speak from as Brotherton wholesome but as she doesn't appear to be participating today, we'll move on to the written submissions. We had a written submission from Sir David Davis MP and from Mr. Andrew Belk. It's the bulk submission deals with his concerns about the effects of the proposal. And as I've already said that that's not for today's meeting. However, I have had a look at his submission. And I consider that all the matters that he raises are things which will be covered in the in the assessment. I understand that. So David is not participating today. However, his written submission says that the principal issues that I've issued cover the majority of his concerns, although he does put emphasis on landscape and visual land use socio economic, and the use of agricultural land, as well as the connection to the national grid and decommissioning matters. He's not alone in many of those concerns, and they will get a good error here airing during the course of the examination. Does anyone else wish to speak on the initial assessment of principal issues?

16:41

There was a brief submission from the applicant just to confirm that the applicant is content with that list. Is there anything you wish to add? Personally? Me

16:52

selling on behalf of the applicant? And yes, sir, we're content with the list of principal issues. And we have no further comments.

16:58

Mr. Reynolds, from your point of view.

17:02

Michael Reynolds NYC now we've confirmed we're happy with the list of issues. Okay.

17:12

No one else in that case, we'll move on to Item four on the agenda. And this is the procedural decisions which I've taken so far. And you'll find these at annex f of the rules six letter and they will appear on screen very soon, I'm sure. So in brief, the procedural issues concern the submission of statements of common ground between the applicant and various parties. Some additional submissions made by the coal authority by national grid electricity, transmission and northern gas networks, together with direct together with the arrangements for the site visit. I should also say, is this microphone still working? I should also say that I carried out and accompanied site visits and a note of that visit has been published on the website. We'll deal with the arrangements for the accompanied site visit when we look at the examination timetable. There are no requests to speak and no written submissions on this matter so far. Does anyone wish to speak on anything now?

18:31

Me sailing on behalf of the applicant? Yes, sir. Just one comment and query really in relation to item am of the request for statements of common ground which is a request for a statement of common ground between the applicant and the UK Health Security Agency and the Office for health improvement and disparities. The applicant notes that the UK health security agency submitted development representation on behalf of both of those organisations confirming that they're satisfied with the submitted documents and that they don't want to register as an interested party and have nothing further to add. On that basis. We created whether a statement of common ground was still required, we can of course, follow up with them, but I think their position is clear on the relevant representation.

19:17

It is the reason I put that in is because there has been some concern about effects of electromagnetic fields and the like from relevant representations and youth key health security agency would be the best people to deal with that. So I was hoping to get some something additional from them just to cover that specific point.

19:44

me something on behalf of the applicant. Okay, notice that we'll follow up with them and check if that's something they're willing to cover.

19:51

Okay, thank you. Anyone else on the procedural decisions? In that case, we'll move on to Item five, which is the draft examination timetable. And this is that Annex D of the rules six letter soon to appear on the screen. Under this item the agenda to the to the accompanied site inspection, the notification of a wish to speak in a hearing, the date for receipt of written representations, the local impact reports and statements of common ground. Now there has been a request to speak on this item from East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and Mrs. Beckett's. And there's also a written submission from David Davis, starting with the Council, which wants to move the deadline back to the 27th of June. Miss Marshall and you want to expand on your concern that

21:12

the law being drafted, we are aiming to present this to members at the planning committee on the 28th of June, we apologise for any delay this may have caused. We are then hoping you would agree to a couple of days extension on the deadline 1/8 of the 18th of June to allow any points raised by members to be added to that local impact report, we will then submit our local impact report in a timely manner. Thank you.

21:44

I think the issue here is that the local impact report is one of a large number of documents which are intended to be submitted at deadline one, I would be very reluctant to move deadline one as a whole back. But there may be an opportunity to move the submission of the local impact report back to say deadline to which I think would give the council enough time to clear its committee process. And to to submit on that deadline. That does mean however, that there won't be much of a gap between the submission of of that local impact report and the next round of hearings which are due from the 10th of July. So I think it's worth having a review of that just to see whether from the applicants point of view

from other participants point of view that is going to cause a problem. So again, starting with Sterling, do you have a view on that?

22:49

Me staying on behalf of the app again? No, sir, we're content for the local impact report to be submitted at deadline to and of course endeavour to review and be prepared to respond to any point raised as soon as possible thereafter. One point to consider which has taken place and other examinations is for a draft of the local impact report to be submitted prior to committee approval and then the final version then submitted to the next day. Maybe an option open to you.

