



TO THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE

EN010170 GREENHILL SOLAR FARM

APPLICATION BY GREEN HILL SOLAR LTD for an Order Granting Development consent for the Green Hill Solar Project pursuant to The Planning Act 2008.

To the Examining Authority (ExA)

DECEMBER 2025 WRITTEN REPRESENTATION OF

SARAH BOOL MP, Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire

I have always said that I am not anti-Renewables (as we need a diverse energy mix) however the placement and nature of the applications must be carefully considered. Any development must be carried out in a prudent and responsible way, in-line with the interests of locals, government policy and national food security. It is clear that this scheme falls short on all of these accounts and leaves some glaring open questions.

Quality of Land

The Green Hill site sits on mainly high-grade agricultural land, with 65% of it being Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV) Grades 1, 2 and 3a. This clearly contradicts National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) which outlines the avoidance of the use of BMV land. Over 850ha of BMV land will be used as part of the proposed development. The scheme is also wasteful in its use of agricultural land and uses over 40% more land than the comparable Sunnica 500MW scheme. The reasons for this remain unanswered.

Battery Energy Storage Systems

Professor Peter Dobson, Emeritus Professor of Oxford University has effectively outlined in his submissions many of my fears over the proposed Battery Energy Storage Systems in this scheme. His concerns over lithium-ion batteries and their risk of “thermal runaway” should be taken very seriously.

Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire

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The BESS proposed is very close to residents in the village of Grendon. In the event of a battery fire residents will be at risk from toxic fumes. Given the lack of details regarding the chemical composition of these specific batteries, little is known regarding the nature of the particulates in potential fumes. Prevailing winds have the potential to disperse these to large population centres such as Wellingborough.

Flooding in relation to the BESS is also worrying. The area was flooded when I visited in Autumn 2024 and is seeing more regular flood events. It's positioning next to the SSSI area is additionally alarming. The application has also failed to consider the cumulative impact of BESS in the Grendon area, with a 49.9 MW facility that went live two years ago and a further 49.9 MW BESS facility that has received planning consent. BESS totalling nearly 600 MW so close to the village setting, the Nene waterways and in a flood zone is inappropriate and disproportionate.

Community benefit

The DCO lacks any mention of community benefits - there is no good or justifiable reason for its omission. As part of the pre-application presentations by the applicant, many residents have reported to me that fund for local projects and Parish Councils was promised but it is suspicious that this is not part of the DCO. There are additional and warranted fears that if the site were sold, any community benefits would not be guaranteed.

Land Selection

This scheme is formed of 9 different and separate sites - there is no good reason for its disparate nature. EN-3 paragraph 2.10.25 calls on applicants to choose sites *"based on nearby available grid export capacity"*. The need for 31km of cabling shows that this is not the case in this application. The distant sites cannot reasonably be described as near to Grendon substation.

As outlined by Chartered Town Planner Alyn Nicholls in its submissions, this approach means that insufficient consideration has been given to ecological and biodiversity concerns, the potential for flooding, the use of BMV land and the impact of heritage assets.

Time period

EN-3 paragraph 2.10.65 says *"An upper limit of 40 years is typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time-period or for differing time-periods of operation."*

The time-period for this DCO being at 60 years is wholly unjustified. The National Policy Statement makes it clear what is typical and there does not seem to be a reason from the applicant on the reasons behind an application for 50% longer. Will the applicant explain why it is so essential and justify?

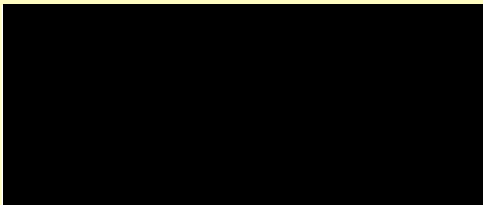
Nature of the panels

The final design of the solar panels is not defined in the DCO. Initial presentations by the applicant showed low-level panels but previous developments designed by Lanpro, who I am led to believe is the proposed designer for Green Hill Solar, have had panels as high as 4.5m. The only information available on this front is that it will comprise of either 3.5m high panels fixed east to west, or 4.5m rotating panels or a combination of both. The fact that this design is not part of the consideration given the impact it will have, avoids the necessary scrutiny of the scheme.

Deadlines

I also wish to highlight concerns over the time period, deadlines for the examination period and process. Whilst I understand that there may be reasons not to use a full 6-month examination period, it does impact the deadlines that parties have to work to. Whilst it is an improvement that Deadline 4 has been pushed back to 14th January 2026, the Christmas and the New Year period does remove a significant proportion of time from the ability to draft responses and particularly impacts local groups who are working on this alongside work and family commitments.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Bool MP
Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire