Submission ID: SCBAB6F9A

First of all we would like to congratulate the Planning Inspectorate for its thorough examination so far of the proposals by Meridian.
Of course, none of us are familiar with this process, so we don't know whether there should still be 63 pages of unanswered questions, taking into account the hundreds of pages so far published, the public consultations and the recent two days of face-to-face examination.
As novices it suggests to us what experience has so far taught us - that Meridian is still far wide of the mark for making a good case for this solar farm.
This process, from day one, has been an enormous and exhausting strain on those to be most affected by it. That will not be anyone from Meridian, or Downing, or the landowners, or the councils, or the other authorities, or the Planning Inspectorate, or anyone so far involved in this academic process. It WILL be the ordinary people forgotten and left behind to deal with this truly massive blot on their lives for the rest of their lives. So it's our plea that space is found in what seems to be an academic process for a little humanity.
Despite the 63 pages there is very little reference to the use of grades 1, 2 and 3, best and most versatile land. Meridian claims one thing, Lincolnshire County Council and its expert advisers say different. But there is no indication which the inspectorate believes. They cannot both be right. Are you to accept that they agree to disagree, or is it your job to believe one or the other? We'd like to know.
In the case of this application, the detailed survey carried out for the Environmental Statement identified the distribution of land grades as: 120.6ha of Grade 1 (11.3%); 92.6ha of Grade 2 (8.7%); 205.4ha of Subgrade 3a (19.2%) and 523.7ha of Subgrade 3b (49.1%) land.
This grading is significantly different to other sources of land grading:
Natural England's 2026 Predictive Agricultural Land Classification map for England shows the whole area within ALC Grades 1, 2 and 3a;
NE's strategic scale map of the East Midlands Region of England, predicting the likelihood of BMV land shows that there is a high likelihood, that is 60% or greater chance, of the land being BMV.
MAFF and the Soil Survey of England and Wales' 1:63,360 scale indicates that the land occupied by the scheme is all within Grades 1 and 2. (Source: Reading Agricultural Consultants 10906_Meridian-LIR_Agric 20 August 2026 102.)
The conclusions drawn and used in the assessment are significantly different from any previously published assessment of the quality of the land of the proposed development area and of the surrounding area, a difference which is not commented on or justified in the ES.
This method of analysis significantly understates the proportion of BMV to be found in the project land.
Most, and more, of the issues which still keep us awake at night have been covered in the 63 pages of questions, so we await honest and direct responses from Meridian, even if it is another few hundred pages of almost impenetrable documentation. Be assured, we're up for it.
To specifics:
Q1.0.4 The Planning Inspectorate draws attention to an update to the National Planning Policy Framework which, so far as new energy infrastructure on greenfield, rural and farmland is concerned is not a friend to those living in the countryside. Despite the framework easing the way for developers it still provides some protections for, specifically, "top-tier land - high quality, best and most versatile agricultural land, typically grades 1,2 and 3a" which remain protected to maintain domestic food security. Large-scale ground-mounted solar arrays are heavily steered by the planning guidance toward grade 3b, 4 or 5 agricultural land, or previously developed brownfield sites. There is some agreement that a substantial percentage of the Meridian site is BMV land.
In conjunction with Q19.0.11 which indicates that flood zone 3b is not suitable for energy infrastructure, with the developers themselves saying that not being able to develop on this land would make the project not viable, this project, by their own admission, cannot proceed.
If Meridian seeks to override NPS EN-1 it has so far failed to demonstrate how it will comply with national planning rules to manage and mitigate flood risks.
Q2.0.1 Also needs to indicate the travel route for what, potentially, will be very large vehicles delivering cable drums. Which leads to Q.18.0.10 The proposed use of Barrier Bank which is currently closed and in a state of total collapse, and Q18.0.34 Back Bank is indicated to be an HGV route. THis is typical of many of the tiny, winding roads with ditches on both sides in the area of the solar sites which are completely unsuitable for large and heavy vehicles. Back Bank, in particular, has properties right on the edge of the road.
Q9.0.7 Could this also include gaps at ground level to allow hedgehogs to roam. Hedgehogs are on the Red List and classed as vulnerable to extinction. Undisturbed farmland laid down to grass, such as a solar farm, would be an ideal habitat for hedgehogs.
Q10.0.1 It is vital, if the Greenhouse Gas Assessment is to have any credibility, that it include the carbon footprint of the sourcing of materials, manufacture, transportation and construction on site of all elements of the proposed structures.
Q13.0.2 It is similarly vital that this includes effects on human health of noise, both during construction and during operation, including noise from inverters, sub-stations and BESS. Meridian states up to 40 decibels above background noise. That equates to 16 times louder to the human ear and 10,000 times more sound energy than the background environment. Adding 40 decibels to the background is like running a vacuum cleaner, all day, every day. It transforms an open farmland environment into a highly-intrusive industrial environment, completely masking the natural sounds of the countryside. A 40 decibel increase will violate environmental noise laws. There needs to be a clearer assessment of how disruptive these noise levels will be to the nearest residential properties.
Q17.0.7 This is completely meaningless as it fails to take into account jobs lost as a result of the land not being farmed and not producing vegetables and grain and the down-the-line jobs this creates in terms of growing (fertilisers, pesticides, herbicide production and supply), produce transportation, preparation and packing, etc.
Q18.0.48 Does cumulative impact include the effect of other projects, such as Grimsby to Walpole and Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire.
Q19.0.1 Fire water - how much will be stored, how and where. If tankered in how much, how often and route to be used. There must be an assessment of the fire risk from all elements - solar array, inverters, substation and BESS and a plan for

dealing with any emergency.