

[Parish Council Letterhead]

Date: [Insert date]

To: [Consultation contact JPAG/ Planning Inspectorate reference]

Subject: Response of Eakring Parish Council to the proposals for the Great North Road Solar & Biodiversity Park, land north-west of Newark-on-Trent

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the Eakring Parish Council I write to submit our formal comments in respect of the proposals by Elements Green for the Great North Road Solar & Biodiversity Park. As the parish council for [Parish Name] and as the local elected body representing our residents, we welcome the opportunity to engage in this consultation.

Introduction

Our parish is situated in a rural, sensitive landscape and we are mindful of the dual challenges of responding to the climate and energy transition, while also safeguarding the character, environment and economy of our local communities. We recognise the potential benefits of renewable energy infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement. However, we consider that the scale, siting, design and local impacts of the proposed scheme raise a number of significant concerns and opportunities which we ask the decision-maker to give full weight to.

The Scheme

The scheme proposes ground-mounted solar PV panels spanning around 3,390 acres of land, with a total landholding of around 7,166 acres (including landscape and habitat enhancement zones). It is estimated to generate enough electricity for approximately 400,000 homes. It is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, meaning the decision is taken at national level rather than by the local planning authority.

Key Issues and Recommendations

Eakring Parish Council submits its **strong and unambiguous objection** to the Great North Road Solar Park. The evidence supplied in our Phase 2 community consultation response, submitted February 2025, demonstrates that the scheme would cause **unacceptable, irreversible and wide-ranging harm** to our landscape, heritage, biodiversity, agricultural land, public rights of way, rural economy, tranquillity and wellbeing.

Our objection is based on detailed local analysis, supported by national planning policy, conservation status, ecological records, local designations and heritage evidence. The reasons are set out belowv(**from EPC Phase 2 response**).

1. Landscape & Visual Impact

The proposal fundamentally conflicts with the character of the Trent & Belvoir NCA (NCA 48). Eakring is described as a “*predominately rural, sparsely settled landscape with fertile soils, low visual intrusion and quiet lanes*”

Major harms include:

- Industrialisation of historically open farmland.
- Panels visible from properties including **Eakring Windmill (Grade II)** and **Bleak House**.
- Fields DB015–DB018, especially DB015/DB016 (north-facing slope), **highly visible from the A616**, creating landscape scarring.
- Loss of traditional views from PROWs and the **Robin Hood Way**.
- Visual clutter from perimeter fencing, CCTV, substations and infrastructure.
- Significant glint and glare across the village’s viewpoints.

This is **direct, permanent character harm** to a Conservation Village whose setting is central to its designation.

2. Traffic & Highway Safety

The proposed HGV access route is **dangerous, unsuitable and high-risk**:

- 250 vehicle movements/day (60+ HGVs) through a **narrow rural lane** with a drainage ditch on one side and **historic species-rich hedgerow** on the other (Sanderson’s Map 1834)
- Road used daily by cyclists, joggers, walkers, horse riders and children travelling to Kneesall Primary School.
- 15 passing places proposed across 4.5 miles — **9 within 2 miles of Eakring** — introducing danger, delays and further habitat loss.
- The bridge at Tug Bridge Farm is narrow and unsuitable.
- Frequent flooding from Kersall Junction towards Penny Pasture LWS and Maplebeck Meadows SSSI.

This scale of construction traffic is **unsafe and incompatible** with rural roads and vulnerable road users.

3. Biodiversity & Wildlife Impacts

Species regularly present within the fields proposed for panel coverage include:

- **Protected or priority species:** Yellowhammer, Skylark, Lapwing, Tree Sparrow, Starling, Linnet, Yellow Wagtail, Kestrel, Red Kite, Buzzard, Barn Owl.
- **Mammals:** Brown Hare, Roe Deer, Fox, Badger.
- **Bats:** Using hedgerows, edges and hunting corridors.
- **Water Voles:** Confirmed in Cauntton Beck adjacent to DB018.

The scheme would:

- Fragment habitat networks.
- Block movement corridors with fencing.
- Reduce foraging habitat across hundreds of acres.
- Increase disturbance through construction noise and lighting.

