

Deadline 1 - Written Submission on OFH2

Hello everyone, my name is Sue and I'm a farmer.

The industrial scale of the development on good, productive arable land is a permanent contamination of the area. It will become a brownfield site and removes this land from any future food production capabilities. This will never be productive farm land again. There is a lot of talk about BMV land and the grading of such land. Any farmland in this area is capable of being farmed successfully and profitably, producing good quality food, be that for human or animal consumption in an environmentally positive and sustainable way.

The loss of the natural habitat for all creatures be it birds, wildlife or insect life cannot be truly mitigated against. Any attempt at mitigation to this natural habitat is negated by the area being surrounded by high, impenetrable fences. The loss of food, nesting and resting sites for this wildlife during construction will mean they will leave the area looking for better homes. Is it realistic to believe that ground nesting birds for example will stay and 'put up' with the destruction of their home turf so to speak, I'm not sure I would if I were a sky lark. I understand there are plans within the mitigation process to recreate sites for ground nesting birds but is that simply too little too late, will the damage be reversible?

As someone heavily involved and invested in farming I am familiar with the government schemes such as ELMS, SFI and CSS. These schemes seek to improve farming practices and our countryside through hedgerow management, soil management etc. Everything we, as farmers, are encouraged to do is for the betterment and sustainability of the countryside. We are continuously measured and governed by government bodies and have to complete a lot of

paperwork and provide proof that standards are being met. All in order to improve the environment we live and work in, not only for ourselves but also to maintain and improve the land ensuring the longevity of farming practices in the future. The scale of this solar development means the construction process will do an unimaginable amount of damage to the land. Compaction of the land for instance, which will be caused by construction machines on the land, will have serious knock on effects on land drainage ability which will lead to surface water runoff and increase the flood risk to surrounding areas. The damage to the soil incurred during construction which cannot be remedied once solar panels have been cemented into the ground causing loss of fauna and flora not to mention microbial life within the soil itself. I am also very curious to understand the reporting and structuring process and proof of obtainment of the 10% biodiversity net gain quoted as being achievable from the mitigation areas. Who will these areas be managed by? Who will be the governing body responsible for ensuring best practice is carried out? Who and by what measure will decide if they have been successful and what base line is being used as the standard that will be measured against? And what remedial action is possible if BNG has not been met? Will for example, the base line be taken before construction and the destruction of natural nesting and breeding habitat? Or once the landscape has been destroyed and there is no habitat for our wildlife so any improvement is improvement?

I agree that this country needs to look at alternative ways of producing power. But using good arable land to site acres and acres of solar panels; which at best are only on average 11% productive from the stated designed capacity, is ludicrous. There are plenty of brown field sites across the UK that could be put to use for this which would allow food production to continue.