

Although the Heckington Fen Solar Park offers benefits in terms of producing clean renewable energy that would help support the UK's transition towards Net Zero; deliver significant biodiversity net gains and offer community benefits through the provision of a new permissive recreational route and a community orchard, these positives and benefits are not outweighed by the significant and negative impacts the development would have in particular on the landscape character and appearance of the area and on best and most versatile agricultural land. Nearly 50% of the total area of the main Energy Park comprises of best and most versatile agricultural land and the development would take this land out of productive arable use for the life of the development (i.e. 40 years). The loss of this high-grade land is not only of significant concern to the Council in respect of this specific project and location but is also of significant concern given the cumulative and in-combination effects of such loss when taking into account other NSIP scale solar developments that are also currently being promoted across Lincolnshire that are similarly seeking to use high-grade agricultural land. Given the strategic importance of the County as a food producer for the nation, any development on BMV land should start from a position of refusal with the emphasis for Applicants to prove otherwise. The Council's view is that the impacts of this proposal are of such significance that the Development Consent Order should be refused.