

I am concerned about lot of issues relating to Mallard Pass, but four in particular.

(1) 1% of the UK population is epileptic, others have seizures for other reasons, and solar farms are terrible for anyone vulnerable to having seizures – whether they have previously had a seizure or not. Different things trigger seizures in different people. But glare and flashing lights are widely known to be common causes, and solar panels create both glare and flashing lights. Glare occurs just looking at one on a sunny day. Passing row after row of panels by train or car, the silver frames are flashing lights even on a dull day or in headlights, and the frames and panels are both flashing strobe lights on a sunny day.

- Any epileptic living near a solar panel at ground level or wanting to walk in a field near a solar panel at ground level is at risk of having a seizure caused by glare.
- Any epileptic is at risk of having a seizure caused by flashing lights if they pass by solar panels at eye level in a car or train – so ground level solar panels are a problem and panels that on a roof that is below a near-by road or rail bridge are a problem.
- Glare and flashing lights are such a high-risk cause of seizures that they could cause a car, lorry, or train driver who has never had a seizure before to drive by, have one, and crash.

What's more, all of these things have costs for the NHS – and for social services and the DWP if people then can't work or someone has to give up their job to become a carer.

At huge on-going cost to the NHS, someone in my family ended up in resus because of multiple seizures after passing sunlight flashing between trees. They have been told that, if it happens again, they could die or end up in a vegetative state. Putting their hands over their eyes as they pass a solar farm on a route they are driven past is not enough to shut out the flashing. They have to bury their head in their hands in their lap, and this is for a small solar farm in one small field. I dread to think of the implications of a farm the proposed size of Mallard Pass.

And planting trees around the site won't resolve the problem. That makes light concentration stronger between each tree. It would need to be a high solid hedge or fence to cut out the glare and flashing from the road, the train, every foot path, and visible property – which would make the site untenable for wildlife, prevent footpaths being used, and put huge fences at the bottom of people's gardens unless Mallard Pass is moved to fields far away from people's homes.

(2) I am concerned for the mental health of those living surrounded by black solar panels if Mallard Pass is agreed. Being surrounded by fields of black solar panels as tall and taller than people will be terrible for people's mental health because black is a depressing colour.

Counsellors tell those who are depressed to wear bright colours to cheer themselves up. They tell clients to avoid black as it is depressing. It is widely recognised that the countryside has a positive impact on people's mental health and this is, in part, because of the colour of the fields. Even car insurance companies know that some colour cars have a higher incidence of accidents than others because of colour psychology. It's been known for years that colour impacts our psychology. Colour psychology needs to be taken into consideration concerning solar farms.

From a colour psychology perspective, a wind farm retaining crops or green fields and sheep would be better than fields of black solar panels. Fields should be calming green, blue or golden natural countryside, not row after row of black glass and silver frames standing like rows of daleks. Solar panels should be on roofs, so they are on what is already dark and above the eye-line of epileptics. Otherwise, we are at risk of ending up with a community of depressed people more prone to needing the help of the NHS and less able to work, such that any energy saving is paid for by the NHS, social services, and the DWP.

- (3) Regular exercise is good for people's health, but walking on narrow lanes at risk of being run over is not. When you live in the country, it is better to walk on footpaths across fields. What's more, it is important that those who have fragile joint health, walk regularly to maintain good joints. It is also important that those who have heart problems walk regularly to maintain the health of their heart.

Days can make all the difference as I know from personal experience. Eight days in hospital last summer reduced me to having poor mobility that I have had ever since. I am now costing the NHS thousands and, as things stand, I am likely to cost the DWP thousands for life – all because I could not maintain my mobility for eight days and one thing led to another.

Figures like these need to be factored into the cost-benefit analysis of Mallard Pass. If people like me are unable to take their usual walk through the fields while Mallard Pass is built, or they can't face going through the fields once those fields are filled with solar panels, and their joints or their heart suffers, they could also cost the NHS, DWP, and social services thousands. It is not enough that paths are provided once the project is complete. Safe and healthy paths must be continuously available or people's mobility will suffer such that the NHS, DWP, and social services pay for at least some of any energy savings that Mallard Pass produces.

- (4) We need to think of the country as a whole. This area of the country is functioning well as agricultural land that provides tourism and other benefits. Other areas of the country are reliant on income from hydro and/or wind power they produce. But they suffer economically when what they produce has to be disconnected from the grid because the grid cannot accommodate a surge of power on a wet or windy day.

It is short-termism to simply produce a solar farm here and not resolve the problem with the grid. If a solar farm is built here, it will have all the health problems I have raised in (1)–(3); we will lose the benefit of the agricultural land and tourism that this area contributes to the national economy, and nothing will be done to improve the grid so that areas of the country dependent on what hydro or wind energy they produce can thrive.

There are already lots of projects across the country waiting 10–15 years to go on the grid because the grid cannot accommodate them. Areas of the country that have to have their power turned off when the grid cannot cope are economically depressed, which means people do not eat well and they are at risk of health issues that cost the NHS, DWP and social services money.

As an ex-international business lecturer, it seems to me that, rather than agreeing to Mallard Pass, the government would be wise to encourage investment in upgrading the grid so that projects that exist can maximise their potential and projects that are waiting to go on the grid are not wasted before technology moves on. Then, and only then, is it the time to consider whether we have to sacrifice good agricultural land to produce more energy – at which point technological advances could be such that fields of solar panels are obsolete because more efficient ways of energy production are available. Why sacrifice agricultural land here when food security is as equally important as energy security and we have the potential to produce energy from projects that we already have elsewhere in the country if we upgrade the grid – and focusing on them will not only improve the lives of numerous rural communities economically reliant on the energy that they produce, but potentially save the NHS and DWP money?

Since I know from my family's experience that solar farms are a health hazard, I do not think people's health should suffer for the sake of solar farms, I do not agree with sacrificing good agricultural land when other options such as upgrading the grid are available, and I do not think solar farms are cost effective when NHS, DWP, and other government costs are taken into consideration, I cannot agree to anything about the Mallard Pass application. I have no problem with solar panels on roofs or with solar tiles which would reduce glare more than panels. But I am opposed to solar farms in fields.