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Dear Sir/Madam

PLANNING ACT 2008 – SECTION 89 AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE RULES) 2010 – RULE 8

APPLICATION BY GATE BURTON ENERGY PARK LTD FOR A DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

Following the Planning Inspectorates Rule 8 letter dated 12 July 2023 the County Council submits its written representation in respect of this application.

The Council provided initial comments in relation to this application in its Relevant Representation response dated March 2023. This written representation provides an updated position following consideration of the application by the Council's Planning and Regulation Committee on 3rd July 2023.

It has been prepared in accordance PINS advice note 8.4 and should be read in conjunction with the Councils Local impact Report submitted by the Council on 18th July 2023.

The Local Impact Report was brought to the Council's 3rd July Planning Committee who resolved to approve the Impact Report for submission and based on the findings of this impact report the Council resolved to submit a formal objection to the application on the following grounds.

“That whilst the project would produce clean renewable energy that would support the nations transition to a low carbon future and deliver significant biodiversity net gain benefits through the creation of mitigation and enhancements as well as other more limited positive impacts (as defined in the Council's Local Impact Report) these positive impacts are not outweighed by the negative some significant impacts that arise given the overall scale and size of the development both on its own and in combination with the three other solar projects proposed in this geographical area.

This is due to the long-term and negative impacts that this proposal would have on the landscape character and appearance of the area through the replacement of large areas of agriculture with solar development. Together with the cumulative impact from the other three projects in this area.

The cumulative change to the landscape will be considerable and the combination of two or more sites has the potential to change the local landscape character at a scale that would be *'of more than local significance'* or would be *'in breach of recognised acceptability, legislation, policy or standards'* The cumulative impact of four adjacent Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project solar sites has the potential to effect the landscape at a regional scale through predominantly a change in land use from agricultural arable to solar creating an energy landscape as opposed to a rural/agricultural one at present. This also has the potential to change the character from an agricultural landscape to that of an energy landscape when travelling through the area and the sequential effects of multiple large scale solar sites of which some are spread over extensive fragmented red line boundaries exacerbating the perception of being surrounded by solar development. In addition the loss of arable land of upto 20% within the main development site and up to 50% of the required land for the corridor route which is classed as best and most versatile agricultural land would have a cumulative or defined negative impact that will result in the loss of agricultural production in the area generally and/or the permanent loss of agricultural production from mostly medium quality agricultural land.

That if the Secretary of State grants the Development Consent Order a comprehensive and appropriate package of Community Benefits is secured and delivered to compensate for the identified negative impacts from the proposed development would cause the communities affected by this project.”

The Council's Local Impact Report submitted at deadline 1 provides the evidence to substantiate the concerns set out above in respect of landscape and visual amenity and also Land Use – loss of agricultural land

The Council will continue to engage with this project for the duration of the examination and therefore any further queries, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours faithfully

Neil McBride

Head of Planning