Light Valley Solar – Written Submission, [redacted]

Oct 19, 2026 · [redacted]

Submission details

Project	Light Valley Solar (PINS ref. EN0110012)
Applicant	Light Valley Solar Limited
To	The Examining Authority
From	Paul Force, [redacted]
Interested Party ref.	F74236743
Deadline	Deadline 4 – Tuesday 10 November 2026 (including comments on the Applicant's change request of 13 October 2026)
Plans referred to	Works Plans (Change Application) (Clean), Sheet 12 of 22 (Ref. P6045_LPR_ZZ_XX_DR_Z_DCO_0071, dated 11/10/2026)

Summary of request

This submission builds on my Relevant Representation of 29 April 2026 (IP ref [redacted]), in which I objected to the scheme on grounds of residential amenity, landscape character, highway safety and the use of best and most versatile farmland. That objection stands. Without prejudice to it, if the Examining Authority is minded to recommend consent, I ask it to recommend the following changes to Site 4:

1. **Remove both northern protrusions of Site 4 and pull panels back to Maspin Moor Drain (the dyke), about 500 m from homes on Hillam Common Lane.** This means removing both the narrow Maspin Moor strip south-west of my home and the wider block that protrudes north to its east, south-east of my home. Using the dyke as a clear, natural boundary would protect my neighbours as well as me. The current 30 m minimum offset is far too small for a scheme of this scale.

2. **On wildlife grounds too, removal of panels from both northern protrusions and the north-western part of Site 4**, where the Applicant's own surveys show greylag geese are concentrated in numbers that meet Natural England's criteria for functionally linked land, and where I regularly see lapwing, skylark, barn owl and other wildlife. This land should be managed as local habitat instead.

The fields are also used by protected and priority wildlife. I hold dated video and photographs of barn owl, lapwing, brown hare and hedgehog on my land and in the proposed development fields, and the Applicant's own surveys rate Site 4 as the most diverse of all its sites for birds.

In addition, and in all cases, I ask for early, enforceable screening, wildlife-friendly fencing, noisy equipment kept as far from homes as possible, and firm limits on construction.

My property and the proposed works

[redacted] sits on the north side of Hillam Common Lane and is named on Works Plans Sheet 12. Measured from that sheet's scale bar (approximate, ±30–50 m):

Proposed works	Direction from [redacted]	Approx. distance
Solar panels, Maspin Moor field (Works No. 1, 1(d), 6)	South-west, across the lane	230 m
Solar panels either side of the cable corridor (Works No. 1)	South-east	250–300 m
Main solar array (Works No. 1)	South	450 m+
Electrical cable corridor crossing Hillam Common Lane (Works No. 5)	East	200 m
Temporary construction access at lane junction (Works No. 8A)	West	200 m

The Order Limits run along Hillam Common Lane itself. My property is surrounded by proposed works on three sides: the cable corridor to the east, construction access to the west and panels to the south.

Grounds

1. **No credible mitigation offered.** At the public consultation I asked specifically how the development would be screened from my property. No clear answer was given, and I am still not aware of any detailed landscaping proposal for the boundaries facing homes on Hillam Common Lane.
2. **Harm to open countryside and landscape character.** The scheme would introduce panels, fencing and electrical equipment into open, flat farmland, urbanising the rural setting of Hillam Common Lane.
3. **Harm to residential amenity.** The Maspin Moor field would place panels, fencing and associated infrastructure in the direct outlook from my home, in an open, flat landscape with little existing screening. The impact would last around 40 years.
4. **Disproportionate harm for little benefit.** The field is roughly 2.5 ha, a tiny fraction of the scheme's approximately 680 ha of panels. Removing it would not materially affect the 500 MW grid connection, but would substantially reduce harm to nearby homes.
5. **Poor layout.** The field is an isolated finger of panels extending north from the main array towards Hillam Common Lane. It breaks an otherwise more contained boundary and brings development closer to homes than elsewhere in this area.
6. **Consistency with the Applicant's own changes.** The Applicant has already proposed removing panels near Milford Lodge Cottage in response to residents' concerns, replacing them with grassland. The same approach should apply here.
7. **Inadequate buffer.** The 30 m minimum offset from homes is far too small for a scheme of this scale, as Hillam Parish Council has also argued. Pulling panels back to Maspin Moor Drain, about 500 m from homes on Hillam Common Lane, would give a clear, defensible boundary and would affect only the two northern protrusions of Site 4.
8. **Cumulative impact on one property.** [redacted] would be affected at the same time by the cable corridor crossing to the east, construction access to the west and panels to the south.
9. **Assessment gap.** I am not aware of a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment or photomontage that considers the view from [redacted]
10. **Harm to wildlife.** The field and its edges support barn owl (Schedule 1), lapwing and skylark (Red List), and brown hare and hedgehog (priority species), as set out in the Wildlife section below. The Applicant's main bird mitigation is about 20 km away at Site 1.

