

I strongly object to this application as a resident of Thorpe on the Hill (hereafter referred to as TOTH). My objections as set out in my registration comments remain. However I would like to make further more detailed objections and comments following the examination hearing held 6-8 January 2026, based on issues in which I have some expertise or which particularly affect me.

Site selection

The selection of this site does not conform with national planning policy which says developers should first consider previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land, and where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land, avoiding BMV where possible. There should also be a nearby existing grid connection, which there is not. This proposal is also contrary to local plans at county, district and parish levels, the local neighbourhood plan for Thorpe on the Hill having been voted on and agreed by the residents after extensive research and consultation.

The site selection appears to stem purely from landowner interest in having solar placed on their fields. The statement that a search was done within 15km radius of the possible but currently non-existent Navenby substation does not in my opinion meet the criteria for a proper search for a suitable alternative site since there is no compelling reason to have restricted it so narrowly.

This part of Lincolnshire is mainly given over to arable farming with some pasture, interspersed with small villages, solitary farms, limited woodland and RAF airbases. Many people choose to live here because of the quiet rural character and the availability of country walks from the doorstep. I moved to TOTH from London to escape overcrowding and noise and enjoy walking in the countryside. Mass solar industrialisation on my doorstep, both in construction and operational phases, will have a very negative effect on my everyday life and on my health and well being, and will similarly impact many other people who live nearby. Replacing open view footpaths with enclosed fenced paths beside solar panels is not remotely a like-for-like replacement, especially with the intrusive noise from the panels.. There is also no guarantee that any new permissive path will stay open.

There will be a lot of noise, dust and traffic for a number of years, and then ongoing work to maintain and replace damaged or degraded panels and batteries. Traffic is already a significant problem for TOTH with commuter traffic cutting through, school run congestion and overweight lorries illegally passing through (and getting stuck on the narrow roads with tight bends) when there are problems on the A46 (frequent accidents and blockages occur between Carholme roundabout and Pennells roundabout).

The cumulative effect of all the solar and BESS proposals for this part of North Kesteven, if granted, will destroy our landscape and impact our lifestyle severely. No part of the district will be free from battery containers and panels. There will be nowhere to walk where solar industry does not intrude. The planning application from Tarmac to substantially extend their existing operations at Whisby Quarry (LCC Planning Application EIA/02/25) will take up a large area to the west and north west of Tunman Wood and should also be taken into account when considering the cumulative effect of industrialisation for TOTH and its immediate surroundings.

Losing productive farmland is a mistake and it will mean fewer farming jobs with a knock on effect on all sorts of agricultural services. Given the rural location and the proximity of historic Lincoln there are a lot of tourist dependent businesses which will suffer if the area undergoes this kind of massive industrialisation. Not just hotels/B&Bs/campsites/restaurants/pubs/cafes/museums and other visitor attractions but also fuel stations, small shops and traders at markets will all see income decline as visitors go elsewhere to enjoy unspoilt landscapes.

Site Design

The applicant seems unwilling to make anything other than very minor changes to the design despite concerns and suggestions raised at consultations.

The suggestion put forward by [REDACTED] to preserve some of the fields close to TOTH and which border the local Stepping Out route is a very reasonable compromise which would alleviate some of the concern and upset, for residents of TOTH and for those in the wider area who also regularly use these paths.

Since the current design has overplanting of panels at a 1.59 ratio there would seem to be a great deal of leeway for the applicant to change the design to preserve the Stepping Out route in TOTH and to significantly mitigate the view issues, both from the village of TOTH and looking back towards TOTH from the Stepping Out route. It is possible to see Lincoln Cathedral from this route (spectacular at night when the Cathedral is lit up) and I fear the insertion of panels would cut off our link to a building which has huge cultural and historic significance.

Fire / Explosion / Pollution Risk

I remain deeply concerned by the wish to build BESS anywhere near residential areas, or where the prevailing wind would carry fumes to residential areas. Likewise operations of the RAF airbases and the air ambulance service which operates out of RAF Waddington are being put at risk. There is also a small but nevertheless real risk of long-burning fires and catastrophic explosion from thermal runaway which would impact people, animals, vehicles, buildings and infrastructure within a wide radius.

At present the applicant's proposals are too vague for the Fire Service to be able to comment meaningfully on the BESS arrangements. The applicant seems satisfied that the availability of a few hours of firefighting water is sufficient. Given that battery fires may need cooling for days there is not enough regard being given to what happens when this initial water supply runs out. Where will the water come from? There are regular problems with low water pressure or interruptions to supply here in TOTH, and no water at all if the local pumps malfunction. Nor are there any detailed proposals to build a protective bund for the BESS areas to prevent potential soil and groundwater contamination.

Where and how will damaged/defunct panels and batteries, or contaminated water or soil be stored pending removal to waste disposal or recycling sites? What protections are proposed for these?

I worked as a claims adjuster for nearly 20 years and mainly dealt with catastrophic incidents so I know very well that things can go wrong, very badly, when there is insufficient planning and care given to site and house hazardous processes and materials, and to prepare for worst case scenarios. Risk assessment is not a linear process but an evaluation of all the potential risks, along with their possible interaction, to try to prepare for any and all eventualities and to remove or reduce as many as reasonably practicable.

Which leads me to ask, how can we be sure, if this proposal goes ahead, that adequate liability cover, provided by

insurers regulated by PRA/FCA, will be in place to cover worst case scenarios? I would expect that the applicant would already be working with a specialist team at their brokers or insurers to gain underwriter input into design and operation of the BESS and other parts of the site to reduce risk. If this is not the case, why not?

Decommissioning

Staying with finances, if this scheme is to be granted the applicant must put aside sufficient funds at an early stage in an escrow to pay for all costs of decommissioning and disposal to avoid the risk of site owner insolvency before the project ends.