

I am writing to formally submit my Written Representation for Deadline 1.

My objection concerns the devastating localized impacts of the proposed East Pye Solar project, the exploitation of global crises by multinational developers, and the deeply concerning democratic deficit within the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) framework.

As a Saxlingham Nethergate resident who fully supports the transition to renewable energy—having recently invested my own capital into installing a sustainable home heat pump—my objection is not to green technology. Rather, it is to the predatory nature and unsuitable location of this specific scheme.

Large, foreign investment firms are exploiting global instability and conflict as a retroactive pretext to fast-track cheap, highly profitable ground-mounted panel installations on productive British countryside. Instead of forcing rural communities to bear the localized economic and spatial burden of these massive industrial grids, the central government should mandate that these wealthy foreign developers invest in more expensive, more suitable alternatives—such as brownfield sites, industrial rooftops, or co-location along existing major transport corridors.

LOCALIZED HARMS OF THIS PROJECT:

ERADICATION OF FAMOUS LOCAL WALKS AND PUBLIC AMENITY: The sprawling nature of this scheme will swallow up and cut off the historic public footpaths that make Saxlingham Nethergate a famous destination for walking and recreation. Important regional routes, alongside the network of paths through our open valleys, will be fundamentally ruined. Turning these treasured open-sky trails into narrow corridors hemmed in by 4.5-meter-high solar panels, security fencing, and CCTV completely obliterates vital community assets used daily for health, connection to nature, and mental well-being.

DESTRUCTION OF RURAL HERITAGE: The sheer scale of the industrial infrastructure permanently alters the historic character, landscape, and rural heritage of South Norfolk, stripping the area of its identity.

UNJUST FINANCIAL BURDEN AND PROPERTY DEVALUATION: Local residents are being forced to absorb severe, uncompensated financial risks. I have personally invested over £100,000 of my own hard-earned capital into upgrading and modernizing my home recently, including installing sustainable green technologies. The government and the developer are effectively asking individual families to shoulder massive, catastrophic equity losses for a private, commercial energy project, with absolutely zero recourse, protection, or financial compensation.

DIRECT THREAT TO THE HISTORIC CORE OF SAXLINGHAM NETHERGATE:

The historic village of Saxlingham Nethergate possesses a vanishingly rare pre-modern agricultural landscape and contains more than 40 listed structures. The developer's intention to route massive industrial construction traffic and oversized loads directly down "The Street" is a catastrophic threat to our village infrastructure and historic identity.

The Street is hopelessly inadequate to serve as an industrial "solar highway". Forcing loads up to 5.5 metres wide down a historic 4.5-metre-wide thoroughfare will result in physical and structural destruction. The developer's plans involve widening the road by tearing down the 18th-century wall at the Old Rectory—designed by the celebrated British architect [REDACTED] and structurally encroaching on the triangular parcel of land where our Grade II listed War Memorial stands.

Furthermore, our ancient medieval church and the concentrated cluster of over a dozen Grade II listed properties lining The Street will be subjected to intense, prolonged vibrations from heavy freight machinery over a two-year construction period. Bypassing these profound architectural risks and undermining years of community conservation effort is entirely unacceptable.

DISMISSAL OF LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS:

There is a deeply cynical procedural contradiction in the application files regarding public health. In their Equality Impact Assessment, the applicant explicitly concedes that "the stress and the anxiety caused by this may impact the mental health of individuals affected." Yet, despite formally admitting this localized public health liability, Island Green Power has systematically scoped it out of serious mitigation.

In their main policy compliance documents, they dismiss the long-term impact on human health as "negligible" and reduce community anxiety to a "temporary secondary friction" caused by standard planning uncertainty. Minimizing the psychological toll on rural families—who face the anxiety of watching their countryside and famous walking routes destroyed alongside the looming threat of losing £100,000 or more in home equity—is highly offensive and structurally irresponsible. The mental health strain on residents feeling entirely powerless against a corporate mandate is a direct localized harm that the Examining Authority must address.

THE OVERRULING OF EXPERT PLANNING INSPECTORATES:

The most alarming aspect of this process is the explicit threat of central government overriding its own independent experts. The Planning Inspectorate exists to provide rigorous, evidence-backed, and objective technical assessments of massive infrastructure projects. They are the true experts in evaluating local environmental, spatial, and economic impacts.

If the central government intends to simply overrule the professional findings of the Planning Inspectorate based on political pressure from corporate developers, it reduces this entire multi-month examination to a performative exercise. Bypassing expert planning judgment in favour of a centralized political mandate sets a dangerous precedent, rendering local evidence worthless and destroying public trust in the integrity of the planning system.

THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT AND ESCALATING SCAREMONGERING:

This threat to expert planning was starkly reinforced during a public meeting held with our local Member of Parliament at our village hall this week. During this meeting, the MP openly stated to residents that while politicians are not technical experts, they believe overriding the independent Planning Inspectorate is necessary because "the lights will go out soon" if these major projects face delays.

This admission points to a deeply troubling structural flaw in the NSIP process. It reveals a highly coordinated strategy where alarmist "lights will go out" scaremongering is being weaponized alongside anxieties surrounding recent global wars to justify rushing through inappropriate developments. By chaining an environmental planning issue to broader geopolitical fears, politicians and corporate developers are intentionally manipulating public anxiety to steamroll legitimate local opposition and ignore professional planning assessments.

THE MISLEADING ENERGY ALLOCATION NARRATIVE:

Furthermore, the narrative that this scheme is urgently required to keep local lights from "going out" is fundamentally misleading and structurally flawed. The East Pye Solar project is designed to connect directly into the 400kV overhead transmission line running between Norwich Main and Bramford. The engineering reality is that the electricity generated here will be exported straight out of our region to feed the high concentrated demands of London and the South East. South Norfolk is being forced to absorb 100% of the industrial blighting, environmental destruction, and financial loss, while receiving 0% of the direct energy security benefit. This is regional exploitation, not a localized emergency.

ABSENCE OF LOCAL RECOMPENSE AND OFFSHORE PROFIT EXTRACTION:

The corporate structure of this application further illustrates this exploitation. The developer, Island Green Power, is backed by the multi-national Australian investment firm, Macquarie Asset Management. This means that while South Norfolk's geographic and food-producing assets are permanently industrialized, the immense financial profits generated from our high UK energy prices will be extracted directly offshore to foreign investment funds, leaving local taxpayers with zero economic recompense and all of the structural loss.

The Prime Minister has explicitly stated that local communities will have their say on major developments. If this pledge is to have any structural meaning, the detailed evidence gathered during this local examination must not be swept aside by a singular political decision in London to appease corporate developers; a rethink will be needed and a more suitable site acquired even if it costs the developer more

I urge the Examining Authority to robustly uphold local accountability, protect our well-being, and strongly recommend the rejection of this disproportionate development.