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**North East  
Derbyshire**  
District Council

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Date: Monday, 12 May 2025

To: **Members of the Planning Committee**

Please attend a meeting of the Planning Committee to be held on **Tuesday, 20 May 2025 at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber**, District Council Offices, 2013 Mill Lane, Wingerworth, Chesterfield S42 6NG.

The meeting will also be live streamed from the Council's website on its You Tube Channel. Click on the following link if you want to view the meeting:

[North East Derbyshire District Council - YouTube](#)

Yours sincerely

Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

## **Members of the Committee**

### **Members of the Committee**

Councillor David Cheetham  
Councillor Andrew Cooper  
Councillor Peter Elliot  
Councillor Mark Foster  
Councillor Christine Gare  
Councillor Lee Hartshorne (Chair)

Councillor William Jones  
Councillor Tony Lacey  
Councillor Heather Liggett  
Councillor Fran Petersen  
Councillor Kathy Rouse

**Please notify the Governance Manager, Amy Bryan by 4.00 pm on Friday of any substitutions made for the meeting.**

**For further information about this meeting please contact: Amy Bryan 01246 217391**

## **A G E N D A**

### **7     Late Representations - Summary Update Report** (Pages 4 - 30)

(Planning Manager – Development Management)

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**North East  
Derbyshire**  
District Council

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## **Planning Committee 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

### **SUMMARY OF LATE COMMENTS/REPORT UPDATE**

The aim of this report is to seek to avoid the need for lengthy verbal updates that Planning Officers have sometimes needed to provide in the past at the Planning Committee. In consultation with the Chair, it has been decided that on the evening before committee a summary of all the late comments/representations received so far will be emailed to the Committee Members by the Governance Team.

It is possible that verbal updates will still be required at the meeting as sometimes comments are received at the last minute or Officers may wish to amend their recommendations: however Officers will seek to keep verbal updates to a minimum.

At the meeting Officers will only refer briefly to any key points of the case in the summary that has been emailed, as well as providing the usual verbal update for any additional last minute items.

If Members have any queries about the comments or the application itself please feel free to contact the relevant case officer given beneath the title of each summary below.

**PARISH:** Morton

**APPLICATION:** 23/01089/FL

**CASE OFFICER:** Graeme Cooper

**1. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Radford)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 10/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

Once again, the last three entries to the support campaign, from YOUR SHOUT? cannot be submitted or even taken seriously as neighbours of this project due to the far distance, postcodes on their actual note of support?

Things JBM will try to push this through?

And the soil sample analysis is not only incorrect but seriously subjective and as usual its done by the applicants paid assessment firm!

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**2. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Scroggins)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 10/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I object to this proposed development as follows:-

The existing solar farm adjacent to the application site is bad enough in terms of its negative visual impact and can clearly be seen from the A61 when driving towards Chesterfield. The proposal for an additional solar farm (or extension of the existing) to such an extreme scale will be even worse.

I am also concerned about the negative impact this development will have on the biodiversity of the area forming the application site and the adjacent woodland.

The application site is designated as Landscape Character, Coalfield Village Farmlands, as indicated in the North-East Derbyshire Local Plan. Policy SDC3, 1 and 2 states:

SDC3. Landscape Character

1. Proposals for new development will only be permitted where they would not cause significant harm to the character, quality, distinctiveness or sensitivity of the landscape, or to important features or views, or other perceptual qualities such as tranquility.

2. Development proposals should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the distinctive landscape areas identified in the Derbyshire Landscape Character Assessment and the Areas of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity (AMES), or any successor document(s), and contribute, where appropriate, to the conservation and enhancement, or restoration and re-creation of the local landscape taking into account its wider landscape character type.

It is clear that the proposed development will not be sympathetic to the landscape character, nor will it contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the local landscape or wider landscape character. It seems therefore, that the proposal is contrary to your policy.

In addition, your Policy SDC10, a) to d) states:-

Policy SDC10. Decentralised, Renewal Energy and Low Carbon Energy Generation

Proposals for the generation of renewable energy ..... will be permitted where either individually or cumulatively with other renewable energy development, there would be no significant adverse effects on:

a)The visual amenity and character of the area including landscape and visual impact;

b)The amenity of local residents, in terms of noise, dust, odour, reflected light, traffic or visual intrusion;

c)The ecology of the area, in particular in relation to protected species and to any sites of biodiversity value, ancient woodland and veteran trees;

d)The historic environment, including the effect on the significance of heritage assets and their setting and important views associated with valued landscapes and townscapes; and .....

Again, it is clear to me that this proposed development will be contrary to this policy.

Please take my comments into account before deciding this application.

Thank you.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**3. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Bladon)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 12/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

My reasons for objecting are:

My name is Mrs Julie Bladon, 18 Holland Close, Morton, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 6HE.

a. For a small village like Morton, this solar farm development is disproportionate and inappropriate. It will swallow up our village. We already have 2 solar farms that are relative to our community.

b. Far too close to the housing. Adverse visual impact of a large scale industrial development on a rural community.

c. Not only will this impact on nature and wildlife, but our lives and ultimately our children's and grandchildren's lives. Exposure to operational noise and light pollution.

d. Flooding risks, fire risks, fumes and pollution.

