

From: Bushmead
Sent: 14 June 2026 09:44
To: The Examining Authority

Subject: Bushmead Road concerns

Bushmead Farm
Bushmead Estate
Near Colmworth
Bedfordshire
MK442LH
14 June 2026

The Examining Authority
East Park Energy DCO Examination
Application Reference: EN010141
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol BS1 6PN

WRITTEN REPRESENTATION — EAST PARK ENERGY DCO (EN010141)

1. Introduction and Standing

1.1 This written representation is submitted on behalf of the Bushmead Estate, Bedfordshire, as an Interested Party in the examination of the Development Consent Order application for East Park Energy (EN010141).

1.2 The Bushmead Estate has a direct and material interest in this application by reason of:

- Ownership of land on both sides of Bushmead Road and of several private access points and field entrances directly off it, which are named in the Applicant's own application documents as proposed construction, operation and decommissioning traffic accesses for Site B;
- The Estate's proximity to Site B of the proposed development, situated between Pertenhall, Keysoe and Little Staughton — immediately adjacent to the Bushmead Estate's landholding;
- The potential loss of, or adverse impact upon, agricultural land farmed in connection with the Estate;
- The significant adverse visual impact upon the Estate's property, landscape setting and amenity.

2. Access Points and Land Ownership: Bushmead Road

2.1 Bushmead Road is a public highway maintained by the highway authority. However, the Bushmead Estate owns land on both sides of Bushmead Road, and owns several access points and field entrances directly off it. These accesses are not in the ownership of the highway authority and are critical to the day-to-day farming and estate management operations of Bushmead Farm.

2.2 The Applicant's own proposals for Site B identify new accesses off Bushmead Road and upgrades to existing accesses off Bushmead Road for construction, operation and decommissioning works traffic. Several of the accesses referred to in the application documents are in the ownership of the Bushmead Estate. The Applicant does not appear to have secured, or sought, the consent of the Estate to use, alter or upgrade these privately owned access points. The Examining Authority is respectfully asked to note that:

- The Estate's private accesses onto Bushmead Road are not public highway. Any works to alter, widen, reinforce or otherwise modify them require the landowner's consent. No such consent has been given;
- The application documents do not appear to include the Estate's access points within any compulsory acquisition or temporary possession schedules. If the Applicant intends to rely upon private agreement, no such agreement exists;
- The use of Bushmead Road as a primary HGV construction route, with the Estate's land on both sides, would create serious risk of obstruction, damage and interference with the Estate's own access points and farming operations over a three-year construction period;
- If consent is granted, the Estate requires that any DCO requirement or associated planning obligation provides that no works shall be carried out to any access point in the ownership of the Bushmead Estate, and no such access point shall be used for construction traffic, until a legally binding Access Agreement has been executed between the Applicant and the Estate to the Estate's reasonable satisfaction.

2.3 The Estate reserves all rights to take such legal action as may be necessary to prevent any unauthorised interference with, or alteration to, its privately owned access points, including injunctive relief.

3. Construction Traffic: Impact on the Estate

3.1 The proposed construction programme is anticipated to span approximately three years from Summer 2027. The Estate owns land on both sides of Bushmead Road, and the road runs through the heart of the Bushmead Farm agricultural operation. During the construction period, the use of Bushmead Road as a primary HGV route would cause:

- Structural damage to the private road surface and verges beyond normal wear and tear;
- Serious interference with the day-to-day agricultural and estate management operations of Bushmead Farm, including safe access for farm machinery, livestock movements and deliveries;
- Dust, noise and vibration impacting on the Estate's residential and commercial occupiers throughout the construction period;
- Safety risks to farm workers, residents and visitors using the road.

