

I wish to object to this proposed Mallard Pass solar development and provide further comment below.

I am not against solar, but I do object to siting solar on agricultural land and removing productive soil and farmland from delivering food for the nation today and in future.

We have a significant food security challenge in this country (exacerbated by the on-going war in Ukraine) where more than 40% of UK food consumption is already imported from overseas. With a cost-of-living crisis, high inflation and the negative carbon footprint associated with such a high level of food imports, there is a pressing need to preserve farmland to produce more of what we eat in very uncertain times. The idea of taking farmland out of food production to provide solar capacity when there are plenty of alternative brownfield and non-agricultural sites for solar is fundamentally flawed.

The Renewables and Low Carbon Energy Guidance from Gov.uk recommends the siting of solar parks on 'previously developed and non-agricultural land'. I support the use of brownfield or commercial/warehouse roofing for the siting of large-scale solar farms to preserve as much agricultural land for improving national food security as possible. According to the British Research Establishment (BRE) there are 600,000 acres of south-facing roof space on warehouses, factories, office blocks and other industrial buildings in this country (source: BRE (2016) Solar PV on commercial buildings: a guide for owners and developers, K.Arora, J.Roper and G.Hartnell). This significant research also notes that if all this available roof capacity were to be used for solar it would provide 50% of all the UK's energy needs! CPRE (Campaign for Protection of Rural England) and the Building Research Establishment have together published several articles making this point and advising how it can best be achieved [REDACTED]

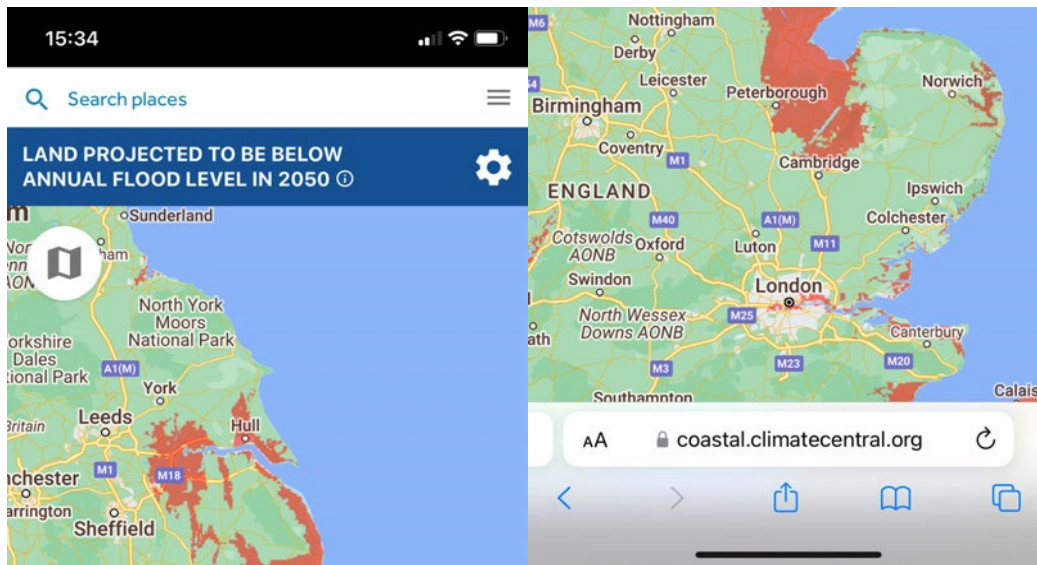
Soil is a responsible for providing 95% of the food we eat so covering it or damaging it or even removing soil and farmland from producing food is wholly irresponsible and would undermine food security for this and future generations. We cannot be certain over the next 40 yrs that imports will flow freely - and imports also create significant CO2 emissions. Undermining FOOD security should not be a by-product of attempts to improve Energy security especially when an abundance of alternative sites exists for siting solar panels.

The current official estimates that sea levels will rise by 1.1m by 2100 do not take account of the accelerated melt rate of the Greenland ice sheet which will add another 0.25m rise [REDACTED]. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England's conclusion to this data is 'that these predictions increase the need for protection from development for good growing land at heights greater than 5 metres above current sea level'. I wish to highlight this point further with a map focussing on this region of the implications of the sea level rise by 2050 from the Country Living article by Lisa Joyner on 11 November 2022 ([REDACTED]). This article states that sea levels around the English coast are forecast to be around 35cm higher by as soon as 2050. The article cites interactive maps from *Ocean & Coastal Management*, a leading international journal dedicated to the study of all aspects of ocean and coastal management from global to local levels.

The picture below from the front page of this article shows very clearly that forecast sea level rises for Peterborough, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire and all land east would devastate **MOST** farming activity and seriously undermine UK food security and the local rural economies. The land in red could be fully or partially submerged in water by 2050. This important research and the

comments from the CPRE therefore represent a significant reason to reject the proposal. Given the vast swathes of land that would be lost to farming in our region over the next two decades, proposed development sites like Mallard Pass should be protected and preserved for agricultural use especially in our region given sea level rise will devastate our region's economy and farming jobs.

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I hope the Planning Inspectorate will also take note of three rejections of Solar developments in our region in the last few months citing amongst many reasons the loss of valuable farmland for food security. They are the separate East Cambridgeshire District Council and West Suffolk District Council rejections of the Sunnica Solar Farm (Sunnica solar farm rejected by East Cambridgeshire council - BBC News). Another solar farm at Sedgeford near Hunstanton was also rejected on 8 Nov – (Vast solar farm on agricultural land at Sedgeford rejected | Eastern Daily Press (edp24.co.uk)). The District Council Chair stated: “Having seen the area that’s being proposed, this is a huge piece to take out of our food chain. We don’t know the future, but we do know that we can put solar panels on roofs.... We don’t know in the future whether we’ll be able to import anything, [with] what’s going on. We need to be getting back to self-sustaining [food sources].”

I also note with concern a 1st June 2023 article in The Times on page 9 raising concerns that the company planning to build Mallard Pass is facing questions about links to forced labour in China, the source of most of the solar panels that will be sourced for this development.

Future generations will not forgive this current generation for making decisions that undermine national food security when the future is so unclear (war in Ukraine, sea level rises, feeding a rising population, immigration to name but a few) and when alternatives exist in abundance and are increasing still further with the recent announcement of the Space Energy Initiative. This is a UK government initiative in partnership with other nations to establish vast solar parks in space sending continuous renewable energy (not intermittent as today) to earth by 2030. It seems siting solar parks on farmland is increasingly illogical. Solar parks on farmland is seemingly fast becoming

obsolete technology that will soon present communities and planning authorities with significant challenges to remove these ageing relics when they are finally superseded by new technologies and innovations (alongside the energy companies who champion them) within the decade.