Wildlife

The fields south of my home are important for wildlife, including several species of conservation concern. This supports removing panels from the Maspin Moor field. I believe these fields form part of Solar Development Site 4.

My own observations. I have regularly seen the following, both in the proposed development fields and on my own property at [redacted]

Species	Evidence held	Where seen	How often
Barn owl	Video and photographs	My land at [redacted] and the proposed development fields	Regularly
Lapwing (Red List)	Video and/or photographs	Proposed development fields and my property	Regularly
Brown hare (priority species)	Video and/or photographs	Proposed development fields and my property	Regularly
Hedgehog (priority species)	Video and/or photographs	Proposed development fields and my property	Regularly
Skylark (Red List)	Personal sightings	Proposed development fields	Regularly
Geese	Personal sightings	Proposed development fields	Regularly
Birds of prey	Personal sightings	Proposed development fields and my property	Regularly
Bats	Personal sightings	Around my house, garden and hedgerows	Regularly
Deer	Personal sightings	Proposed development fields and my property	Regularly

The Applicant's own surveys support this. ES Chapter 12 records that Site 4 "supported the highest diversity" of any site, with nine bird species of conservation concern. Skylark (9 territories) and greylag goose bred there, and corn bunting, yellow wagtail, lapwing and yellowhammer (all Red List) probably bred there (paras 12.8.75–76, Table 12-12). Greylag geese were "particularly concentrated in the north-western extent" of Site 4, nearest my home. They exceeded the 1% threshold every month, meeting Natural England's broad criteria for functionally linked land to the Lower Derwent Valley SPA (para 12.13.51). ES Chapter 6 records water vole in a ditch in Site 4, bat activity on every survey along the adjoining woodland belt, and frequent otter use of the River Aire nearby (paras 6.7.71, 6.7.89, 6.9.185).

Gaps and concerns.

1. The main bird mitigation is a 65.7 ha Bird Mitigation Area at Site 1, near Escrick, about 20 km away. It does not replace habitat for the skylark, lapwing and other ground-nesting birds lost locally at Site 4.
2. 32 of the 45 ponds due for great crested newt surveys could not be accessed and were assumed positive (para 6.7.108). The Works Plans show [redacted] next to my home. I ask whether it was surveyed, and what the April 2026 resurveys found.
3. Hares, barn owls and bats use the field edges and hedgerows around Maspin Moor. Fencing and panels would reduce this habitat for around 40 years.

Barn owl. I hold dated video footage and photographs of barn owl on my land at [redacted] and of lapwing, brown hare and hedgehog in and around the proposed development fields. I can provide all of it to the Examining Authority on request, and selected stills are included at Appendix A. Barn owl is listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which protects it from disturbance while nesting, and the Applicant's ES identifies it as present within the Order Limits (Chapter 12). Barn owls hunt over rough grassland, field margins and ditch edges. Fencing and panels in the Maspin Moor field would reduce this hunting habitat next to my property. I ask the Applicant to confirm whether it has surveyed barn owl nest and roost sites within 1 km [redacted] and what buffers and seasonal working restrictions it will apply.

Lapwing, brown hare and hedgehog. Lapwing is a Red List ground-nesting bird that needs open fields with clear sightlines, the kind of habitat that solar panels and fencing remove. The Applicant's surveys record lapwing as probably breeding at Site 4 (para 12.8.75), and my recordings confirm it uses these fields. Brown hare and hedgehog are both priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Security fencing would cut them off from the fields unless it includes mammal gaps, and construction traffic on Hillam Common Lane adds to the risk of road deaths.

