EWERBY & EVEDON PARISH COUNCIL

2nd July 2025

To the Examining Authority,

Subject: Beacon Fen Energy Park – Ewerby Thorpe

Ewerby and Evendon Parish council ("the Council") has met and discussed the proposed Beacon Fen Energy Park at Ewerby Thorpe (the "Development") on several occasions during Council meetings over the past two years.

The Council is strongly against the proposed development and request that the Examining Authority's recommendation to the Secretary of State is that the project should not be given permission to go ahead.

The principle reasons for the Councils objections are summarised below in two categories; local issues; and macro issues.

1. Local Issues

1.1. **Scale –** the parish is 1,973 ha of open countryside. The Development's solar arrays alone amount to 529 ha (1,307 acres) which is 27% of the entire parish. The scale and loss of the countryside is an enormous wholescale transformation of the parish's landscape. The Council would support a smaller scale development, up to 132 ha (325 acres), in the south eastern quarter of the proposed site away from highways, footpaths and residential properties.

1.2. **Location –** it is given that transforming countryside from open farmland to industrial energy use is a detrimental transition for the locality. Such sites therefore should be chosen where their impact is minimised, such as shielding by woodland or the topography of the land (behind a hill). For example the nearby 160 acre solar park at Ermine Street Farm, Cranwell, Sleaford is a good example of a considerate location.

The Development however is proposed on a location that actually presents the exact opposite. From the village of Ewerby Thorpe which is on a rise of 20m above sea level the entire site corner to corner can be seen spread out below the village at its elevation of 2m-7m. Further, from the public highways along the northern and western boundaries the entire site can be viewed, as it can be from the village and houses of Ewerby Thorpe, Howell and Howell Fen. Even if screening above the proposed 4.5m arrays could be achieved from the outset the hedges will be without leaf for over six months of the year. This leaves the landscape for the residents of the parish a new unwelcome industrial scar.

1.3. **Wellbeing –** Already there has been significant anguish and anxiety within the parish. The Council has been approached by multiple households to ask for help with regards to the project. The effect on the local residents has been very sad to witness, and of course the Council is powerless to help since the project is an NSIP. Sleepless nights,

tears and anxiety are described to the Council and witnessed by the councillors. This trauma and upset is very real and happening.

1.4. **Entrapment –** one local resident had a sale agreed on their property, subject to contract, when the Development was announced in the spring of 2023. Their buyer pulled out of the sale due to the Development and the residents have not been able to sell their house since. They are trapped and their life plans are on hold. Others have subsequentially tried to sell their properties but all, without exception, have been unsuccessful. The Chairman of the Council has had a property in Ewerby Thorpe valued for probate reasons and the valuation was impaired by 32% due to the proposed Development. With such large reductions in property values, even if a buyer could be found for these lower prices, those who wish to move away from the Development cannot, and may even find themselves in negative equity if a sale can be agreed.

These are real tangible issues that are unfairly affecting the local residents around the Development with no compensation nor thought from the developers. The Council understands that there is no legislative obligation on the developer to address these problems but the Council would like the Examining Authority to stress these issues to Secretary of State as they make their decision. The local population is already being unfairly harmed by the proposed Development with no recourse.

1.5. **Disruption –** if the project proceeds the parish will be subject to significant traffic disruption. It is noted that there is a planned access route, forcing an easement on the local farmers, but such routes and instructions to use this route will inevitably be flouted. The experience of the Sleaford power station and traffic issues that are endured by our neighbouring village have been presented to the Council by the leader of Kirkby-La-Thorpe parish council.

It is understood that there will be a workforce of circa 400 personnel for the construction of the project for four years. There is no explanation of how these workers and the deliveries will be forced to use the bespoke access route and how that will be enforced. It is expected that this work will fall on the residents affected by the project, as was the case for the Sleaford power station. This is an unwelcome burden.

1.6. **Landscape –** this project is just one of a goldrush in the area that is making a wholescale change in the landscape that we live in. The concentration of solar farms in the area is overwhelming. Specifically:

- Heckington Fen 1,600 acre approved in July 2024 which is only 2 miles away;
- Burton Pedwardine 210 acres of solar 2.5 miles;
- Moore Lane Farm 25 acres of solar 3.5 miles;
- Bell house Farm 150 acres 4 miles;
- Gorse Lane Solar Farm 180 acres 4.5 miles;
- White House Farm 250 acres, 4.5 miles;
- Vicarage Drove solar farm 250 acres 5 miles;
- Sun Energy solar Farm 250 acres 5 miles;

- Ermine Street Farm 160 acres of solar 7 miles away;
- Grange Farm solar park 40 acres, 9 miles;
- Dances Bank solar park 57 acres, 9 miles;
- Folly Lane Farm 20 acres, 11 miles;
- Ing Bank solar 50 acres 14 miles;

Our area has endured far in excess of its fair share of these projects already. See Appendix 1 for a list of addition known projects in our locality that are in planning, the above are all operational or under construction.

1.7. **Local jobs –** the agronomist for the land will lose his work; the blacksmith in Heckington that supports the farm will lose his customer; the agrichemical business that supports the land will lose their trade; the local machinery dealer will lose a client; the fertiliser manufacturer and salesman will lose his book and all the local allied trades that support the farmland will lose out. Then the secondary effect of this loss of trade will be felt by all the other trades and services that in turn supply these primary contacts of the farmland. This is replaced by a remote, internationally funded, business with no investment in the local economy.

