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Supplementary Response to the Revised EcoPower Suffolk Proposals Response to Statutory Pre-Application Consultation 22 June – 16 August 2026 - EcoPower Proposals for solar farm and BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) with an anticipated capacity of around 250 megawatts (MW). This includes approximately 600 hectares / 1,500 acres of land located near the National Grid Yaxley 400kV Substation, near Eye, Suffolk.

From : Palgrave Parish Council, Suffolk

Date: 14 July 2026

Submission to EcoPower Suffolk Proposal via contact@ecopowersuffolk.com

Palgrave Parish Council acknowledges the amendments made by EcoPower Suffolk following the previous consultation. While we welcome the applicant's engagement with consultees, we do not consider that the revised proposals address the principal planning concerns previously raised. Indeed, several of the amendments reinforce the scale and permanence of the development and give rise to further concerns.

1. Expansion of the Site Area

The applicant states that the site area has been expanded to increase separation from residential properties and provide additional space for landscaping and environmental mitigation. Whilst greater separation from individual dwellings may reduce direct visual effects for some residents, this has been achieved by extending the overall land take. Consequently, a larger area of predominantly rural countryside and agricultural land will be affected. The proposal therefore increases, rather than reduces, the cumulative loss of productive farmland and the extent of landscape change across this part of north-eastern Suffolk.

The expansion must also be considered alongside the existing 49MW solar farm currently under construction, the adjacent consented 30MW solar development, and the proposed Norwich to Tilbury transmission scheme. Collectively these projects continue to industrialise a substantial area of open countryside. Increasing the footprint of the EcoPower proposal exacerbates this cumulative impact.

2. Landscaping and Environmental Mitigation

The applicant proposes additional landscaping and environmental mitigation. While mitigation measures are expected in developments of this nature, they do not remove the underlying impacts created by the development itself.

New planting requires many years, and often decades, to become effective. During this establishment period residents will continue to experience extensive views of solar infrastructure, fencing, substations and associated equipment. Furthermore, landscape screening cannot compensate for the permanent loss of agricultural land or the transformation of the area's rural character.

Similarly, environmental mitigation should not be regarded as a substitute for avoiding ecological harm in the first instance. The Parish Council has already observed significant wildlife displacement associated with existing solar farm construction in the locality. Additional mitigation areas cannot guarantee that displaced species will

successfully adapt where surrounding habitats are already under increasing pressure from multiple major infrastructure projects.

3. Refined Layout

The revised layout is intended to reduce impacts through improved positioning of infrastructure. However, changes to the internal arrangement of panels do not alter the fundamental scale, operational lifespan or cumulative effects of the proposal. The principal planning concern remains the concentration of large-scale energy infrastructure within a relatively confined rural landscape.

The revised layout does not address the combined effects on landscape character, public rights of way, biodiversity, agricultural productivity or the wider setting of neighbouring communities including Palgrave.

4. Extended Programme

The applicant has extended its programme to allow additional surveys, environmental assessments and community engagement. Whilst additional evidence gathering is welcomed, extending the pre-application timetable does not in itself reduce environmental impacts. More time to assess impacts should result in more robust analysis, particularly of cumulative effects, but it should not be interpreted as evidence that those impacts have been satisfactorily resolved.

The Parish Council remains concerned that cumulative assessment across the EcoPower proposal, existing solar developments and the Norwich to Tilbury transmission project remains inadequate.

5. Defined Cable Corridors

The introduction of defined cable corridors provides greater clarity regarding the proposed infrastructure. However, underground cable routes themselves have the potential to generate additional environmental impacts. Construction of cable corridors may involve prolonged excavation across agricultural land, temporary road closures, disruption to drainage systems, impacts on hedgerows and mature trees, disturbance to habitats and further construction traffic. These impacts should not be considered separately from the generating station itself but as an integral part of the overall development. The cumulative effects of these works alongside ongoing construction activity from neighbouring energy projects must be fully assessed.

6. Material Changes to the Proposal

The Parish Council considers that the amendments made to the EcoPower Suffolk proposal constitute material changes to the scheme. The expansion of the site area, revised layout, additional landscaping and environmental mitigation, and the definition of cable corridors alter both the physical extent and potential impacts of the development.

These changes require a thorough reassessment of the proposal's environmental effects, particularly when considered alongside the existing and consented solar developments in the locality and the proposed Norwich to Tilbury transmission scheme. It cannot be assumed that conclusions reached in earlier assessments remain valid where the development footprint and associated infrastructure have changed.

In particular, updated assessments should be provided to demonstrate the revised impacts on:

- cumulative loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land;
- landscape character and visual amenity;
- biodiversity, habitat connectivity and protected species;

- construction traffic, access and highway impacts;
- residential amenity and the cumulative effects on neighbouring communities.

The Parish Council submits that these material changes reinforce the need for a comprehensive cumulative assessment before any decision is made. Without clear evidence demonstrating that the revised proposal avoids or significantly reduces these impacts, the application remains unacceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion

The amendments made by EcoPower Suffolk do not overcome the Parish Council's principal objections. While certain refinements may marginally reduce impacts at individual locations, they do so by increasing the overall site area and do not alter the fundamental planning issues associated with the proposal.

The cumulative impacts on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, biodiversity, landscape character, rural communities and local infrastructure remain substantial and insufficiently addressed. The concentration of multiple nationally significant energy developments within this locality continues to represent an unacceptable transformation of the rural environment over several decades.

For these reasons, Palgrave Parish Council respectfully maintains its objection to the EcoPower Suffolk proposal and urges the Planning Inspectorate to give significant weight to the cumulative impacts of this and associated infrastructure projects when determining the application.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Emery

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Palgrave Parish Council