



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Relevant Representation: objection to the East Park Energy Solar Project (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) submitted to the Planning Inspectorate

I submit this Relevant Representation in my capacity as the Member of Parliament for North Bedfordshire, on behalf of residents who would be directly and significantly affected by the proposed East Park Energy Solar Project (“the Proposed Development”).

While I recognise the role that renewable energy can play in meeting national energy objectives, National Policy Statements EN-1 and EN-3 make clear that the existence of national need does not, in itself, justify the acceptance of unacceptable adverse impacts, poor site selection, or conflicts with other national policy objectives.

The Proposed Development would permanently transform over 1,900 acres of open countryside, including 74% Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, into an industrial-scale energy complex. The scale of the development, the generational loss of high-quality arable land, and the long-term industrialisation of the landscape would result in a permanent and fundamental change to the character, appearance, and function of an extensive area that is rural in nature and forms the accustomed environment for nearby communities. I consider that the adverse environmental, social, and land use impacts of the Proposed Development clearly outweigh its benefits.

Crucially, the development cannot be considered in isolation. North Bedfordshire is already subject to exceptional housing growth (2.5x to 3x the national average) and multiple Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects such as East West Rail (EWR), the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road Scheme, Tempsford New Town, Universal Studios, and Luton Airport expansion. The application fails to provide a comprehensive cumulative effects assessment. It omits major local infrastructure projects, relies on narrow assumptions and does not adequately address the long-term and combined effects on local communities and the landscape.

Combined with existing and consented local solar schemes, the Proposed Development would result in more than 4,000 acres of North Bedfordshire being covered by solar panels, accelerating the industrialisation of a valued rural landscape. In this context, the introduction of an additional large-scale solar development would exacerbate an already extreme cumulative burden on the area.

The application also fails to demonstrate that alternatives have been properly considered, including whether rooftop solar has meaningfully been considered or that lower-grade land has been prioritised. Energy benefits are overstated, relying on nominal capacity rather than actual seasonal output, which is modest and mismatched to demand.

Given the existing and anticipated change in North Bedfordshire, the question is whether this site is appropriate and whether one more significant and irreversible development can reasonably be accommodated in North Bedfordshire. I conclude that it cannot.

For these reasons, and for the more detailed grounds set out in the main body of this submission and in Annexes A and B, I object to the Proposed Development and submit that development consent should be refused.