PHILIP HEARD: INTERESTED PARTY REFERENCE No. 20054420

COMMENTS ON FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED BY DEADLINE 3

These comments refer to the Applicant's Response to Deadline 2 Submissions, Rep3-074 (EN010118/APP/8.21 dated August 2025); all page numbers refer to this document unless otherwise stated.

1.0 Bats:

1.1 In response to REP2-027 regarding bats (Page 15), the Applicant states this area of research has been poorly explored to date. Therefore, solar developers are going to wait until it is potentially too late and bat populations across the country are possibly severely affected by solar farms. Given the huge number of solar developments a responsible industry would collectively fund the required research to limit the ecological impact. The Applicant goes on to suggest that improvements to hedgerows and field margins could have a positive effect on bat abundance and species diversity; by inference, where the Applicant is removing hedgerows, there could be significant negative impact depending upon the success or otherwise of embedded mitigation along hedgerows.

1.2 The Applicant goes on to state "*Whilst it is correct to state the exact mechanism by which bats might be displaced by Solar PV Modules is not currently known, …… The assessment on bats …… concludes that there would be no significant adverse residual effect.*" If the mechanism is not known how can the Applicant possibly conclude there would be no significant adverse residual effect?

2.0 Land ALC Grading:

2.1 The main focus in "ensuring" the land will be returned to the same ALC grading after over 40 years is in exercising amelioration and avoidance of compaction. Solar PV panel frames will be removed by vibration; XLPE cabling will be left in situ so as not to disturb the soil. Yet where infrastructure/trackways have been constructed, subsoiling will be undertaken, which clearly does disturb the soil. If the Applicant is confident that subsoiling will return soil to its previous quality, why will Applicant not remove cabling and ducting, the waste that **the Applicant** has put into the ground, and conduct subsoiling to return the soil to its previous waste-free state? Where trackways and construction/decommissioning compounds have been constructed, para 10.4.14 of the oSMP states *"On completion of the restoration works the soils will be in a fragile condition. A strongly growing crop will be established, where practicable, to help stabilise the soil structure and ensure the best chance of a successful restoration."* At Para 14.1.3 of the oSMP it states "*…..the land will be reinstated and returned to the condition and ALC grade it was prior to the installation of the Proposed Development."* So, is it **best chance** of reinstatement or **will** the land be reinstated?

2.2 Overall, there appears to be little detail as to how the Applicant will have the soil independently tested at the end of the project or how it will be reinstated to its pre-development standard if found to have deteriorated. Indeed, oSMP Para 14.1.4 states "*Effective soil compaction alleviation and the replication of the original soil profile will return the land to its original ALC grade."* Alleviation will reduce compaction not prevent it. How will replication of the original soil profile occur where subsoiling does not take place?

2.3 It should be noted that in the documentation recently submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the Proposed Fosse Green Development, regarding underground cabling/components left in situ, the Environment Agency state: "***Our preference is for all cables and subsurface infrastructure to be removed where they are within SPZs or Principal aquifer."*** (EN010154/APP/6.1 Chapter 9 (Page 9-43) Water Environment). Given that the Proposed Springwell Development sits on a Principal Aquifer, the ExA may wish to seek EA confirmation that they still do not object to cabling etc being left in situ.

(Note: SPZ refers to a groundwater Source Protection Zone).

3.0 BMV Land:

3.1 The Applicant still has not adequately explained why BMV land needs to be used. As I have previously written, ES Volume 1, Chapter 4 Para 4.2.11 states *"In determining a suitable location for the Proposed Development, the Applicant sought to develop a single new Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) scale solar project generating a minimum of 250 – 500 Megawatt (MW) (based on a site comprising minimum 1,000 acres) …. "* Non-BMV land within the order limits totals over 1800 acres. Why cannot solar PV panels, BESS, substation, compounds etc be restricted to this land? Figure 11.2 shows solar PV panels covering a large amount of Grade 3a land; if these panels were not installed there would still be over 500 MW of output, above the higher figure of Applicant's original target. Because of the sole willing landowner, the Applicant is planning to use BMV land for commercial profit.

4.0 Climate:

4.1 In response to my Deadline 2 comment (REP2-031) regarding the life of solar panels, the Applicant states that "A*dvancements in current PV manufacturing has seen greater reliability with performance warranties extending in some cases to 40 years …..*". Could the Applicant please provide some examples of which manufacturers provide 40 year warranties on solar PV panels.