23:16

Just following through on that point was Marshall. If the consumer reports if the committee's on the 20th of June presumably the your committee report will be publicly available sometime before that. Can you just let us know that the dates for that so that we know when it will be available?

23:42

Yes, the agenda for the committee will be published five days prior to the 20th of June so the agenda will be available and we will be able to publish the local impact report and allow the applicants have sight of that.

23:58

So when you say prior to is there a date that we should be looking for

24:05

just one second I can just check that for you.

24:26

Yeah, sorry, that's five working days. Just I'm just checking my calendar. Sorry about this.

25:04

Well, I think we can probably walk apologies.

25:06

Sorry, I did technical problem. Sorry about that. Yeah, I think it would be the 14th 14th of June.

25:15

Okay. Thank you.

25:18

Well, that sounds like a reasonable way forward. Just looking at Mr. Reynolds and your local impact report.

25:29

Michael Reynolds, North Yorkshire Council, our local impact report doesn't won't be going through our committee cycles. So we were prepared to meet deadline. One. Okay. We'll take other instruction if necessary, but that was our position. Okay.

25:45

Well, I just in the interest of fairness, if I've given the dispensation to ease riding, I don't want to I don't want to invite you to delay submission, but perhaps I should allow you the opportunity.

26:04

Thank you, again, we were set up to to go for deadline. Well, but we're happy to say we would

26:12

be happy if you're happy to submit if you don't feel that you're being harshly done to shall I put it that way? By submitting it deadline one, then we'll leave it there.

26:21

No, I think because he's ridings issues come out of the committee cycle. I don't feel like we're being we're being hard done too. But it might be easier if we wait. Perhaps we'll pick it up with East riding offline with you and make sure we're the applicant rather. And we can make sure that we're mirroring and we're happy to share early drafts anyone? Okay,

26:43

fine. Thank you.

26:53

Right. This is Beckett's I think you'd like to speak about the site visits.

27:03

Yes. We think that David Davis and PE should accompany you on your site visit this summer. All homes that will be affected by the solar farm should be visited so that you can see for yourself how residents will be affected within their own boundary. The plan site visit is during the summer, when usually The Verge is and land on dry and firm and the hedgerows will be in full leaf. You should also do a site visit during the winter months when all of the proposed site will be visible through the hedges and you will then get a true picture of the site. You can only know how residents will be affected by visiting each property that will have the solar farm close to them. We also suggest that you ask the farmers who own the land to reuse for the solar farm why they have offered land away from their own homes and offered land that is close to or surrounds local residents homes. We suggest that you also question boom, why they would use land close to residential properties. When the farmers have other land that would not be near any homes. We propose that you send a boundary set a boundary of 250 metres between any residential property and the solar farm. We know that you have already done an accompanied site visit using the information supplied to you by boom, using their own chosen visual points and noise assessment reset locations. These locations are not their residential properties. Cool and new.

28:50

Mrs. Beckett Can I think I do need to interrupt you that we're dealing with the procedural matters and the the arrangements for the site visit we can't stray into your views on the merits or otherwise of the case.

29:13

I thought that it was about this was all about the site make site visit.

29:19

It is yes. So it's the arrangements for the site visit. There'll be an opportunity for people to put forward suggestions for the itinerary for the site visit and where you feel that I should look at the site from and they will be I can make a judgement based on submissions you may make that point but today is about the arrangements for the site visit who attends and the the procedure.

29:52

Okay, thank you

29:59

i I have seen your written submission. And I understand that your the point that you're making. Just to take the points in order, then, Mr. Date, Sir David is very welcome to attend the site visit. And if that can be arranged, then I'm pleased to see him there. So that is really a matter for him. If he wishes to attend, then that's fine. In terms of visiting all of the homes, that's going to be a very difficult thing to achieve logistically just in terms of the examination, timetable, and the practical consideration, but as things stand, I don't have the authority to go on to other people's into other people's properties to view the site to view the sites. So I think I'm very well aware of the level of concern that there has been about how the proposal will affect the the

31:13

reply. Yes. I'm sure that if you was to ask local residents, they wouldn't welcome you.

