

North Muskham Parish Council (PC) has already raised the serious cumulative impact of the GNR proposal, particularly when considered alongside the growing number of other solar applications. We now draw attention to the proposed development at Grassthorpe, which lies very close to the GNR site and would add a further 52.2 hectares of solar infrastructure.

The developer, Enso Energy, also outlines additional prospective schemes on its website, including Tuxford Road and several others. It is entirely realistic to expect yet more applications to emerge — potentially even during the examination and decision process.

You will be aware that the Planning Inspectorate has very recently (3 December) granted planning permission, on appeal, for the nearby Kelham Solar Farm and BESS. In the Appeal Decision Notification, the Inspector states:

Paragraph 10: “The GNR scheme is at an early stage in its consent process, and at this stage I can only have regard to what may be granted in the future in assessing the appeal before me.”

Paragraph 13: “Any impact on the wider Character Area by the wider GNR scheme will be for the examiners of that development to consider.”

It is clear that the Kelham Solar Farm decision—and indeed all other decisions allowing development in the immediate area of the large GNR proposal—have openly deferred consideration of cumulative effects until the GNR scheme itself is assessed. This indicates that only at the time of the GNR decision can the wider cumulative impact properly be taken into account. In light of this, we consider it essential that the current examination of the GNR proposal now fully accounts for this emerging pattern of multiple developments.

The absence of a coherent government strategy for the siting and scale of solar and other renewable projects has created a “gold rush” of financial speculation. At present, only the Planning Inspectorate has the authority to impose any proportion or common sense on decisions that will shape communities for generations. If it cannot do so, the outlook for affected residents is bleak.