

Norfolk County Councillor Karl Catchpole (Long Stratton Division)

5/10/2026

The Planning Inspectorate
East Pye Solar Project Ref: EN0110014

Subject: Objection to the East Pye Solar Project (Island Green Power / Macquarie)

Dear Examining Authority,

I write to object strongly to the East Pye Solar proposal. I was born and spent my formative years living in the South Norfolk village of Newton Flotman until I was 21yrs old. I own land in south Norfolk and hope to move back soon for the benefit of my disabled daughter.

This is a short sighted, mindless race to ruin our beautiful countryside, so my objection is coming from a different angle to most. I sincerely hope that the decision makers can be compassionate, visionary, diligent and caring for the sake of our children's future. I'm also mindful it is a governments duty to make sure its citizens are safe and the country secure. Making us increasingly reliant on food imported from abroad contradicts this in time of war.

A desktop understanding of a living landscape

The Applicant's submissions rely far too heavily on desktop analysis of South Norfolk's land, roads and communities. Maps, aerial imagery and traffic models cannot capture how this area works day to day. Our narrow lanes, blind bends and unmarked verges are used by farm machinery, school transport, cyclists, riders and walkers. A construction programme that looks workable on screen would be very different on the ground.

The same gap applies to the people and the environment. The Applicant has not shown a real understanding of South Norfolk's rural communities, which depend on farming, tourism and the quiet character of the countryside. Nor has it shown an understanding of the habitats, hedgerows, watercourses and wildlife that make up this landscape. We have several endangered species for example the White Clawed Crayfish, Barbastelle bats and Barn Owl. Proper consideration requires time spent here, listening to residents.

The pace of the proposal

The pace at which this scheme is being pushed forward is a concern. Decisions that will change this landscape for generations are being rushed, and local people are left struggling to keep up with the volume of documents. A development of this scale and permanence deserves unhurried scrutiny, not a timetable driven by investors' returns.

The cost of a rushed transition

The drive to reach net zero at speed is, in my view, placing a growing burden on ordinary working people and families. Household energy bills have risen sharply, and many people in South Norfolk are already making difficult choices about heating and food. Policy that raises costs for those least able to bear them, while the profits of overseas investors grow, is not a fair transition.

Decisions of this scale need calm, long-term thinking from those in authority, not a race to meet targets that sacrifices communities and countryside along the way. I would urge the Government to slow down and put its effort into a more visionary, sustainable and British energy future.

A better, British alternative

This scheme is led by Island Green Power and backed by Macquarie, an overseas investment bank. The profits will leave our communities, while the harm stays here. I urge the Applicant and the Government to consider a British alternative: Rolls-Royce small modular reactors. They offer secure, low-carbon power around the clock, need a fraction of the land of solar farms, and would build UK engineering skills and jobs. Energy policy should be planned for the long term and should not sacrifice productive countryside for intermittent generation.

Protecting British jobs and British interests

I believe we have a responsibility to protect British industry and British jobs, and to be cautious about handing our countryside and energy future to overseas investors. Too often, foreign-backed developers appear to treat communities like South Norfolk as an easy target, pressing ahead with scant regard for local knowledge or local concern. British engineering firms and suppliers deserve the opportunity to lead our energy future, rather than being pushed aside by large international finance.

The Applicant's own submission supports this concern. It contains errors, including [insert specific examples, such as incorrect road descriptions, wrong place names, outdated traffic data, missed local features or inaccurate statements about land use, with document references where possible]. Mistakes of this kind suggest a lack of care and an unfamiliarity with the area that fits a pattern of working roughshod over the communities affected. People who had taken the time to understand South Norfolk would not have made them.

Our children's inheritance

South Norfolk's historic landscape is irreplaceable. Industrialising it with solar arrays, cabling and substations would damage it for decades and affect the generation now growing up here. I would ask the Secretary of State, and the Minister, Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, to look to the future and not trade away land that cannot be restored once it is lost.

For these reasons, I ask the Examining Authority (Mr Cliff) to recommend that development consent be refused.

Yours faithfully,

Karl Catchpole

Norfolk County Councillor