

North Muskham Parish Council  
c/o The Clerk to the Council  
1 Village Way  
Farndon  
Newark  
Notts NG24 4SX  
Email: northmuskhampc@hotmail.co.uk

19<sup>th</sup> September 2025

To : Planning Inspectorate

Dear Sir/Madam,

**North Muskham Parish Council (PC) – Objection to Great North Road Solar & Biodiversity Park Development**

North Muskham Parish Council (PC) welcomes the planned permissive paths in or leading to North Muskham, as well as the riparian corridors, and community orchard etc. There are however many issues still present and the PC wishes to formally register its objection to the proposed Great North Road (GNR) Solar and Biodiversity Park.

The PC objects to the design and scale of this proposal for the following reasons:-

**Severe Cumulative Impact**

1. Impacts on rural landscape character and Visual Impact
2. Construction and Maintenance Traffic and Access
3. Ongoing Site Maintenance
4. Flooding and Hydrological Impacts
5. Use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land
6. Ecology and Biodiversity
7. Adequacy of Consultation
8. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Fire Risk
9. Health and Well-Being
10. True Environmental Impact

**Severe Cumulative Impact**

1. The PC is deeply concerned about the cumulative impacts of the GNR proposal, particularly due to its excessive size and the additional solar developments in the surrounding area. The additional substantial industrialisation of the countryside, including existing utilities, transport, and mineral extraction in the Newark and Sherwood district, could create a significant overall adverse cumulative impact on the rural landscape character in this area of north Nottinghamshire and the bordering area with Lincolnshire.

2. In addition to the GNR proposal, several other solar developments are planned or proposed in the area, including:
  - a. Muskham Woods - Approved on appeal
  - b. Knapthorpe - Approved on appeal
  - c. One Earth - Examination stage
  - d. Barnby in the Willows - Application submitted
  - e. Kelham - At appeal stage
  - f. Foxholes - At appeal stage
  - g. BESS Staythorpe - Approved
  - h. BESS Additional at Staythorpe - Application submitted
3. Existing gravel extraction is being further extended closer to North Muskham, and the British Sugar factory is located just 1.5 miles away. The upcoming A46 bypass further exacerbates the industrialisation of the region.
4. The cumulative impacts of these developments are likely to have significant consequences, including:
  - a. Loss of traditional rural landscape
  - b. Increased traffic congestion during construction and ongoing disruption for residents
  - c. Degradation of the physical and psychological benefits of the countryside
  - d. Increased noise and vibration
  - e. Visual dominance and loss of tranquillity
  - f. Potential negative impact on the psychological and physical health of our rural communities
5. The current rate of solar development in Newark and Sherwood is unprecedented, and the district is at risk of being overwhelmed by these projects. The cumulative impact of multiple large-scale solar installations could result in significant environmental degradation and loss of agricultural land.
6. The PC believes it is essential for decision-makers to have a comprehensive view of all proposed projects, rather than assessing each scheme in isolation. Without coordinated oversight, the Trent Valley could be irrevocably altered. A link to a simple Youtube video prepared by the Local Joint Parishes Action Group (JPAG) that shows the cumulative affect locally can be found at the following link:

<https://youtu.be/lhzb-4a4Tg>

## **Impacts on Rural Landscape Character and Visual Impact**

7. The GNR Solar Park has an unusual circular design, which significantly increases its overall footprint. The proposed site will affect a much larger area than initially anticipated, and many residents, both within and outside this area, will experience adverse effects. The potential visual impact should be carefully reconsidered given the site's unique configuration.
8. Although screening plans have been proposed, the PC is concerned that effective screening will not be realised for several years. The PC requests that more mature trees and shrubs be incorporated into the plan, with a comprehensive maintenance strategy to ensure long-term effectiveness, well beyond the short-term timelines provided. The capacity of the local planning authority at Newark and Sherwood District Council is not capable of monitoring and enforcing this level of effective screening.

## **Traffic, Routes, and Access**

9. Construction traffic is expected to increase the flow of heavy vehicles on the A1, which runs very close to North Muskham. The A1 is a major trunk road, and its use is unavoidable, but it adds to the cumulative impact on the village.
10. After leaving the A1 or other major roads, construction vehicles will pass through North Muskham on the Great North Road and the A616 at a small mini-roundabout. The PC believes this roundabout cannot accommodate the volume of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) that will be required.
11. The PC is also aware of frequent accidents, delays, and roadworks on the A1, which significantly affect local traffic. The proposal does not adequately address contingency planning for these issues, and the PC requests that a clear, enforceable plan be developed.
12. Given local knowledge, it is likely that some HGVs will take alternative routes, either inadvertently or as a result of GPS misdirection. The PC asks that the developer provide clear guidance on how these deviations will be avoided, including enforcement measures.
13. The PC also requests that a contact number be provided for immediate resolution of traffic-related issues during construction and operation, ideally staffed by a local site office with authority to address local concerns.
14. Safety concerns regarding the level crossing at Vicarage Lane in North Muskham also need to be addressed. The PC suggests further safety measures be incorporated to prevent traffic delays or accidents caused by the frequent train crossings on the East Coast Main Line.