This list could be longer and I have very strong views against this monstrosity on our landscape.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**4. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Haslam)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 10/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I object to the solar farm in Morton, not only will it be an eyesore, it have an impact on our precious wildlife which is really struggling with not only solar fields being used but also for building on, also the loss of good agricultural land for growing crops and the use for farm animals, there is already a solar farm close by so why the need for another? So what comes 1st food or power, our landscape all over England is being blighted by these ridiculous Net Zero targets which is never going to happen, its time it all stopped, this is my objection, definitely NO!! to Solar farms.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**5. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Coope)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 12/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the planning application 23/01089/FL for the proposed solar farm at Morton. As a resident of the local area, I have serious concerns about the potential negative impacts of this development on Morton, the surrounding area and lovers of the countryside.

My objections are based on the following grounds:

**\* Visual Impact on the Landscape:**

The proposed industrial-scale solar farm would have a significant and detrimental impact on the character and visual amenity of the surrounding rural landscape. The installation of numerous solar panels, associated infrastructure (including inverters, transformers, security fencing, and access roads), and potential security lighting would be out of keeping with the existing landscape, which is currently characterised by open fields, farmland and woodland. This would negatively affect the enjoyment of the area by residents, visitors, and users of public footpaths/bridleways. This contravenes Policy and the principles of protecting the countryside outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework.

**\* Ecological Impact and Loss of Biodiversity:**

The development would result in the loss of open fields, grassland and agricultural land which provide important habitats for local wildlife. I am concerned about the potential impact on nesting birds, bats and invertebrates. There does not appear to be any mitigation measures to compensate for habitat loss and disturbance. This is

contrary to Policy and national guidance on protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

**\* Impact on Agricultural Land:**

The proposal involves the loss of a significant area of good farmland. This is a valuable resource, and its conversion to industrial use is unsustainable and undermines local food production. Insufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate that the need for this development outweighs the importance of retaining productive agricultural land.

**\* Proximity to Residential Properties and Amenity:**

The proposed development is located in close proximity to residential properties, including Morton Grange Nursing Home. The potential for visual intrusion, noise pollution from inverters and traffic during construction and operation, and glint and glare from the panels could significantly impact the living conditions and amenity of nearby residents.

**\* Devaluation of Property:**

The presence of a large-scale solar farm in close proximity to residential areas is likely to negatively impact property values in the surrounding area.

**\* Cumulative Impact:**

When considered in conjunction with other existing or proposed renewable energy developments in the wider area, this proposal would contribute to an unacceptable cumulative impact on the landscape and local environment. The area is becoming saturated with such developments, eroding its rural character. There are already two solar farms in the community.

**\* Lack of Community Benefit:**

The proposed development offers little or no tangible benefit to the local community.

Supposed green electricity is an oxymoron. While "green electric" from renewable sources is a vast improvement over fossil fuels in terms of environmental impact and carbon emissions during operation, it's crucial to acknowledge that it's not entirely without environmental consequences. The loss of land is huge. We community has to also have pylons because of the poor infrastructure. The carbon footprint is huge - I would say the panels are produced in China.

I urge the Local Planning Authority to carefully consider these objections and refuse planning permission for this inappropriate development. The potential negative impacts on the landscape, ecology, agricultural land, and the amenity of local residents significantly outweigh any perceived benefits.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**6. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Mrs Stone)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 13/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I strongly object to this planning application for many reasons. Firstly this would result in the significant loss of good agricultural land used for growing crops, which would result in the loss of a local business. In addition, the hugely negative cumulative effect of a second solar farm in such close proximity to an existing solar farm, especially to the character of the land and local wildlife. This proposal is unreasonably close to residential properties, despite the amendments made to the original proposal. I believe this proposal would have a massively negative effect on this rural community and the size, scale and nature of the intrusive solar farm in this rural location is disproportionate and highly inappropriate.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**7. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Mr Stone)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 13/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I strongly object to this planning application. I believe this proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the local residents and rural community and these significantly outweigh the benefits of the proposed location for this solar farm. This proposal is unreasonably close to residential properties, despite the amendments made to the original proposal. In addition, it would lead to the significant loss of good agricultural land used for growing crops, which would result in the loss of a local business. This proposal would lead to a hugely negative cumulative effect to the character of the land and local wildlife and habitats due to this proposal of a second solar farm being in such close proximity to an existing solar farm. I whole heartedly believe this proposal would have a massively negative effect on this rural community and the size, scale and nature of the intrusive solar farm in this rural location is disproportionate and highly inappropriate.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**8. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Mather)



**DATE RECEIVED:** 13/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

Existing two solar farms already in area plus we may be affected by the new electricity pylons planned for the area.

