

I strongly oppose this application and make the following submissions on how the examination should be conducted. The recent shifts in energy policy and political direction make rigorous examination of this proposal even more essential than before. The government under the new Prime Minister [REDACTED] has adopted a far more pragmatic stance on domestic oil and gas, and it has recognised that Britain will continue to need these fuels for years to come. Nuclear power also continues to receive strong government support through life extensions, small modular reactors, and regulatory reform. Furthermore, [REDACTED] departure from the Energy brief further signals that the previous hardline prioritisation of intermittent renewables is no longer unchallenged.

In this evolving context, the Examining Authority must not treat large-scale solar projects on agricultural land as automatically justified “nationally important infrastructure.”

The examination must prioritise the following:

1. Necessity and alternatives in light of changing national policy:

Substantial weight must be given to genuine alternatives that deliver far firmer, more reliable, and dispatchable power, such as accelerated domestic oil and gas production from existing North Sea fields and a rapid expansion of nuclear. All claims that this solar project is required for energy security must also be properly tested against the government’s own emerging recognition that oil, gas, and nuclear remain essential.

2. Agricultural land and food security:

Permanent loss of productive farmland in Norfolk must be rigorously assessed as this is greenfield agricultural land, not brownfield or previously developed land. The prioritisation of large-scale solar arrays on such farmland is also difficult to reconcile with the national interest in domestic food production, especially when more reliable domestic energy options exist that do not require industrialising the countryside.

3. Ownership and general value for money:

Full transparency is absolutely required on the corporate chain (East Pye Solar Ltd to Macquarie Asset Management funds) and the projected cost to UK billpayers through Contracts for Difference and other subsidies. Ultimately, British consumers should not be funding returns to these overseas investors for intermittent energy projects when a variety of domestic alternatives are available.

4. System costs, reliability, and grid stability:

The examination must assess intermittency, backup requirements, and whole-system costs. Recent European experiences have highlighted the genuine risks that come with over-reliance on weather-dependent generation. This must be taken into account.

5. Timetable and process:

Given the potential for large-scale irreversible harm and the shifting national energy context, the timetable must allow sufficient time for full written representations, independent evidence on the costs and all alternatives, comprehensive site inspections, and proper consideration of the cumulative impacts with other solar and battery schemes in Norfolk. This proposal seriously risks forcing the UK down a long path of expensive and intermittent energy generation at precisely the moment when our national policy is beginning to re-emphasise energy security, domestic resources, and genuine reliability. The examination must properly test whether East Pye Solar truly serves the national interest or merely continues a failed approach.

I will attend the preliminary meeting as an observer.