

Hambleton Parish Council – LVS – Open Hearing

Application Reference – EN0110012

Location: Escrick, Hambleton, Chapel Haddlessey, Monk Fryston and South Milford

It should be noted that all the affected Parish Councils have worked together to firstly show our solidarity for the objection to the project, but also to save the Planning Inscrutable time in these hearings without having 12 PC's speaking about the same issues and in that we all took one subject in the Issue Specific Hearing to speak upon.

These Parish Council's are:-

1. Birkin
2. Burton Salmon
3. Chapel Haddlessey
4. Escrick
5. Hambleton
6. Hillam
7. Monk Fryston
8. Skipwith
9. Thorganby
10. Thorpe Willoughby
11. West Haddlessey
12. Wistow

I am [REDACTED] Chair of Hambleton Parish Council. I spoke at the Open Hearing not only on behalf of Hambleton residents, but alongside the other 12 Parish Councils affected by this proposal. Although each parish has its own distinct concerns, we share a common concern about the cumulative effects of the scale of development proposed in our area.

Hambleton had housing developments approved recently for an additional 500 houses to be built, and our village has increased by 62% since 2021. I attend every planning meeting with NYC to object to these developments, but no-one seems to consider the area as a whole; they take each application on its own merit, and no-one seems to care about or understand the cumulative effect on our residents. All these dwellings are on farmland and now we face LVS taking more of this precious commodity.

We object to this application due to the massive impact on our village, instead of beautiful farmland we will witness a fundamental change to the rural landscape and experience a long-term change in its character for decades to come. Whilst grazing is proposed beneath the panels, we would ask the Examining Authority to consider evidence from existing large scale solar developments regarding the long-term condition and management of the land.

The scale of the project is staggering – 1,000,000 panels, 1,000 football fields, 12 villages affected, a cable route that can be 15m wide and is anticipated to be 18 miles long, as it connects 7 other panel sites to National Grid. Doesn't that sound excessive? Doesn't even saying that out loud sound ridiculous? A million Panels? In villages with very few services. Hambleton doesn't have a Post Office or an ATM. We have one village shop, a furniture store, a garage, a hairdresser and two pubs. The only other industry we have is farming. From my garden I see more aeroplanes, tractors and trains than I do cars. I tell you this because this is how rural we are. A bus every hour – that's it.

This project is 900 hectares – Selby is 980 hectares. For scale, the main built-up residential area of Hambleton is roughly 2 hectares. This proposal is 450 times larger than Hambleton village itself.

We speak to retain our village community – Hambleton is more than a collection of houses. It is a rural community with a strong sense of identity shaped by its agricultural surroundings and shared community life. We have carols on the green at Xmas, village fetes and fabulous events through the year as we come together to share village life. Our concern is that the cumulative scale of the development risks changing the character of that community in a way that cannot be easily reversed. This proposed development will remove the beauty of the rural location we have, and not for housing, a necessity for the future, but for commercial gain. Let's not kid ourselves that this is about net zero and about fossil fuels, there will be financial gain for the backers of this project. We can't get accurate figures for ANY financial gain to Hambleton residents, not even an estimation of reduction in fuel bills.

We are concerned about the disproportionate number of NSIP projects (15 in number) and 71 smaller renewable energy projects currently being considered. Hambleton PC has already been approached by another developer recently and I am sure it won't be the last. What protection can the Examining Authority give to villagers that more and more applications will not be approved as other companies seek to link into this development? We ask the Examining Authority to consider whether the cumulative assessment properly reflects the exceptional concentration of major energy infrastructure affecting this locality.

Add this project to the houses being built in Hambleton and then the housing in the wider area, 1500 homes for Eggborough, 600 for Sherburn, 500 for Thorpe Willoughby, to name a couple, and when considered alongside this proposal, you should start to understand why we feel we are not being listened to and why we fear for our village identity. We ask the Examining Authority to look at the housing figures as part of this review, compare this to other areas of the UK and ask, with this context, if the development proposals for this small part of the UK are fair, proportionate and sustainable.