Loss of habitat and food for the dwindling wildlife on this planet

Loss of agricultural and green belt land

Too close to residential properties

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**9. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Dzsupin)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 13/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

In regard to the above planning reference I would like to confirm objection in regard to:

- Unreasonably close proximity to the residential properties close by and the nursing home
- The small rural village location is not able to accommodate the size of the proposed application.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**10. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Rhodes)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 13/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

In regard to the above planning reference I would like to confirm objection in regard to:

- Unreasonably close proximity to the residential properties close by and the nursing home
- The small rural village location is not able to accommodate the size of the proposed application.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**11.SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Ward) - Your Shout

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I think we can be green

I also believe it is good for the local environment for future generations

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**12.SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Wright) – Your Shout

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I'm in the renewables industry, so I support clean energy.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**13.SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Smart) – Your Shout

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I support this project for clean energy and efficiency.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**14. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Brown) – Your Shout

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

Need green energy, well landscaped.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**15. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Cadman)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

The size, scale and nature of this intrusive solar and battery farm in this rural location is both disproportionate and inappropriate despite the amendments.

We already have 2 solar farms that are relative to the size of the community.

The loss of good agricultural land used for growing crops is unnecessary and culminates in the loss of local business.

They are destroying the visual amenity of our footpaths and recreation areas because of this.

They have an ecological and environmental impact on our wildlife and their habitats which for decades we have been nurturing and protecting.

All the Net Zero Targets set by this government are set to fail at our expense.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**16. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Calverley)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of a 135-acre solar farm on farmland adjacent to my home. I moved into my new build home at 17 Birch Street, Padleywood View, DE55 6NL last year, drawn by the rural charm, community spirit, and open countryside. This proposal would significantly and irreversibly impact not only my quality of life, but also the character of the entire village.

My concerns are as follows:

**Non-compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** The proposal contradicts key principles of the NPPF, including safeguarding rural land, protecting the environment, and considering cumulative impacts.

**Loss of productive agricultural land:** This land is actively used for growing crops and forage-raised beef, supporting local food production and livelihoods. Its loss would destroy a local business and reduce the area's self-sufficiency.

**Cumulative overdevelopment:** With two existing solar farms already in our locality, this third installation represents a disproportionate burden on our small community.

**Proximity to homes and vulnerable residents:** Despite amendments, the site remains unreasonably close to residential properties, including the Morton Grange Nursing Home, raising concerns over visual intrusion, health, and wellbeing.

**Destruction of visual amenity:** The proposed development would spoil views from our only wheelchair- and buggy-accessible footpath, further isolating less mobile residents from the natural beauty of our countryside.

**Loss of landscape character:** The industrial scale of this project is entirely out of keeping with our valued rural landscape and would dramatically erode the village's identity and tranquility.

**Ecological damage:** There is inadequate evidence that the solar farm will avoid significant harm to local wildlife, habitats, and biodiversity.

**Mental health concerns:** The scale and presence of such an industrial development near homes could have unknown and long-term impacts on the mental wellbeing of residents.

**Poor site selection:** This is an inappropriate location for a development of this scale, especially given the existing solar farms nearby.

**Disproportionate impact:** The harms to residents, heritage, and environment clearly outweigh any marginal energy benefits this location might offer.

Finally, in a somewhat ironic twist, it's worth pointing out that the government is currently investing £60 million into geoengineering research to reflect sunlight away from the Earth in order to combat global warming—while simultaneously blanketing the countryside with solar panels to harvest that same sunlight. It's difficult to see the logic.

I urge the planning authority to reject this application in recognition of the profound and cumulative damage it would inflict on our community and rural landscape.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**17. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Adams)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I object to this application for many reasons, it is still far to large, it will destroy wildlife habitat, it will be an eyesore.

It will take away a farmers living, it will take away valuable land used for growing crops.

It will lead to a further cumulation of Solar farms in the area.

All these existing Solar Farms that are just a stones through away from each other, were all built on agricultural land..

Do Planning have any idea, of how much agricultural land in total, in the same genera area has been taken out of agriculture use in order to create all these Solar Farms in close proximity to each other ?

Surely that needs to be looked into ?.

Also if the Planning department is minded to approve this application, then i suggest they need to make sure that any condition relating to its approval are enforced.

I note that the Padley Wood Solar Farm still has biodiversity conditions that are not yet satisfied, even though it was approved in 2015 !.

15/00224/FL

5.0 MW solar farm with ancillary buildings security fencing CCTV access tracks and landscaping on land associated (Major Development) (Public Footpath)

Padley Wood Farm Evershill Lane Morton Alfreton DE55 6HB, status conditionally approved

15/00859/DISCON

Discharge of condition 13 Bio diversity Management Plan discharged relating to

planning application 15/00224/FL Padley Wood Farm Evershill Lane Morton Alfreton DE55 6HB, status further discharge required

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**18. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from Natalie Fleet MP

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

Following recent discussions with residents in Morton, it has come to my attention that a solar farm is being proposed for the village. As a government, we remain committed to achieving Net Zero and ensuring that 95% of our energy generation is derived from clean energy sources.

