

RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Planning Inspectorate
One Earth Solar

22nd August 2025

Dear Sir,

I write as the Member of Parliament for Newark to object to the One Earth Solar Farm Development Consent Order (EN010159) and to request that you exercise your discretion to accept this representation.

I want to make clear at the outset that I am not opposed to solar power in principle. I have said publicly that Members of Parliament should support the expansion of rooftop and brownfield solar and work constructively to mitigate the worst impacts of large schemes. However, the scale and siting of the proposed One Earth Solar Farm are wholly unacceptable for Newark and the Trent Valley, and would cause harm on a scale that far outweighs any claimed benefits.

Since the outset of the proposals, I have met with constituents across the affected area studied the details of the application. In all of my surveys, constituency visits and public meetings, I have found that the overwhelming majority of residents - and in fact almost everyone I have spoken to - are opposed to this proposal. They are deeply concerned that their villages, farmland, and way of life will be overwhelmed by what is effectively the construction of an industrial power station across the Trent Valley.

The proposal is vast. At around 740 MW and covering approximately 1,409 hectares across Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire - 1,203 hectares of it in Nottinghamshire - it would stretch some 4.5 km north to south and 8 km east to west, with the River Trent running directly through its centre. Villages including Fledborough and Ragnall lie only about 50 metres from the site; Thorney and North and South Clifton are within 500 metres; and Dunham is just 800 metres away. The grid connection would be to High Marnham. When viewed in isolation this is already an unprecedented scheme, but when considered alongside other nationally significant infrastructure projects in the locality, such as Steeple Renewables and Great North Road, the cumulative impact on Newark is severe.

The land in question is among the most productive agricultural land in the country. National Policy Statement EN-3 is explicit that where solar farms are proposed on agricultural land, poorer quality land should be preferred, and the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land - Grades 1, 2, and 3a - should be avoided wherever

From the Member of Parliament for the Newark Constituency

including Balderton, Bingham, Collingham, East Bridgford, East Markham, Fernwood, Newark, Southwell and Tuxford.



possible. At this scale, the loss of BMV land is inevitable, undermining food security at a time when the importance of protecting domestic food production could not be clearer. Around nine per cent of the Newark constituency's land mass is at risk from solar farm proposals; One Earth would be by far the most damaging.

The impact on the historic pattern of settlement and landscape along the Trent would be profound. Entire villages and individual homes would be encircled by panels and ancillary infrastructure, their setting permanently altered, and opportunities for natural and organic growth constrained for decades. The Trent Valley is a rural, historic landscape, and to industrialise it on this scale would be to impose lasting harm on its character and on the amenity of residents.

There are also specific heritage and archaeological concerns. This stretch of the Trent Valley contains listed churches, historic farmsteads and known archaeological sites. The imposition of an industrial energy complex of this scale risks permanent harm to the setting of historic assets and the loss of undiscovered archaeology that helps to tell the story of the region's past. Constituents rightly fear that a development of this magnitude would damage their historic environment irreparably.

Flooding and drainage are another serious concern. Large parts of the proposed site lie within the Trent's floodplain, an area already vulnerable to regular inundation. Covering so much land with panels, tracks and substations will inevitably alter drainage patterns, increase surface water run-off, and reduce floodplain capacity. There is a real risk that neighbouring villages would face worsened flooding as a result of this scheme, an outcome that would be wholly unacceptable given recent national focus on flood resilience.

There are further serious concerns about construction and safety. EN-3 acknowledges that access and traffic during the building of such large schemes can be a significant consideration in rural areas. The local road network is not suited to prolonged volumes of heavy goods vehicles, and residents are rightly worried about disruption and safety risks. Even if the scheme were acceptable in other respects, robust caps, routing restrictions and independent monitoring would be essential.

The proposal also includes a very large battery energy storage system. Several serious fire incidents involving lithium-ion battery storage systems have occurred in the UK and internationally, and have shown how real the risks of fire, explosion and toxic plume scenarios can be, and how difficult they are to suppress once ignited. Constituents have pressed me on this repeatedly.

Above all, there is a democratic deficit in how this project is being advanced. Residents across the Clifton, Fledborough, Ragnall, Thorney and Dunham cluster feel ignored and powerless as decisions about the future of their villages are taken over their heads. They fear, with justification, that they will be forced to live for a generation inside what is essentially an industrial complex. Local press, council



reports and parish surveys show near-universal opposition to the proposal, and that reflects what I have consistently heard on the ground.

Government policy is clear that solar development should prioritise rooftops, brownfield sites, contaminated land and other industrial surfaces. Newark and the wider region have significant warehouse and logistics space, along with large commercial roofs, that could and should be exploited before sacrificing prime farmland. I have consistently made that case locally, and my constituents are right to expect the same logic to apply here.

For all of these reasons, I urge the Examining Authority to accept this representation into the Examination for EN010159 and to give very substantial weight to the loss of BMV agricultural land, the cumulative impacts with other energy schemes, the permanent harm to village settings and landscape, the unacceptable construction impacts, and the real safety risks posed by battery storage.

On that basis, I ask you to recommend refusal. If, notwithstanding these objections, you are minded to recommend approval, then the only way to protect my constituents would be through stringent and binding requirements. These would need to include independently verified soil surveys to minimise BMV loss; enforceable construction traffic caps and routing conditions; strong protections against glint, glare and loss of amenity for residents; comprehensive BESS safety and emergency response plans; robust decommissioning and soil restoration obligations; and a meaningful community benefit package proportionate to the scale of the intrusion.

I would be grateful if you could keep me informed of all remaining Examination milestones and any hearings where constituency evidence may assist.

Yours sincerely,

