MERIDIAN SOLAR FARM (EN010169)

DEADLINE 3 INTERESTED PARTY REPRESENTATION

Submitted by

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Submitted by an Interested Party pursuant to the examination of Meridian Solar Farm (EN010169). This representation is submitted in accordance with the Examination Timetable for Deadline 3, due on 27 October 2026.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Covering Statement
2. Introduction
3. Executive Summary
4. Legal and Policy Framework
5. Human Rights Considerations
6. Compulsory Acquisition
7. Funding and Financial Deliverability
8. Agricultural Land and Rural Economy
9. Traffic and Construction Impacts
10. Environmental Considerations
11. Procedural Fairness
12. Planning Balance
13. Requests to the Examining Authority
14. Reservation of Rights
15. Declaration
16. Conclusion

Meridian Solar Farm (EN010169)
Deadline 3 Interested Party Representation
Richard Langley-Stevens MBE

1. COVERING STATEMENT

1.1 This representation is submitted in my capacity as an Interested Party in the examination of the proposed Meridian Solar Farm development.

1.2 The purpose of this submission is to place before the Examining Authority my continuing concerns regarding matters which, in my respectful opinion, require careful scrutiny before any recommendation is made to the Secretary of State.

1.3 This submission is intended to assist the examination process by identifying issues which remain relevant to the assessment of the application, particularly in relation to compulsory acquisition, funding and deliverability, agricultural impacts, traffic impacts, environmental effects and the overall planning balance.

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2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Planning Act 2008 provides a framework for the examination of nationally significant infrastructure projects.

2.2 The examination process is intended to test evidence and ensure that decisions are taken on a properly informed basis.

2.3 As an Interested Party, I recognise the importance of renewable energy generation and national energy objectives.

2.4 However, the significance of a project does not remove the requirement for all statutory tests to be met.

2.5 I respectfully request that the Examining Authority continues to scrutinise the evidence supporting the application and ensures that all relevant impacts are properly considered.

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3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 This submission raises concerns regarding:

- Compulsory Acquisition.
- Funding and Deliverability.
- Agricultural Land.
- Rural Economy Impacts.
- Traffic and Construction Effects.
- Environmental Impacts.
- Procedural Fairness.
- Planning Balance.

3.2 This submission does not seek to advance unsupported assertions.

3.3 Instead, it respectfully invites the Examining Authority to continue its careful scrutiny of the evidence presented by the Applicant and to be satisfied that the evidence is sufficient to support the conclusions advanced.

3.4 The ultimate question should remain whether the statutory tests have been satisfied and whether the evidence is sufficient to support the grant of development consent.

3.5 This representation does not oppose renewable energy development in principle. Rather, it seeks to ensure that all statutory requirements have been satisfied and that the evidence before the Examining Authority is sufficient to support any recommendation ultimately made to the Secretary of State.

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4. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 This submission should be considered within the context of:

- Planning Act 2008.
- Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Applicable National Policy Statements.
- Relevant Government guidance concerning compulsory acquisition.
- Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

4.2 It is respectfully submitted that the burden remains upon the Applicant to demonstrate compliance with all applicable statutory requirements.

4.3 Compulsory acquisition powers should only be granted where a compelling case in the public interest has been demonstrated.

4.4 The Examining Authority should remain satisfied throughout the examination that the evidence supports the conclusions advanced by the Applicant.

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5. HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Compulsory acquisition powers have the potential to interfere with private rights and interests.

5.2 The Examining Authority is respectfully requested to consider:

- Article 1 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

5.3 Any interference with private property rights should be:

- Lawful.
- Necessary.

- Proportionate.
- Properly justified.

5.4 The stronger the interference with private rights, the greater the need for clear justification supported by evidence.

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6. COMPULSORY ACQUISITION

6.1 Compulsory acquisition powers represent one of the most significant powers available within the development consent regime.

6.2 Such powers should only be exercised where:

- They are necessary.
- They are proportionate.
- They are justified.
- No reasonable alternative exists.

6.3 The Examining Authority is respectfully requested to continue scrutinising:

- The extent of land sought.
- The rationale for acquisition.
- Rights sought over land.
- Temporary possession requirements.
- Impacts on affected parties.

6.4 Particular regard should be given to impacts upon:

- Landowners.
- Occupiers.
- Agricultural businesses.
- Rural enterprises.

6.5 The Interested Party respectfully submits that compulsory acquisition powers should not be recommended unless the Examining Authority is satisfied that all applicable statutory requirements have been fully demonstrated.

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7. FUNDING AND FINANCIAL DELIVERABILITY

7.1 Funding adequacy is fundamental to project delivery.

7.2 The Examining Authority is respectfully requested to continue examining:

- Funding certainty.
- Funding sufficiency.
- Delivery risk.
- Cost assumptions.
- Compensation liabilities.