However, I must express my concerns regarding the scale of the proposed development. It is crucial that we find a balance; the size of such a solar farm could significantly alter the landscape of this picturesque village. It is imperative that any solar initiative does not dominate the visual aesthetics of Morton and that both its placement and size are carefully considered to uphold our objectives for clean energy while preserving the integrity of our villages and the stunning Derbyshire landscape.

I know that neighbours are consulted on planning applications during the planning process, but I hope the views of residents in the village are considered before a decision is made.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**19. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Jones)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I write to OBJECT to the planning application for the proposed Eden Meadows Solar Farm in Morton (including the Amended Plans) for the following reasons:

- it is vandalism of our beautiful countryside and is non-compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- the vast size of the development in conjunction with the existing adjacent solar farm is totally inappropriate (despite the amendments made to the original proposal) for a site so close to residential properties (private homes and the Morton Grange Nursing Home) in a small rural village location;
- the adverse visual impact of such a huge solar farm would fundamentally change the countryside character of the area and would inevitably result in ecological and environmental destruction to wildlife and habitats;
- there would be unknown mental health and wellbeing implications; and
- the development (and the amendments made to the original proposal) would be an eyesore and the significant harmful impact on local residents and the rural community would grossly outweigh any purported benefits for this location.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**20. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Fitzpatrick)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I write to strongly object to the planning application for the proposed Eden Meadows Solar Farm (and the amendments made to the original proposal) in Morton for the following reasons:

- we already have two solar farms that are relative to the size of our local community;
- the adverse cumulative effect on the community of another solar farm in the close vicinity is totally inappropriate for a small rural village;
- it is non-compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework and would be a blight on the countryside destroying wildlife and natural habitats for birds, bats and insects;
- there would be a loss of good agricultural land for growing crops, forage raised beef and the loss of a local business (the last remaining working farm in Morton, a historic farming village in the geographic centre of England);

- unreasonably close proximity to residential private properties and the Morton Grange Nursing Home;
- the vast size and scale of this disturbing development in a rural location is completely disproportionate and unsuitable despite the amendments made to the original proposal;
- such developments should be on rooftops, adjacent to motorways or on already industrialised land - not causing a significant negative visual impact to residents and visitors in a rural location, damaging footpaths and having unknown mental health and wellbeing implications.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**21. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Gough)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

From a very early age my parents used to take us on a picnic to see the trains on Padley Wood Bridge. This took us down Evershill Lane, past the houses, onto a track between the fields of open meadow, sometimes cropped, sometimes with cows or just grass to grow and cut.

Look for the Skylark my Dad used to say, when it comes straight down that is where its nest is.

Or we would hear the noise of a train approaching and rush to the bridge to get its number or name. I had my train spotting book ready.

When we went on our own Mum used to know exactly where we had been with the smell of the smoke on our clothes.

I repeated these events with my children much to their delight.

I will very much miss the pleasant walk even now, not seeing the fields or the birds, but a lot of panels and possibly noise as well.

Is this progress?? I am not sure as at 83 years old I may not see them in the short future, but would be nice to think that other people may benefit from my protest and objection.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**



This raises no new material planning considerations.

**22. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Walker)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 12/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

A waste of money and there are lots of places to put them and not on farmland.

We need farms and farmers, use large buildings, schools and factories, etc.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**23. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from Cllr Cupit

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I'm writing as a local district councillor with my strong objections to the proposed large-scale solar farm, and all the associated intrusive infrastructure that would go with it, on land to the north of Stretton Road, surrounding Morton.

I would be grateful if these objections and comments could be formally logged both against the application (23/01089/FL) but also reported in full as final representations to planning committee members.

Ahead of the planning committee meeting, having now been able to consider the application report being presented to members in full, I have significant concerns over these proposals, even as amended.

Whilst supportive of clean energy, this should not come at the price and detriment of the very countryside and environment we are trying to protect, which I believe this proposal would irrevocably harm. At 66 hectares in scale, even for the revised application, to put this into stark context, this is the equivalent of 268 football pitches of over-imposing solar panels scarring our local countryside (recognising the clear countryside and green field designation of this land).

This landscape is currently enjoyed by many local residents and walkers, including in my district ward area of Stonebroom and Shirland, and many residents here have expressed concern to me about these proposals and the impact they would have.

With this, I support the recognition in the planning officer's report of the significant harm that would be caused by this blanket solar farm not just to the immediate but also much wider area. This is clearly demonstrated in the applicant's own chart of

the visibility impact of this proposal detailed in figure 8 of the committee report, under para 7.16. This development would be visible as far as North Wingfield, but also amazingly as far as the Shirland-Alfreton border. The damage and significance of this leaving an imposing scar on both the immediate countryside around Morton but also much wider afield across the south of the district should not be underestimated - and I hope members of the committee will recognise this in reaching their decision. My concerns here are also formally recognised by the CPRE in their objection.

