

St Neots Town Council has not adopted a position either in support of or in opposition to the proposed East Park Energy development. These comments are intended to assist the Examining Authority in its consideration of matters relevant to local communities, including safety, emergency preparedness, environmental management and the long-term effectiveness of mitigation measures.

The Council considers it important that potential risks associated with the development are fully identified, appropriately assessed and subject to robust mitigation and management measures, and that any such measures remain effective and enforceable throughout the construction, operational, replacement and decommissioning phases of the project.

Replacement Phase

The Council welcomes the Examining Authority's consideration of future replacement works relating to solar panels, battery storage units and associated infrastructure. Given the anticipated operational life of the development, the Council considers it important that future replacement works remain within the environmental, operational and safety parameters assessed and agreed during the Examination, or are subject to appropriate assessment and regulatory oversight where future changes could materially affect those impacts.

Outline Battery Safety Management Plan

The Council notes the commitments set out within the Outline Battery Safety Management Plan and the ongoing engagement with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. The Council welcomes the Examining Authority's consideration of inspection, monitoring and review arrangements and considers it very important that appropriate safety, maintenance and emergency response measures are secured through the final Battery Safety Management Plan and remain effective throughout the operational life of the development.

Given the proximity of the proposed BESS facility to nearby communities and infrastructure, the Council considers it important that all reasonably foreseeable risks are fully assessed and that appropriate measures are secured to minimise impacts on local communities should any incident occur.

Requirement 7 – Soil Management Plan

The Council supports the Examining Authority's consideration of whether management measures relating to soils should remain subject to ongoing maintenance and implementation throughout the relevant lifetime of the development. Where mitigation measures are relied upon during the assessment of effects, the Council considers it important that they remain effective and enforceable.

Requirement 14 – Surface Water Management Plan

The Council welcomes proposed surface water management arrangements as part of any application and supports the consideration of the long-term maintenance of those measures. The Council considers that drainage, attenuation and pollution prevention measures relied upon within the environmental assessment should remain subject to appropriate management and maintenance throughout the operational life of the development.

Closing Comments

The Council recognises and stresses the importance of ensuring that understanding risks, their mitigation, management and safety measures must remain robust, enforceable and effective throughout the construction, operational, replacement and decommissioning phases of the development. The Council therefore welcomes the Examining Authority's continued scrutiny of these matters and respectfully requests that it is satisfied that appropriate safeguards are secured through the Development Consent Order and associated management plans.