

East Park Energy Solar Power Complex and Co-located Battery Energy Storage System DCO Application EN010141

Response to applicant's drive-through of local highway network

At the outset, it is important to note that the drive-through does not provide a complete representation of the proposed construction traffic route. Key sections – most notably those along Great Staughton Road where construction vehicles would access the site via the public highway – are either omitted or insufficiently shown. These are not peripheral details but safety-critical locations involving turning movements, constrained visibility and interaction with existing road users.

It is also notable that, at the construction traffic issue specific hearing on 18 April 2026, the developer's consultant implied that he had only undertaken the route for the first time on the morning of the hearing itself. If so, this admission indicates that, until that point, the assessment of this safety-critical route had been made largely via desk-based analysis rather than direct, on-the-ground observation. In the context of a route with clear physical constraints and operational challenges, this raises legitimate concerns about the robustness of the earlier work and whether the realities of the network have been fully understood or properly tested in practice.

There are a number of limitations associated with the video itself that affect how it should be interpreted. The vehicle type is not given. The date and timing of the journey is not clear. The footage is presented as a smooth, uninterrupted journey, but this creates a somewhat sanitised impression of the network. Weather is favourable, traffic conditions appear unusually light, there is little evidence of opposing large vehicles, and the drive is undertaken without the delays, hesitations or interactions that typically occur in real-world conditions – particularly where larger vehicles must negotiate constrained sections. In addition, the perspective of a single moving camera tends to flatten distances and underplay the severity of bends, gradients and pinch points. As a result, the film risks understating the practical challenges of the route rather than fully revealing them.

Even with these limitations, however, the drive-through still exposes significant concerns about the suitability of the network for high-volume HGV traffic.

The most striking issue is the stretch of the B645 at Pigg's Hill, well known locally as an accident blackspot. The application suggests that all construction traffic would be routed down here.

The film shows, without ambiguity, a narrow and winding section of road characterised by sharp bends, restricted carriageway width and very limited forward visibility. These are not minor inconveniences; they are fundamental constraints. The alignment of the road leaves little room for error, and there is no obvious capacity for two large vehicles to pass each other safely without one yielding significantly or encroaching onto verges.

The following screenshot sequence from the video illustrates some of the issues at this particular section of the proposed route, despite the effects of the camera perspective noted above:





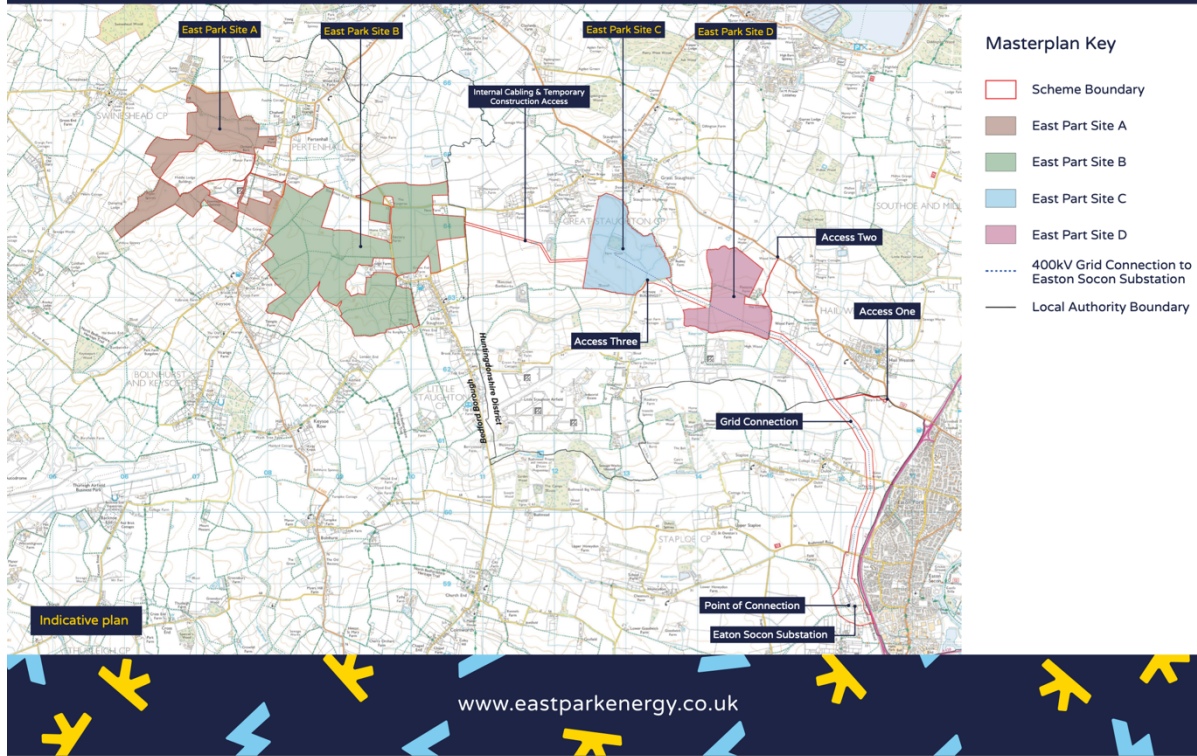




What is most compelling is that the conclusion that this section of road is highly problematic does not require technical analysis – the risks are self-evident from the developer’s consultant’s footage. The geometry of Pigg’s Hill is visibly incompatible with frequent HGV movements. While the road may function under existing, relatively light rural traffic conditions, the introduction of regular, large construction vehicles, often travelling in convoy, would materially change its risk profile. The film shows a route that is inherently unforgiving: tight bends obscure oncoming traffic, the road width constrains manoeuvrability, and there is no margin for recovery if something goes wrong.

In this context, the suggestion that this section of the B645 could safely accommodate high volumes of HGV traffic is difficult to sustain. The drive-through does not demonstrate resilience or robustness; rather, it highlights fragility. Any increase in traffic – particularly large, slow-moving vehicles – would increase the likelihood of conflict, delay and, ultimately, accidents. Pigg’s Hill stands out as a clear pinch point where these safety risks would be most acute.

This leads naturally to a broader question about the chosen primary construction traffic access strategy. An alternative construction access option – referred to as Access One – was set out during the non-statutory consultation in 2023 (see screenshot from developer’s website below) and appears to have provided a more direct and inherently safer route onto the first of the construction sites, avoiding reliance on constrained sections such as Pigg’s Hill. In contrast, the final proposed arrangement places significant dependence on precisely those stretches of the local road network that the film itself shows to be most problematic.



It is therefore reasonable to ask why this earlier, apparently safer access option – clearly identified at the 2023 non-statutory consultation stage – appears to have been abandoned in favour of one closer to Access Two and which depends on a route with such evident physical limitations. The drive-through footage brings this question into sharp focus: if the constraints of the B645 are so plainly visible, what justification is there for selecting it as a primary corridor for construction traffic?

Rather than reassuring the viewer, the drive-through film inadvertently demonstrates the unsuitability of the proposed route. The Pigg's Hill section of the B645, in particular, is shown to be narrow, constrained and inherently hazardous. The introduction of high volumes of HGV traffic on this stretch would not simply add pressure to the network – it would introduce a level of risk that is clearly visible and difficult to justify.