To further illustrate the damage the sheer scale of these proposals would have on our countryside, that it cannot be mitigated against and therefore should be refused, the comparison of the existing smaller scale solar farms on individual fields to the north of the application site is helpful. Whilst they are indeed not comparable in size to the mammoth proposals here, they serve to demonstrate that smaller scale solar provision can have a lesser impact and be more appropriate to and in keeping with the area. As such, whilst I support these existing panels, I would note they clearly highlight the visible imposition on the landscape they leave - the planting around those is still yet to screen or establish properly nearly a decade on.

In wider planning policy terms, I recognise proposals such as these are becoming increasingly frequent. I believe NEDDC's wider planning policy stance on these sorts of proposals should be considered and clearer policies put in place, which is why I have pushed for this at Full Council meetings. Nevertheless, in the meantime and absence of a specific policy in this regard, I look to the closest similar national policy decisions. Specifically, I highlight the previous appeal decision which dismissed the application for a solar park in reasonably close vicinity, on land to the north west of Alfreton and between Shirland - appeal reference APP/M1005/W/22/3299953. This was only a slightly bigger proposal, at 75 hectares to the 66 hectares proposed here, but was clearly and definitively refused by the local council and national planning inspector. In reaching their decision, the inspector noted their alarm at a 'starkly industrial mass of metal... [being] a prominent feature seen from far away' and that '40 years is a very significant period in people's lives during which the development would seriously detract from landscape character and visual amenity.' The same planning considerations and objections apply equally to this proposal.

The inspector's decision in that appeal also attached significant weight to protecting local amenity, which I believe is of equal importance here for both local residents, especially of Morton, but also wider communities and walkers from across my ward and the area as detailed above. Simply siting benches and information boards overlooking a blinding sea of metal fails to compensate for the loss of important countryside and agricultural land.

As an additional concern, I would ask the planning committee to pay particular attention too to the landfill and contamination concerns, touched on in paras 4.32-35 and 4.37 onwards of the officer's report. Noting the extensive contamination buried in this area which includes Coalite contaminants yet isn't fully known due to its nature (which was highlighted in Parliament in the 1980s) as well as the reactions and

dispersal of some of the chemicals involved due to the historic mine workings, I would suggest this area should not be disturbed at all, and certainly full and proper testing should be carried out prior to any permissions being granted given the potential significant consequences.

To conclude, approving even these amended plans would still be a monstrous metal and glass overbearing shadow over a significant part of the District's countryside and green land - as well as setting a dangerous precedent for the future.

I reiterate that the report is clear in attaching significant weight to the landscape harm of this proposal (para 7.109), which is an important material planning consideration in deciding this application. Members can and should reach their own balanced conclusion of refusing this application on these grounds, recognising the landscape and visual harm, and that green energy does not and should not override environmental protections.

I therefore strongly urge the planning committee to refuse this blanket application. I would also request that prior to making a decision on this application, any planning committee members who have not yet been should visit the application site centre point or the top of Evershill Lane to fully appreciate the dominating impact this proposal would have on a beautiful part of our open countryside.

#### **OFFICER COMMENTS:**

Most of the comments made raise no new material planning considerations.

Officers note the reference to a previously dismissed appeal (APP/M1005/W/22/3299953) between Shirland and Alfreton, however this was determined in 2022 with planning policy now weighing more heavily in favour of solar development. The appeal site was also very different to this application site as it was located in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent landscape character area and was highly visible. There were also heritage impacts which formed reasons for refusal. Regardless, Officers would advise members of planning committee that each application has to be taken on its own merits.

**24. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Wood)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

#### **SUMMARY:**

My reasons for objecting are :

1. the loss of green belt land in a countryside area which is being removed at a fast pace

2. there is already areas of solar farms, which I am in agreement are necessary but surely brown field sites could be used much more for this type of application
3. Morton is a small rural location and is already undergoing major building works for houses
4. Disproportionate to the available area with significant impact on wildlife, both fauna and flora

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**25. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Dykes)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

- loss of valuable farmland
- blot on landscape
- interfere with rights of way
- plenty of buildings capable of accommodating solar panels

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

Whilst this raises no new material planning considerations, officers would comment that the proposal does not result in the loss of any formal public right of way or bridleway.

**26. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Lawton)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

This proposal is totally unsuitable and not viable for the area. Solar farms should commence where there is no green space, such as industrial buildings and man-made environments. Our natural environment should not be subjected to these truly awful monstrosities that ruin our countryside!

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**27. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Nelson)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I object to the proposal of a solar farm in morton village.

I have lived in this village for 10 years and chose this area because of its natural beauty surrounded by trees, fields and nature.

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

There will be a loss of land used for the growth of crops, forage raised beef and a loss of local business as a result.

The removal of vegetation from the land and the lack of working of the land could likely lead to local flooding. Within Morton village this has already been an issue in the past in a few areas. This has the potential to affect more residents, which will have a knock on effect on housing, mortgages, insurance and cost to the village.