The traffic through our village is excessive now, add in the building of said homes and then this project (and others) and the cumulative transport impacts become clear. We do not even have a road crossing in the village, despite many requests for this to NYC. Overlapping construction periods and onward maintenance will massively increase HGV on our rural roads. The NPPF requires that growth should be sustainable, proportionate and appropriate to the role and character of the settlement, we ask for the same respect and consideration from this Examining Authority. National Planning policy requires development to respond positively to local character and landscape.

Whilst some growth may be appropriate, the cumulative scale, pace of change and development proposed within and around the village would represent a significant and rapid change in its character. The combined effect of multiple developments would result in a rate of growth that is disproportionate to the settlement's size, infrastructure capacity and rural character. The issue is not development per se, but the cumulative pace at which development is occurring. The combination of housing allocations, speculative applications and major energy infrastructure proposals risks creating a step change in the scale and character of Hambleton that is out of proportion to its role as a rural village.

The cumulative effect of housing, solar farms that are approved and pending, should all be assessed together by the Planning Authority, because residents experience the **combined** effects rather than each project separately.

This proposal includes not only extensive solar arrays but also a Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure. We note that the Applicant has submitted an Outline Battery Safety Management Plan, but we ask the Examining Authority to ensure that robust arrangements for emergency access, operational safety and long-term management are secured before development proceeds.

Residents would like reassurance regarding the long-term water requirements associated with the operation and maintenance of the development, including any water required for panel cleaning. We ask the Examining Authority to be satisfied that any operational water demand is sustainable and will not place unnecessary pressure on local water resources.

We are very concerned that the application lacks clarification on the 'preliminary works'. Removal of vegetation, installation of access points and remediation of land will require the use of heavy plant machinery. These activities should not be treated in the same way as the main construction which are controlled by the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which will include traffic routes and operation hour restrictions

However, we wish for the planting to be done as early as possible and including this in the preliminary works would be a benefit provided it is appropriately monitored once the development commences.

To conclude – We recognise the national need for renewable energy generation and the role it has to play. However, we ask the Examining Authority to ensure that the cumulative effects of this proposal, when considered alongside the scale of existing and proposed development across this area, are given full and careful consideration.

Thank you.

Hambleton Parish Council – LVS – Issue Specific Hearing

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Landscape and Visual Effect

I am Maria Ferris, Chair of Hambleton Parish Council. I spoke at the Issue Specific Hearing on behalf of Hambleton and the other 14 affected Parish Councils regarding the Landscape and Cumulative Effects of this proposal.

I spoke at the Open Hearing about the houses already built in Hambleton, the recently approved housing developments and that our village has increased by 62% since 2021.

This project, if approved, will have a massive impact on our village, the size and scale is one of the largest projects of its kind in the UK. A million panels, an area which is twice the size of Manchester Airport or a 1000 football fields. It is almost the same size as Selby.

Whilst some growth may be appropriate, the cumulative scale, pace of change and development proposed within and around our village would represent a significant and rapid change in its character. The combined effect of multiple developments would result in a rate of change that is disproportionate to the settlement's size, infrastructure capacity and rural character.

The proposal would result in cumulative landscape and visual effects across a number of Parishes. Existing open countryside provides separation between settlements and contributes to their individual identity. Successive developments risk creating visual coalescence, eroding

that rural separation and fundamentally altering the appearance of moving through the landscape.

Hambleton is a flat, rural area where residents regularly walk, cycle and run along local roads and public rights of way. The concern is not simply the view from one particular location, but the repeated and sequential experience of development when moving through the wider area. Residents may experience one solar development after another, together with associated sub stations, battery storage, cable infrastructure and other development.

Agriculture is central to the character, economy and identity of Hambleton and neighbouring villages. Our farmers contribute to village life in many ways and the agricultural landscape shapes the identity of the area. The cumulative loss and fragmentation of agricultural land should therefore be considered alongside the wider landscape effects.

The Applicants own Environmental Statement identifies a cumulative temporary loss of 2,324 hectares of agricultural land, including 720 hectares of best and most versatile agricultural land. It concludes that the effect would be locally significant when considered at the former Selby district level.

The Applicant also identifies a number of moderate adverse and significant cumulative landscape and visual effects affecting landscape character areas, residents, road users and public rights of way users.

These findings reinforce our concern that this proposal cannot properly be considered in isolation.