Requests. I ask the Examining Authority to:

1. Treat both northern protrusions and the north-western part of Site 4 in the same way as the land near Milford Lodge, where the Applicant has already proposed replacing panels with grassland for ground-nesting birds. This area should become local habitat for greylag geese and ground-nesting birds instead of panels.
2. Ask the Applicant for its survey results (breeding birds, great crested newt, bats, water vole, badger) for the Maspin Moor field and Maspin Pond specifically.
3. Ask the Applicant to explain how breeding skylark, lapwing and corn bunting displaced from Site 4 will be accommodated locally, not only at Site 1.
4. Require wildlife-permeable fencing (gaps for hares, badgers and hedgehogs), no lighting, and no hedgerow or vegetation clearance during the bird nesting season (March to August).

Farmland quality

The scheme takes a large amount of the best farmland, which national policy says should be avoided where possible. ES Chapter 5 confirms, from the Applicant's own field survey, that across the Solar Development Sites:

Grade	Hectares	Share
Grades 1 and 2 (excellent and very good)	179.4	20%
Subgrade 3a (good)	307.0	34%
Subgrade 3b (moderate)	401.8	45%

About 486 ha (54%) is therefore best and most versatile (BMV) land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). At Site 4 alone, 123 ha of 284 ha (43%) is BMV, including 2.8 ha of Grade 1 (Table 5-15). The Applicant itself assesses a moderate adverse effect on Grades 1 and 2 (para 5.9.11).

NPS EN-1 (para 5.11.34) and EN-3 (paras 2.10.21–23) ask applicants to prefer poorer-quality land and avoid BMV land where possible. At the public consultation event in November 2024, I was told by the Applicant's representative that its policy is not to develop on Grade 1 or 2 land, and that it had not yet checked the land grade here. The submitted scheme includes 179 ha of Grade 1 and 2 land. The arable land around Hillam is also actively farmed and relies on historic field drainage, which construction could damage.

I ask the Examining Authority to test whether the Applicant has justified using BMV land, and whether poorer land, brownfield land or land further from homes was properly considered. Removing the two northern protrusions of Site 4 and keeping panels behind Maspin Moor Drain is a simple way to reduce harm while losing little of the scheme.

Requests to the Examining Authority

1. Recommend a Requirement (and corresponding changes to the Works Plans) that no solar panels, fencing, inverters or other above-ground equipment are placed north of Maspin Moor Drain (about 500 m from homes on Hillam Common Lane). This would remove both northern protrusions of Site 4: the narrow Maspin Moor strip and the wider block to its east. That land should be reclassified as Works No. 6 (landscaping and biodiversity only) or removed from the Order Limits.
2. Independently of request 1, recommend removal of panels from both northern protrusions and the north-western part of Site 4 on wildlife grounds, and their management as local habitat for geese and ground-nesting birds. This is where greylag geese are concentrated (ES Chapter 12, para 12.13.51), and where I regularly see, and hold footage of, barn owl, lapwing, brown hare and hedgehog.

3. Ask the Applicant, through written questions, what generating capacity would be lost under requests 1 and 2. I expect it to be a very small share of the scheme.
4. Ask the Applicant to produce a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment and photomontages from [redacted] and other homes on Hillam Common Lane, in summer and winter.
5. Include [redacted] the Maspin Moor field and the north-western part of Site 4 in any accompanied site inspection. I am happy to give access to my property.

Further requests

In addition to the two changes above, and wherever panels are built in Site 4, I ask for DCO Requirements that secure:

1. **Early screening:** native hedgerow and a tree belt along every panel boundary facing homes on Hillam Common Lane, planted in the first planting season before construction, at a stated minimum height, with replacement of failed planting for the life of the scheme.
2. **Retention of screening at decommissioning**, so mature planting is not removed when the panels are.
3. **Wildlife-friendly fencing:** mammal gaps for deer, hares, badgers and hedgehogs, and no vegetation clearance during the bird nesting season (March to August).
4. **Equipment at the far end:** inverters, transformers and other noisy equipment placed as far from homes as possible, with noise limits at the nearest home.
5. **Lower panel heights** nearest to homes.
6. **No lighting, and CCTV poles positioned and angled away from homes.**
7. **No glint or glare** affecting [redacted] confirmed by an assessment that includes my property.
8. **Drainage:** no increase in surface water flooding, with Maspin Moor Drain and existing field drains protected.

Comments on the Applicant's change request

These comments respond to the Applicant's change request of 13 October 2026, accepted by the Examining Authority on 27 October 2026.

