

RE; Your Ref: EN010127 dated 2 April 2024. Mallard Pass Solar DCO.  
Request for Comment on the responses received to your letter dated 13 March 2024

From; Essendine Parish Council.  
Contact; clerk@essendinepc.org.uk

15 April 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

Further to your invitation to all interested parties to comment on the responses received please find below the comments from Essendine Parish Council.

Essendine residents and the village as a whole is the village that will be the most negatively affected, should the DCO be granted, because the Solar Farm will be on three sides of our village along with years of enormous construction chaos and noise.

Essendine Parish Council strongly oppose and do not agree with any part of the DCO application (the Solar Farm project). It brings only negative impacts to our community and unacceptable upheaval for the very inefficient production of electricity.

Constructing a Solar Farm (to provide a limited amount of electricity from a system that is expected to be 10% efficient according to government information) on three sides of Essendine is swapping a global environmental crisis for a local rural environmental disaster.

**Compulsory Acquisition/Cable route** – The developer in advance of their final DCO application submission has had years of pre planning, planning and numerous submissions to the Planning Inspectorate on the route the electricity cable should follow.

After many years of activity and following the Planning Inspectorate process and with only weeks before your decision is due on May 17<sup>th</sup> the developer is unable to confirm to any party the final route the cable will follow, subsequently the Applicant is unable to confirm if Compulsory Acquisition of Rights over land will be required or not.

Essendine Parish Council consider this to be a wholly unacceptable state of affairs and stands by its Compulsory Acquisition comments of 20 November 2023 as submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in its Deadline 10 Submission – Closing Summary Statements. Please see copy below.

“The developer wishes to compulsory acquire rights over land owned by Essendine Parish Council. Essendine Parish Council object in the strongest possible terms to these compulsory acquisition rights being granted. This is land that is owned by the public for the public, its rights should not be given away to any individual or corporate body, even if only on a temporary basis for the period of construction of this industrial edifice. (Note; The acquisition of rights will not be on a temporary basis although most of the disruption will occur during construction). Disturbance to residents’ access to their properties would be unacceptable.

Utility companies have statutory rights over Parish Council land, and this is enshrined in law to which Essendine Parish Council fully subscribe and adhere to.

Essendine Parish Council maintains its previously communicated position of;

“Essendine Parish Council are vehemently opposed to any compulsory acquisition of any land belonging to the Essendine Parish Council by anyone at any time”.

The above resolution was resolved unanimously by the councillors at a meeting of Essendine Parish Council held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023.”

**Highways Side Agreement** – Given the likely impact on Essendine, its residents and traffic passing through the village, it is not acceptable for the highways side agreements with LCC and RCC to be not concluded before consent is given. The Councils appear to be less confident than the applicant with regard to possible future progress on this matter.

**Community Benefit Payment** - The Applicant refers to Community Benefit Payments and a payment of £400.00 per MW (AC) installed per year for the lifetime of the project;... This is the first public reference made by the Applicant on the potential amount of Community Benefit Payment.

Essendine Parish Council has been and remains reliant upon Rutland County Council to negotiate any Community Benefit Payment that will benefit the residents and village of Essendine. This said the financial amount the Applicant refers to in their letter dated 27 March 2024 to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero appears to be an inappropriate token gesture.

Additionally as stated by the Applicant, “the matter of community benefit payments cannot be taken into account in the planning balance, as set out in case law.” Essendine Parish Council therefore request that the subject of community benefit payment is not taken into consideration and discounted from the SoS’s consideration in her decision-making process.

**Conclusion** – The applicant appears to have not completed the necessary research and or negotiations and thus appears to resort to be making changes long after all of the consultations and after the DCO has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and after the DCO has been submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration.

Essendine Parish Council strongly oppose and do not agree with any part of the applicants DCO application (the Solar Farm project). It brings only negative impacts to our community and unacceptable upheaval for the very inefficient production of electricity.

The construction and operation of the Solar Farm surrounding Essendine on three sides will remove good farming land from food production, significantly compromise the existent flora and fauna and the beautiful views and surroundings as well as the daily lives and health and wellbeing of all Essendine residents.

Essendine Parish Council

End.