

In this representation I want to reinforce the points made in the oral representation on Friday 9 December. I represent ten villages affected by this planning application, as well as the town of Newmarket.

Fundamentally this is an irrational plan to industrialise rural Suffolk.

I am a strong supporter of solar power and have supported solar schemes throughout my constituency. However this is a hodge podge of loosely connected sites without any thought for the wider community.

But this is not about a solar farm: it is primarily an application for an industrial battery storage facility, with a solar farm attached. The capacity of the battery storage is greater than the electricity generation of the solar farm. This demonstrates that the primary purpose of this proposal is a battery farm in the middle of rural Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, which should instead be located in an industrial site.

Many acres of battery farming placed in the middle of a rural location is totally inappropriate. Furthermore, battery farms of this scale are dangerous – there have been 38 fires in the last three years that we know of. The proposed battery farm is upwind of major settlements, including Red Lodge, which is growing village sited less than a mile away. This is an irrational choice to site batteries so near to a large residential area.

The scheme will significantly negatively impact the major local industry: horse racing. Newmarket is the pre-eminent flat racing centre in the UK, and probably the world. Its unique nature is based on the extensive public gallops, on which thousands of the best racehorses in the world train. The economics of the industry requires the attraction of investors in racehorses, including very high net worth individuals, who own the horses. Their investment supports thousands of jobs locally, both directly within horse racing and indirectly. Without a beautiful backdrop, the attraction of Newmarket to this role will be significantly undermined. The setting of the gallops is not a nice-to-have but vital for this incredibly important local industry. This consideration has been completely ignored by the application.

Furthermore, there has been a woeful lack of consultation, including a complete failure by the applicant to engage in determining the quality of the land and the hiding of an industrial-scale battery farm under the headline of a solar farm and the fundamental change of character to this local area.

This is an irrational scheme that has not been put together with any consideration for policy, for good sense, or for the character of the local area.

I urge you to reject this application.

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Member of Parliament for West Suffolk