My name is Jane Thompson, and I am a resident of Fleet Parish.

From the outset, Meridian appears to have approached this project on the assumption that this development will proceed, and that their objective is simply to satisfy the requirements necessary to obtain the DCO.

One of the principal justifications given for selecting this location is its proximity to a substation and the availability of four willing land owners. However, the proposed connection is dependent upon infrastructure that does not currently exist.

I also struggle to understand how the willingness of four landowners can provide a sufficient or morally justifiable reason to impose such significant and long lasting disruption on a population of more than 10,000 people.

People chose to live in rural communities because of the qualities those communities provide, open countryside, agricultural landscapes, tranquility, wildlife and a connection to the land. Living alongside what will effectively become an extensive industrial energy development is not something most residents would reasonably expect or choose.

The scale of this proposal therefore matters enormously. This is not simply the installation of a few pieces of infrastructure. It represents a fundamental change to the character of the countryside and to the environment in which thousands of people live.

I also ask the inspector to consider the wider purpose and ownership of developments of this kind. Why should productive agricultural land and open countryside be sacrificed primarily to generate financial returns for global investors?

Foreign investment in energy infrastructure does not, in itself guarantee energy security for local communities or for the UK. We should ask whether this development genuinely strengthens our long term energy resilience, or whether it is primarily structured around commercial return.

There are also important environmental and ethical questions surrounding the manufacture of so-called green energy infrastructure. If components are manufactured overseas using energy generated from fossil fuels, transported vast distances and produced under environmental and labour standards that may differ significantly from those expected in the UK, then the environmental credentials of the development deserves proper scrutiny.

It seems contradictory to describe a development as clean and green without fully accounting for the environmental cost of manufacturing , transporting, installing and ultimately disposing of the infrastructure. The environmental cost should be considered in full.

I respectfully ask the Inspector not to reduce this decision to a question of whether Meridian can tick all the necessary boxes to obtain consent.

The real question is whether this development is genuinely in the public interest and whether that public interest outweighs the considerable, long-lasting and potentially irreversible costs being imposed upon these rural communities, agricultural land and the environment.

Please consider not only the proposal in front of you today, but the consequences of that decision for the people who live here - and for the countryside - for decades and generations to come.

The above forms my statement made to the Inspector on the Open Floor Hearing on the 8th September.

With regard to investment companies owning our utilities it has not been very successful so far. Take the water companies, private companies, who have consistently failed to deliver clean water, and improved infrastructure. Instead they have paid large bonuses and dividends, to shareholders mis managing the infrastructure and subsequently they are on the verge of being rescued by the government.

I was somewhat dismayed to hear during the preliminary meeting, that Meridian have put forward such incomplete plans, and so many interested parties have extremely concerns.

The DCO is of immense value to our community, and the prospect of it being issued to Meridian is deeply concerning. Their apparent lack of professionalism, complacent approach and repeated failure to demonstrate proper regard for the community, landscapes and planning regulations are simply unacceptable.

Solar Energy is old technology and electrical pylon systems are even older and one has to wonder as we are way behind the rest of the world, why we are not looking at what the more successful countries are doing.

We need an energy policy that is well thought through and not just what suits private companies.

Two points I picked up in the meeting where the, Rochdale & Holford Rules. I've looked at this as it is something I know nothing about.

With regard to Meridian requiring deviation in the Rochdale, all this would do is give them further ability to do as they see fit with no accountability, under the disguise of flexibility, is a huge concern. Giving free reign to the money men over such valuable natural resources.

Regarding Meridians reference to the Holford Rules, these rules where set out in 1959, they are nearly 70 years old. I'd like to think, with technology, engineering and advancement of new materials and processes we could do better. After all we wouldn't purchase a car spec'd in 1959 today.

Why the rush, why not wait until NESO have completed their Strategic Spatial Energy Plan.

A decision of this significance must be approached with utmost care, transparency and respect for us, the people who live here and value the area. We deserve nothing less.

Deadline 1

22nd September 2026
J Thompson