

# Objection to Beacon Fen Energy Park (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project)

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Submitted to: The Planning Inspectorate (PINS)

Project Reference: Beacon Fen Energy Park

By: Brian Hammond/Howell Parish Meeting

Status: Interested Party registration – Chair

## 1. Introduction

I am Brian Hammond; a resident located at [REDACTED] parish]. I submit this objection as a relevant representation to ensure that the Examining Authority and Secretary of State give full consideration to the project's cumulative, environmental, and social impacts.

Beacon Fen represents an unprecedented scale of solar industrialisation in this part of Lincolnshire, and its impacts will be extensive, long-lasting, and inadequately mitigated.

## 2. Summary of Objection Grounds

- Unacceptable landscape and visual impact, eroding the rural character and tranquillity of the Fens.
- Significant and unjustified loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.
- Inadequate assessment of biodiversity, protected species, and habitat connectivity.
- Unacceptable cumulative impact with other regional NSIPs (e.g., Heckington Fen, Springwell, Fosse Green, Cottam, Gate Burton, West Burton, Mallard Pass).
- Potential harm to heritage assets, archaeological remains, and historic landscape character.
- Insufficient detail on drainage, flood risk, and soil hydrology, given local fenland sensitivities.
- Adverse construction traffic and highway safety impacts on rural lanes unsuited to HGV volumes.
- Lack of robust glint and glare assessment for nearby dwellings, roads, and aircraft flight paths.

- Omission of clear, enforceable battery safety and emergency response protocols (if BESS is included).
- Absence of any transparent Community Benefit Scheme, contrary to precedent set by other solar NSIPs.

### **3. Detailed Grounds**

#### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

The proposed 2,000+ hectare site would fundamentally alter the open, expansive fenland landscape, undermining its visual simplicity and horizon character. The applicant's LVIA underestimates residual harm, especially from [insert village / PRoW]. Mitigation planting cannot screen such a large industrial-scale scheme within the lifetime of the development.

#### **Loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land**

Evidence suggests much of the site is Grade 2 or 3a. National Policy Statement EN-3 and the NPPF (para. 174) require avoidance of BMV land unless wholly unavoidable. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that alternative lower-grade land was considered, contrary to sustainable land-use policy.

#### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

The Environmental Statement underplays risks to nesting birds, invertebrates, and wetland habitats. Insufficient information is given on long-term habitat management, species corridors, and monitoring.

#### **Cumulative Impacts**

Beacon Fen should not be assessed in isolation. Its combined footprint with Cottam, Gate Burton, West Burton, and Mallard Pass results in region-wide industrialisation. A cumulative assessment limited to grid connections is inadequate.

#### **Heritage and Archaeology**

The proposal risks substantial harm to the setting of listed buildings and scheduled monuments. The applicant's heritage baseline is limited and should be revisited with Historic England and LCC archaeologists.

#### **Drainage and Flood Risk**

Fenland hydrology is highly sensitive. The scheme risks altering water tables and increasing surface runoff. Detailed SuDS design and maintenance arrangements are absent, contrary to NPS EN-1 (5.7.7) and NPPF (167–169).

#### **Construction Traffic and Amenity**

Local roads (A153, B1189, and rural byways) are unsuitable for HGVs. No enforceable CTMP is secured. Noise, dust, and vibration will harm amenity and safety.

### Glint and Glare

The glint and glare assessment lacks data for key receptors (roads, PRowS, farmhouses). The assessment should be independently reviewed.

### Battery Energy Storage Safety

If BESS facilities are included, the DCO must secure a Battery Safety Management Plan and emergency response protocol, as required at Cleve Hill (Req. 7) and Sunnica (Sch. 2).

### Absence of a Community Benefit Scheme

Unlike Cleve Hill (£500k), Longfield (£5.72m), and Byers Gill (£1.5m), Beacon Fen offers no tangible community benefits. The ExA should require a proportionate Community Benefit Fund (£200/MW/yr for 40 years) administered locally.

## 4. Conclusion and Request

For the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that the Examining Authority:

- Finds the Beacon Fen Energy Park proposal contrary to national and local planning policy;
- Requires substantial revision and enhanced mitigation; or
- Recommends refusal of the DCO in its current form.

If approval is considered, enforceable requirements should cover:

- Landscape and ecological management;
- Independent hydrological monitoring;
- Robust CTMP and noise controls;
- A comprehensive Battery Safety Management Plan; and
- A Community Benefit Fund proportionate to the project's scale.

## 5. Contact Details

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Email:

Organisation (if any): Howell Parish Meeting

Date: 7/10/2025