4.2 On Page 24, the Applicant states "*The findings of these different methodologies showcase that the Proposed Development is comparable with other renewable energy technologies …..".* In Appendix 2 to Response to Deadline 1 Submissions, the Applicant refers to Table 2 (which is in fact the 3rd Table in the document), which shows lifetime emissions for Springwell as 84.1 gCO_2/KWhr, onshore wind at 11 gCO_2/KWhr, offshore wind at 12 gCO_2/KWhr, hydropower at 24 gCO_2/KWhr and nuclear at 12 gCO_2/KWhr. **These figures do not support the statement that the Proposed Development is comparable with other renewables, producing over 7 times the GHG emissions of nuclear/wind, 3 times that of hydropower and approximately double that of solar rooftops/solar utility.**

5.0 BESS:

5.1 Page 25 states "*The Applicant has proposed suitable design features to LFRS, which has resulted in agreement of the proposed layout parameters."* Why does the Applicant not state what the suitable design features are? What are the proposed layout parameters? Where is the documented evidence that LFRS agree; there is very little detail in the SoCG? Also on Page 25 the Applicant states that "*ERPs can only be drafted when based upon a specific BESS design.*" A draft is just that; If the proposed layout parameters are agreed with LFRS why cannot an ERP be drafted?

5.2 Page 26 refers to the selected BESS as mandated under NFPA 855; how can a foreign document be mandated in the UK? Unless, of course, the Applicant intends to include the requirement in the DCO?

5.3 Page 26 states, *"The Applicant has been in full coordination and discussions with the LFRS ……."* As stated earlier, the latest meeting between the Applicant and LFRS was, according to the SoCG, July 2024. Page 26 refers to Responses to Deadline 1 submissions which states, "*The ExA, SoS and the public can have confidence that there are adequate controls in place with respect to the BESS ….."* Confidence comes as a result of trust generated through adequate information. Speaking as a member of the public, and having spoken to many concerned individuals, I can categorically state that many members of the public **have no confidence in the Applicant's ability to put adequate controls in place.**

6.0 Firewater:

6.1 In response to REP2-027 regarding Firewater (Page 20), the Applicant states it "*has conformed with all guidance received from LFRS …… as well as the current NFCC Guidance."* What guidance has been received from LFRS? The SoCG states the most recent contact was 9 July 2024; so clearly no documented recent exchange. The SoCG further states: "*The Applicant confirms that the NFCC guidance is being used as a fundamental input ……..* " IT IS NOT (no 6m separation for example and no clear, evidence based, case for any reduction as required by the NFCC Guidance) so how can this be AGREED? The document is not signed so how have LFR actually agreed all this?

6.2 The Applicant states that suitable amounts of firefighting water will be available which will only be used for boundary cooling. Why has the Applicant failed to specify the quantity of water? The Applicant suggests boundary cooling is something new; lithium-Ion battery fires cannot be extinguished so boundary cooling has always been the preferred firefighting method.

7.0 These Comments Refer to the Updated Plume Assessment:

(The following paragraph numbers refer to the Plume Assessment Addendum: Air Quality Assessment (EN010149/APP8.24 dated AUGUST 2025))

7.1 Para 2 of the Executive Summary refers to the risk of thermal runaway being 1 in 7700 years; there is no reference quoted, so where is the calculation resulting in this figure?

7.2 Para 3.1.4 states "*… due to the short-term nature of any BESS thermal runaway incident ……"* What is the Applicant's definition of short and long-term? Is long-term totally dismissed? The Rochdale Envelope approach is supposed to assume worst case; some BESS fires have burned for many days. Why is the Applicant not considering the worst case scenario?

7.3 Para 4.2.1 "*An example design could include the operation of multiple 5MWh BESS containers. Each of these 5MWh BESS containers could be made up of 4,991 …….. These 4,991 cells are typically organized into 48 ……"* Para 4.2.3 "*An example container could operate 24 hours a day ……"* Para 4.2.3 "*…. There could be multiple 5 MWh BESS containers* onsite *…"* '**Could**', '**typically**', '**example**', when is the Applicant going to commit to anything? Indeed, the Applicant states "*The BESS Example design **includes** the installation and operation of multiple 5MWh BESS containers"*, then states the example design **could**

include multiple 5MWh containers and also states ‘there could be multiple containers”. All in all, a total lack of any definitive detail upon which to make a reasonable plume, or indeed, safety assessment.

7.4 Para 4.2.5 does not allow for propagation from one container to the next. Indeed, Para 4.2.10 explicitly states “*the modelling scenarios assume that only one 5MWh BESS container will experience a battery thermal runaway heating/fire incident.*” No battery type has been selected for the BESS nor any BESS design, including key safety elements such as container separation, finalised. Where the Applicant states mitigation factors will ensure/prevent, the mitigation factors are not explained. By not modelling propagation of an event from one BESS container to another the Applicant is failing to consider the worst case scenario as required by the Rochdale Envelope approach. Overall, with no definitive battery type, no definitive BESS design and no consideration of the worst case, the updated Plume Assessment provides very little additional value.