**Parish of Easton Grey’s response to targeted consultation on proposal for Lime Down Solar Park 8.7.25**

Dear Sirs

I refer to your letter dated 3rd June 2025 (which arrived on 30th May 2025) sent to me as Chair of the Easton Grey parish meeting. I also refer to the enclosed leaflet announcing changes to the boundary of the proposed NSIP referred to as Lime Down.

As already set out in the 9th March response to the statutory consultation Easton Grey is strongly opposed to Lime Down for a number of reasons including that it would substantially damage  the landscape which abuts an Area of Outstanding National Beauty and conservation areas, increase risk of flooding  and create vastly increased traffic on roads which simply cannot take the volume and size of vehicles proposed.

The statutory consultation was unsatisfactory with no proper indication given of the extent and route of traffic in any meaningful way which the residents could understand.  The numbers of HGVs likely to use the principal route from the M4 towards Easton Grey, particularly those for the BESS, was so deeply buried in the PEIR that almost no one consulted had any idea of the extent of traffic disruption or the true extent of the damage which Lime Down would inflict on the area.

In your summary you state that the changes comprise “six areas to enable temporary highway and traffic works” and “nine areas where the development boundary area has been adjusted” in the latter case “to avoid constraints such as woodland and hedgerows”. That is 15 changes in total. However, it appears in the description to all 15 changes that the “boundary area has been amended”, i.e. not just nine. It also appears that avoiding constraints like hedgerows means ripping them up.

The changes you now refer to in the leaflet are very difficult to understand.  Whilst some changes appear to be simply for a small number of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (which clearly are unsuitable for local roads) others appear to be for further internal access roads which are likely to require further construction vehicles and aggregate (damaging soil structure and further raising the risk of flood) and requiring the removal of ancient hedges.

It is not clear why these changes are being made after the statutory consultation and why the changes are only the subject of a targeted consultation not involving the users of the roads and residents of the villages which will be most affected by the proposals, including those on the cable route.

It is also not clear on what basis you have decided that the changes are minor when the increased land for access routes is likely to increase the need for aggregate deliveries and further damage to soil structure in an area already prone to flooding.

The plans and explanations used on the material you have provided are almost impossible for a lay person to understand.  I certainly have struggled.

Beyond the general increase in HGV traffic and the risk that would cause to the users of local roads in terms of safety, the change which causes most concern from the perspective of Easton Grey are set out below. The proposed changes 1 and 2 are particularly close to Easton Grey. This does not mean that the other changes are acceptable:

**Change 1**

The change appears to be over a complete section of the road between Easton Grey and Norton. That road is the primary route that provides access to the M4 and beyond. The section of road is in a blind dip that has witnessed a number of accidents in the past, I believe one of which, involved our current Queen. It is already a dangerous section of road and not suitable for works. The description states that the road is to fall within the development area so presumably access for the community to use the road will be terminated or limited and it is not clear which but either would not be acceptable. The description goes on to state that this will “allow optimal locating of cables to avoid constraints” which begs the question constraints to whom?

**Change 2**

"Description of change: The development boundary area has been amended to accommodate the potential for temporary minor junction widening, temporary removal of street furniture and vegetation removal. This will allow an abnormal load vehicle to turn at the corner and provide sufficient visibility for vehicles to safely access the Site. Total area of change:  0.55 ha (1.37 acres)"

The area of land marked in pink is extensive.   It is part of the ancient Fosse Way and is much used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.  It is one of the rare parts of the Fosse Way which remains unmetalled and is of significant archaeological significance.  It is surrounded on both sides by ditches and hedges and trees with far reaching views of the countryside.  The wording at first sight suggests the access is needed for a single AIL but that is clearly misleading since it appears this area is to be used for HGVs to access the site.  This use of the Fosse Way and any damage to the hedges and trees and change of the surface of this ancient bye way and make such fundamental changes to the area should not be permitted and is a very significant change which will affect a huge number of receptors.

**Change 4**

This change is described as necessary to achieve safe visibility splays at a site access.  The location was not originally identified as a site access point.  Hedgerow would be lost along the north-west side of the Fosse Way.

**Change 7**

 It appears that the existing narrow track south-west of Rodbourne will need to be widened over a length of around 200m.  It appears that the south-east side of the track is heavily wooded.  There is concern that these works would lead to an adverse impact on the trees.

**Change 10**

The A429/B4014 roundabout has been included since it lies on the proposed AIL route (orange route) for areas D and E.  The route is shown through Corston but no information is provided to show how the AIL would travel through Corston and beyond through Rodbourne to reach the proposed substation site.  The local roads are extremely constrained in this area.

**Change 12**

The turn from the A46 into Acton Turville Road is not identified as being on one of the AIL routes.  It raises the question of whether the proposed route via the B4040 (purple route) is seen to be viable.  It needs to be demonstrated that the AIL vehicle is able to negotiate the left turn within Acton Turville to join the designated AIL route south on the B4039.  It is not clear whether those most affected who use this road or live in Acton Turville have been consulted, either in relation to the main consultation of this targeted consultation.

**Change 13**

(Purple AIL route) This is the B4039 junction adjacent to the Salutation Inn.  The junction is very constrained with well-established hedges and property boundaries close to the edge of the highway boundary.  Details are required to demonstrate that the AIL vehicle can successfully negotiate this junction.

The green AIL route passes along Bradfield Cottages north of Hullavington.  This road is very narrow and has quite tight bends.  It may not be negotiable by an AIL vehicle.  The route also passes under the railway before reaching Site D.  There is obviously some constraint on width and height passing under the railway bridge. This is the main route into Easton Grey.

We are concerned that you have failed to give an accurate prediction of the HGV movements which will be required.  You do not appear to have allowed for the substations and the materials needed for those or the fencing.  Nor have you provided any information about the trip generation associated with the cable route.

Please acknowledge receipt and confirm that each of the points raised will be included in any report on the consultation which you prepare for the Planning Inspectorate.

Yours faithfully

George Clarke

Chair of the Easton Grey Parish Meeting.