The proposed solar farm is also unreasonably close to residential properties.

There are two other solar farms locally which are relative to the size of our community.

It will affect the access to a local public footpaths that are used daily by local residents and myself. These walks and being surrounded by nature benefit both physical and mental wellbeing. The benefits of physical activity and being out in nature on mental health has been researched/ evidenced by public health and should be protected.

I do not believe the solar farm will benefit this small village and will likely cost it as a result, and therefore object to the application.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**28. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Martindale)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

While I am fully in favour of the use of renewable energy I object to the above for several reasons, the chief one being that the development is on a gigantic scale in comparison to village around it and will have a very serious impact on the semi rural nature of the area.

We already have two solar farms in close proximity to the village so it cannot be said that Morton is not doing it's bit to support this infrastructure. In addition to the above the solar farm will swallow up a large amount of valuable agricultural land and, I am led to believe, result in the loss of a local farming business.

With so much recent development in the area I do not understand why developers cannot be persuaded or compelled if necessary to incorporate solar panels into their projects such as on the roofs of the huge warehouses recently constructed at junction 28 of the M1.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**29. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Wrench)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I wish to object to the Morton solar farm for the following reasons:

- Cumulative effect on the local community with existing solar farms in close vicinity
- Ecological and environmental impact on wildlife and habitats
- loss of good agricultural land used for growing crops, foraged raised beef and loss of local businesses

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**30. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Wilson)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I strongly object to the proposed Morton solar farm for the following reasons.

1. Non compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
2. Loss of good agricultural land use for growing crops and loss of local business.
3. Loss of character of a valued landscape and the rural nature of the local area.
4. Ecological and environmental impact on wildlife and habitats.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**31. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Fitzpatrick)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 15/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

I write to strongly object to the planning application for the Eden Meadows Solar Farm (and the amendments made to the original proposal) in Morton for the following reasons:

- we already have two solar farms that are relative to the size of our local community;
- the adverse cumulative effect on the community of another solar farm in the close vicinity is totally inappropriate for a small rural village;
- it is non-compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework and would be a blight on the countryside destroying wildlife and natural habitats for birds, bats and insects;
- there would be a loss of good agricultural land for growing crops, forage raised beef and the loss of a local business (the last remaining working farm in Morton, a historic farming village in the geographic centre of England);
- unreasonably close proximity to residential private properties and the Morton Grange Nursing Home;
- the vast size and scale of this disturbing development in a rural location is completely disproportionate and unsuitable despite the amendments made to the original proposal;
- such developments should be on rooftops, adjacent to motorways or on already industrialised land - not causing a significant negative visual impact to residents and visitors in a rural location, damaging footpaths and having unknown mental health and wellbeing implications.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.

**32. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Email from resident (Walker)

**DATE RECEIVED:** 16/05/25

**SUMMARY:**

It is very good land which does not need putting under concrete.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:**

This raises no new material planning considerations.



### 33. SOURCE OF COMMENTS: Email from applicant

DATE RECEIVED: 19/05/25

SUMMARY: Committee briefing document sent from RWE to all members.

Planning reference 23/01089/FL

## Eden Meadows Solar Farm

Officer recommendation: Grant permission

May 2025

# Helping Derbyshire tackle the climate emergency

### Our proposals will:

-  Generate enough renewable energy to power the equivalent electricity needs of approximately **over 19,400 homes annually**, equivalent to **42% of the households within the NEDDC area**.
-  Displace over **1,343,000 tonnes of CO2 over the lifetime of the project**, equivalent to taking 21,000 cars off the road each year.
-  Provide a **biodiversity net gain in habitats of over 89% and a net gain in hedgerow of 17%** delivered through the measures such as the inclusion of wildflower meadows, grasslands, bird and bat nesting boxes and insect hotels.
-  Provide approximately **£6.5 million in business rates** over the lifetime of the solar farm to support vital local services.
-  Deliver a **£660,000 community benefit fund** to the local community to support sustainable initiatives, such as rooftop solar on community buildings.
-  Create an **educational trail with information boards** teaching the importance of tackling climate change as well as key local features.
-  Enable **over 95% of the site to remain in agricultural use**, such as sheep grazing, allowing the land to recover and for soil health and structure to be enhanced.
-  Include plentiful **new green infrastructure including enhanced widened green corridor footpaths and wildflower meadows for the community to enjoy, new trees and 2.7 kilometres of new hedgerows**.
-  **Store energy** to ensure that any energy generated is not wasted, balancing the grid supply and enabling energy distribution during peak periods.

On 20 May 2025 you will be asked to consider plans for a solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) near Morton, Derbyshire known as the 'Eden Meadows Solar Farm', which has been **recommended for approval by officers**.

This project will enhance Derbyshire's energy security while supporting both local and national targets for net-zero carbon emissions. The project can also store excess solar energy for use when it is most needed, meaning that the proposals can help to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, lower energy bills and provide a more resilient power supply for local communities.

