

SUBMISSION BY THE MERIDIAN ACTION GROUP

REGISTRATION IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: [REDACTED]

MAG COMMENT ON Meridian's Connection to the National Grid National Grid vs Meridian

The statements and discussion between NG and Meridian at the Issue Specific Hearing on the 9th of September completely exposed the total lack of planning that infrastructure of this magnitude deserves, this infrastructure has deep real world impact and consequences for communities and individuals. It seems clear that these two **commercial** companies are each looking to position themselves in the best way for their own benefit.

Meridian have stated that this project is urgently required to help combat climate change, we would point out that the UK produces less than 1% of global carbon dioxide emissions, just 10% of those emissions are the result of electricity generation and solar will be able to effect a proportion of that 10%. Even solar farms of the scale proposed have a very small effect when considered holistically, we do have time to deploy solar where it should be, on domestic and commercial roofs, over car parks, in industrial and brown field sites.

We would like to draw your attention to the submission which we support by Mr Tim Henderson for the first issue specific hearing. This submission makes many valid points, specifically in this instance we would highlight his comments asking specific questions on the carbon cost of this project and how they have been calculated. These questions must be addressed and the methodology and calculations shown in a transparent and accessible way to all to give an accurate carbon payback period.

These statements and discussions also highlighted a number of significant issues raised by NGET with Meridian's application for the DCO.

The applicant only has a "Gate 1" notification from NESO, which means that as NGET stated the project has **no connection offer at any location**.

It is NGET's understanding that the NESO strategic alignment conditions for a Gate 2 offer have **not** been met by the applicant for both the BESS and solar and therefore NGET cannot proceed further. It is for the applicant to resolve these issues with NESO.

NGET's position is that the applicant's proposed grid connection is **"entirely presumptive"**

There are technical issues with the pylon line as it approaches Weston Marsh. As proposed there is insufficient clearance between the Meridian line and the proposed G to W line which would lead to operation and safety issues. NGET are not satisfied that both projects can be accommodated in this area.

The proposed G to W project is designated to be of wider importance, the presence of a further pylon line (up to 66m high) parallel to it on the approach to Weston Marsh would add considerably and unacceptably to the cumulative visual impact on the open and flat fenland landscape.

Meridian stated at the Issue Specific Hearing when asked about site selection that their starting point was the proposed Weston Marsh substation, now that we hear that it is entirely presumptive that they will have a connection to this site. As such the whole validity of the application must be considered to be in doubt as they have no grounds to make that assumption.

The above issues illustrates that Meridian are not in the required position to apply for the DCO and there is a very strong case to reject the application.

In fact they are so wide of the mark there is an argument for the application to be withdrawn now and not considered until at the minimum NESO have completed their work on the National

Strategic Plan due to report at the end of 2027 when there will be more clarity on how much and where energy is considered to be required and be used to inform infrastructure projects.

A solar farm with BESS is too impactful to proceed in a speculative manner when national strategic plans are in the process of being formulated.

Submitted on behalf of the MERIDIAN ACTION GROUP (MAG)
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Note: AI was not used in writing this submission