Submission ID: S60EFA12A

Summary of Updated Objection to the Meridian Solar Development
Carlton Lane – Registration identifier - [redacted]
I maintain my objection to the Meridian Solar Development. Nothing material has changed since my original submission and none of my principal concerns have been resolved. Please see the full updated objection with photo of entrance.
I support the transition to renewable energy, but I strongly object to the scale and location of this development, particularly its use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land in an area of national importance for food production. I remain concerned that insufficient justification has been provided for using highly productive farmland rather than brownfield, previously developed or lower-quality agricultural land.
I am also concerned about the cumulative impact of Meridian Solar alongside National Grid and other associated energy infrastructure. These developments cannot reasonably be considered in isolation when local residents will experience their combined effects on the landscape, roads, agricultural production, residential amenity and rural character.
Of greatest concern is the disproportionate impact on my own home and business. The proposals include an access road passing through our secure, operational haulage yard and within approximately one metre of our bungalow, including alongside the bedroom wall. This would significantly affect our privacy, security and ability to operate the business.
Since my original objection, a representative has visited our property and seen the circumstances first-hand. During that visit, the representative appeared to largely acknowledge our concerns and recognise that, given the exceptionally close proximity to both our home and business, the proposals would be excessively intrusive. Despite this, we have received no subsequent substantive verbal or written response and no alternative solution has been proposed.
The continuing uncertainty is now having a significant personal impact. I have spent my entire working life building this business, with my home and business occupying the same property. I have reached a stage where I should be able to consider retirement, but I do not believe either the property or business can realistically be sold while proposals of this nature remain unresolved.
I therefore feel trapped: unable to retire, unable realistically to sell the home or business I have spent my working life building, and facing continuing uncertainty over my home, livelihood and financial security. The resulting impact on my mental health and wellbeing is becoming overwhelming.
This is not simply the ordinary inconvenience associated with infrastructure development. It represents an exceptional and disproportionate burden on one home, one operational business and one family.
I therefore maintain my objection and respectfully request that the application be refused. At an absolute minimum, the arrangements affecting our property should be fundamentally reconsidered so that construction and operational access do not pass through our business premises or immediately adjacent to our home.

Updated Objection to the Meridian Solar Development

Carlton Lane – Registration identifier - [redacted]

I am resubmitting my objection to the Meridian Solar Development because, despite some further engagement with the Applicant since my original submission, nothing material has changed and none of my principal concerns have been resolved.

I recognise the importance of addressing climate change and supporting the transition to renewable energy. However, I continue to strongly object to the Meridian Solar proposal because of its scale, its location on some of England's highest quality agricultural land, its significant impact on the local community, and, in particular, the severe and disproportionate effect it would have on my home, my business and my family.

Taken as a whole, the proposal represents the industrialisation of a productive rural landscape for little local benefit.

My objection remains based on the following principal grounds:

- The unnecessary loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land and the resulting impact on food security.
- The adverse impact on the local community, landscape and infrastructure, including the cumulative effects of associated energy developments.
- The severe and disproportionate impact on my home, business and property rights.
- The increasing personal and mental health impact of the prolonged uncertainty surrounding proposals which threaten both my home and the business I have spent my working life building.

1. Loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

My principal objection remains the proposed development of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.

South Holland contains some of the highest quality agricultural land in England and is nationally recognised for its importance to food production. Agriculture is fundamental to both the local economy and the UK's food supply. The loss of this land for a large-scale solar development is therefore contrary to the long-term public interest.

National planning policy is clear. Paragraph 5.11.34 of National Policy Statement EN-1 requires the Secretary of State to ensure that applicants do not site schemes on BMV land without adequate justification and, where BMV land is proposed, to give significant weight to the economic and other benefits of that land.

This position has been reinforced by statements from the Minister of State for Energy that, wherever possible, solar developments should utilise brownfield, industrial, contaminated or previously developed land and that, where agricultural land is required, lower-quality land should be preferred to higher-quality land.

