



30<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear Councillors,

**Delivering renewables in the right places - Protecting Epping Forest**

We strongly support the UK's transition to net zero but at the same time our charitable objectives are to protect Epping Forest. The issue is therefore *where* renewables are sited, not whether they are built. Without a clear strategy, case-by-case approvals risk creating a piecemeal belt of industrial structures around Epping Forest.

**Both adjacent and more distant field proposals both pose risks:**

Projects sited close to the Forest risk undermining its natural setting and character. Construction activity adds further noise, traffic, and emissions that affect the natural environment and Forest visitors. Long-term solar installations require robust pollution controls and transparent whole-life management. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) raise fire and chemical hazards risks for the Forest.

More distant schemes also bring harm: glint, glare, and industrial structures degrade countryside character, reducing its attractiveness and displacing recreation from the surrounding areas into the Forest.

**What we ask EFDC to do**

1. **Publish siting guidance for solar farms without delay.** Prioritise rooftop, brownfield and co-location with existing development (e.g., car parks, warehouses) ahead of sensitive open countryside adjacent or close to the Forest.
2. **Set interim development-control criteria.** Until a full strategy or siting guidance is adopted, require assessment of the cumulative/in-combination impacts of solar farms, with tight controls close to the Forest.
3. **Undertake a strategic, plan-led assessment of sites.** Embed a district-wide renewables siting strategy within the Local Plan and engage with EFHT and local communities in shaping the policy.

This combination of actions would enable EFDC to deliver renewable energy at pace while protecting the Forest's ecological integrity, landscape setting and public value.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Lewis'.

Peter Lewis  
Chief Executive  
Epping Forest Heritage Trust