1. **Change 7 (bird habitat area at Site 6).** I welcome the removal of panels south [redacted] to create a bird habitat area. It shows that removing panels close to homes and creating habitat is practical and proportionate. I ask that the same approach is applied to both northern protrusions of Site 4, which are at least as close to homes and support greylag geese, lapwing, skylark and barn owl.

2. **Change 4 (visibility splays at Site 4 Access 1, near Roe Lane Bridge and Maspin Moor).** The extra land is sought to control vegetation and boundary features for sightlines for the life of the scheme. This could mean permanent loss or cutting back of hedgerows close to Hillam Common Lane, which are wildlife habitat and the only existing screening. I ask that hedgerow loss is kept to the minimum needed, that any loss is replaced nearby with new native hedgerow, and that no clearance takes place in the bird nesting season (March to August).
3. **Change 9 (abnormal load access over Roe Lane Drain).** New crossings of Roe Lane Drain should not increase flood risk or harm the drain as wildlife habitat. The Applicant's surveys found water vole in a ditch within Site 4. Works should follow the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Board requirements, with water vole checks before any work.
4. **Cumulative impact.** The Examining Authority has asked the Applicant to update ES Chapter 10 (Landscape and Visual) to include Hillam Solar Farm (ID67) in the cumulative assessment. I ask that this updated assessment specifically considers the combined effect on homes on Hillam Common Lane, which would be close to both schemes.

Construction

I ask that the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan and Requirements secure:

1. No HGV or construction traffic passing [redacted] on Hillam Common Lane, and no construction access to the Maspin Moor field from the lane.
2. Defined working and delivery hours, with no deliveries at weekends or on bank holidays.
3. A stated programme and duration for the cable crossing of Hillam Common Lane, with access to my property kept open throughout.
4. A pre-construction road condition survey of Hillam Common Lane, with the Applicant responsible for repairs.
5. Controls on dust, noise and vibration, a named community liaison contact and a complaints procedure.

