

By email to:

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Date: 22 September 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Act 2008 – Section 89 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rule 8 and 9, 10 and 17.

Application by Meridian Solar Farm Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Meridian Solar Farm.

Following the Planning Inspectorates Rule 8 letter dated 15 September 2026 the County Council submits its Written Representation (WR) in respect of this application. The Council provided initial comments in relation to this application in its Relevant Representation (RR) response earlier this year and full details on the impacts of the development in our Local Impact Report (LIR) submitted 22 September 2026 at deadline 1.

This Written Representation provides the Council's updated position following consideration of the application by the Council's Planning and Regulation Committee on 07 September 2026.

The WR has been prepared having regard to MHCLG examination stage guidance and should be read in conjunction with the Council's LIR submitted by the Council at deadline 1. The LIR was brought to the Council's September Planning and Regulation Committee when it was resolved to approve the document for submission to the Examining Authority. Based on the findings of the Local Impact Report, the Council resolved to submit a **formal objection** to the application on the following grounds.

The Meridian Solar Farm aims to contribute to renewable energy generation, with a capacity of 750MW. This aligns with the objectives of the National Policy Statements (NPS) and key government commitments. Positive impacts in terms of the potential to deliver significant BNG through the creation of mitigation and enhancements and some enhancement to the Public Rights of Way network are proposed as part of the development. There are also some limited socio-economic benefits, the potential creation of employment opportunities and increased spend on local services during the construction phase, however these would be time-limited and therefore need to be

balanced against any negative impacts identified. These positive impacts are not considered to be outweighed by the negative, some significant, impacts that arise given the overall size and scale of the development, both on its own and in combination with the other large scale energy development and NSIP scale solar projects proposed in this geographical area, as follows:

Landscape Character: A significant negative impact upon the landscape character and visually both individually and cumulatively with other projects, which results in the conclusion that the scheme would be contrary to SELLP Policy 3 (Design of New Development) and Policy 31 (Climate Change, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy). By reason of its mass and scale, the development will lead to significant adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity at all main phases of the scheme. The development has the potential to transform the local landscape by altering its character on a large-scale across an extensive area. This landscape change also has the potential to affect a wider landscape character, at a regional scale, by replacing large areas of agricultural or rural land with solar arrays, substations, pylons and overhead lines, affecting the current openness, tranquility and agricultural character that are identified as defining characteristics of the area. The Council also judge that this is a long-term project in regards to landscape and visual matters, spanning generations.

Public Rights of Way – A negative impact has been identified regarding PRoW. Further information is sought regarding powers contained in the DCO. There is a current lack of clarity regarding PRoW closures and management measures. Enhancement proposed could be further strengthened and it is not considered to outweigh the negative impacts incurred. It is considered that the proposals do not contain sufficient information regarding the management and protection of the existing PRoW contrary to SELLP Policy 33 (Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network).

Heritage - The development would result in adverse impacts on the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets. The significance and special interest of the identified assets would be eroded by the change in landscape character arising from the solar farm and associated infrastructure. The Applicant's assessment underestimates the scale of harm to several designated and non-designated receptors, particularly where the contribution of setting and group value has been overlooked. Based on the information submitted at this stage the proposal would result in harm to built heritage assets that has not been convincingly justified and further assessment and mitigation will be required to demonstrate compliance with planning policies. The potential for slight adverse impacts on archaeology has also been identified. As such it is considered the proposed development would have a negative impact on heritage assets and would be contrary to SELLP Policy 29 (The Historic Environment).

Soils, Agriculture and Land Use - The development would result in adverse impacts on BMV land by taking a significant area of agricultural land out of production for 40 years. There are significant concerns over the validity of the ALC survey undertaken, the results from which run contrary to, and are not supported by, existing published literature. In combination with other solar developments already permitted and potentially in the pipeline for Lincolnshire, the cumulative effects of agricultural land being taken out of production are proportionately significantly higher than other parts of the country. The ES fails to take account of the economic and other benefits of BMV land, as required by policy, nor any socio-economic impacts. The development is therefore considered to be non-compliant with SELLP policies 3 (Design of New Development), 30 (Pollution) and 31 (Climate

Change and Renewable and Low carbon Energy), and Policies DM11 (Soils) and DM12 (Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land) of the LMWLP.

Socio-economic - The potential for several negative socio-economic impacts have been identified. These include significant pressure on local services, particularly accommodation, due to the temporary construction workforce, with cumulative impacts acknowledged as major. The ES does not assess the economic impact of reduced agricultural output, nor the broader effects on the food supply chain. The combined socio-economic effects of this and other NSIPs are considered substantial and insufficiently analysed or mitigated within the application.

Public Health - The application does not adequately address the potential impacts of the development on public health, particularly mental health, contrary to SELLP Policy 32 relating to Health and Wellbeing. In addition, further measures to mitigate against negative impacts must be considered to ensure community gain across a range of areas.

Waste - Additional information is needed to demonstrate how waste arising from solar infrastructure would be sustainably managed. Currently there are no facilities to process and recycle solar panels and associated equipment. When combined with the other solar projects in the County that have either had DCO granted or that may be granted in the near future, this would present a significant issue as additional facilities would be required to ensure these products are sustainably disposed. As such it is considered to be contrary to LMWLP policy W1 (Future Requirements for New Waste Facilities).

Cumulative Impacts - The nature and scale of current and emerging proposals relating to large scale solar developments and other NSIP scale developments in Lincolnshire is significant. At the time of writing this report 9 NSIP scale solar schemes have been granted a DCO in Lincolnshire and a further 3 schemes (including Meridian) are either progressing through examination or are at pre-application stage. In addition, the County is host to a further 11 NSIP proposals including five National Grid Great Grid Upgrade proposals and a new Lincolnshire reservoir. Other new NSIP proposals are currently emerging and these figures are expected to increase. The cumulative effects of Meridian Solar Farm, in combination with other major infrastructure development identified could be considerable, including impacts upon; landscape character and visual amenity, ecology, heritage, waste management (from construction, operational and decommissioning activities), socio-economic factors, traffic, the loss of BMV agricultural land, and cumulative amenity impacts on local communities that may arise from successive and prolonged construction periods, not solely from construction activities that overlap in time. As such the potential cumulative effects of the development are considered contrary to SELLP Policy 31 (Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy).

Traffic and Transport – Further information and supporting justification are required in order to fully understand and assess the traffic and transport impacts of the Meridian scheme. In the absence of such information the development is not currently considered to accord with SELLP Policy 31 (Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) and Policy 33 (Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network).

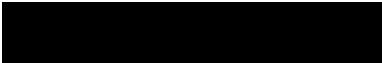
Water Resources and Flood Risk – From a policy perspective there are concerns over whether the strategic site selection process and application of the sequential and exceptions tests have been undertaken in a robust manner and whether consideration of alternative, smaller land parcels may

have led to a development proposal occupying less land sited in areas of high flood risk. Pending further information and clarification from the Applicant on this latter point, the development is currently considered to be contrary to development plan policies 2 (Development Management), 3 (Design of New Development), 4 (Approach to Flood Risk) and 31 (Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) of the SELLP.

Ecology – Notwithstanding the positive impacts arising from BNG delivery, it is considered that the development would have a minor, temporary, negative impact on ecological sites, species and habitats during the construction phase contrary to SELLP Policy 28 (the natural environment).

In conclusion, whilst the Council currently objects to the proposed development on a number of grounds, the Council will continue to engage with the applicant and Examining Authority throughout the examination period in an attempt to resolve as many of these concerns as possible by the close of examination.

Yours faithfully,


On Behalf of


Head of Planning