Nearby designated sites at risk include:

- **Eakring Meadows LWS / SSSI (neutral grassland)**
- **Eakring & Maplebeck Meadows SSSI (alluvial neutral grassland with breeding birds)**
- **Redgate Woods & Mansey Common SSSI (ancient woodland & dumble habitat)**

Solar industrialisation around these sites is **ecologically incompatible**.

4. Heritage Harm

Eakring is an exceptionally historic settlement:

- A Conservation Village whose medieval street pattern and ancient lanes remain intact.
- **Grade II*** Church of St Andrew.
- **Four Grade II listed domestic properties**, including Eakring Windmill.
- Red K6 phone box, war memorial, stone water troughs.
- Below-ground archaeology (subrectangular enclosure, fish ponds, terraces, ridge-and-furrow).
- Two Ancient Trees of national significance recorded by Woodland Trust.
- Historic oil extraction history at Dukes Wood (now a heritage and ecological site).

The proposal introduces industrial structures into this heritage setting, causing **setting harm of national significance**.

5. Public Rights of Way (PROW) & Recreation

Eakring's footpath and bridleway network is one of its defining characteristics. Panel fields DB015–DB018 sit alongside or across:

- The **Robin Hood Way LDP**
- Footpaths to Maplebeck
- Historic open-field lanes
- Popular cycle routes used for charity rides

Harmful effects:

- Loss of panoramic rural views
- Glint & glare impacting walkers and riders
- Deterrence of PROW use due to fencing, CCTV and industrialisation
- **Deletion of a historic footpath in DB015** (opposed strongly by parish)

This is a **major public amenity and wellbeing impact**.

6. Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Grade 2

All affected fields are Grade 2 (ALC) Very Good Quality Agricultural Land — explicitly protected under NPPF.

This land:

- Provides high-yield food production
- Forms part of the medieval three-field system still visible in the landscape
- Supports local farming economy

Solar panels on BMV land represent a **direct conflict with national policy** and an irresponsible long-term sterilisation of productive farmland.

7. Wellbeing & Rural Economy Impacts

Eakring is valued for its:

- Quietness and remoteness
- Elevated countryside views
- Wildlife presence

Construction impacts include:

- Noise, vibration, pollution
- Loss of tranquillity
- Disturbance of wildlife
- HGV fear, intimidation and danger

Local businesses affected:

- **The Daffodil Tearoom** – popular with walkers, riders, cycling clubs.
- **Cabin in the Country** – marketed for views and rural setting.
- **Multiple equestrian businesses**, including livery and professional riders.

These assets depend on rural quality — which the proposal undermines.

8. Cumulative Impact – Already Hosting Wind & Solar Farms

Eakring already hosts:

- A wind farm
- A solar farm
- Additional solar adjacent to parish boundary

Adding a national-scale NSIP would create:

“An industrialised landscape for generations to come.”

This cumulative harm is **unacceptable** and exceeds reasonable capacity for rural Nottinghamshire.

Conclusion and Parish Council Recommendation

In summary, the Eakring Parish Council supports the principle of renewable energy and biodiversity enhancement, but objects to the scheme in its current form. We recommend that the decision-maker ensures the scheme is revised or conditioned so that local impacts are properly mitigated and community benefit is delivered effectively. **Eakring Parish Council strongly objects.**

This is **the wrong scale, in the wrong place**, with **unacceptable, irreversible harm**.

We request that the application be **refused in full**.

We trust that our comments will inform the next stage of the examination process, and we would welcome the opportunity to meet with the applicant or examining body to discuss local concerns further.

Yours sincerely,

[Name], Chair,

[Contact details]

Eakring Parish Council – Great North Road Solar Park - Phase 2 Consultation Response February 2025

Eakring is a medium sized village located between Ollerton and Southwell. The village is surrounded by open countryside, is centred upon its fifteenth century church and is characterised by its medieval street pattern, steeply banked sunken lanes and groups of red brick farmsteads. The village has a relatively unspoilt core which is why in 1974 it was designated a conservation area extended in 1988 to include the whole of the built up area and part of the landscape setting to the south.

