

I write to object to the Green Hill Solar Farm proposal on the grounds of agricultural impact, community impact and local character. My points relate directly to matters the Inspectorate can consider during an appeal.

Agricultural land quality

The proposed site sits on productive clay arable land and grazing land used for livestock.

If this land falls within Grades 1–3a, it meets the definition of best and most versatile agricultural land.

National Planning Policy requires strong justification for using such land and states that developers should demonstrate why lower-grade land is not suitable.

The loss of this land reduces local food production capacity and removes an established agricultural resource from the area.

Impact on local character

The change from open arable and grazing land to a large solar installation would alter the rural character of the Mears Ashby area.

The scale and nature of the development would change views and the way the countryside is used by the community.

Cultural and community impact

The land in question has been the setting for the Mears Ashby family shoot for over 50 years, with the shoot itself running for more than 75 years.

This activity forms part of the community's identity and social life.

The development would end this long-standing tradition, which contributes to relationships between local families, neighbouring farms and rural businesses.

While the shoot is not a designated heritage asset, its removal has a measurable effect on the social and cultural fabric of the area, which the Inspectorate can weigh as a material consideration.

Insufficient consideration of alternatives

No adequate evidence has been presented to show that lower-grade land, or less sensitive land, has been explored.

Current planning policy expects developers to show that good agricultural land is avoided wherever possible.

In this case, the choice of site appears to prioritise developer convenience over agricultural value and community impact.

Request

I ask the Inspector to give full weight to:

the agricultural value of the land

the loss of a long-established community activity

the effect on the rural character of Mears Ashby

the lack of clear justification for selecting this site over lower-grade alternatives

For these reasons, I ask the Inspectorate to dismiss the appeal.