We have worked closely with statutory consultees, officers at NEDDC and the community to bring forward this application. We are proud that there are no objections from statutory consultees to this application.

RWE, the UK's largest power generator, acquired JBM solar in March 2023 and is committed to supporting the decarbonisation of the energy sector and playing a significant role in the UK's transition to renewable energy. We've worked hard to ensure the plans are robust and deliverable, designed with long-term benefits in mind.



### How we have listened

We are committed to ensuring that these plans deliver meaningful benefits for the local community.

In response to feedback received during the consultation and throughout the planning process, we have made a number of changes to the proposals:

- **Introduction of 7x new sections of hedgerow** across the central and eastern land parcels, largely following the orientation of lost historic hedgerow, totalling c. 2.7km of new hedgerow planting.
- **Introduction of additional trees** within existing and proposed hedgerow.
- **Introduction of a 20m buffer** from the Public Right of Way (NE 13/8/1) to a north and a 10m buffer from the Public Right of Way (NE 13/8/1) and Everhill Lane to the south. These buffers will be managed in order to retain existing hedgerow at current heights, with newly planted hedgerow at the outer edges of the offset areas also to be maintained at a height of 5m.
- **Amendments to the siting and orientation** of several battery energy storage system units and the substitution of solar farm panels.

### What the community said

As part of a survey undertaken about the project in January 2024, after the planning application was submitted, we asked people living within a c. 1.5km radius of the site for their thoughts on a range of issues. This is what they said:

- 75.3% said that addressing the climate crisis is very or somewhat important.
- 45.74% of respondents said they were supportive of the proposals.

Comments included:

- "Need more homegrown energy can't rely on fossil fuels"
- "Climate change is important to tackle"
- "Good for the environment"
- "Climate change is important, better than housing"
- "Happy to support"

As part of our commitment to ongoing engagement, a further community survey was undertaken in March 2025 to a wider consultation radius within c. 10km of the site. This identified over 250 members of the public who supported the project, 5 against and 2 neutral.



The site is located on land classified by Natural England as Grade 4 (poor quality) and Grade 3s (moderate quality). This is confirmed by our soil surveys undertaken by soil scientists and highlight that neither grades are considered "Best and Most Versatile" farmland. Natural England also raises no objection on this point.

This makes the site well suited for solar development without compromising high quality agricultural land. Over the project's lifespan, soil quality will improve through reduced tillage use.

Biodiversity

Research done in recent years has highlighted how solar farms can become wildlife havens and we have worked to ensure that our proposals are no different. The proposals include wildflower meadows, hedgerows, trees and various wildlife-friendly features like bird boxes, insect hotels and beehives. These measures will result in a biodiversity net gain in habitats of 89% and in hedgerow units of 17% - being almost nine times the national requirement for habitats. The Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in their response to the application outlined that impacts to protected species and habitats can be mitigated and proposals are generally well designed.

Community benefits

The project has been carefully designed to ensure that the site can be opened up for community use. Benefits such as picnic areas, interpretation and information boards and new and enhanced footpaths have all been included so that the community can make use of the site. The inclusion of information boards will help the site become an engaging educational facility. We are a big believer in teaching children about renewable energy and regularly invite children to visit our site, meet ecologists and learn more about the thriving biodiversity on a given site. A community benefit fund of up to £660,000 has also been included to help fund sustainable initiatives such as rooftop solar installations on community buildings.

If you would like to see some real examples of how RWE has helped communities across the UK, please visit [uk.rwe.com/fr-your-community](https://uk.rwe.com/fr-your-community) or simply scan the QR code:



**Energy storage**

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) ensure that the energy generated by the solar farm is not wasted. These systems store excess energy during low demand periods and release it when demand is high. The BESS will use lithium-ion batteries - a safe, established technology commonly used in devices like phones and laptops. We design our BESS projects to accord with all relevant policy and legislation and include detailed Battery Safety Management Plans within our applications. The Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service have reviewed our Battery Safety Management Plan and stated that they have no objection to this application.

Noise

Solar farms generate very minimal noise. The inverters and batteries may produce a low hum, but to minimise the impact on residents, any low level noise generating equipment will be located towards the centre of the site wherever possible, which is a considerable distance away from any residential properties. A thorough noise impact assessment has ensured that any noise remains within acceptable limits which has been accepted by the Council's Environmental Health Officer.

Landscape and visual impact

The site is not within any national or local landscape designations and the Officer's Report confirms that the site is not considered to be a 'Valued Landscape' per the NPPF. Significant landscaping is being proposed at heights greater than the maximum height of the proposed solar panels and associated infrastructure to limit its visibility. Derbyshire County Council state that 'the poor quality of the land, along with the flat nature leading to limited views, the effects of the proposal would not be significant (P2.28)' and that 'the development would be surprisingly contained visually (P2.33)'.

NEDOC's external landscape consultant has provided several rounds of comments, none of which have provided substantive rationale for disagreement on the level of harm assessed within the submitted Landscape and Visual Assessment. The Officer's report is clear that the planning balance should weigh in favour of the development and this is evidenced by Government and Planning Inspectorate precedence.







