

Formal Objection to the Meridian Solar Farm Proposal

As a homeowner whose property would be completely enclosed by the proposed Meridian solar development, I wish to register a strong and detailed objection to this application. The recent hearing made it abundantly clear that Meridian has not provided the level of evidence, research, or understanding required for a project of this scale. Many of their responses were vague, incomplete, or demonstrated a lack of familiarity with rural environments, local livelihoods, and the realities faced by residents who would be directly affected. For these reasons, I believe the application should be refused.

1. Misrepresentation of Rural Employment Benefits

Meridian claimed the project would generate local employment, yet offered no credible data to support this. Large solar developments rely on specialist contractors who travel from outside the area, meaning rural communities see little to no long-term benefit. Permanent jobs associated with solar farms are minimal and do not support the agricultural and small-business-based economy typical of rural villages. Their statements on economic benefit were unsubstantiated and misleading.

2. Failure to Address Impacts on Residents

The profound effect on residents—particularly those whose homes would be surrounded by industrial infrastructure—was not properly acknowledged. The psychological strain of living encircled by fencing, cameras, inverter stations, and thousands of panels was dismissed. Rural living is defined by openness, landscape connection, and peace; Meridian's proposal would replace this with an industrial environment, significantly reducing amenity, privacy, and wellbeing.

3. Noise Pollution in a Flat Landscape

Meridian's noise assessment did not reflect the acoustic reality of a flat landscape, where sound travels further and more sharply. Equipment such as inverters and transformers produces a constant hum that would be highly intrusive in a quiet rural setting, especially at night. Their modelling was generic and failed to consider local topography.

4. Unsuitable Road Network for Construction Traffic

The proposed access routes are narrow rural lanes entirely unsuited to heavy construction vehicles. Meridian did not present a credible plan for managing congestion, road safety, or damage to verges, drainage, and local infrastructure. Risks to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, and farm machinery were not adequately assessed.

5. Lack of a Clear Construction Plan

The developer failed to provide a phased or sequential construction plan. Without a detailed timeline, residents cannot understand how long they will face noise, dust, traffic, and disruption. The absence of detail suggests poor planning and disregard for community welfare.

6. Loss of Productive Agricultural Land

The land earmarked for development is productive farmland. Meridian did not justify why high-quality agricultural land should be converted to industrial use, especially at a time when food security is increasingly important. Their land-quality assessment was superficial and did not reflect actual agricultural output.

7. Disorganised Construction Strategy

The construction approach presented was fragmented and lacked coherence. Large infrastructure projects require careful staging to avoid environmental damage and safety risks. Meridian's presentation raised concerns about competence and the likelihood of avoidable errors and delays.

8. Inappropriate Siting in a Flat Landscape

The flatness of the area means the visual impact would be severe, with no natural screening. Residents would face uninterrupted views of industrial infrastructure in every direction. Meridian did not propose adequate mitigation or acknowledge the sensitivity of this landscape.

9. Risks to Local Waterways and Fisheries

Potential impacts on local watercourses, fish populations, and fishing activities were not properly investigated. Soil disturbance, altered drainage, and construction runoff can have serious ecological consequences. Meridian provided no detailed hydrological or ecological studies.

10. Unrealistic Claims About Land Restoration

Meridian's assurances that the land could be easily returned to agriculture after decades of industrial use were vague and unconvincing. Solar farms often leave behind compacted soil, damaged drainage, and altered ecosystems. No credible restoration plan or evidence from comparable sites was provided.

11. Flood Risk in Zone 3

The site lies largely within Flood Risk Zone 3. Meridian did not justify placing major infrastructure in an area known for significant flooding. Solar installations can worsen flood behaviour by altering water flow and increasing runoff. Their assessment did not address cumulative impacts.

12. Cumulative Impact of Multiple Local Projects

This proposal cannot be considered in isolation. The area is already under pressure from other infrastructure developments. Meridian did not provide a meaningful cumulative impact assessment, despite the significant combined burden on residents and the landscape.

13. Conflict with National Grid Infrastructure

National Grid has stated that the proposed development would interfere with their own infrastructure plans. Meridian did not adequately address this conflict. A project that disrupts national energy infrastructure should not proceed without clear resolution.

14. Carbon Cost of Imported Materials

Meridian failed to acknowledge the carbon footprint associated with importing solar panels and equipment. Manufacturing and shipping these materials carries a substantial environmental cost, making their environmental claims incomplete.

15. Absence of a Confirmed Grid Connection

The most fundamental flaw is that no grid connection is available for this project. Meridian provided no credible timeline or explanation for securing one. Approving a project with no confirmed connection point would be premature and irresponsible.

16. Impact of Pylons and Infrastructure on Bird Life

The proposal includes pylons and overhead infrastructure that would significantly disrupt local bird movement, flight paths, and habitat use. In flat landscapes, birds rely on unobstructed airspace for feeding, nesting, and seasonal movement. Pylons create collision risks, alter flight behaviour, and fragment habitat connectivity. Meridian did not provide any meaningful assessment of how these structures would affect local bird species or the wider ecological network. This omission is serious and demonstrates a lack of ecological consideration.

Conclusion

Given the extensive shortcomings in Meridian's research, planning, and justification—and considering the severe impacts on residents, landscape, ecology, infrastructure, and agricultural land—I strongly urge the planning authority to refuse this application. Meridian has not demonstrated that the benefits outweigh the harms, nor have they shown respect for the rural community they intend to disrupt.