

**Draft statement, as delivered at the Open Floor Hearing on 21/01/20**

- I would like to start by thanking EDF Energy for its engagement over the past 6 months. There has been some noticeable movement during this period, and this has been recognised by Bole villagers. I would like to thank EDF Energy for this.
  
- For the Planning Inspectorate's reference, I am the District Councillor for Sturton Ward where the new power station may be built. The village of Bole is located near the site, and I consequently organised a series of meetings with Bole villagers:
  1. June 2019
  2. August 2019
  3. December 2019
  
- We submitted a relevant representation at the end of August. This concluded that villagers were, on the whole, against further development on the West Burton site, without further reassurances about the future of West Burton A which sits outside this planning assessment. You will no doubt be aware of this document and the thematic approach that was adopted.
  
- Since then, I have been engaged in various discussions with EDF Energy about the six requests that were raised as part of the relevant representation. For those who aren't aware, these were:
  1. For EDF Energy to commit to working with relevant regulatory bodies to limit, and ideally stop, Bole lay-by being used by construction-related traffic.

2. For EDF Energy to commit to providing sufficient parking for all contractor vehicles on site, 24 hours per day.
  3. For EDF Energy to commit to investing in the effective visual screening of all West Burton developments for the village of Bole.
  4. For EDF Energy to grant access to EDF Energy land east of the village for dog-walking and other recreational purposes;
  5. For EDF Energy to commit to reversing all plans for weekend work outside the peak construction period;
  6. For EDF Energy to consider funding a sign near the roundabout, emphasising the weight limit for HGV vehicles using Sturton, North Leverton and other villages.
- On each of these points, with the exception of point 4 about access to EDF Energy land, EDF Energy has sought to make concessions. I do not, therefore, want to go into great detail about what local villagers do and don't find acceptable today.
  - I also recognise that this planning proposal will be assessed primarily on its planning merits, rather than its community credentials.
  - However, I do want to focus on one thing which I've felt to be true throughout this process, which is this: **that I do not believe that the concessions which have been made to-date, have been made with the same level of due diligence and care as other elements of the planning application.**

- I will give you two examples of this.
- Firstly, EDF Energy has committed to giving the community £X0,000 upfront to put towards infrastructure-related costs such as signs and cameras to manage the potential impacts on the lay-by outside Bole and surrounding roads. This gesture is welcomed.
- But when you get into the detail and speak to Notts County Council about the cost of Highways signs, or speak to Bassetlaw District Council about CCTV camera costs, as I have done, you realise that the community won't be able to afford both items with the fund that has been proposed.
- A second example.
- EDF Energy has committed to giving the community £X,000 per annum in the form of a community fund. This could be put towards visual screening costs, which were referenced as being important in the relevant representation. Again, this gesture is welcomed.
- But when you get into the detail, you realise that mature trees can cost between £150 and £400, meaning that the fund could be spent before having a meaningful impact, should Bole villagers chose to spend the money in this way.
- To be clear, I am not here now saying that we necessarily want more money. I am merely making the point that some of the concessions which have been made are simply financial,

without really thinking about the community which will be spending the money – and that is a real shame.

- I know that EDF Energy feels that it has moved a long way since we started, and we have – but I am leaving this process, feeling like we've simply been thrown some money, **without really thinking about what that money can and can't do**. I don't believe that this was necessarily EDF Energy's intention – but that is how it feels, and I think that is how this planning process is set-up.
- To the Inspectorate, I would therefore ask that, in addition to thinking about Bole's particular issues further, for future planning applications of this size or bigger, that you seek to place local communities front and centre of what is being proposed.
- In our ward, over the next 10 years, we are contemplating the opening of a new quarry, a new power station, the closure and demolition of a power station, hundreds of new houses being built and a new 200-acre solar farm being erected. This is just a snapshot of what is happening today – and local community needs and impacts aren't considered holistically, which is a real shame and to the detriment of the area where we live.
- I will, once again, thank EDF Energy for its engagement over the past six months or so, and look forward to hearing the outcome of this process along with the rest of the villagers in Bole and beyond.