Eakring sits within the Trent and Belvoir Character Area (NCA 48) which is described as a “predominately rural and sparsely settled area with small compact villages and dispersed farms linked by quiet lanes. Buildings are mostly brick and pantiles with agriculture the dominant land use. Soils are inherently fertile (Mercia mudstones) and visual development and auditory intrusion relatively low compared to neighbouring NCAs”.

Taking the above description of Eakring and its surrounding area into account Eakring Parish Council provides the response below to the Phase 2 Consultation for the Great North Road Solar Park.

Landscape and visual impact

The proposal will have a significant negative impact on the rural, open landscape around Eakring being highly obtrusive and creating an industrial feel to the village and its environs. The panels do not respect the area's topography and will have a negative impact on the landscape character. The panels will be visible from properties within the village e.g. those on the Eakring -Wellow Road including Eakring Windmill, Grade II listed, and Bleak House, Kirklington Road. All Fields – DB015, DB016, DB017 and DB018 will be highly visible from the A616 to the north exacerbated by the fact that Fields DB015 and DB016 are north facing and on a slope. In addition, our rural environment will be damaged further by perimeter fencing, CCTV and other associated infrastructure. Traditional views visible from our extensive network of PROWs including the Robin Hood Way (Long Distance Footpath) that are valued by parishioners and visitors alike will be lost as will the character of the footpaths. Once installed the panels will cause considerable sun glare.

Traffic

The proposed construction traffic access route is completely unsuitable and dangerous. There is a deep drainage ditch on one side of the access road while on the opposite side are historic and species rich hedges marked on Sanderson's 1834 Map. The road from Caunton – Eakring is narrow while at the same time being used by cyclists, joggers, horse riders and walkers. The risk of collision and accidents will be very high particularly as the road is predicted to carry an extra 250 vehicles /day of which 60 at least will be HGV's during the construction phase. Children of the

parish attend Kneesall C of E Primary School. They travel in the mornings and evenings along part of the access route. 15 new passing places are proposed from the junction of the A616 to Eakring, 4.5 miles of which 9 are within 2 miles of Eakring, measured from the Kersall junction. While reducing some of the threats to road users the passing places will not eliminate the risks entirely as well as the fear and intimidation from an extra 250 large vehicles/day. The large increase in HGV traffic and the large number of passing places will cause unacceptable delays to road users and others in our parish. The narrow bridge at Tug Bridge Farm is dangerous and currently suitable for only one vehicle to pass at a time. The condition of the road is poor and suffers from frequent flooding particularly the stretch from the Kersall Junction and below Eakring Field farm, opposite Penny Pasture LWS Eakring and Maplebeck Meadows SSSI.

Wildlife

Regularly observed in the fields to be panelled include protected bird species such as: Yellowhammer, Skylark, Lapwing, Tree sparrow, Starling, Yellow wagtail, Linnet, Fieldfare, Greenfinch along with Kestrels, Red kite and Buzzards. Of special note are the Barn owls which are regularly seen hunting across the field's thanks in part to the Barn Owl Trust who have been instrumental in working with local farmers to increase their numbers. The fields to be panelled are home to Brown hares while deer, foxes and the occasional badger have also been spotted. Bats are seen regularly around the village and hunting along hedgerows. Water voles are confirmed present in the Caunton Beck that runs adjacent to field DB018. Security fencing and large areas of panels will disrupt and destroy the traditional pathways for such animals and birds along with their nesting and feeding habitats.

Within the order limits and close to Eakring are Eakring Meadows LWS, partly designated an SSSI and Eakring and Maplebeck Meadows SSSI. Eakring and Maplebeck Meadows SSSI is important for its species rich neutral grassland on damp soils derived from river alluvium over clay. Additional interest is provided by the variety of breeding bird species using the site and the notable wildflower populations. These habitats will be negatively impacted by the solar farm.