The Applicant has repeatedly argued that the high proportion of BMV land within South Holland makes its use unavoidable. I do not consider this to be a convincing justification. Meridian Solar

is promoted by a major national and international renewable energy company capable of considering alternative locations. The existence of extensive BMV land within one district does not, in itself, justify concentrating development on that land when alternative locations may be available.

The importance of agriculture within South Holland should also not be underestimated. The district sits at the heart of the UK's agri-food industry, with approximately 35% of the UK's food passing through South Holland during production or distribution. The consequences of removing productive agricultural land therefore extend beyond the immediate locality.

The United Kingdom is currently less than 50% self-sufficient in food production. Even if the proportion of agricultural land lost nationally appears relatively small, I do not believe there is justification for sacrificing some of the country's most productive farmland where lower-grade land, brownfield sites and rooftop solar installations could provide alternatives.

The proposal conflicts with paragraph 5.11.34 of National Policy Statement EN-1. In my view, the Applicant has not demonstrated that reasonable alternatives have been adequately examined.

National policy establishes a preference for previously developed land, brownfield land and lower-quality agricultural land. The application does not adequately demonstrate why these alternatives have been discounted, nor why a solar development of this scale must be located on some of the country's most productive agricultural land.

Commercial convenience is not the same as planning necessity.

For these reasons, I believe the development should either be relocated to poorer-quality land or substantially reduced in scale.

2. Impact on the Local Community and Rural Environment

The proposal would fundamentally alter the character of this quiet rural area.

The construction period, expected to last approximately four years, would impose prolonged disruption through increased traffic, noise, dust and general disturbance. These impacts would then be followed by approximately forty years of industrial-scale infrastructure occupying what is currently productive agricultural land.

The cumulative effect would be the gradual industrialisation of the countryside, permanently changing the landscape and reducing the amenity enjoyed by local residents.

Rural communities should not be expected to bear a disproportionate share of the environmental and social impacts of nationally significant infrastructure which primarily serves wider regional or national electricity demand.

Local road infrastructure is already limited and unsuitable for development of this scale, and the proposal would place further pressure on existing transport networks.

3. Failure to Properly Assess Cumulative Effects

One of my greatest concerns remains that this proposal is being considered largely in isolation.

The Examining Authority should give considerable weight to the cumulative impact of Meridian Solar together with the other major energy infrastructure proposed for this area.

The Applicant's Environmental Statement largely considers the effects of the Meridian Solar Project in isolation. Local residents, however, will not experience these projects in isolation. We will experience the combined effects of multiple energy developments, including National Grid infrastructure and associated transmission works.

Assessing each project individually risks materially underestimating the true effects on landscape, agricultural production, transport infrastructure, residential amenity and rural character.

The cumulative impact is substantially greater than the sum of the individual developments.

The submission of multiple related projects through separate planning processes makes it difficult to appreciate the overall impact being imposed on South Holland and its residents. I believe this cumulative impact should be given significant weight.

4. Impact on My Home and Business

This remains the most immediate and personally significant aspect of my objection. Please see the picture below.

The proposal would have a severe and disproportionate impact on my property. The developer proposes to construct and operate an access road within approximately one metre of my bungalow, including alongside the bedroom wall, and through our haulage yard.

The yard forms part of our licensed haulage operation. Although vehicle movements are relatively limited during the day, it provides secure parking for HGVs and trailers operating under our Operator's Licence.

Following repeated thefts, including fuel theft, the site has been secured with gates and CCTV. The proposed access arrangements would require the developer to pass through our secure business premises and residential property, fundamentally compromising the security and privacy of both.

Since my original submission, a representative of the project has now visited our property and seen the situation first-hand.

I welcomed this visit because it provided an opportunity for the Applicant's representative to see what cannot adequately be understood from plans and drawings: the extremely close relationship between the proposed infrastructure, our home and our operational business.

During the visit, the representative appeared to largely acknowledge and agree with our concerns that, given the proximity of the proposed works and infrastructure to both our home and business, the impact would be excessively intrusive.

I had hoped that this recognition would result in meaningful engagement over an alternative arrangement or, at the very least, a substantive response explaining how our concerns could be addressed.

