

Cogenhoe & Whiston parish Council wish to formally object to the Green Hill Solar proposal on the grounds that the proposed construction and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) access points will cause unacceptable disruption to the timetabled Village Hopper bus service that serves the villages in the area, and which we are the operator.

The Village Hopper route operates on a fixed timetable and provides a vital public transport link for residents, including elderly people, those with disabilities, and residents without access to private vehicles. Having studied the access to work plan and associated maps, it is clear that the proposed access points to the solar site and BESS compound are located on roads currently used by this service, and the volume and nature of construction traffic associated with the development would inevitably interfere with the safe and reliable operation of the bus route.

During the construction phase, frequent movements of heavy goods vehicles, construction traffic waiting to enter or exit the site, and potential temporary road narrowing or traffic management measures would create delays and safety concerns. Even minor delays can render a timetabled rural bus service unworkable, leading to missed connections, reduced reliability, or suspension of services. Once disrupted, such services are often difficult to reinstate.

In addition, the ongoing operational access required for the BESS facility introduces the risk of long-term conflict with the bus route, particularly on narrow rural roads not designed to accommodate regular large vehicle movements alongside public transport.

The planning application does not provide sufficient evidence that the Village Hopper service can be maintained without disruption, nor does it offer robust mitigation measures to guarantee continued safe and reliable operation throughout construction and operation. This failure is contrary to local and national planning policies that seek to protect sustainable transport, reduce social isolation, and safeguard access to essential services for rural communities.

For these reasons, we believe the proposal would have a harmful and disproportionate impact on an essential local transport service and should be refused unless and until the applicant can demonstrate, with certainty, that the Village Hopper route will not be disrupted.