



Interested Party Reference number - [REDACTED]

Date: 15/10/26

Objection of Malmesbury Town Council to the Lime Down Solar Project

Malmesbury Town Council formally objects to the proposed Lime Down Solar Project and respectfully urges the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State to refuse development consent.

The Council recognises the urgent need to address climate change, strengthen energy security and expand renewable energy generation. However, support for renewable energy does not remove the requirement to ensure that developments are appropriately located, proportionate in scale and capable of being accommodated without causing unacceptable harm to communities, landscapes, heritage assets and agricultural land.

Having considered the consultation material, representations from residents and neighbouring parish councils, and evidence submitted during the Examination process, the Council concludes that the adverse impacts of this proposal significantly outweigh its claimed benefits.

The proposed development represents the industrialisation of a substantial area of open countryside surrounding Malmesbury and neighbouring villages.

The scheme extends across multiple sites and incorporates solar arrays, battery storage facilities, substations, transformers, security fencing, CCTV systems, access roads and associated infrastructure on a scale unprecedented in the immediate area.

The Council considers the development wholly out of character with the largely rural and agricultural landscape of North Wiltshire. The proposed infrastructure would transform extensive tracts of countryside from a productive and visually attractive rural environment into an industrial energy-generation complex lasting for decades.

The Council remains deeply concerned about the extent of landscape harm arising from the proposal.

The setting of Malmesbury, together with the surrounding villages, fields, public rights of way and open countryside, forms an integral part of the area's character and identity.

The Council does not accept that proposed mitigation planting can offset the scale of change that would result. Screening measures may take many years to mature and can never fully conceal a development of this magnitude. During construction, establishment and operational phases, significant adverse visual impacts would remain. The resulting loss of rural character would be substantial and ever-lasting.

Malmesbury is one of England's oldest boroughs and possesses a heritage significance that extends beyond its individual listed buildings and conservation area.

The Town's historic importance derives from its relationship with the surrounding landscape and its prominence within the wider rural setting. Development of this scale within that setting would erode the historic character of the area and diminish the experience of the landscape that contributes to the significance of heritage assets.

The Council considers that the cumulative change proposed across a wide geographic area would result in unacceptable harm to the setting of Malmesbury and nearby heritage assets.

The Council remains concerned by the large-scale and long-term loss of productive agricultural land. At a time when national food security is increasingly recognised as a strategic concern, the conversion of extensive areas of farmland to energy generation is difficult to justify.

The proposal would generate significant construction activity over an extended period.

The Council remains unconvinced that local roads and rural lanes can safely accommodate the scale of construction traffic likely to be generated by the installation of solar infrastructure, battery facilities, substations and the extensive cable route associated with the project.

Residents have repeatedly raised concerns regarding highway safety, noise, dust, disruption to daily life and impacts on local communities. The Council considers these concerns to be both legitimate and insufficiently addressed.

Throughout the consultation process, substantial concerns have been raised by residents, community groups, parish councils and local organisations.

While consultation has been undertaken, the Council does not believe that the fundamental concerns regarding location, scale and cumulative impact have been satisfactorily resolved.

Meaningful consultation must lead to meaningful change. In this case, the principal concerns remain substantially unchanged despite sustained opposition across the affected area.

The Council considers cumulative impact to be one of the most significant and potentially damaging aspects of the proposal.

The development cannot properly be assessed in isolation. The project includes not only solar arrays but a major battery energy storage facility, grid connection infrastructure, substations, access arrangements and a cable route extending approximately 22km across Wiltshire.

The Council is concerned that the Environmental Statement fails adequately to address the combined impacts arising from existing and proposed solar developments within North Wiltshire and existing and proposed battery energy storage facilities. Together with grid reinforcement projects and associated substations, construction compounds, cable routes and infrastructure upgrades and the cumulative effects on landscape character, views, public rights of way and the rural environment not to mention the combined impacts upon local roads, residential amenity and community wellbeing.

During the Examination process, concerns have already been raised by local authorities and community bodies that cumulative impacts are being considered too narrowly and that assessing infrastructure projects individually risks understating their overall effect on Wiltshire communities and landscapes. Representations submitted to the Examination have highlighted concerns regarding the cumulative effects of energy-generation projects, substations, battery facilities, cable routes, construction traffic, flooding, drainage and other enabling works across the wider area.

For residents around Malmesbury, the issue is not the isolated presence of a single solar installation. Rather, it is the progressive transformation of a large area of North Wiltshire into an interconnected energy-generation and transmission corridor.

When viewed collectively, the impacts upon landscape character, local identity, heritage setting, recreation, tourism, tranquillity and agricultural land are significantly greater than the sum of their parts.

Malmesbury's economy is intrinsically linked to its historic environment, countryside setting and visitor appeal. The cumulative industrialisation of the surrounding landscape risks undermining the qualities that attract visitors, support local businesses and contribute to residents' quality of life.

The Council is concerned that insufficient weight has been given to the economic and social value of preserving the distinctive character of the area.

When the cumulative effects are considered alongside the direct impacts of the scheme, the overall balance falls decisively against the proposal.

Malmesbury Town Council therefore objects to the Lime Down Solar Project and respectfully requests that the Examining Authority recommend, and that the Secretary of State determine, that development consent should be refused.

Councillor [REDACTED]

Deputy Mayor of Malmesbury

Chair: Planning & Environment Committee

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