

Dr Catherine Judkins, Comments on Written Representations. Deadline 3A submission

URN: 20031441

Dear Examiners

Please see below comments on a number of Written Representations. There are many which I feel capture the same concerns I share, which I outlined in my own personal relevant and written representations. I don't intend to repeat all of the points I have previously made but felt compelled to pick out a few points that I consider important.

- 1) In the Written Representation of chartered civil engineer, Mr Andrew Munro [REP2-102] he picks up on many points which I agree with, in particular his concerns about the over use of the 'Rochdale envelope' principle and the lack of information in the Sunnica application and during the Sunnica consultations. This relates well to my personal experience of this development. It has been frustratingly difficult to obtain answers and detailed information about the proposed scheme from Sunnica Ltd throughout this process – from consultation to examination. If I were to build a house next year I would have to supply precise drawings with details of materials that I intend to use and show images of what it would look like so that it's impacts can be assessed properly. I find it incomprehensible that a scheme of this huge size and scale can be proposed with so little information about the layout, design, safety, making it so difficult to assess the impact on those who would be expected to live in its shadow. I am not against solar but I do feel that solar developments need to be done with the support of the community. This is far from the case with Sunnica and Mr Munro alludes to the strength of opposition to the scheme in this area – over 1300 relevant representations outlining objections to the scheme, not to mention written representations. This is entirely consistent with the many conversations I have had with friends, neighbours and residents across the affected communities over the course of the last few years. There is overwhelming opposition to this particular scheme.
- 2) I also agree with many of the points raised by Dr Anne Noble in her written representation [REP2-103] and the illogical concept of losing such a large area of highly productive farmland that can produce over 38,000 tonnes of food each year and that can still be productive even through wet and drier periods. It doesn't make sense to replace this kind of versatile and productive land with a huge solar development (particularly when alternatives are available such as rooftops and land of genuinely poor quality). Dr Noble also makes the point about the significant carbon footprint of this huge Sunnica proposal and the Cranfield University findings that it will emit more carbon than it can ever save over its lifetime.

There is no logic in developing a scheme that takes away such large areas of highly productive farmland, thousands of tonnes of food (over 38,000t food x 40 years = well over 1.5 million tonnes of food over the lifetime of the scheme) at a time of high global food insecurity in order to develop a scheme that will be detrimental to our climate and will do nothing to meet the UK's net zero targets.

- 3) The Written representation of Brian Challis [REP2-109] also make the point about the importance of preserving the site of the B50 military plane crash near Isleham and the fact that this is an important part of Isleham's village history. There is a strong sentiment amongst residents that the crash site should be preserved as a mark of respect for the crew who bravely sacrificed themselves to save the village. Parts of those brave individuals still remain in that field and it should not be drilled into and covered over with panels.
- 4) I agree with the lack of assessments of footpaths and public rights of way and road users both short term and long term as outlined in the written representation of Cambridgeshire County Council [REP2-112], as well as the comments made about the preservation of the plane crash site in E05. I fully agree with the views of East Cambridgeshire District Council [REP2-131] who do not consider that any development of E05 should be permitted not just because of the plane crash site being located within that field but also the significant landscape impact, which cannot be appropriately mitigated, around the village of Isleham. And that the harm caused by this scheme in this area would not be outweighed by the renewable energy production.
- 5) The representation put forward by the Ark Church [REP2-251] alludes to the significant impact that the scheme would have on them as a whole, and especially the impact of development of E05 being in such close proximity to their unique building.
- 6) Living in a rural environment brings many benefits to residents that live here and especially those with children and I was struck by the points raised by Dr Alistair Burn MBE [REP2-127] regarding the wildlife, including rare

birds (e.g. stone curlew) that we have on our doorstep. He comments on the questionable mitigation measures for this species and also the negative impacts on other farmland bird species that are in decline as a result of the Sunnica proposal. My own children very much appreciate the wildlife around them and this needs to be preserved for their continued enjoyment and for the enjoyment of future generations. The mitigation measures for the curlew are described as being 'shoehorned' into areas that couldn't be used for solar panels in the written representation of the Friends of Isleham Nature Reserves [EP2-140] and this is in direct opposition to the way developments should take place in this day and age - wildlife and environment should be at the heart of developments, rather than an afterthought. It seems incongruous that a supposedly 'green' scheme does not have the environment at the heart of its aims.