Unfortunately, since that visit we have received no further meaningful verbal or written response. We therefore remain in essentially the same position as before, except that the Applicant has now had the opportunity to see the circumstances for itself.

This is particularly frustrating because our concerns are not theoretical. This is our home and an operational haulage business. The proposed access does not simply pass through a field some

distance from a residential property; it would pass through the secure area in which we live and work and within approximately one metre of our home.

Discussions with our insurers have also indicated that, following a previous subsidence claim, allowing this level of construction and operational activity immediately adjacent to the property could prejudice future insurance claims by materially changing the surrounding conditions.

In addition, the proposed National Grid infrastructure would already leave our property surrounded by pylons. The addition of further infrastructure associated with Meridian Solar would impose an unreasonable and wholly disproportionate burden on our home and business.

5. Personal Impact and the Future of My Home and Business

I also feel it is important to explain the personal impact that this prolonged uncertainty is now having on me.

I have spent my entire working life building and operating this business. My home and business are intrinsically linked; they occupy the same property and together represent the result of a lifetime's work.

At the stage of life when I should reasonably be able to consider retirement, I now find myself in a position where I do not believe I can realistically sell either the business or the property while these proposals remain unresolved.

Who would reasonably purchase a home with a proposed construction and operational access road running within approximately one metre of the bedroom wall and through the associated business premises? Equally, the uncertainty and proposed interference with the haulage yard inevitably affects the marketability of the business itself.

The practical consequence is that I feel trapped.

I cannot simply relocate my home without addressing the business, and I cannot simply sell the business without addressing the property from which it operates. Nor can I sensibly market either while such substantial infrastructure proposals hang over them.

I have worked throughout my life with the reasonable expectation that, when the time came, I would be able to retire and realise the value of what I had spent decades building. At present, I cannot see how I can do that.

The impact of this uncertainty on my mental health and wellbeing is becoming overwhelming. This is no longer simply an objection to a planning proposal on land nearby. It is an ongoing uncertainty over my home, my livelihood, my financial security and my ability to retire.

The fact that a representative has now visited the site and appeared to recognise the particularly intrusive nature of the proposals, but that we have subsequently received no substantive response or proposed solution, has added considerably to that distress.

I do not make this point lightly. Major infrastructure inevitably causes some inconvenience to those living nearby, and I accept that this cannot always be avoided. However, what is proposed here goes far beyond ordinary inconvenience. The burden being placed on one individual property, which is simultaneously our family home and our business premises, is extraordinary.

I ask the Examining Authority to consider not merely lines on a plan, but the actual effect of those lines on the people who live and work within them.

Conclusion

Nothing material has changed since my original objection and my concerns therefore remain.

If anything, the subsequent site visit has reinforced them. The Applicant has now had the opportunity to see first-hand just how close the proposed infrastructure would be to our home and how significantly it would interfere with our business. The representative appeared to recognise the intrusive nature of what is proposed, yet we have received no subsequent substantive verbal or written response and no solution has been put forward.

I continue to support the transition to renewable energy, but that does not mean that every development, in every location and at any cost to the people affected, should be regarded as acceptable.

This scheme would unnecessarily remove some of England's highest quality agricultural land from food production, conflict with national policy favouring lower-quality land, industrialise a productive rural landscape and contribute to severe cumulative impacts on the local community.

For my family, however, the consequences are even more direct. The proposals threaten the security and operation of our business, the peaceful enjoyment and potentially the value and marketability of our home, and my ability to retire after a lifetime spent building the business.

The continuing uncertainty is also now having a serious and increasing effect on my mental health and wellbeing.

I do not believe that such a severe and disproportionate impact on one home, one business and one family has been adequately justified or addressed.

I therefore respectfully maintain my objection and request that the application be refused. At an absolute minimum, I ask that the proposed arrangements affecting our property are fundamentally reconsidered so that neither the construction nor operational access passes through our business premises or immediately adjacent to our home.

Bedroom

Wall



Only vehicle entrance