15. The PC requests that the GNR developer coordinate with other local developers to create a unified traffic plan, especially as several solar projects and the Newark bypass upgrade are expected to occur simultaneously.
16. To assist with enforcement, the PC requests that an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system be installed at key entry points to the North Muskham village to help monitor and deter unauthorised HGV traffic.

### **Ongoing Maintenance of the Site**

17. The proposal lacks adequate explanation regarding the ongoing traffic volumes required for site maintenance. The PC believes that the projected minimal activity for panel replacement over a 40-year period is unrealistic, and technology advances may lead to increased traffic needs.
18. The proposal includes new planting to provide screening across the site, but there are no plans for long-term maintenance. The PC requests that maintenance provisions be extended throughout the lifespan of the development.
19. The PC is concerned that the reduction in local farm traffic will result in increased fly-tipping. A detailed plan and budget for dealing with this issue should be incorporated into the project.
20. In the event of issues related to hedging, screening, or fly-tipping, the PC requests a direct line to a named individual by the developer or local office responsible for resolving these concerns.

### **Flooding and Hydrological Impacts**

21. Despite some areas being removed from the DCO submission, parts of the site remain subject to flooding risks.
22. The potential for changes in rainfall patterns and surface runoff, exacerbated by climate change, should be fully considered. The PC requests a more detailed analysis of the impact on water courses and flood risks.
23. The PC also asks that measures be implemented to guarantee that areas not previously prone to flooding do not become more vulnerable.
24. The potential impact on aquifers and groundwater in the area should be fully assessed and included in the environmental considerations.

### **Use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land**

25. Significant portions of the proposed development area are classified as BMV land, currently used for arable farming. The PC objects to the use of this high-quality agricultural land for solar energy generation, which should be avoided.
26. The PC is skeptical about the viability of sheep grazing under solar panels. Evidence suggests that this is not a sustainable or effective use of land, particularly on BMV land.
27. Given the apparent trend for substantially lower crop yield we suggest that the adequate availability of good agricultural land is increasingly essential if the country is to have sufficient self sufficiency in food production that will not entail additional CO2 liability with an increasing need to import more.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

27. The PC is concerned that the proposal lacks sufficient evidence on the ecological impacts of the development. The potential effects on wildlife, including rare species like Barn Owls, Deer, and Hen Harriers, Otter and shrew, have not been adequately considered.
28. The PC requests that further studies be conducted to assess the impact of the development on local wildlife, particularly in relation to the disruption caused by the loss of mature hedges, fencing and changes in natural migration and movement patterns.
29. The proposal should also include measures to restore and enhance local biodiversity, in line with recommendations from Natural England and the State of Natural Capital Report for England 2024.

### **Adequacy of Consultation**

30. The PC believes that the consultation process, particularly regarding the NG+ scheme, was unclear and caused confusion among local residents. The distinction between what would be included in the DCO and what might be granted voluntarily by the developer was not well communicated.

### **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Fire Risk**

31. BESS systems have a history of safety concerns, including the risk of fires and explosions. The PC requests that these risks be thoroughly assessed and addressed in the development plans.

## **Potential Negative Impact on the Psychological and Physical Health of our Rural Communities**

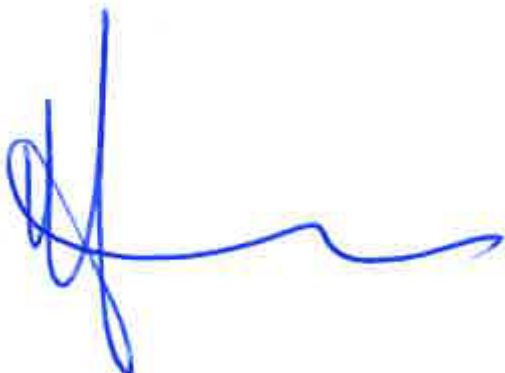
32. The PC is concerned about the long-term health effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields generated by solar panels, particularly given that the panels will remain in place for 40 years.
33. The industrialisation of the countryside could negatively impact the mental and physical health of local residents, particularly those who moved to the area to enjoy its natural beauty.
34. The PC requests that measures be implemented to monitor and address any health and well-being issues related to the development.

## **True Environmental Impact**

35. While the benefits of solar power are acknowledged, the PC is concerned that the environmental impact of construction materials and the production of solar panels has not been adequately addressed. The PC requests assurances that the materials used will not contribute significantly to carbon emissions.
36. The use of large scale solar projects such as these are highly injurious to the character of the local rural landscape, its communities and its cultures.

The PC trusts that these observations and suggestions will be carefully considered during the planning process. We remain committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure that the development does not adversely affect the environment or the well-being of local residents.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ian Harrison  
Chair, North Muskham Parish Council