Within the parish and not far from field DB015 is Redgate Woods and Mansey Common SSSI Grid Reference SK 680 600 which is just over 71 ha's. The citation reads: "Redgate Woods are a fine example of an Ash- Elm Wood developed on stiff clay. Additional interest is provided by species rich glades and a breeding bird population. Mansey Common is a good example of a species rich neutral grassland derived from stiff clay. Additional interest is provided by the adjoining section of "dumble" a narrow, steep – sided wooded valley that possess a ground flora similar to the flushed slopes of ancient woodland.

Heritage

Eakring is a settlement with a Danish name meaning a circle of oak trees. It is believed that the Danes took over an Anglo Saxon village although this has not been confirmed. Eakring is a conservation village and has a significant amount of historic interest associated with it. The Church of St Andrew is Grade II*, while there are four Grade II domestic properties in the village including Eakring Windmill. The village still retains its red K6 phone box, has a war memorial, stone water troughs and was home to William Mompesson rector of Eyam in Derbyshire from 1664 to 1670 and of Eakring 1671 to 1709. William Mompesson is celebrated for his actions during the bubonic plague at Eyam and for achieving important posts at Southwell Minster. He is buried in Eakring.

The medieval “three field system” of strip farming was practiced in Eakring until WW II This “Open Field “system of farming is still easily identifiable from the east and west and explains in part why the fields around Eakring are large and open. The medieval three field system of strip farming is still practiced at Laxton, a nearby village.

There are designated heritage finds in and around Eakring including:

- on the boundary of Field DB015, within the order limits – “below ground subrectangular enclosure”
- Fish Ponds above ground feature close proximity to Field DB016
- Terraced area above ground feature within village
- Enclosure at Eakring below ground feature within Field DB013
- Ridge and Furrow, Banks and Features at Mansey Common above ground features.
- Ridge and furrow, banks and other features at Dukes Wood above ground features.

The Woodland Trust have recorded two Ancient Trees of significance in Eakring. One in the church yard of St Andrew’s the other on the corner of the access track to Field DB017.

Just before the outbreak of WW II oil was discovered under Eakring and in Dukes Wood. Oil was extracted which was speeded up at this crucial time with the help of a group Oklahoma oilmen. Dukes Wood is now a wildlife reserve managed by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust although signs of its past can still be seen within the wood. Dukes wood is visited by historians, wildlife enthusiasts, walkers etc. both from within and outside the village.

The planned semi industrial infrastructure will harm the heritage assets of Eakring and the setting of our conservation area.

Public Access

Eakring has an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PROW) including lanes, tracks and footpaths associated with the long maintained open field system of farming. These PROW are extremely well used by villagers and visitors alike who are

daily seen bringing their dogs from nearby villages and towns for walks into the quiet and beautiful environs of Eakring. The Robin Hood Way, long distance path passes by the panels as does the existing footpath to Maplebeck a walk enjoyed by many generations of Eakring residents.

Residents and visitors alike enjoy quiet country pursuits around Eakring such as walking, horse riding and cycling. The roads through Eakring particularly the proposed access route is regularly used for charity bike rides as it is part of a designated quiet cycle route. The PROW provide uninterrupted views across open countryside which will be lost by the proposed panels and infrastructure. Fencing, CCTV, panels and other industrial infrastructure associated with the solar farm will detract from the enjoyment of using the PROW and will negatively impact the wellbeing of our community. Glint and glare will be visible from many of the PROW which will detract from the enjoyment of the routes. The Parish Council objects to the deletion of the footpath in field DB015 as it is a historic route.

Soils

All the fields to be panelled are classified Grade 2 – Very good quality agricultural land ALC (Best and Most Versatile soils) which will be lost to commercial agriculture. In the opinion of Eakring Parish Council solar panels should be placed on rooftops and brownfield sites not high yielding agricultural land.

Wellbeing

Eakring is special because it feels remote/quiet/ with wonderful views and a haven for wildlife particularly when entering the village from the east. The construction phase will result in an increase in noise and vibration pollution associated with the movement of vehicles, heavy machinery etc. which is unacceptable for both residents and wildlife.