31:22

Well, I'm not in a position to indeed, speak to each individual residents. If residents want to invite me to view the site from their content to do that, what I was going to suggest is that perhaps you could get together with the applicants and come up with a representative sample of homes, which will be affected. And I could visit though, and then if consent could be arranged for me to get access to those homes, and we could do it that way to go to every single house, I don't think he really is a realistic proposition.

32:16

Your other concern was about the fact that the site visit will take place in the summer rather than the winter. That is simply a quirk of the timing of when the application was made. And there's something which comes along quite regularly. The issue is, I have a statutory duty to complete the examination in six months from today, essentially, which takes us to November. So even if I were to do another type visit towards the end of the examination, and there will be no point in doing it right at the end of the

examination, because there'll be no opportunity to discuss the way have been seen on the site visit. If I did it earlier than that, the chances asked, some of the trees would still be in leaf and wouldn't experience the effect that you wish me to see. So that's a practical difficulty. The other point to make is the guidelines for landscape and visual assessment require photographs and photo montages to be submitted in during the summer and winter. And that is part of the the applicants landscape and visual assessment. You may say that that's not ideal, but that is the way that these things are often handled, because it simply isn't practical to do two site visits, six months apart for examinations like that. So again, on the site visit, if we can't have a discussion about the merits, but if you want to point out as we go around particular views where the view will be different during the winter months, then again, I'm very happy to to hear from you on that point.

34:10

Thank you.

34:22

Are you content that we've covered that issue? Probably not entirely to your satisfaction, but at least we've gone through the issues. Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Sterling. Have you anything to add on that point?

34:38

Me Sterling on behalf of the African just to echo a few of the points that you made sir, and I guess to manage expectations around the role of the accompanied state visit, which is a state familiarisation familiarise, familiarisation exercise rather than a detailed discussion of the merits of the proposal as you as you traverse the order limits and associated viewpoints and To make the point that you made earlier that deadly one is the deadline in the examination for suggestions for any accompanying site visit the applicant at deadline two will then also propose a draft itinerary, which will then be published before they before they ESI. And then also, just as you mentioned, so yes, we have the applicant has undertaken photo montages during the winter months, which are available within the examination Library. Thank you.

35:28

for tuning in to the submission, that's David Davis made he requests that the events take place on Fridays. Again, let's go going to have a significant effect on the examination timetable, not least because the events such as the next round of hearings are likely to take place or need to take place over several days, so they couldn't all take place on Friday. In any case, however, the site visit if he wishes to ascend, if that was on a Friday, because it suits him, then I think we can certainly accommodate that. The other point that Sir David makes is that he refers to the use of hybrid events, such as the one that we're having today. And I can confirm that all the events that we have will be hybrid events. So if David wants to join us through that process for future events, he's very welcome to do that. Does anyone else have anything to say about the examination timetable?

36:36

Can't see any hands virtually are in the room, thank you for your contributions and that I will take them into account when I produce the final timetable, which I aim to do as soon as possible. Final item on the

agenda is any other matters. And Mr. The only submission we've gotten on this is from Mr. field. And so you want to expand on your concerns. Points.

