

**Planning Committee: DC/23/05/05426 – Marsh Farm (Aura) Solar Development
Ward Member Statement (Palgrave) 09/04/2025**

It's without any doubt that this application, together with the immediately adjacent approved PV development has caused fracture to the people of Palgrave. The issues have been well rehearsed in this chamber before today.

But it's not as though local communities have been subjected only to these two energy developments. An anticipated towering infernal mega pylon route snaking across the nearby countryside and considerable Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects within very close proximity on both sides of the River Waveney will – for in excess of a generation – dramatically alter the character of this pastoral landscape.

Across my ward every village (that's 9 communities) is impacted by existing or proposed energy development; wind turbines, electricity substations, a synchronous condenser, multiple power stations, several battery installations, massively significant land absorbing solar and related infrastructure. Just south of 3 thousand residents can be forgiven for feeling that they're single-handedly Powering Up Britain and that it's all just too much.

Conversely and perversely, the Planning Authority is all but **powerless** to refuse such applications thanks to a lack of strategic coordination. The increasing demand for new grid connections for sustainable clean energy developments in Mid Suffolk - particularly along the A140 corridor make our area an inevitable target to be placed under siege.

This Council has made a plea to National Grid and the National Energy System Operator for national strategic coordination to mitigate the harmful cumulative impact of energy infrastructure saturation on small communities.

At a meeting last night I was asked if I was anti-solar? I was asked by a resident whose home I knew is proposed to be surrounded on three sides by panels, so I thought carefully before responding that, in fact, I'm *not* opposed to solar. Perhaps surprisingly, neither was the resident. As I speak, on this grey afternoon in Ipswich, over 60% of energy feeding the grid derives from renewable or low carbon sources, over 25% derives from solar. Of course it's a valuable sustainable source.

But getting the balance right between food security, protection of valuable community landscape, habitat and biodiversity assets and energy security targets requires very serious consideration at national level if communities aren't going to be divided and disenfranchised.

END