

Introduction

We submit this representation to record our serious concerns regarding the conduct of Light Valley Solar Ltd and its representatives in relation to our interests as affected landowners.

Throughout the development process, we have sought to engage constructively, promptly and professionally with the project team. In return, we have experienced what we believe to be inadequate engagement, poor communication, a failure to properly consider our circumstances, and an unwillingness to enter into meaningful negotiations despite the potentially significant impacts of the proposals on our landholding and future development opportunities.

The cumulative effect of these shortcomings has caused considerable frustration and distress and has left us with little confidence that our legitimate concerns have been given proper consideration.

Our Particular Circumstances

At an early stage of the public consultation process, we attended the engagement event held at Hambleton Village Hall and discussed our circumstances in detail with representatives of the project team.

We explained that our land is subject to a unique set of circumstances. Prior to the emergence of the Light Valley Solar proposals, we had progressed to an advanced stage of discussions with a developer regarding the potential delivery of a village relief bypass and associated housing development involving our land.

In our view, the proposed cable routes associated with the Light Valley Solar scheme and adjacent Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) have the potential to significantly constrain, if not entirely sterilise, these development opportunities. The implications for the value and future use of our land are therefore substantial.

Given the importance of these matters, we sought guidance from the project representatives as to how our concerns should be addressed.

Advice Received from the Project Team

At the consultation event we were advised by the project representatives to:

- Submit our concerns through the official consultation feedback process.
- Appoint our own professional agent to represent our interests and negotiate on our behalf.
- Maintain records of our time and activities associated with responding to the scheme.
- Expect that reasonable costs, professional fees, disruption, and expenses arising from engagement with the project would be considered and appropriately compensated.

We acted in good faith upon this advice and took the steps recommended to us.

Failure to Respond to Consultation Feedback

Despite submitting our concerns through the consultation process, we received no meaningful response whatsoever.

Given the significant implications of the proposals for our land, we found it surprising and disappointing that concerns raised through the formal consultation process were apparently neither acknowledged nor addressed. This left us uncertain as to whether our representations had been properly considered at all.

Failure to Recognise Our Appointed Agent

As advised, we appointed a professional agent to act on our behalf.

The contact details of our appointed representative were supplied to the project team through multiple channels, including:

- Consultation feedback forms.
- Telephone discussions.
- Email correspondence on more than one occasion.

Despite this, the project team repeatedly failed to acknowledge the existence of our appointed representative and continued to engage in a manner that suggested this information had either not been recorded or had not been properly considered.

This resulted in unnecessary delay, confusion and inefficiency.

Inadequate and Unreasonable Negotiations

When the project team eventually engaged with our appointed agent, this occurred at a very late stage in the Heads of Terms process and close to a deadline imposed by the applicant.

Our agent reviewed the proposed Heads of Terms and promptly submitted what we believe were reasonable and proportionate comments together with suggested amendments.

These included concerns relating to:

- The heavily applicant-favoured nature of the proposed terms.
- Appropriate recognition of the development potential of our land.
- The need for a realistic assessment of the effect of the project on future land value.
- Amendments necessary to achieve a more balanced agreement between the parties.

Notwithstanding the delays that had arisen largely as a consequence of the applicant's own actions, there appeared to be little willingness to engage in any genuine negotiation.

Requests for further discussion were declined. Requests to extend the deadline were refused. Our position concerning development value and future planning potential was not meaningfully explored.

The overall approach appeared to be one of accepting the applicant's terms as presented or abandoning negotiations altogether. Such an approach cannot reasonably be characterised as constructive engagement or meaningful negotiation.

Consequences of the Applicant's Approach

In the absence of any genuine opportunity to negotiate acceptable terms, we were left with no reasonable alternative but to decline the Heads of Terms.

That outcome was entirely avoidable had a more collaborative and proportionate approach been adopted.

We remain of the view that our concerns regarding development potential and land value have never been properly evaluated.

Failure to Honour Commitments Regarding Professional Fees

We are advised by our appointed agent that their significant professional fees remain outstanding despite repeated requests for payment.

This is particularly concerning given the assurances provided by the project representatives during the consultation process that reasonable professional costs would be met.

The non-payment of these fees has resulted in our agent being reluctant to continue engagement with the applicant, thereby further undermining our ability to participate effectively in discussions concerning our interests.

In our view, this has placed us at a significant disadvantage.

Lack of Ongoing Communication

Since the breakdown of negotiations, we have received little or no meaningful communication from the applicant despite the project progressing significantly through the planning and approval process.

As landowners whose interests are directly affected by the proposed development, we consider this lack of engagement to be unacceptable.

Meaningful consultation should be an ongoing process rather than a one-off exercise completed for procedural purposes.

Personal Circumstances

The importance of proper representation and fair engagement has been amplified by our personal circumstances throughout this period.

The entirety of our involvement with the project has coincided with the demands, stress and uncertainty associated with traumatic personal circumstances that absorbed most of our time

The appointment of a professional agent was therefore not a matter of convenience but a necessity. We relied upon that representation to ensure our legitimate interests were protected during a particularly difficult period in our lives.

Against that background, the repeated failures in communication, recognition of our representative and engagement with our concerns have been especially distressing.

Conclusion

Taken collectively, the matters outlined above demonstrate what we consider to be a prolonged pattern of inadequate engagement and an unreasonable approach towards landowners with legitimate concerns regarding the impact of the project.

Throughout the process we have sought to cooperate with the applicant. We have responded promptly to requests, assisted with ownership enquiries, facilitated access to our land for surveys and investigations, and generally conducted ourselves in a constructive and professional manner.

We therefore respectfully request that the applicant:

1. Provides a substantive written response to the concerns raised in this representation.
2. Settles all outstanding professional fees and reasonable expenses incurred in reliance upon assurances given by the project team.
3. Re-establishes meaningful dialogue with our appointed representatives.
4. Undertakes genuine negotiations regarding the impact of the scheme on our land and its development potential.
5. Considers the potentially significant loss of value arising from the sterilisation of future development opportunities.

We believe these requests are reasonable and proportionate and would help restore confidence that the interests of affected landowners are being treated fairly and appropriately as the project progresses.