37:11

Yes, so I have been looking at previous examinations. And I think there are shortcomings in the examination process that maybe could be improved by the inclusion of electronics and electrical engineer. And the reason for that really, is this a rather nice graphic on your website, it comes from a video. And it's just a pair of scales. And it shows on one side, it's local impacts. And on the other national policy. And this is sort of your job description. It's the one they I think they've worked it from the section 104, which says, do the benefits of the proposed scheme outweigh its adverse impact. So you're looking at both how it potentially provide large amounts of electricity according to the government's requirements, against the effects on local community of having and in six months time, you're going to pick up the scales and see which one has the greater weight. So it seems to me that the funding authority has great expertise in working out local effects, and mitigations, to things like that. But it doesn't come from a background of any electrical understanding. And there are a number of things that could be improved. So one that comes straight to mind. And this is sort of from one of the submissions I read. Somebody referred to shot wick, which is a very nice, medium size solar farm. I'm very that's my favourite, but the point they made about it was it has very high output for a relatively small amount of air. And I think that's an index you forget any application that's brought before you is what's the you could call it the power density, how much electricity can we get in exchange for this much land, almost to the point where if it was a very low figure, you could reject the first day and say, this is never going to be acceptable in terms of how much electricity you're producing. And you could build up a database of previous ones, including the non NC ones, things like shopping, which have quite good figures. So that would be my first point. So I'd like to give two examples of where I see the procedure as failings that could be tightened up. One in terms of the procedures themselves and the second example is what are the consequences of those shortcomings. So the first one that struck me was I was watching. I think it was a Sinica lshs one because your website is very good at providing information for people like me to just log in and have a look and During the course of that meeting, which looked very similar to this one, their solicitor was very well spoken most of the time. So quite agitated. At one point, he sort of say, How could I'm paraphrasing? How can somebody in their right mind right 90 or 90 megawatts of a battery limit? Okay, so typewriters not worth getting worked up about this move on. But then I looked into it, because also, you've got all the submissions there. And the diva spurs came from what's called Double CRO, which got a DCO in the end. And that started off as 150 megawatts of solar and 50 megawatts of battery. And during the course of the examination has increased a few 100 megawatts, and 90 megawatts to the battery. And the inspector was trying to put us okay, with the battery 90 megawatts particulars trying to put limits on this solo, he wants to put 300 as a limit. So 200 was okay, but let's put down a limit of, say, 300. And the applicant wasn't happy with that. So he said, Well, how about 500? For both of them. That in itself is strange to me, because we want as much electricity as possible, I can't understand why the inspector will be looking to put an electrical limit on the

41:20

I can understand your concern. And I'm sure the output of the proposal will be something which comes on up in the examination. I'm going to be quite frank, I'm a chartered town planner, I'm not an electrical

engineer, I don't have that detail background. However, as you say, my expertise such as it is, is in weighing the evidence and hopefully understanding the evidence and weighing it. What I think I want to hear from you is why you feel that in this particular case, there's something about the electrical side of the proposal, which is different from other solar farms where there hasn't been an electrical engineer or engineer on board. And why you feel that that's required in this case and perhaps in not need others, because clearly you've looked at what has happened in other cases. Yes,

42:25

well, what happened in other cases will apply equally here, there's no big difference. I would like to draw your attention to the potential problems of not having an electrical background, which I suggest could be satisfied by having an engineer, which we may decide to not necessarily be making a decision. I mean, I can think of one thing straight off that's different about this. But it's not really about what's different about this. One is what is consistently not being addressed. And it would be nice if it was addressed.

42:59

The other element to this is my role is to consider the significant environmental effects of the proposal. It's not to undertake an engineering review of it, although I do accept entirely that the output and how that relates to national policy on electricity is something that's for the examination, and that's something that will be something that I will look into certainly.

43:29

Okay, well. Can I Okay, jump to the end of that example and tell you what it was that I didn't like about any final means. The final DCO was awarded with 50 megawatts for the solar rather than the proposed 200. And nothing on the battery, just a battery of unspecified size. But that went to the Secretary of State who then decided he would put a limit on the battery of the of the 19 megawatts that had arrived that little crow then wrote to the Secretary of State's of these removers, 90 megawatts we don't have this here. And the Secretary said no system, megawatt limit for the battery. The reason the solicitor was getting upset was because night he was a city member for a battery by an order of magnitude. But the other problem is, we ought to know that you don't measure batteries in megawatts, you metric megawatt hours. It's an it's an energy unit. It's not a power unit. And this is sort of GCSE physics level knowledge that people should really have, if we're going to go forward with this. And even if you don't have GCSE, you probably know somebody with electric car. They will tell you my batteries 100 kilowatt hours. And there'll be interested in the charge rate, which is a power unit, and they'll say, I Tesla power is 100 100 kilowatts, but they wouldn't So the distinction between the two, and I think that can have knock on effects. We don't get some of the basic physics, right? If you're going to look at any electrical parameters it's not necessarily a problem. There was a Hornsey for I think, which was Austin's putting up some new offshore wind bombs. And they got a DCO quite recently, and they're the experts. They know everything about offshore wind farm, we have working examples on we know it works. It's a large company that gets sent, I think, billions of turnover, you know that they're going to work that every detail of it to the last watt and bolts and Euro. So you can have a is it any of the electrical detail, because of your competence in the solar farms, that's not necessarily the case, because they tend to be small outfits that are addressing this new challenge. Nobody's made 500 megawatt solar farm. This is a new concept of this. And it's fraught with all sorts of problems. And so I looked at the famous one is going to

leave Hill, you must know that was the first one that was the landmark one, with a lot of work went into that, like three years ago, suddenly two years between the application and the exam. And then the ECA was boarded in, when. So that a lot of work went into that. And there were three examiners on the panel for that one, including an engineering application. That was a 350 megawatts.