We urge you to avoid 'visual coalescence' – the term for the physical or visual merging of separate developments or distinct villages. In solar planning, this occurs when successive solar farms fill the open green gaps between communities, destroying their distinct rural separation. You have this across 14 Parish Councils – **not 1 or 2** – 14. Imagine every journey out and everywhere you go, you'll encounter a field of panels on your route. That impact on residents is highly significant. We urge the Examiners to imagine this.

On Tuesday, Mr Fox was questioned by Mr Tandy on the need for two cable routes for compulsory purchase, I think these were C1a-C4a but I am happy to be corrected. When asked why two accesses were needed, Mr Fox advised that this was because if the neighbouring solar farm application was installed before the LVS one, then they would take one route, hence the request for two options. However, yesterday, upon replying to the various speakers about visual coalescence, Mr Fox told this Examining Authority that due diligence had been done throughout the project on this subject. Clearly it has not been done if the LVS project has the same access route proposed as it's neighbour. Sounds too close for comfort to me.

Add this project to the houses being built in Hambleton and the wider area. We ask the Examining Authority to look at the overall development of Hambleton and its neighbouring villages, as part of this review and ask if the cumulative scale of development proposed for this small part of the UK are proportionate and sustainable.

We also request confirmation that no replacement installations are visually more harmful. Technology will move forward and we fear that larger or noisier panels may be installed in order to maximise output. The sizes need to be clarified through the life of the site.

We are also concerned about the disproportionate number of NSIP projects (15 in number) and 71 smaller renewable energy projects currently being considered in our area. The Applicant's own cumulative assessment includes developments such as Yorkshire Green,

Helios, other solar and battery storage schemes, housing developments, employment developments and mineral workings.

Residents experience the combined effects of these developments rather than each proposal individually. We therefore ask the Examining Authority to satisfy itself that the cumulative assessment fully reflects the interaction between committed housing development, existing and proposed solar farms, battery storage, substations, grid infrastructure, mineral development and associated construction activity.

The traffic through our village is already a significant concern, add in the building of the homes already approved, those being built in neighbouring villages and then this project (and others) and you should understand our position. Overlapping or successive construction periods and onward maintenance will massively increase HGV on our rural roads. We would welcome clarification as to whether the assessment considers only directly overlapping construction periods, or whether it also captures the prolonged effect of successive construction projects on the same villages and road network.

The Applicant has used defined zones of influence and professional judgement to decide which developments should be included in the detailed cumulative assessment. We ask the Examining Authority to consider whether this approach fully captures the wider concentration of development experienced by residents, particularly where schemes may share roads, communities or the wider landscape even where they fall outside an individual technical study area.

We ask the Examining Authority to consider whether the cumulative assessment fully captures the interaction between these different forms of development, rather than assessing each category effect in isolation.

The Applicant's own assessment identifies locally significant cumulative effects on agricultural land and a number of significant cumulative landscape and visual effects. We ask the Examining Authority to examine carefully whether the assessment also fully captures the sequential effects experienced when travelling through the area, the erosion of rural separation and settlement identity, and the prolonged effects of overlapping or successive construction programmes on local communities and roads.

It also seems incredible to our combined Parish Councils that panels are allowed to be built within just 30m of homes. Especially when the distance allowed for a great crested newt or a water vole is further. The visual impact on a family when their home is surrounded by panels on 3 sides is quite unimaginable and we strongly ask for redesign to be considered in these cases. The proximity to some homes is life changing. It was disappointing to hear that 'guidance' has been followed in these calculations when really a respect for those affected people has not been considered. The inclusion of a buffer of 250m from homes would show a true respect for LVS working with the residents. A water vole or great crested newt has to be 100-250m from a panel.

Planting is not enough in our opinion; there needs to be greater emphasis on planting early so the effects on the landscape are limited for residents. It is not acceptable to be 'okay' by year 15 as the applicant stated within the Issue Specific Hearing.

LVS seemed to suggest that visual impact was limited to areas around sites 6,7 and 2. This opinion was disputed by NYC's Officer who did not accept this and we worry that NYC are unable to submit their Local Impact Report by 11.8.26 due to lack of effort, lack of staff,

whatever the reason and the local residents will have to deal with this problem despite all our efforts to show our opinion.

