

I live near Oakham, Rutland, about 13 miles from the edge of the proposed development.

In general I consider the development to be inappropriate in scale and location for a rural area which, over the past 20 years in particular, has already become increasingly encroached upon.

I endorse the well-considered grounds for objection already submitted by my local MP, Alicia Kearns. Below are my key objections informed in part by her analysis:

1. Size of Development: Mallard Pass would be by far the largest Solar Plant in the UK. The scale would have a serious, inappropriate and negative impact on the local area.
2. Loss of Agricultural Land and Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land: The effects of Brexit and the continuing war in Ukraine have highlighted the underlying vulnerability of our food supply chain which has, since the 1980s, become over reliant on imported produce and use of just in time supply systems. This is only now beginning to be recognised. In the future we must grow more at home and develop our agriculture, not reduce the land's potential. Building on good quality and BVA land would be a strategic mistake for the UK economy and for food security.
3. Human Rights Abuses in Supply Chains: Disturbingly, Alicia Kearns has highlighted well-documented accusations against Canadian Solar for human rights abuses in their supply chains.
4. Loss of Natural Environment and Damage to Biodiversity: The area is home to a wide variety of wildlife. The developers' assessments have not properly explored the impact this development would have on it, particularly on rare wild birds.
5. Solar Panel Glare: The site is only about 8 or so miles from Rutland Water. It is a major tourist site with the largest surface area of any reservoir in England. Rutland Water is a designated Special Protection Area of international importance for some bird species. Evidence shows that birds can mistake solar panels for water, resulting in major disruption to their habitats. Likewise, glare from solar panels can represent a risk to drivers in an area already suffering a high level of road accidents.
6. Recreation, Mental Health, Physical Health: This part of the East Midlands remains attractive as a place to live and visit and is mostly unspoilt. However, the unprecedented size of this development and the fundamental changes to the landscape and communities affected will negatively impact the mental and physical health of residents and be a less attractive area for visitors to the area.
7. Local Economy and Business: Local businesses reliant on the tourism draw of nature will suffer. The benefits the applicant claim the community will enjoy do not take account of the population demographics and types of employment that characterise the area.
8. Technical Questions: Questions remain over the carbon benefit of the proposal; the carbon footprint that will be generated by the construction and the maintenance of the proposed development. Forecasting is not an exact science. There are questions over the accuracy of the forecasts for the amount of energy the project is likely to produce. If the estimates are inaccurate, the justification for the project will be negated. The forecasts need much deeper scrutiny.