7.3 Large infrastructure projects frequently encounter risks arising from:

- Inflation.
- Market volatility.
- Supply chain issues.
- Programme delays.

7.4 It is therefore respectfully submitted that the Examining Authority should remain satisfied throughout the examination that adequate, reliable and demonstrably available funding arrangements exist to support delivery of the proposed development.

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8. AGRICULTURAL LAND AND RURAL ECONOMY

8.1 Agricultural land represents a valuable and finite resource.

8.2 The Examining Authority is respectfully requested to continue considering:

- Agricultural productivity.
- Farm business impacts.
- Fragmentation of holdings.
- Long-term land management.
- Restoration proposals.

8.3 Particular attention should be given to whether impacts have been properly identified and whether mitigation measures are realistic and enforceable.

8.4 The Interested Party respectfully submits that rural economic considerations should be afforded appropriate weight within the overall planning balance.

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9. TRAFFIC AND CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

9.1 Construction activity can generate substantial temporary impacts.

9.2 The Examining Authority is respectfully requested to continue assessing:

- Traffic volumes.

- Highway capacity.
- Construction routing.
- Road safety implications.
- Construction management measures.

9.3 Monitoring and enforcement arrangements should be robust and capable of practical implementation.

9.4 Proposed mitigation measures should be assessed by reference to their demonstrated effectiveness and practical enforceability.

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10. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 Environmental considerations remain a central component of the examination.

10.2 Continued scrutiny is requested regarding:

- Biodiversity impacts.
- Landscape impacts.
- Visual impacts.
- Noise impacts.
- Drainage and flood risk.
- Water management.
- Cumulative impacts.

10.3 Environmental mitigation measures should be clearly identified, adequately secured, demonstrably deliverable, appropriately monitored and capable of effective enforcement.

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11. PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

11.1 I support a transparent and fair examination process.

11.2 Interested Parties should be able to:

- Understand the evidence relied upon.
- Review material changes.
- Comment upon significant updates.
- Participate on an informed basis.

11.3 Procedural fairness remains fundamental both to public confidence in the examination process and to the integrity of the examination itself.

12. PLANNING BALANCE

12.1 The planning balance requires consideration of both benefits and adverse effects.

12.2 The assessment should be based upon evidence.

12.3 In my view, the following matters should continue to receive weight:

- Compulsory acquisition impacts.
- Agricultural land impacts.
- Environmental effects.
- Rural economy effects.
- Construction impacts.
- Delivery risks.

12.4 Any recommendation to the Secretary of State should be informed by a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of both the benefits and adverse effects arising from the proposed development.

13. REQUESTS TO THE EXAMINING AUTHORITY

The Interested Party respectfully requests that the Examining Authority:

1. Continues detailed scrutiny of compulsory acquisition powers.
2. Continues scrutiny of funding arrangements.
3. Reviews agricultural impacts carefully.
4. Examines cumulative impacts thoroughly.
5. Reviews mitigation measures critically.
6. Tests assumptions relied upon by the Applicant.
7. Ensures all statutory requirements are demonstrably satisfied.
8. Maintains procedural fairness and transparency.
9. Gives appropriate weight to impacts upon affected parties.
10. Ensures that any recommendation is evidence-based.
11. Continues to scrutinise all evidence carefully before making any recommendation to the Secretary of State.

14. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

14.1 I reserve the right to make further written and oral representations during the remainder of the examination, including in response to:

- Future Written Questions.
- Updated Applicant submissions.
- Statements of Common Ground.
- Hearing discussions.
- Local Impact Reports.
- Further examination documentation.

14.2 Nothing in this submission should be interpreted as restricting that right.

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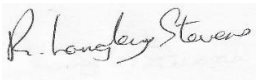
15. DECLARATION

15.1 I confirm that the information contained within this representation is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate and complete.

15.2 Where opinions are expressed, they represent my genuinely held views based upon the information presently available to me.

15.3 I respectfully request that the Examining Authority accepts this representation as part of Deadline 3 of the examination of Meridian Solar Farm (EN010169).

Signed:



Richard Langley-Stevens MBE

Date: 26 October 2026

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16. CONCLUSION

16.1 I recognise the importance of national infrastructure and renewable energy objectives.

16.2 However, where significant land use change and compulsory acquisition powers are proposed, rigorous examination remains essential.

16.3 I respectfully request that the Examining Authority continues to test all evidence carefully and ensure that all applicable statutory requirements have been met before making any recommendation to the Secretary of State.

16.4 The Interested Party respectfully requests that this representation be accepted and taken into account as part of Deadline 3 of the Examination of Meridian Solar Farm (EN010169).