

Dear Sir

I am writing to express my objections to the proposal to site a 2700 acre solar energy park, "Sunnica" on the Cambs/Suffolk border. If given approval this development will have an enormous impact on the villages it encompasses i.e. Isleham, Chippenham, Fordham, Freckenham, Red Lodge, Snailwell, West Row, Barton Mills and Worlington-directly affecting the lives of some twelve thousand residents. The plant would also have negative repercussions on the town of Mildenhall just two miles away with a further 10,000 residents.

Objections to the solar energy park have been well documented by local residents, Parish Councils, District Councils, County Councils. I understand 3 conservative Prime Ministers and other MP's including our local MP's have expressed concern at covering agricultural land with solar panels.

Objectors to the proposal are totally in support of renewable green energy created by wind farms and solar panels placed on roofs.

I have no expertise in any of the following issues but they do concern me:

1. The size and scale

This would be the largest site in Britain and one of the largest in Europe. The choice of a huge swathe of productive farmland, adjacent to small local communities, on which to site this solar farm seems an unreasonable decision, not only for those villages but it must also pose difficulties for the developers. Uninhabited brownfield sites would be more appropriate.

2 The loss of agricultural land

This is highly productive soil which has, for centuries, produced vast quantities and varieties of root and salad crops. At a time when food security is so important, we should aim to be self-sufficient and avoid the need to import food.

3 The environmental impact

The scheme is on and near sensitive ecological habitats. It is adjacent to Chippenham Fen – an SSSI and RAMSAR designated site. Construction work and erection of solar panels could contaminate the local chalk stream. Disturbance of ground nesting birds, particularly the red listed stone curlew, cannot be resolved by any mitigation. It is not possible to determine where a bird with such specific nesting requirements chooses to nest. The flora and fauna over the 2700 acres will be radically affected.

4 Noise and visual pollution

The constant humming noise emanating from the battery storage will be audible and particularly annoying since, hitherto, this was a quiet peaceful area. The visual pollution of acres of solar panels and enormous BESS installations will change our open agricultural countryside forever. Both noise and visual pollution are recognised as being injurious to health and well-being.

5 Construction Difficulties

It is difficult to understand why this remote rural site was chosen. There are no "A" roads nearby, the site will be serviced by "B" roads and some are narrow with passing places. There is the difficult "4 cross£ bridge to be negotiated, heavy goods construction vehicles will inevitably cause severe disruption to all local traffic.

6      Footpaths and Public Rights of Way

There is justifiable concern at the “temporary” closure and possible loss of footpaths. However, I feel this issue is sadly almost irrelevant as few people will want to walk in the vicinity of the solar farm with the attendant noise, glare and ugly installations

7      Safety hazards

There are real concerns re the fire risks and consequent hazardous toxic contamination which has occurred with other large installations of lithium batteries. This site is in such close proximity to places where many people gather – schools, public houses, churches etc, not to mention numerous public dwellings where people could be at risk.

8      Wellbeing of local inhabitants

Perhaps the most difficult and serious objection to be addressed is that of the well being of the residents from the affected villages. The loss of our “normal” way of life and the loss of our local environment with its expansive views over open countryside. Travelling between our villages will no longer be a pleasant experience. The physical disruption during construction may cause much irritation. The industrialisation of this area cannot be screened by planting young “whips” The plant will be due for decommissioning before they have grown sufficiently.

There are many people in the villages who are already profoundly concerned and distressed by this proposal

Thank you

Mrs J Malkin