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2. Macro issues

2.1. **Spatial energy plan** – the government is yet to produce a Spatial Energy Plan detailing where the electricity is needed, where it is produced or should be produced and how the production and consumption are connected. Political ambition is driving decisions rather than carefully considered planning of generation and consumption requirements. Decisions such as these should only be made once the Spatial Energy Plan has been completed. Lincolnshire has excess supply of electricity compared to demand, specifically the supply making landfall from the north sea and being transferred from Scotland, therefore no more power generation is required in the locality of this proposed project, meaning it will need to be transferred away.

2.2. **Energy production** – solar PV generates most of its output during the summer months, peaking at midday on sunny days. Relatively little generation happens in the winter. Peak solar tends to correlate with the periods when demand as at its least. This is evident from established market signals where power is sold in half hour segments. Currently the 'capture' price for solar is approximately 16% below the market price. This means the market values it less than other forms of generation because it is available when there is least demand.

The UK currently has approximately 17GW of solar installed and the National Energy System Operator (Neso) has opined that the country needs 47GW by 2030. Tripling supply will crash 'solar capture' prices. The developers will require long-term contracts via Contract for Difference (CFD) auctions run by Nesco. These guarantee an index linked price but are paid for by everyone's energy bills. These bills will inevitably rise as solar is likely to be exporting mostly when market prices are below CFD rates.

2.3. **Balance of payments –** following on from this, the assumption is that Low Carbon will sell the site if planning is granted. Initially they informed the Council that they had funding for the Development from a Canadian pension fund. They have sold the Gate Burton development just north of this site to the French energy firm EDF. In either scenario the British energy bill payer will be paying excess energy bills to offshore businesses thus damaging the country's balance of payments.

2.4. **Grid capacity –** solar makes poor use of grid capacity, a solar project uses approximately 12% of its grid capacity compared with a wind farm at around 40%. Therefore the capacity available at Bicker sub station should be used by the less invasive and more efficient north sea wind generation projects.

2.5. **Land use -** Loss of arable land to solar parks and infrastructure offshores our environmental damage but extrapolates that damage due to UK's and, especially, Lincolnshire's productivity.

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Country	5 year average wheat yield (2019-2023) t/ha	No. of replacement ha required for 1ha of Beacon Fen Farmland loss
Beacon Fen Farmland	10.17	1ha
World record - Lincolnshire	17.96	0.57ha
UK[1]	8.03	1.25ha
USA[2]	3.45	2.9ha
Russia[3]	3.00	3.4ha
Australia[4]	2.28	4.5ha

2050 government land use targets a 20% reduction in arable area. General population expectations are for a 15% rise by 2050. It is 'hoped' that yield increases will compensate for this mis match and food security will not be compromised.

However wheat yields have plateaued[5] and with the advent of the new environmental schemes, nitrogen taxes and regenerative agriculture it is expected that they will decline in this period reducing self-sufficiency.

In 2023 the UK was deemed to be 62% self-sufficient in food[6]. Reduce arable area by 20% and raise population by 15% this will leave the UK 43% self-sufficient before the aforementioned expected reduction in productivity.

Therefore the UK will need to rely on exporting countries such as Russia and Brazil for our food and hope they are not doing a similar reduction in their agricultural capabilities. Importantly though, as noted in the above table, we will require between 3 times and 4.5 times the lost area in the UK of *their* farmland to compensate for our loss.

The developer does not divulge the site's agricultural yields which are in the UK's top quartile.

In the UK there are 18.2m hectares of agricultural land of which only 27%, or 4.7m hectares are capable of producing arable crops. The remaining 73% cannot grow arable crops. The Development is on land in the top quartile of arable production in the UK on its predominantly Grade 2 and 3 soils. Land based solar projects must be confined to non productive land, not farms that are capable of growing consistent yields well in excess of the UK average.

[redacted]

World Resource Institute (WRI) report from 2023 noted that 85% of the planet's usable land is already in commercial forestry or agriculture and that the world is on course to need more than 50% extra food and wood by 2050 compared to 2010. At present rates of yield increase meeting this demand would mean converting an area of natural habitat up to twice the size of India. Dedicating land already in production out of production compounds this environmentally diabolical situation. This will unwittingly accelerate global biodiversity loss and have an overall negative climate impact and drive up food imports.

2.6. **Wholescale change** – the county of Lincolnshire is experiencing an unprecedented attack on our environment with over 40,000 acres (12.5GW) of projects granted planning or with planning in the pipeline. This is creating a permanent change in the character of the environment that we live in. The appropriate place for solar development is on roof tops; car parks; brown field sites; and non arable poor agricultural land out of sight. Not, as in the case with Beacon Fen, in the wide open countryside on top quartile arable land.

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Appendix 1

Solar mega projects commissioned and proposed in and around the Council.

- Heckington Fen 1,600 acres
- Fosse Green 2,400 acres
- Leoda Solar 2,400 acres
- One Earth solar 3,700 acres
- Springwell solar 4,200 acres
- Temple Oaks 1,200 acres
- Tillbridge solar 3,459 acres
- Gate Burton 1,690 acres
- Meridian 1,500 acres
- Mallard Pass 1,120 acres

Figure 1. Extract from Heckington Fen planning application with some of the projects listed above.