- 7) I was also deeply concerned to read the representations of Womble Bond Dickinson [REP2-130] on behalf of Drug Development Solutions Limited, LGC Limited and LGC Bioresearch Limited, who operate out of the site formerly known as the Horseracing Forensic Laboratory (HFL) where I used to work. From its beginnings in horseracing testing this impressive laboratory facility has grown and expanded considerably over the years to become a world leading supplier of not only sports testing services but also a broad range of pharmaceutical and bioanalytical services. It has ca. 400 employees on this site and the removal significant portions of this site to construct the Sunnica scheme would damage this global business and be highly problematic for the employees that work there, which includes a number of my friends and acquaintances.
- 8) I fully support the points made by the Isleham Society in their written representation [REP2-149] and agree with the level of harm not only to the landscape but on the heritage of Isleham village which is so highly valued. I often use the footpaths around the River Lark and I fully agree that the setting of the Spurgeon stone would be harmed due to the proximity of the Sunnica fields particularly E05, E01, E03 and the visibility of the tall industrial infrastructure (the battery storage and substation compound) from this setting. I also note that they request protection of the military plane crash site in its current setting. Preserving heritage is so vital to our future generations and provides a sense of place and identity for those that live here, which is fundamentally so important for wellbeing. The Isleham Society promotes many different events catering for different generations, bringing communities together. But they can only do this if the heritage which they are promoting and preserving is there. If the heritage that we have is hidden, or covered over or harmed by the Sunnica development, the community's sense of pride and identity will diminish. The Isleham Society notes that access to heritage sites has already been depleted over the years and I agree with their wish that no further restrictions arise out of developments in this area. The Sunnica scheme would indeed be a high price to pay for no local benefit.
- 9) Lack of information, lack of responses from Sunnica are repeated in many of the relevant and written representations, including written representations by Joanna Cant [REP2-162] and Marianne Corbin [REP2-186]. Both feel that information from Sunnica Ltd has been lacking and note that there are still people in the communities who don't realise the sheer size and scale of this scheme because of the way it's been presented and the lack of engagement from the developers.
- 10) Other presentations discuss the impacts on the horseracing industry which is so vital to the local economy here. Written Representations of West Suffolk Council [REP2-260] highlight the damage that Sunnica could cause to Newmarket's reputation as being the "Home of Horseracing" which is vital to retain and the fact that the landscape from the famous Limekilns gallops would see significant parts of the scheme from its settling. The resulting detrimental impact on this historic landscape would not only affect those using the gallops but could also deter investors to racing and to the area. On a more personal level, the representation of Will O'Dwyer talks about the threat of job insecurity, the damage the scheme would have to the pleasure he gets from riding horses out on the historic Limekilns (how horrible it would be to ride along the gallops with huge seas of solar panels and battery storage units and substations sandwiched between the famous limekilns and the beautiful Chippenham park) and the high price trainers pay to have their horses here, which comes with the expectation of having the very best facilities. He believes that the scheme would be an eye sore around the whole training grounds. Katherine Stewart also makes a point in her representation [EP2-175] as she discusses the number of people in her village who are associated with the racing industry and that if this goes into decline their livelihoods would be affected.
- 11) Finally I have read the written representations of the local parish councils (Isleham, Freckenham, Red Lodge, Worlington, Chippenham, Snailwell, Fordham, Reach, Exning) and I support these and the objections they relay on behalf of their parishioners. I also fully endorse written representations of the Say No to Sunnica Action Group Ltd, which outlines very comprehensively the objections that myself and many other local residents have about this scheme. And also the views presented by our local MPs.

Thank you for your consideration