

## **Formal Objection to the Proposed East Park Solar Development**

**From:** Tim Price

**Location:** Green End, Little Staughton

I wish to formally object to the proposed East Park solar development on the following grounds:

### **1. Loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land**

National planning policy, supported by ministerial statements from both current and previous Governments, is clear that Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land should be prioritised for food production.

Approximately 74% of the East Park application site is classified as BMV land (Grades 1–3a). Planning guidance requires developers to undertake a sequential test when proposing development on such land, demonstrating that no more suitable lower-grade land is reasonably available.

While I acknowledge that identifying alternative land may be challenging in this area, I question whether the current proposal represents the most efficient and justified use of the land available.

### **2. Inefficient and Fragmented Site Design**

The proposed scheme comprises multiple parcels of land spread across a wide area. This fragmented and inconsistent layout appears inefficient and unnecessarily disruptive.

Having lived in the area for ■■■ years, I do not believe the scheme makes optimal use of available land. Instead, it appears that land has been selected based on individual landowners' preferences rather than through a coherent and efficient design strategy.

There are clearly more logical and less harmful configurations that should be explored, including alternative land owned by the same parties.

### **3. Preferable Alternative Layouts**

A more compact layout, located closer to the grid connection at Eaton Socon, would offer several clear advantages:

- Reduced land take
- Lower construction and operational disruption
- Simplified traffic movements
- Reduced impact on residential areas

There are already several solar developments in the locality, including at Pertenhall, Little Staughton Airfield, and the scheme under construction at Bushmead. A revised configuration could consolidate development within this existing cluster, closer to the A1 and away from residential communities.

#### **4. Selective Land Submission by Landowners**

It appears that some landowners have been selective in the land they have put forward for development, excluding areas of personal importance.

For example:

- Land used for game shooting has been retained, despite being potentially more suitable due to proximity to the grid and distance from residential properties.
- At Rectory Farm, shooting grounds have been excluded, even though they would provide logical connectivity between included parcels.
- Another landowner has influenced transport routing to avoid their property, resulting in less efficient routes and increased disruption through local villages, particularly along the B660 and through Great Staughton.

These decisions suggest that the scheme has not been designed in the public interest or in accordance with planning best practice.

#### **5. More Suitable Alternative Land**

I believe the Planning Inspectorate should give serious consideration to alternative land at Crown Farm in Little Staughton.

This land:

- Lies closer to the A1 and the grid connection
- Is further from residential properties
- Would integrate effectively with existing and proposed solar developments at Little Staughton Airfield and Bushmead
- Is controlled by a landowner already involved in the East Park scheme

The use of Compulsory Purchase Orders should be considered where necessary to prevent selective land inclusion and to ensure the most suitable land is utilised.

#### **6. Transport and Construction Impacts**

The current dispersed layout increases construction traffic and disruption unnecessarily. A more consolidated scheme would significantly reduce transport movements through local villages and minimise impacts on residents.

#### **7. Cumulative Impact and Rural Character**

The addition of the East Park development, in its current form, would result in an unacceptable cumulative impact.

This part of North Bedfordshire is at risk of becoming a concentration point for solar infrastructure, effectively industrialising the countryside. This places increasing pressure on:

- The rural landscape
- Local character
- Community amenities

**Conclusion**

If a development such as East Park is deemed necessary to meet the UK's Net Zero targets, then it is essential that the scheme is designed to the highest possible standard.

This includes:

- Minimising the loss of high-quality agricultural land
- Ensuring efficient and coherent site design
- Integrating with existing and proposed developments in the area

In its current form, the proposal fails to meet these expectations. It would result in significant and lasting harm to agricultural land, the environment, and the local community.

For these reasons, I strongly object to the proposed development.

**Yours faithfully,**

Tim Price