46:48

And

46:52

although that was a great success, and the DCO was awarded, it's what happened next, which is essentially nothing. It all went quiet. The they stopped updating the web page, there were no more newsletters. And then chapter two started 18 months later, when a company called quinnbet windrock infrastructures announced they were going to build Britain's biggest solar farm, up 350 megawatts, it was called Project fortress, and they had a DCO. In other words, they bought the DCO of the applica.

47:27

Well, I think we're straying from, what's the justification for for having an electrical engineer? I mean, well, I'm going to ask the applicant for their comments in a second. But just to assure you that you've given us a potted history of solar farm GCOS. And, you know, that process, that journey of of understanding doesn't go noted within the planning Inspectorate. And we do try to learn lessons from previous screen so that that knowledge is is embedded in certainly the information that I have. I'm still I'm still pond pondering in terms of my role as examining the significant environmental effects, and making sure that we get a DCO, which is fit for purpose. What what the advantage of having a electrical engineer would be, can you please sync on that?

48:44

I could skip ahead to that. But it's sort of doesn't make much sense unless like, had explained why the DCO is failing us on these previous ones. But I can

48:56

just put that, well, I don't I don't want to prevent you from making the points that you wish to make. I'm just slightly concerned that we need to focus on the whys rather than the the history,

49:14

the history as to why this isn't good, it's going wrong that we should make change.

49:20

Why why? Let me put it this way. Why would having an electrical engineer involved in the examination of say little crow or cleave Hill have made for a better DCO or a better outcome in your view?

49:41

Okay, I'll skip ahead. Because we would nail down in the DCO electrical specifications which could not be subsequently changed because they are written down. Currently the DCO is virtually a blank piece of paper as far as the electrical side and we had an electrician Who could analyse their design and say

yes, this is good, this will produce 350 megawatts, then you can assign up a DCO with some confidence will ever have margin margin of error built into it because you know, things change. I'm not trying to be dogmatic about this. But I see it more as turning it into a local planning authority planning application. For example, if I have a plot of land, and I want to build a three bedroom house, and I get planning permission for the three bedrooms, I can then sell that to somebody else. And that's fine. And the planning commission grey, cover all the things you mentioned about the effects on the environment, and traffic and flooding and all that stuff. It will also pin down all the details of that building. What's the pitch of the roof? What colour the class everything is nailed down. So you don't have to worry about me selling it to somebody else, it will still be built according to the rules with a DC Oh, that's not the case. We have all it does a fantastic job on the environmental stuff. No, and that's part of the question, but depends virtually nothing on the electrical side, and it means that downstream you can end up with something that's completely different. What your intended.

51:25

Miss darling, do you want to comment on anything you've heard?

51:29

Me say anything on behalf of the applicant? Yes, sir. I'm conscious of straying into minutes of the case. So I'll keep it I'll keep it brief. We've spoken a lot. We've heard a lot today about battery storage. Just to clarify, this is not a scheme which includes battery storage. So the capacity or otherwise of battery storage isn't relevant to this particular scheme, in relation to capacity genuinely can confirm to Mr. field that we're not seeking to cap the capacity of the solar PV and that the 50 megawatts that he refers to that was in Little Crow and include fell under longfield solar DCO is the minimum capacity. And that is because that is the threshold which brings a scheme within the nationally significant infrastructure project realm. There are examples of uncapped solar and battery and couldn't believe her long field solar, and perhaps has reassurance I hope to Mr. field is that Pinsent Masons acted for the promoters of greifeld solar longfield, solar and indeed, Hornsey for initiating of Yorkshire councils, we can bring the lessons learned from those schemes to the scheme as we have done in the application. And just a final point that, as I'm sure we get into more detail in a DCO, or in later questions and headings is that the design of the scheme is controlled by the environmental effects and the requirements and the framework plans which are submitted and ultimately subject to detailed design approval by the relevant local planning authority.

52:58

Welcome back on that.

