Submission ID: S7CC5363C

Application by the Droves Solar Farm Limited (EN0110013) Deadline 5
Interested Party. [redacted] Castle Acre Parish Council, also representing some residents of South Acre.
We as communities continue to have huge concerns in respect of this DCO application for a Solar PV Site, associated Substations and Bess Storage.
We have previously expressed our objections to the approval of this development and continue to do so believing many of our concerns have not been resolved and never will be.
We would like to make some additional specific points and ask some further questions.
We refer to the Issue Specific hearings in September and the Examining Inspectors further question EXQ3 Q2.0.2
Ref: “Issue Specific Hearing 3, Item 3-1, post hearing note, Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions and Responses to Action Points at ISH2 and ISH3 [REP4-035] refers to if mitigation acceptable to the Ministry of Defence (MoD), could not be achieved within those parameters [referred to above], the [PV] panels in the affected areas would not be built. Could the applicant and DIO clarify how this restriction would be secured in the DCO?”
Question 1. What is the area, in acres and hectares, of the RAF Marham Mitigation proposed on Document 8.26 RAF Marham MAP? This now appears to impact on Fields 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 15 which is greater than originally indicated. Can you please confirm the fields which will have RAF mitigation areas?
Question 2. What percentage area of the total development does this now represent please? (15%?) Referring to the above if this area is not to be built, surely the NSIP application as a whole has to be questioned.
Ref: Q9.0.1 The applicant. Notification of Gate 1 connection offer.
“With reference to National Grid Electricity Transmission plc’s (NGET) written representation [REP1-090] paragraph 3.7, could the applicant confirm whether it has received notification from the National Energy Systems Operator (NESO) that it will receive a Gate 1 connection offer? If so, could a copy be provided with its response?”
We still cannot understand the applicants claims that this specific development is, (as stated many times) critical infrastructure when indeed no Gate 1 connection has been offered and consequently there is no confirmed site for the customers substation. This application is surely pre-mature and cannot be fully considered without this vital information.
Can we please have an update on the request by ourselves and others for further Bird Surveys to be carried out across the site specifically in relation to the Red Listed protected species, ‘Stone Curlew’. There was evidence of their presence on the site last year, expert opinion suggests there should be three to five years of survey work carried out, can we have confirmation that this will be done as survey work to date appears to be inadequate.
National policy states that the use of BMV land for solar development should be avoided. The applicants survey work has found large areas of this site are classified as BMV land, some 54%. Irrigation is also available to much of this site allowing high value specialist crops such as potatoes, carrots, onions to be successfully grown in rotation across the whole area. Surely this is further evidence that the site selection is inappropriate.
Community Benefits and Applicant engagement.
To this point the lack of meaningful engagement with local communities by the applicant is hugely disappointing. However, some progress, there is an initial meeting involving representatives from local communities and the applicant planned for next week, we shall listen with interest to what the applicant has to say. It was our desire to have some commitment from the applicant before the end of the examination process, this will now clearly not be possible.

[redacted]
Chair. Castle Acre Parish Council