Jan Hiscock – Submission 10th December 2025

This is a build on my previous submission and further comments provided to the Examining Panel on 27th November 2025.

I would urge the Examining Panel to refuse the Great North Road Solar Biodiversity Park Project. There is only one objective for this project and that is to meet the requirements of the UK Governments Net Zero Targets. The National Policy Statements for energy embed an urgent, enduring need for large-scale low-carbon generation and whilst I accept we need renewable energy the proposal is fundamentally flawed, it is the wrong solution, in the wrong place. There are no benefits, this project will only mean economic cost to the British Public as part of a flawed policy and cause long term social and environmental harm to the multiple rural villages, communities, local heritage, surrounding countryside and farmland affected by this project.

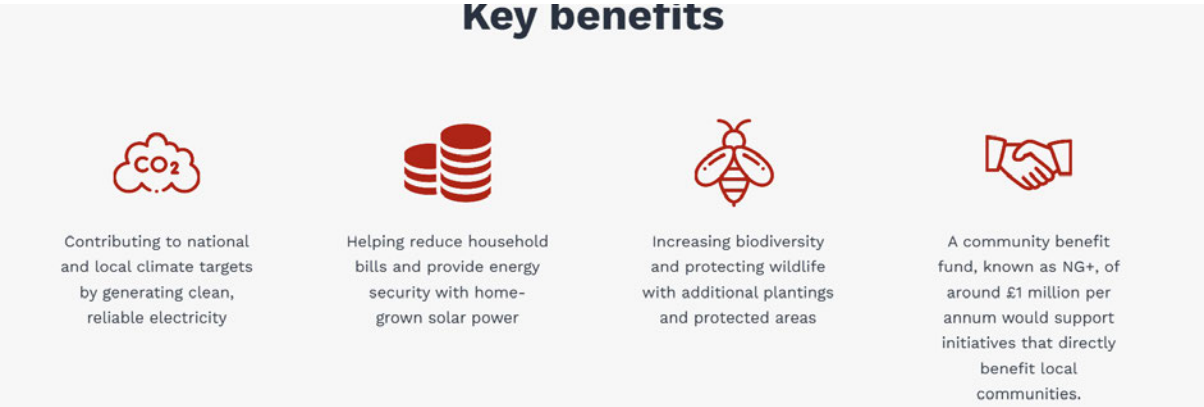
With regard to Section 104(7) of the Planning Act 2008 there is one express exception which authorises refusal and that is if the Secretary of State "**is satisfied that the adverse impact of the proposed development would outweigh its benefits."**

If approved this project will have a cumulative and undeniably adverse and detrimental impact on the local countryside and community for **all the issues listed in Annex C which I totally support.**

The economic cost of this project and the energy it may provide is also becoming ever more relevant when there is an absolute requirement to make the best use of scant public financial resources. There has been an accepted and unquestioned mantra within the UK and elsewhere that renewables will provide clean and cheaper electricity. Indeed, Labour promised during the 2024 general election campaign that *"clean energy" would save families up to £300 on gas and electricity bills per year by 2030*.

The GNR Solar and Diversity Website declares on its home page that it "would support UK energy security and contribute to tackling the cost-of-living crisis through the reduction of household energy bills", In addition a key benefit is listed as " Helping reduce household bills and provide energy security with home-grown solar power" **however the Applicant stated at the Planning Meeting held on 26th November 2025 that 'helping to reduce household bills' is not in scope.**

Within the 'The Development' section of the website 3 other key benefits are listed including:



- **Contributing to national and local climate targets by generating clean, reliable electricity?** - Discussed on 26th November 2025. **W**ith regard to emissions, with reference to APP-058 the Applicant indicates that there are emissions savings whilst the Norwell Solar Farm Steering Group indicates that the project will **"be responsible for significantly more CO_2 emissions than it will save. "** if there are no emissions savings then what is the point of the project at all!

- **Increasing biodiversity and protecting wildlife with additional plantings and protected areas**. –. Whilst I acknowledge the care with which the Applicant has taken over the biodiversity and wildlife plans, is the project really beneficial for the environment when 1,765 hectares or over 4000 acres of BMV land is being given over to solar panels? Professor Dieter Helm of Oxford University who took part in a House of Lords discussion on the cost of renewables states " **if we cared about the environment then we wouldn't be building a solar park we'd be ensuring long term energy strategy for consistent power"** You have to say that a net zero strategy that relies on using thousands of acres of prime farmland to generate subsidised intermittent energy has to be completely flawed!

- Finally, there is the N**G+ community benefit fund.** I acknowledge again the care and good intent associated to NG+ community benefits but in the Planning Meeting discussions the Applicant stated that the NG+ community benefit fund would not be formally attached to the application. Whilst I understand why, should planning be approved then potentially there is no 'official'/'legal' obligation for the Applicant to carry out the NG+ benefits.

Given the scale of the project and the huge amount of information generated it must be the likely expectation of the Applicant that the website is a principal 'go to' in terms of information to the public. The narrative very much includes cost reduction for consumers, with equal weight in terms of font size and visual prominence given to all 4 key benefits and yet 'helping to reduce house hold bills' ie the cost to the consumer as the Applicant stated at the Planning meeting on the 26th November 2025 is out of scope with no further caveats or supporting information for the consumer to understand why.

I am raising the question of cost now since there is a growing consensus particularly in recent months that 'green' energy requires massive subsidies and that the cost of renewables has been underestimated. For solar this includes, intermittency, the cost of real time balancing as part of the requirement to backup energy when it's not sunny or there is unpredictable weather, battery storage, life cycle costs of battery storage and more grid infrastructure.

To support the increasing relevance of cost to this examination I reference:

- **The Energy Department** which has recently changed the official slogan on its website to a pledge to 'protect billpayers'. And the commitment to reduce household energy bills by £300 by the end of the decade has now been removed from its flagship policy.

- **The Climate Change Committee** in its "7th Carbon Budget" which has indicated "that there will likely be no net zero savings until the 7th carbon budget period in 2038-2042."

- **The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) in July 2025 published** [redacted] has stated that there is considerable uncertainty around the economic and fiscal cost associated with climate change mitigation.

- Finally the The topic of **Renewable Energy Costs** was raised in **the House of Lords on the 8th November 2024** [redacted] raised the topic of Renewable Energy Costs 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*".

Household electricity bills are increasing, set to climb to more than £1,815 in April 2026 from the current level of £1,755. Energy requirements within the UK are set to double by 2050. Since 2020 there has been a steady and accelerating flow of DCOs for large onshore solar projects in England, resulting in the conclusion that there will be further requests for more solar developments within Newark and Sherwood District and the surrounding areas. This area therefore has the prospect of becoming, if not already, the dumping ground for more solar power projects with the British public carrying the economic cost of this ill thought out transition to net zero and the local community disproportionately carrying the burden of a damaged and industrialised countryside, eroding the rural nature of many villages, farmland and countryside for years to come not to mention the terrible visual impact, pollution from traffic, flood risks and the safety risks from battery storage. Given the significant cumulative and adverse impact on the environment and the community then I would ask the Examining Authority to undertake the appropriate and very rigorous scrutiny of the cumulative impact of this project which cannot be offset by the costly and inconsistent power generated, and the non-existent and small 'sweetener' benefits as laid out by the Applicant.