53:06

Yes, please. Yes, I think friends opposite may have misunderstood me, I was not referring to battery as an issue here, which indeed, they do not have. My point was the end of discussion with the battery to merge that neither the applicant nor the planning authority for planning inspectorate, nor for that matter, the Secretary of State in his office and whiteboard had a grasp of GCSE physics, not the battery itself, is the level of expertise that's going into this entire process. And as far as the 50 megawatts, that's the lowest they could pin it out, because otherwise you can't apply for an insert. So they've reduced it as low as they can, as long as they make 51 megawatts, rather than the 150 or 350, or whatever they've

discussed at the examination, they will be entirely in keeping with the DCO. That I think it's a mistake, but DCO examination has looked at a project which claims 200 megawatts, that should be somehow reflected in the DCO not saying that's fine. Now, as long as it's more than 50, we're okay.

54:15

Survey essentially what you're looking for, if I understand if I can summarise it is for an electrical engineer to give me some support, to be able to be confident to put a minimum and or maximum figure on the electrical output of the scheme.

54:40

Not a maximum. That's misunderstanding. This whole balance, we want as much electricity as we can out of every installation. There should never be a maximum in terms of that to say there should be a maximum height, noise, that intent there, all those involved mental things, they have maximums. But the electricity output, we want that to be as high as possible, it should have a minimum. Because if they've presented something to you using 1000 acres of land, and promising, say 350 megawatts, you want to hold them to that this is like my, I say, three bedrooms in my house, I've been a Christian, I can't then build a one bedroom house and say, although that's fitting with the planning application, that's the kind of everyone would work. And in this particular application, they haven't stated what the value is. And the first thing I would say, come back tomorrow, and tell us what you're planning on doing. Because this one we have, we know how many acres they want to use, we have no idea how much electricity they're planning on. I don't see how you can make any judgement until they say, is it because here's the megawatts? Is that sufficient? And at the moment, all they're saying is 50? We've got some guesses. We can see that there, sir. All 100 megawatts link at Drax. So we know it's not going to be more. I found one document that said they've got 400 megawatts of panels. So my guess is that be somewhere around the 303 150. But this isn't the first guess they should come here with a number and tell you what it is. And then you can Okay.

56:30

Taking that as What do you want to achieve? The purpose of today's discussion is whether in terms of the procedure of the examination, I need an electrical engineering input in order to be able to if I consider that that is what I should be doing. Yes, do I do I need an electrical engineer to assist me in asking that question or making that demand? If you like?

57:04

Yes, I appreciate that you don't appoint panel, you're appointed by a different authority. So I'm not suggesting you should appoint somebody. But I think you can ask for consultations. And his specific role the to look at the amount of panels, they're purchasing the arrangement of the panels, how big are the inverters, the transformer, how much power they're going to lose in the enormously long run down to direct? And then if they say, and this is going to be 350? The engineer can say yes, they plan this out. Well, they got the right specification for the items in the in the chart. I will approve this for 350, or whatever the number.

57:50

Was Sterling, do you want to add anything else before we

57:55

Gareth Phillips to the applicant, I've been advised and all the projects that have been mentioned before, and we are straying into probably the topics for your written question, sir, but also, later issues specific hearings on on the design parameters. But the way all of these projects have worked is to set up a set of design parameters that walk is guide the design, the guesses that have been referred to or essentially, our own electrical engineers understanding of what the supply chain looks like today, and where it's expected to be at the point of procurement, which is likely to be at least two years from now based on the timescales for achieving consent. So that's why they are estimates now. And actually, one would know more about the output for the solar panels. And indeed, if there were battery involved, the battery output, all of that is determined by subsequent approvals by the local authority under the conditions attached to the DCO. So there's a second point in time to check what's been put forward. But that's that's essentially how it works. And yes, there are there are there is flexibility built into the DCO so that we can achieve the best power output possible. And also, I might add that it's in the of any developers interest to actually increase that because essentially, these are multimillion pound projects, you one wouldn't build a battery or a solar farm and then and then not use it. So there is an incentive on the developer that once procurement has started and construction started that they will make best use of the facility that the estimates that are given now are best expert estimates of where the supply chain is expected to evolve to. But you know, we'd welcome questions on this when you do your written questions. And we can also deal with it more in hearings if if some better understanding is required. My view is so that you wouldn't need an electrical engineer to advise you on this. It can all be tested through the q&a process that happens. And of course everybody gets to comment on anything that we put forward. So the gentleman across the room clearly has a background in engineering. He'll be able to read the submissions we put in QA maintenance on those. And likewise, we can comment back and then you can form subsequent questions. So all of this will be borne out through the course of the process. Thank you.

