SUBMISSION BY THE MERIDIAN ACTION GROUP

REGISTRATION IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: [redacted]

SUBMISSION ON LOCAL IMPACT REPORT
Lincolnshire County Council

Lincolnshire County Council have produced a comprehensive and detailed Local Impact Report. MAG fully support the content of that Report. In particular we support the Council's comments on:

Land and Agriculture

MAG's view is that the particularly relevant impact issues relating to land and agriculture include:

- Meridian's lack of transparency in site selection.
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- site selection - limited in scope -for instance no assessment of suitably of land to the west. No heed given to NPS ENI regarding the minimisation the use of BMV. Meridian justify their side selection could not minimise the use of of BMV land due to the high proportion of BMV in the locality. The logical conclusion is that the proposed sites should not be used if that condition cannot be met

- flawed methodology - the methodology used to calculate the proportion of different grades of land does not use recognised methodology eg use of a different method of calculation to that found in other solar applications (Ref. Reading Agricultural Consultants APP. LCC LIR)

- This methodology of the proportion of land type which generally understates the proportion of BMV land to be required for the project

- Meridian's reliance is on use of large sites without due consideration of the use of smaller sites This is contrary to other projects with which LCC have been involved. It also limits the site selection and the consideration of alternatives.

LCC's report on this topic states that: 'The ExA will need to be satisfied that the site selection process and assessment of alternatives is robust and in line with the EIA Regulations and land use policy requirements, rather than being an exercise driven primarily by the availability of parcels of land above a certain size and willing landowners in a defined location.' MAG shares this view,

In summary, should the development go ahead, LCC believe there would be a significant loss of BMV land, with consequential negative impacts on economic and other benefits. The vast majority of the site area is currently productive, high-quality farmland, which would be removed from mainly arable farming for at least 40 years, and replaced with, at best, a lower intensity grass-based system. The loss of arable production is considered locally significant and in view of other projects in the wider district and county, potentially cumulative significant adverse effects may arise.

Not withstanding the Council's significant concerns with the survey and grading, on the basis of the ALC results submitted there has been little attempt to avoid the use of BMV land and a failure to justify any exception for its use, as well as a failure to take account of and assess the economic or other benefits of the BMV land. In conclusion, the impact of the development on BMV and soil resources is contrary to national policies NPS EN-1 and EN-3 and Local Plan policies.

The South Holland economy is rooted in the agricultural industry and the economic dimension is not restricted to farming but associated activities such as supplies, for processing, training and education, and transport. Electricity production will not benefit the local community to the current degree.

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