



**Application by Mallard Pass Solar Farm Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent
for the Mallard Pass Solar Project – project ref. EN010127**

Submission by Mallard Pass Action Group (MPAG) – unique ID ref. 20036230

Deadline 1: Comments on Relevant Representations (RR)

Local authorities

Prior to both the Local Impact Reports and Written Representations being submitted, it is hard to know how much overlap there will be between the authorities. Whilst they have their specific areas of both geographic and topic responsibility, MPAG is concerned that the total combined impacts may be underestimated unless the proposed development is looked at as one entity rather than 2 stand-alone geographical areas.

RR-0855 - North Kesteven District Council (NKDC)

MPAG are in agreement with NKDC and particularly concerned about the cumulative impact on BMV land on future food security. We don't believe the cumulative impacts regionally and nationally have been properly taken into account by the Applicant, which given their elevated focus on the 'national' need for energy is surprising. MPAG explore this further in our Written Representation.

RR-0634 - Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)

It is reassuring to hear LCC has identified the following topics as areas of concern.

- Landscape and Visual impact - methodology and conclusions. It would be beneficial for LCC to share the Applicant's feedback they received during meetings and communications to aid understanding of the findings and conclusions. MPAG will be providing a detailed assessment from our landscape and visual specialist, identifying particular concern with respect to the Applicant's methodology and subsequent conclusions.
- Heritage. LCC are right to flag the limited evaluation work submitted with the application, highlighting how the conclusions were 'uninformed' and 'cannot be fit for purpose'. The applicant has given no explanation why the full trial trenching evaluation was conducted so late, and given the 400+ pages of data recently posted on the portal, how there can be no changes to the findings and conclusions. The late submission of document PDA-014, has provided no time for local authorities to make a proper assessment before submitting their Local Impact Reports, the same can be said for any other Interested Parties wanting to give feedback.

RR-1078 South Kesteven District Council (SKDC)

MPAG would like to draw specific attention to SKDC's Policy RE1 (Renewable Energy Generation) which outlines the criteria required to enable such a development to take place. It is clear that the Applicant does not meet the majority of their criteria, further explanation will be given in MPAG's Written Representation.

MPAG concur with SKDC's concerns '*in relation to the evidence and technical reviews*' and '*the importance of ensuring they are sufficiently robust*'. Irrespective of the fact the site is a huge 852 Ha, this does not negate the requirement to carry out assessments at the right density and level of depth.

MPAG also support SKDC's comment about looking at cumulative developments in the pipeline, albeit we would stress that given this is a national infrastructure project, the considerations should be national as well as local and regional.

RR-1016 - Rutland County Council (RCC)

RCC's Core Strategy seems to be in conflict with the proposed development, as does Policy CS2 (Spatial Strategy). RCC rightly highlights in Policy CS4 (The Location of the Development) their concerns about the appropriateness of the proposed development in this location given its countryside designation. Particular attention needs to be drawn to the visual impacts given the overall scale of the development and the amount of agricultural land take.

Core strategy Policy CS20 (Energy Efficiency and low carbon energy developments). MPAG draw the ExA's attention to the elements of this policy and how there are more negative than beneficial impacts as a result of the development.

RR-0029 - Alicia Kearns MP (Rutland & Melton)

As one of 2 members of Parliament Alicia Kearns MP has played an active role in understanding the feedback to the proposed development from her constituents from day 1, before drawing any conclusions herself. The level of concern, anxiety, anger, upset is evident through the many letters/emails received, and the Parliamentary petition with over 2,400 signatures to date clearly indicate the level of opposition across a wide range of issues, as outlined in her Relevant Representation.

RR-0348 - Gareth Davies MP (Stamford & Grantham)

Whilst wanting to weigh up the positive and negative impacts carefully before raising his concerns, the continuous feedback from residents over the course of the pre-application period has confirmed the many concerns and issues he has raised in his Relevant Representation.

Parish Councils

15 Parish councils made Relevant Representations, a clear message of the concerns raised by their parishioners not just in villages adjacent to the site but in further outlying villages that will be affected, as well as Stamford Town Council.

RR-0323 - Environment Agency (EA)

The EA state: "5.1 The site is primarily located within Flood Zone 1 ('low probability' of flooding as defined in paragraph 078, Table 1 of the Planning Practice Guidance, Flood Risk and Coastal Change section). However, as recognised within the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), the West Glen River runs through the site. 5.2 The areas of the site adjacent to the West Glen River include land in Flood Zones 2 ('medium probability') and 3 ('high probability'). Flood Zone 3 is important for storing flood water and this has been addressed adequately in the FRA, with proposed buffer strips between the river and proposed solar panel mounted structures. We also note

that the mounted structures will be mounted 0.8m above the ground level, with the solar panels and infrastructure to be located entirely outside of the 1% annual probability fluvial flood extents, with allowance for climate change. “

The EA acknowledge there is flood risk 2 and 3 areas on the site, and that flood risk 3 is *“important for storing flood water”*. Whilst they are clear the Applicant’s solar panels are safely located, they don’t take account of faster water run-off (also acknowledged by the Applicant) from the panels on to land caused by likely compaction occurring during construction. The land may be unable to absorb both the speed of rainfall and it may also be at a point in the year it has reached field capacity. The consequent effect is the rainfall will reach the river faster than would normally be the case. When the river is overwhelmed during exceptional rainfall, the speed and height of the river rises too fast for the current flood mitigation measures to work fully, the consequent impact being that the river breaches its banks and flooding occurs running into the back of Greatford Gardens. This will be explored in more detail in our Written Representation. MPAG urge greater consideration is given to the combined pluvial and fluvial flooding **off-site risks** especially into adjacent residential areas.

RR-0823 - Natural England (NE)

MPAG fully support the NE’s request for a clearer breakdown of the BMV land as outlined below. The current level of detail on BMV breakdowns is inadequate especially when you consider the significance of 360Ha of land being affected on the site. They also draw attention to the significance of assessment needing to take account of the pattern of grades, so that the highest significance value for the agricultural land receptor is that which is then applied to the site as a whole.

“An assessment of potential impacts of the Mitigation and Enhancement area on agricultural land and soils has not been undertaken by the Applicant. The ES (Chapter 12) should include either an additional table or an expanded table 12.1 to clearly show the amounts and proportions of agricultural land, including BMV across the full Order Limits, impacted by each element of the Proposed Development, including permanent infrastructure, temporary solar PV arrays; retained arable fields and other mitigation and enhancement options.”

NE raises the issue of no time limit being imposed. This lack of clarity raises questions about how robust the Applicant’s assumptions can be about returning the land to its original status whether in 25 years or 40+ years time due to the differing impact on soil health over time. With an undefined time limit it is not possible to define and claim certain benefits as the operational life of the development will affect soil carbon storage, soil structure and biodiversity differently.

NE are very clear about the importance of creating the grass sward in advance of construction to protect the soil health (which will also help reduce flood risk), yet there are contradictions in the Applicant’s documents concerning the timing of construction relative to the sowing of the grass seed.

“Furthermore, these photos (including Insert 12.9) indicates that trafficking occurred when the soils were not sufficiently dry, which goes against the Applicant’s commentary regarding the appropriate timing of works (in the oSMP). Long term damage of the soil can occur as a result of this type of activity, including subsoil compaction. This damage can only be deemed to be restored following the excavation of soil pits following restoration to confirm there is no residual subsoil compaction.”

NE highlight further weaknesses in the phase 2 auger testing, rendering the BMV calculations unreliable in our opinion. MPAG explore this further in our Written Representation.