

Jan Hiscock - Response to PM – How the examination is conducted

Please find below my submission for the Preliminary Planning Meeting to be held on Wednesday 26th November AM.

With regard to Item 3, Initial assessment of principal issues, I have submitted a response previously and I agree with all the issues listed in Annex C however one issue has been missed from my previous submission and that is COST. I therefore wish to include the further principal issue of **Cost Benefit** for Newark and Sherwood Households and Businesses to Annex C and topics for issue specific hearings.

As I have previously submitted, I have huge concerns regarding this large scale solar park within the local community particularly as a substantial amount of public money is being used to fund the project. Elements Green via the GNR Solar and Biodiversity Park website, has a very unambiguous statement on its home page that reads “*GNR Solar and Biodiversity Park would support UK energy security and contribute to tackling the cost-of-living crisis through the reduction of household energy bills*”. [GNR Solar Park](#) The costs and economic impact to meet net zero in my humble opinion have not been fully investigated so to state this this project will contribute to the reduction of household energy bills with no caveats could be construed as rather misleading! Whilst I accept within the Planning Inspectorate Document ‘Rule 6 Letter’ ref EN010162 dated 23rd October 2025 “*The SoS is entitled to disregard any representations that relate to the merits of the designated National Policy Statement (NPS). In practice, this means that the ExA will not spend time examining representations that challenge policy set out in NPSs, or the validity of NPSs themselves. The focus will be on the merits or disadvantages of the proposed development, tested to the appropriate extent using the tests set out in relevant designated NPSs*” I do believe that it is incumbent upon the Examining Authority to provide transparency on the economic, social and environmental costs to Newark and Sherwood residents and businesses given the substantial and detrimental impact on our local countryside, landscape, prime agricultural land and food security which will have consequences now and in the years to come.

To question cost and to conduct a rigorous review and be open and honest with all consumers is highly topical and essential since electricity prices have never been higher, in fact electricity prices in the UK are amongst the highest in the world including the EU and many developed countries. The cost therefore of moving to renewables including solar has potentially been underestimated or largely ignored and as a result there is growing concern and debate regarding this topic as can be illustrated below.

- 16th November 2025 Jonathan Leake, Energy Editor at the Telegraph, published an article <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2025/11/16/energy-debts-6bn-quarter-homes-struggle-to-pay-bills/> “**Energy Debts ‘to hit £6bn’ as a quarter of homes struggle to pay bills**” in which he states “Average bills rose from £1,179 in the autumn of 2019 to £1,755 today. While the initial surge was driven by a spike in gas prices, costs are now being kept high mainly by the 11 or so levies and other policy costs used to fund the expansion of renewables”
- In relation to “**Administrative Strike Prices for the upcoming 7th auction round for the Contracts for Difference subsidy scheme**” Kathryn Porter published an article on 25th July 2025 [ASPs for AR7 prove renewables are not cheap - Watt-Logic](#) in which she states “Not only have the contracts been extended from 15 to 20 years, but the new maximum strike prices, the highest in over a decade, are eye-watering. This should finally end the claim that renewables are cheap, since even at the first order level, that is the subsidy, they are likely to be higher than the cost of generating electricity using gas. Even for solar which is the cheapest of the lot.”
- The topic of **Renewable Energy Costs** was raised in the House of Lords on the 8th November 2024 [Renewable energy: Costs - House of Lords Library](#) Whilst there were arguments within the House of Lords discussion to support the assertion that renewables will mean cheaper electricity in the future as argued by Keith Bell, holder of the Scottish Power Chair in Future Power Systems at the University of Strathclyde, Professor Dieter Helm, Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Oxford, has argued that the costs associated with addressing the problem of intermittency has been ignored by “almost every calculation of the costs for these renewables”.^[50]
- The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) in July 2025 published [Risks around the estimates of climate change mitigation costs - Office for Budget Responsibility](#) stating there is considerable uncertainty around the economic and fiscal cost associated with climate change mitigation.
- Bill Gates in **Gates Notes** [The website of Bill Gates | Gates Notes](#) published 28th October 2025 states that “Climate change is a serious problem, but it will not be the end of civilisation”, in addition “Unfortunately, the doomsday outlook is causing much of the climate community to focus too much on near-term emissions goals, and it’s diverting resources from the most effective things we should be doing to improve life in a warming world” Whilst Bill Gates is focused on putting human welfare at the centre of our climate strategies to improve agriculture and health in poor countries it is no less relevant or important to review how consumers and our money is being spent in the UK, including Newark and Sherwood and in particular on this project to ensure that public ie consumer money is being spent wisely and whether indeed other technological solutions providing reliable, consistent and affordable power and

which arguably have less impact on the surrounding countryside are more beneficial.

Given the ongoing high cost of electricity prices in the UK and the wider discussions on the true cost of renewables including solar **NOW** would be a prudent and absolutely necessary obligation for the Examining Authority to assess and carry out a full cost benefit review of this project so that households and businesses within Newark and Sherwood are made aware of the true cost of this energy provision and any benefits can be assessed and measured against the impact on our household and business finances, our local countryside and environment and that of climate change.

The cost analysis and methodologies should include, although not be limited to, the following:

- Subsidies, how much is being provided by government, the local councils and other public funds.
- The True 'levelized cost of this solar electricity' (LCOE) to include all associated costs and life cycle impacts including but not limited to:
 - full system costs of renewables,
 - intermittency, the cost of real time balancing as part of the requirement to backup energy requirements for when it's not sunny,
 - battery storage and life cycle costs of battery storage
 - Economic impact of loss of agricultural land and food production
 - all economic and environmental lifetime costs associated with the solar panels, manufacture, maintenance and disposal.