LVS stated that visual impact is classed a low consideration, and this point received some audible gasps in the hearing. If your house is surrounded on 3 sides, then this will have a massive effect on your family, your wellbeing and your mental health. The fact that LVS state that we will all be better protected from the view of the panels by year 15 was correctly challenged by Inspectors. They were not happy with the limited information that suggested impacts in Year 1 but all would be ok by year 15 and that LVS had not taken reasonable considerations to other developments in the area.

LVS informed landscape mitigation would largely be in the form of little 'transplant trees' that grow 1ft per annum but this did not sit comfortably with resolving glint and glare issues in the early years. The LVS suggestion that they would plant taller trees in early years to resolve is fluffy, unclear, flawed and not costed. It is also subject to perception.

Traffic/Transport:

We have a major concern on the traffic in our village and for the wider area. The A162/A63 roundabout has massive plans for improvement but these are unclear and without funding. NYC express concern that they do not have a firm plan and cannot foresee what that plan would look like in 3 years time.

According to NYC, this Phase 1 upgrade doesn't mitigate its own traffic let alone anything more recently consented. In recognising this, NYC stated they are working on a longer Phase 2 upgrade possibly include additional lanes from developments recently approved but not yet built, but even this does not resolve a total capacity problem. In short, the roundabout is currently over capacity and will remain so.

The applicant, during the hearing admitted they are still planning to use this route, but to mitigate the local effect but doing deliveries outside peak hours. This isn't something that they can control in our opinion. Sub contractors and hauliers that they employ may choose to ignore this suggestion if not fully enforced and again residents suffer this lack of control. reliant on this junction as their preferred route. They have other routes suggested but NYC don't like them. Add to this that no-one can restrict the staff that travel to these sites and we have a complete lack of control over the traffic on our roads which are already at capacity and that's before 500 houses in Hambleton are built, 600+ in Thorpe Willoughby and 600+ in Sherburn.

The route to site 4 via West Haddesley were very clear during the hearing. Roads passing a local school, where LVS claim they have no 'receptors' showed clearly that the traffic survey had not been done accurately. There is a bridge/road with a NYC restriction upon that LVS simply advised that they would ignore. This is not acceptable and a route around West Haddesley was suggested by the PC but our concern is that this will then direct traffic through Gateforth and into Hambleton which is already highly congested.

LVS continued to state, during the hearing that their surveys showed traffic levels were acceptable but local information seems to have been omitted/ignored and when objections were raised, there was very little commitment from LVS to revisit any prior survey, work with the PC's and find a solution. We maintain their surveys are not in depth enough and lack local knowledge and accuracy.

Hambleton PC was very disappointed that NYC advised that they have only just started work on their Local Impact Report with relation to traffic due to lack of staff. An extra officer has now been appointed (this week – July 29th 2026) and informed the Planning Inspectorate that

they won't be in a position to conclude their highways case in the Local Impact Report on 11th August. This is very disappointing for Parish Council teams. We are not planners and solicitors, we are volunteers who work full time and have the expectation of our residents in our minds. We entrust our local council to have such experts to protect the smaller villager from over development and bullying by these large developers.

Flood Risk

We are concerned at the matters the Inspectors raised in the hearing. They seemed unsatisfied that up to date data has been used. Again NYC did not have any spokesperson on this subject to explain their position on this.

The Inspectors had concerns over the height of surface water flooding and it was agreed that LVS's survey had not been done on surface water, just flooding. The Parish Councils would like the report to reflect all water effects on the land to ensure that the Planning Inspectorate satisfies us that the runaway referred to in the hearing does not run onto homes, businesses and roads or move that water onto another landowner and cause them any issues.

To conclude – Hambleton Parish Council is asking the Examining Authority not to consider this proposal is isolation. It is these cumulative effects, experienced by our residents as a whole rather than as individual planning applications, that are at the heart of our concerns.

Thank you.

During the preparation of this submission, I have used Google Search as a research tool, for content assistance, specifically to check UK legislation, regulations and guidance relating to Solar developments. I have used ChatGPT and a number of websites in the drafting stage, to calculate the distances between renewable energy projects and local information. I have reviewed and revised the material generated and take full responsibility for the final content.