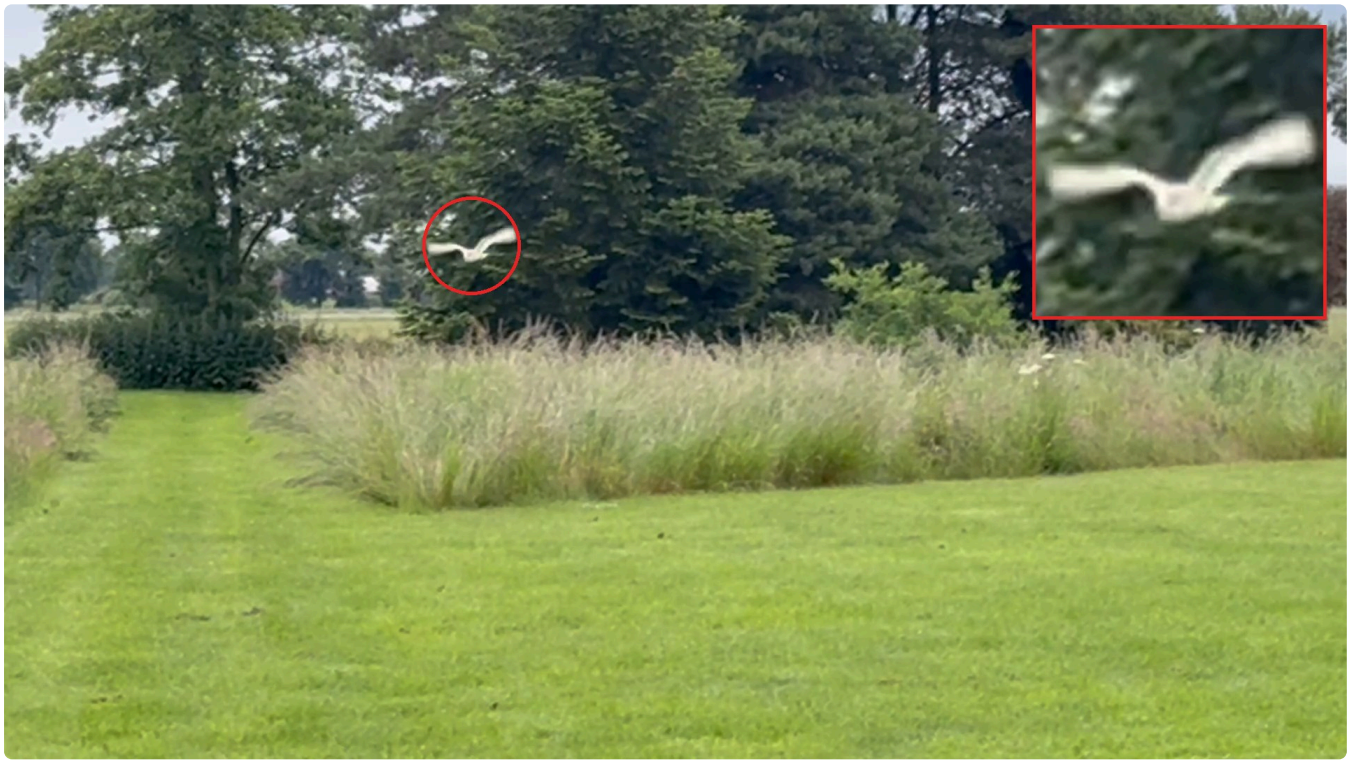
Closing

I do not oppose renewable energy in principle. However, for the reasons in my Relevant Representation, I object to this scheme, and in any event the northern protrusions of Site 4 cause avoidable harm to homes and wildlife for little benefit to the scheme. I ask the Examining Authority to accept this submission, to put these points to the Applicant, and to allow me to speak at any further hearing on landscape, visual and residential amenity.

Paul Force
IP ref: [redacted]
[redacted]

Appendix A – Wildlife evidence

Still images taken from my own videos and photographs. Dates and times are from the original files' metadata. The original files are available to the Examining Authority on request.



A1. Barn owl hunting over my land at [redacted] 11 June 2026, 20:59 (still from video; enlarged in the box).



A2. Barn owl over the fields beside [redacted] 11 June 2026, 20:59 (still from the same video; enlarged in the box).



A3. Lapwing in flight over the fields near [redacted] 3 May 2023, 09:01 (still from video; circled and enlarged).



A4. Brown hares (two) in the field next to [redacted] 24 May 2023, 09:03 (photograph).



A5. Hedgehog near [redacted] 16 July 2025, 20:42 (still from video).

Record of regular sightings. In addition to the images above, I regularly see the following on my land and in the proposed fields: barn owl, lapwing, skylark, geese, birds of prey, deer, brown hare, hedgehog and bats.

From: Paul Force
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2026 15:52
To: Light Valley Solar
Subject: Fw: EN0110012 Light Valley Solar – Deadline 4 written submission – IP ref F74236743 – Paul Force, [redacted]

Dear Case Team,

Re: Light Valley Solar (EN0110012) – Deadline 4

Please find attached my written submission for Deadline 4, as the resident of [redacted] (Interested Party reference [redacted]).

This submission follows my Relevant Representation of 29 April 2026. My objection to the scheme is maintained; the changes requested are without prejudice to that objection.

The submission asks the Examining Authority to recommend:

1. removal of both northern protrusions of Site 4, with panels pulled back to Maspin Moor Drain, about 500 m from homes on Hillam Common Lane;

2. separately, on wildlife grounds, removal of panels from both protrusions and the north-western part of Site 4; and

3. Requirements for early screening, wildlife-friendly fencing, equipment siting away from homes and construction controls.

It also includes my comments on the Applicant's change request of 13 October 2026 (Changes 4, 7 and 9, and the cumulative assessment with Hillam Solar Farm), and covers residential amenity, visual impact, wildlife, farmland quality and construction traffic.

Appendix A contains dated still images from my own footage of barn owl, lapwing, brown hare and hedgehog, each one of several sightings over 2023–2026. The original video files are available on request.

I would also be grateful if my earlier request for an accompanied site inspection, covering [redacted] and the two northern protrusions of Site 4, could remain under consideration for the hearings in the week of 11 January 2027.

Attachment: Light Valley Solar – Written Submission, [redacted] PDF, 12 pages)

Please could you confirm receipt of this submission.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Force

IP ref: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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Paul Force

Director

T: [redacted]

[redacted]

Wysiwyg

Design & Marketing Communications

[redacted]

[redacted]

(wizi:wig) what you see is what you get

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Paul Force

IP ref: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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Paul Force

Director

T: 019[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

(wizi:wig) what you see is what you get