3.2 The Estate requests that, if consent is granted, the following are secured as DCO requirements:

- (a) A pre-construction road condition survey of Bushmead Road and all affected estate roads, agreed with the Estate;
- (b) Full reinstatement of all Estate access points and field entrances to at least their pre-construction condition at the Applicant's cost, with a financial bond or security in place prior to commencement, and coordination with the highway authority regarding the condition of Bushmead Road itself;
- (c) Restriction of construction HGV movements to agreed hours, with a prohibition on early-morning, late-evening, weekend and bank holiday movements past the Estate's residential buildings;
- (d) Appointment of a Community Liaison Officer with direct responsibility for responding to complaints and concerns from the Bushmead Estate within 24 hours.

4. Agricultural Land and Tenancy Impacts

4.1 The Bushmead Estate farms and manages agricultural land in the area directly affected by Site B. Approximately 74–75% of the land within the East Park Energy project boundary is classified as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land of grade 2 and grade 3a. The Estate is deeply concerned by the permanent loss of productive agricultural land to solar development for a minimum period of 40 years.

4.2 The Estate notes that government policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), requires decision-makers to give

significant weight to the protection of BMV land. The Estate submits that the Applicant has not demonstrated that the use of BMV land is unavoidable, nor that the harm to agricultural productivity has been adequately addressed.

4.3 The Estate further requests that, if consent is granted, robust soil management and restoration conditions are imposed to ensure that affected land is returned to its pre-existing agricultural grade and capability upon decommissioning, with an independently verified restoration bond in place.

5. Visual Impact on the Bushmead Estate

5.1 The Bushmead Estate occupies a prominent position within the North Bedfordshire landscape. The proposed 1,900-acre development, involving 700,000 photovoltaic panels on 250,000 pile-driven metal posts, would cause a fundamental and irreversible change to the character of the landscape within which the Estate sits.

5.2 Site B, located between Pertenhall, Keysoe and Little Staughton, is directly adjacent to the Estate. The Estate submits that the visual impact assessments submitted by the Applicant underestimate the degree of harm to the Estate's landscape setting, amenity and heritage character. The Bushmead Estate has historic and architectural significance, and the industrial character of the proposed solar infrastructure would be visible from Estate buildings, gardens and land.

5.3 The Estate requests that a specific viewpoint assessment from key locations on and around the Estate be carried out and included in the Examining Authority's site inspection, and that meaningful landscape screening and mitigation is secured as a DCO requirement before any development commences on Site B.

6. Property Value and Estate Amenity

6.1 The Bushmead Estate comprises residential, commercial and agricultural property. The proposed development, both during its three-year construction phase and throughout its 40-year operational life, is likely to cause material diminution in the value and marketability of Estate property. The Applicant's application does not contain any provision for compensation to affected landowners and estate owners beyond those whose land is directly subject to the DCO.

6.2 The Estate requests that the Examining Authority recommends that the Secretary of State requires the Applicant to enter into a Land Value Impact Agreement with affected neighbouring landowners, and that the Legacy Fund of £6 million referenced in the Applicant's supporting material is structured and governed so as to provide direct, meaningful benefit to immediately affected estates and landowners, not merely to wider community projects.

7. Summary and Requests

7.1 For the reasons set out above, the Bushmead Estate:

- Objects to the grant of development consent in its current form;
- Requests that the Examining Authority requires the Applicant to demonstrate that it has secured, or will secure, the necessary legal rights over Bushmead Road before any consent is granted;
- Requests that, if consent is granted, robust DCO requirements are imposed covering road reinstatement, traffic management, landscape mitigation, soil restoration and community liaison, as detailed above;
- Requests a hearing session to enable the Estate to present its case orally before the Examining Authority;
- Reserves the right to submit further representations as the examination progresses and further information is made available.

7.2 The Estate is willing to engage directly with the Applicant and the Examining Authority to seek to resolve its concerns. However, in the absence of satisfactory legal agreements and DCO protections, the Estate maintains its objection to the grant of development consent.

Yours faithfully,

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Bushmead Estate

*Submitted as a Written Representation in the Examination of Application
EN010141*

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