# PLANNING STATEMENT – Application AVA/2026/0656

**Proposal:** Installation of a domestic, ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array comprising 48 panels on a seasonally adjustable Cornish Fix mounting system.

**Site Address:** Land adjacent to Melkridge House, The Dimple, Fritchley, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2HP

**Applicant:** Piers Barnes

**Date:** 21st October 2026

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the installation of a ground-mounted solar PV array consisting of 48 panels, to be sited in the field immediately adjacent to Melkridge House, The Dimple.

**1.2** The objective of the proposal is microgeneration: providing a direct, clean, and renewable source of electricity to power the applicant's adjacent domestic property. The electricity generation is projected to be sufficient to cover 75% of annual electricity demand for the household which includes air-sourced heat pump and two electric vehicles.

**1.3** While the system is domestic in nature, its scale (48 panels, configured across two rows) exceeds the limits permitted under standard Stand-alone Permitted Development rights. Consequently, this formal application is submitted for consideration.

## 2. Site Context & Topography

**2.1** The application site comprises an area of grassland, owned by the applicant, and situated immediately South of the principal dwelling.

**2.2** The site is located adjacent to The Dimple. The topography of the field slopes downwards away from the road. This natural depression provides a topographical advantage, naturally lowering the visual baseline of the development when viewed from the public highway.

**2.3** The site is not within a Conservation Area, National Park, or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are no listed buildings or scheduled monuments impacted by the site footprint.

## 3. Description of the Proposal

**3.1** The development proposes the installation of 48 high-efficiency solar panels arranged uniformly into two rows of 24 panels.

**3.2** The panels will be South-facing to maximise solar irradiance. They will be mounted via a Cornish Rocker adjustable ground-mount system. This system allows for seasonal manually optimised tilting—typically set at 30 degrees during peak operational periods—retaining a low maximum height profile relative to the field baseline.

**3.3** Reversible Foundations: The array framework will be anchored using low-impact ground methods rather than deep concrete foundations. This ensures that the installation is entirely reversible, leaving the soil undamaged and allowing the land to be fully restored to its original state if required.

**3.4** DC power lines from the array will be routed via an underground trench directly back to the inverter and battery storage system located within the curtilage of the main house.

## 4. Planning Policy Context

**4.1 National Policy:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It explicitly mandates that local planning authorities should support community and domestic transitions to a low-carbon future, recognising that even small-scale projects contribute valuably to reducing greenhouse gases.

**4.2 Local Policy:** This proposal aligns directly with the strategic objectives of the Amber Valley Borough Local Plan 2022-2040. The council has stated a statutory obligation to reduce regional carbon emissions and supports the widespread expansion of localised renewable power generation to eliminate reliance on fossil fuels.

**4.3 Carbon Commitments:** Regard must also be given to Amber Valley Borough Council's corporate commitment to achieving Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2030. The council actively promotes domestic-scale energy conservation and home renewable energy (Solar PV) to lower grid reliance. This application represents private, localised infrastructure that directly advances these borough-wide sustainability objectives without requiring public funding.

## 5. Key Planning Considerations

**5.1 Landscape and Visual Impact**

- **Topographical Mitigation:** While the field is visible from The Dimple, the visual impact is mitigated by the field's downward slope. Because the ground drops away from the road, the tops of the two rows will sit lower than they would on flat terrain, preventing a dominant or intrusive profile.

- **Biodiversity and Screening:** The land surrounding and beneath the solar array will continue to be managed as grassland, with opportunities for enhanced biodiversity through the establishment of native wildflower and grass species. Existing trees and vegetation along the roadside boundary will be retained, providing natural screening while also supporting local wildlife and habitat connectivity.
- **Low-Profile Design:** Structuring the 48 panels into just two long rows (rather than a tall, multi-tier layout) keeps the entire framework close to the ground, allowing it to blend into the horizontal context of the landscape.

**5.2 Residential Amenity & Glint/Glare**

- The array is located away from neighbouring houses, situated entirely next to the applicant's own property. It will not cause any loss of light, overshadowing, or privacy issues to third parties. The location is not overlooked by any other neighbouring property.
- The panels are equipped with modern, high-absorbency, anti-reflective glass coatings designed to capture solar light rather than reflect it, ensuring low glint or glare.

**5.3 Ecology and Land Use**

- The array preserves the green field character. The ground beneath and between the rows will remain unpaved, allowing for continued natural sustainable drainage and grazing.
- The margins around the array can be utilised for biodiversity enhancement, such as sowing wild grasses or native wildflowers, creating a localised net gain for wildlife.

## 6. Conclusion

**6.1** The proposed 48-panel ground array represents a highly sustainable, well-considered domestic infrastructure project. It directly supports local and national green energy mandates while preserving the rural character of the area through intelligent layout choice and natural topographical screening.

**6.2** Given that the system will use reversible ground-mounting, causes no harm to residential amenity, is visually minimised by the downward slope from the road and screening, the applicant respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.