## RWE, a trusted partner for sustainable growth

RWE is one of the UK's largest power providers, supplying around 15% of the UK's electricity with a diverse and reliable energy portfolio. As a key partner in the decarbonisation of the UK's power sector, RWE is committed to delivering secure, clean and affordable energy while investing in local communities.

- **Driving the UK's clean energy transition** – Between 2012 and 2021, RWE achieved a 43% reduction in carbon intensity for electricity produced in the UK. Looking ahead, the company is committed to carbon-neutral energy generation by 2040.
- **Expanding renewable energy** – In 2023, RWE acquired JBM Solar, one of the UK's largest independent developers of solar and battery storage projects, further strengthening its ability to deliver secure and sustainable energy solutions.
- **Investing in the future** – By 2030, RWE expects to invest up to £15 billion in new green technologies and infrastructure in the UK, creating opportunities for local businesses and communities.
- **Supporting communities** – RWE works closely with local stakeholders, investing in community projects, education initiatives and funding opportunities that create long-term benefits for residents.
- **Proven reliability** – With enough energy production to power the equivalent of 14 million UK homes, RWE's expertise ensures secure and sustainable energy solutions for the long term.

Through strategic investment, responsible energy transition and direct community engagement, RWE continues to be a trusted partner in shaping a sustainable and prosperous future.

### Contact us

If you have any questions or would like to speak to the project team, please do get in touch.

[megan.pritchard@meeting-place.uk](mailto:megan.pritchard@meeting-place.uk)

07375 599 056



## OFFICER COMMENTS:

This document has been shared with each member of planning committee and raises no new material planning considerations.

**PARISH:** Ashover

**APPLICATION:** 24/00781/FL

**CASE OFFICER:** Adrian Kirkham

**1. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Mel Hardy – Bolsover Ramblers Association

**DATE RECEIVED:** 04.05.2025

**SUMMARY:** Having considered the additional drawing, clearly indicating, the definitive lines of RoW Ashover FP 52, 53 and 57 we now have a clearer understanding of the proposal in relation to the said RoW. As a consequence, we withdraw our objection.

However, our concerns remain regarding the parking and turning area at the eastern end of the site. This is also the intersection point for the definitive lines of FP 52 and 57, which potentially exacerbates the problem. We trust these concerns will be addressed with at least adequate signage and uninterrupted sight lines.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:** The comments The Ramblers are noted. If permission is granted for the scheme as a whole, it is recommended that a signage scheme in respect of waymarking is submitted to and approved by the LPA to address the comments made.

N.B. See also Officer comments on point 2 below.

**2. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** DCC Rights of Way

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14.05.2025

**SUMMARY:** Having reviewed the revised drawings clearly showing the definitive line of the footpaths, the shift of the parking slightly to the east is a welcome move to prevent obstruction of FP 57. The end space does appear to sit very tightly by the intersection of FP 57 and FP 52, it should be a metre from the centre of the definitive line of the path so as not to encroach on the path and allow it a 2 metre width.

We do however withdraw our objection as the path is now available. All consideration to safety of the public using the paths at this intersection and in the areas where there is increased vehicle manoeuvring must be given, including any necessary safety signage.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:** The Officer comments on point 1 above are equally pertinent to this comment.

Notwithstanding that, the policies of the Development Plan, notably policy ID8 of the Local Plan but also policy AP21 of the Neighbourhood Plan, both seek to ensure that the quality of the public rights of way network are protected. Despite the removal of any objection by the consultees, Officers retain the view that the scale and character

of the development proposed in close proximity to the rights of way would impact on the manner in which the footpaths are experienced.

Only policy ID8 is noted in the draft reason for refusal 4. It is recommended, if the application is refused, that reference is also made to policy AP21 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

**3. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Mr J Cook

**DATE RECEIVED:** 14.05.2025

**SUMMARY:** I support this application 100%. Motor Cross has been a part of Ashover for many, many years. The application provides responsible development and can only enhance and improve the village of Ashover.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:** No further comments.

**4. SOURCE OF COMMENTS:** Charlotte Stainton - Applicant's Agent

**DATE RECEIVED:** 16.05.2025

**SUMMARY:** States that the applicants have several concerns about inaccuracies in the Committee report for Butts Quarry, many of which could have been discussed/clarified if there had been a meeting.

However, one error that the applicant would like to clarify is that the summary on the front sheet states that of the 14 representations, 12 are objections and 2 are in support. This is the wrong way around and misleads the Committee, many of whom will use this summary as a reference to guide their thinking on the scheme.

**OFFICER COMMENTS:** This is correctly pointed out and acknowledged. Members will note that the body of the report correctly reports the comments made at paragraph 5.2 with the correct number of support comments and objections reported.

However, please note that the numeral 4 (at the beginning of the paragraph) should properly read 14 (noting that one objector to the scheme has commented twice).