Eakring supports a number of successful businesses including:

- The Daffodil Tearoom, Main Street, Eakring used as a regular and popular stop for walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The Tearoom hosts a local book club, cancer support group as well as numerous well attended functions.
- Cabin in the Country, School Lane, Eakring – accommodation advertised as being perfect for cycling and walking with fabulous views over the countryside.
- Horse Livery Yard at Ryalls Farm, Main Street, Eakring
- Sam York Oakring Stud and Performance Horses, Brail Lane, Eakring.

Horse riding within Eakring is a very popular sport with numerous horses being kept both for leisure and professionally. Riders of all ages including young children use the lanes and tracks for peaceful enjoyment. The impact of increased noise, volume

of HGV's will negatively impact PROW, cycling and riding routes etc. and our rural businesses.

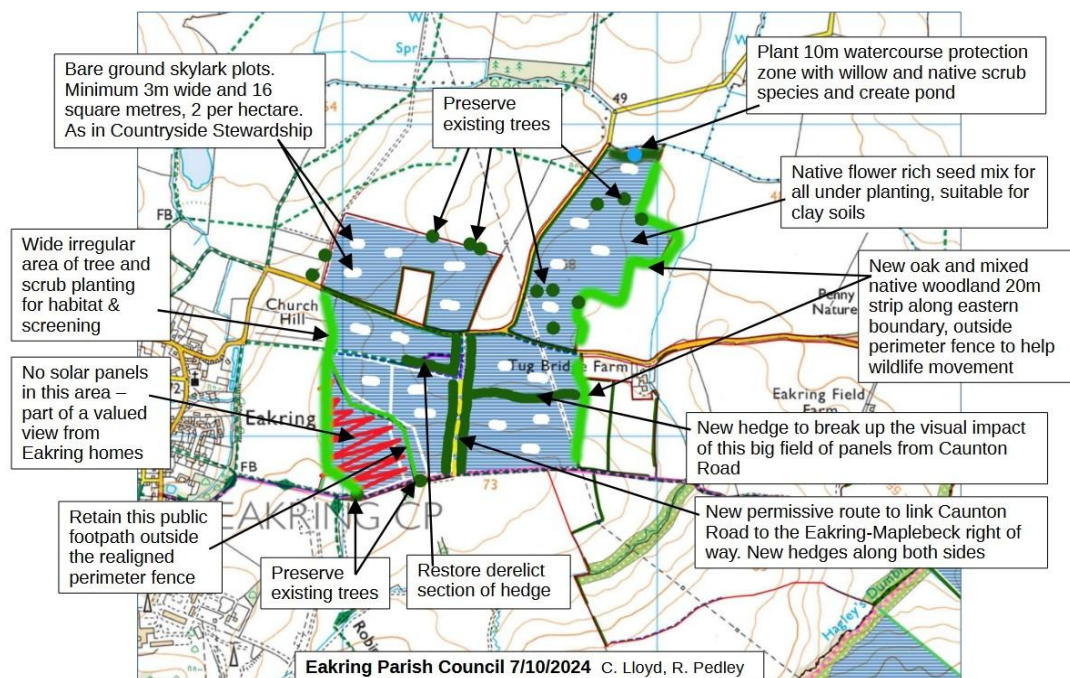
Cumulative Impact

The Parish of Eakring hosts both a wind and a solar farm. Immediately adjacent to the parish boundary is an additional solar farm.

The cumulative impact on the village and the surrounding area of the proposed GNR Solar Farm, other NSIP solar projects proposed for the area together with planned and existing solar farms under 50 MW in Newark and Sherwood is unacceptable and is and will create an industrialised landscape for generations to come.

As a Parish Council we object to the size, location and cumulative impact of the GNR Solar Park.

As residents of the parish with local knowledge we wish to see improvements to the current proposals for Eakring see the annotated Map attached.



In addition, we would like to see a wide irregular area of tree and scrub planting along the boundary adjacent to Church Hill and Eakring, Fields DB016 and DB 015 to act as screening for the village.

Eakring Parish Council

Date: 16/02/2025