1:00:18

I think I understand that the concern that you have Mr. Field and why you feel an electrical engineer is required. I'll take that on board and make a decision in due course, it's not something that I'm going to do at the meeting today is only

1:00:36

raised one new point that I think we should address. Okay. First of all, clarify a couple of errors. I'm not an electrical engineer, I available physics 50 years ago, I expertise is almost nil. That's why I'm saying. Secondly, to say there's a flexibility built into the DCO. is underestimating it, is just saying anything over 50 Will do. That's not flexibility. You have a principle called Rochdale Mo, which is what we imaginary engineers, or a margin of error. So you have known intended a car and you allow certain flexibility, it will change. But the starting off point, that flexibility is not it's whatever number and the major point he has, once they glossed over, that he makes you implies that if they go ahead with this, it's not in their interest to have a lower final output, they would want to get what I want, which is as much electricity as possible. This is not always the case. And that's why I was trying to raise the milk. It got sold onto somebody else in somebody else. The final one really doesn't care how much electricity it made.

1:01:58

We're straying into other points here. Just to confirm that within the DCO, there are controls over consent that is required for the scheme to be implemented by people other than the other than the applicants. But again, above and beyond that, that is a matter for the DCO potentially a legal matter. I do understand what you're saying about having a basic understanding and able to be able to come up with a minimum figure. But that doesn't help me in the electric electrical engineers input doesn't help me in formulating the DCO. And that wouldn't be the engineers area of expertise.

1:02:57

Unless anyone else has got anything to add on that point. Are there any other matters relating to the preliminary meeting and the way the examination is being or will be conducted? I can see one hand at the back. Could you just start with your with your name?

1:03:38

The village adjacent to this project? Yeah. First of all, thank you for letting me speak. The basically, do you allocate time to examine this all the stress experienced by people who live in the middle of this project, the effect of the proposed project the local environment, and the effects of the effect of local people living in a huge semi industrial site several years. And when completed, the change their local landscape that they chose to live in and enjoy. It's basically it's the it's the mental feeling of local people who actually live in this area, your cultural tastes and looked into all the environment, environmental impact, the effect on drainage, the effect on rivers, pollution and everything else, but the mental effect on local people I don't think has even been considered. There

1:04:41

is a section in the initial assessment of principal issues which deals with human health. And that takes into account mental health and stress and the like. I'm very happy to receive submissions. As from you or others on that aspect of the proposal,

1:05:04

I think the what I'm trying to say, the applicants not really ask people how they feel about a project in their area. But also perhaps touch include them, make them feel if they are part of the project, record the East riding solar farm. We know local people are part of this project

1:05:36

there was a process of consultation which follows certain rules and guidelines. Issues such as human health, were part of that consultation process. If you feel that that you haven't been heard, then the examination process is the opportunity for you to make your views. And as I've said, Ed, it will be one of those things to be examined. It's

1:06:07

it's both. Sorry about that. It's basically fine finding out what local people feel about, you know, the impact, because they're the people that really matter. Yes, yes. It's got nothing to it's more than just money.

1:06:25

And, as I say, the examination process is your opportunity to make those points and the scope of it takes those things into account.

1:06:37

My original question is, will you allocate time to look into this? Yes, yes. Sterling, we

1:06:45

got anything to add on that point.

1:06:49

Anything relying on behalf of the applicant? Not substantively. So just to flag as you mentioned, I will direct the gentleman to item 9.3 of Annex E which is initial prints initial letter principal issues, which specifically refers to effects on local community well being as an issue which will be examined during the course of the examination. And likewise, the local impact reports which will be submitted by portrayal of relevant planning authorities will also deal with this matter. So Jen took a message with that it will be properly considered.

1:07:23

Any other matters on the procedures before we wrap up?

1:07:33

No, okay, well, in that case, it only remains for me to thank everyone for their attendance and contributions. They will be helpful to me. That concludes the preliminary meeting for this morning. As has been alluded to, there will be an issue specific hearing this afternoon on the development consent order. We finished in good times. So the hearing will start as planned at two o'clock in this room and on teams with registration starting from 130. So just to say thank you, and goodbye to this afternoon for those people who are attending this afternoon. Thank you