

Observations on representations made at the Issue Specific Hearing 18th March 2026

USE OF BMV LAND

- The applicant was totally unable to convincingly demonstrate that the extensive loss of BMV land was genuinely unavoidable. Reasonable alternatives had not been properly assessed and therefore this project does not comply with National Policy.
 - Those of us living within the immediate area were aware that the applicant was approaching farmers within 15 km to the west of the Eaton Socon substation and signing agreements on whatever land they were offered regardless of its BMV designation.
 - The applicant was unable to provide any examples of alternative areas of lower grade farmland which they had examined and the reasons for its rejection.
 - The applicant seemed unwilling to expand on any of their original claims. For instance, they were unable to explain WHY they had chosen a 15km search area when no other NSIP solar proposal had imposed such a restriction.
 - The applicant failed to engage with the challenges made to their choice of land, merely repeating, time and time again, the sketchy information in their original reports.
 - Multiple matters were deferred to post consent plans thereby avoiding any examination.
- Scheme optimization has obviously been prioritised over objective evaluation of reasonable alternatives. It is evident that profitability, not viability, is the main driver of this scheme.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DURING CONSTRUCTION PHASE

- The applicant failed to demonstrate how traffic management during the 3 year construction phase would be monitored and, of even greater concern, how it would be enforced. Every challenge to their traffic plan was dismissed out of hand.
- They seemed to imagine that “encouragement” would be sufficient
- They would not accept that “3 strikes and you are out” was an insufficient deterrent
- car sharing ratios were totally unrealistic.
- The proposal that HGVs and abnormal loads would exit the A1 from the south only and only return heading north was risible – how would these vehicles return to their bases? Maybe by continuing on the A1 until the small roundabout at Buckden? !!!
- Traffic accident statistics used were out of date.
- The applicant had never driven the proposed route until the day of the hearing!
- Desk based modelling meant that the applicant had no understanding of the impact of the very high levels of heavy traffic proposed.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DURING OPERATIONAL PHASE

- The applicant totally failed to address the volume of traffic during the 40 years of the operational life of the plant. Every solar panel, support structure, transformer, inverter, fence post and fencing as well as the BESS, will need to be replaced over the lifetime of the plant, yet the applicant seemed to think this would result in very little traffic movement! As the internal road network used during construction would have been covered in solar panels this would no longer be available and all HGV loads would have to use the local lanes. The applicant suggested that this would result in a totally unrealistic estimate of 2–3 HGVs per day
 - The applicant failed to accept concerns as to ongoing damage to local B & C grade lanes and the resulting costs to local councils, not to mention the danger to other road users.
- The applicant was totally dismissive of any comments as to the impact of this scheme on the very rural nature of the area and its tiny villages and critical aspects were glossed over rather than addressed.