

Interested party Reference No – [REDACTED]

My name is Sarah Shipley, and I am speaking on behalf of my family and our family farm at Hill House Farm in Woodton. My family have farmed here for many generations.

We strongly oppose the East Pye Solar proposal because of the impact it will have on our farm and our home, the wildlife and the countryside.

One of our greatest frustrations has been the complete lack of consultation over the proposed cable route through our land. (Cable route corridors CRC8 and CRC9 joining site 10 to site 7.)

We were repeatedly told that the applicant would work with us to identify the most suitable route. Yet despite our detailed knowledge of the land and sensitive environmental areas, this has not happened.

Instead, it feels as though the route has been selected to suit the applicant's requirements rather than the needs of those who own and farm the land.

The proposed cable route will carve through approximately 200 acres of our 500-acre holding, crossing productive farmland and grazing areas and effectively splitting the farm in two. What appears as a line on a plan represents a significant intrusion into a working farming business. It will affect how we move machinery, manage livestock, access fields and undertake day-to-day farming operations. For a farm that has been managed by my family for generations, the disruption and loss of flexibility will be considerable.

The proposals include cable joint bays and connection points within our fields. Although these may appear relatively small on a plan, in practice they will create permanent obstacles to modern farming operations.

I am particularly concerned about the impact on our drainage systems and soil. We have invested significant time and money improving these fields, and once damaged by the cable route there is no guarantee they can ever be fully restored.

I am also deeply concerned about the impact on wildlife.

Our farm includes Beckett's Wood, classified as a County Wildlife Site, and farm buildings where barn owls have [REDACTED]. The proposed cable route passes extremely close, within only metres, to both the woodland and the barns.

Beyond our farm, I am concerned about the impact on local roads, footpaths, bridleways and the wider countryside. These will become dominated by traffic, disruption and industrial infrastructure, which they were never designed to accommodate.

The scheme will remove over 1000 hectares of productive Best and Most Versatile farmland. Government policy, as set out in the newly published National Planning Policy Framework, recognises the importance of protecting this land and directing development towards poorer quality agricultural land wherever possible. This has never been a consideration for East Pye – their search was simply for willing landowners!

East Pye cannot be viewed in isolation. Norfolk is already being asked to accommodate multiple solar farms and associated infrastructure. While each scheme is assessed

separately, the communities affected experience them cumulatively. These cumulative impacts extend to the aggregated loss of BMV agricultural land, the impacts on the character of landscapes as well as on the environment generally.

More fundamentally, there remains no comprehensive national spatial strategy setting out where large-scale solar development should be located. In the absence of such a framework, proposals are being brought forward through a largely developer-led process, leaving individual communities to bear the impacts one application at a time. Proposals are considered in isolation without the cumulative impacts, as set out earlier, being fully considered. The Government itself has recognised this gap by commissioning the first Strategic Spatial Energy Plan, acknowledging the need for a more strategic approach to energy infrastructure planning.

Therefore, I question whether it is appropriate for major projects such as this to continue to be determined through a piecemeal, developer-led process before the outcomes of this work have been fully considered and incorporated into planning policy.

For all these reasons, we respectfully object to the East Pye Solar Development.

Thank you.