Submission ID: 17954

The proposal represents an ill-conceived and decisive attempt to convert greenfield, and productive agricultural land of recognised character into a commercial-scale Industrial solar landscape- Not a farm- But above all it is against the clear wishes of many in the community and contrary to national and local policies and guidelines.
I am not opposed to the principle of renewable energy- I utilise it myself. I do not seek to shirk the individual and collective responsibility to help our country meet its climate change targets, however, I see the proposal for what it is: a commercial venture veiled under the guise of the green agenda pursuing purely private profit, launched, with an incredible lack of knowledge and experience. This Chosen site Mallard Pass proposes saves them Millions of pounds due to existing Grid Substation in place only enforces this point. No meaningful community engagement and No community benefit. But plenty to take away from it and impact it for Generations to come.
Some Salient Points:
Lacking and untruthful community engagement
Dominate the landscape with 10ft high panels and anti-deer fencing.
– Turn open rural footpaths into corridors inside an industrial facility.
– Litter the countryside with large shipping containers.
– Turn tranquil countryside into a constant “hum”.
– Displace existing wildlife, such as deer, bats, and protected birds.
– Bring 70+ vehicles per day *onto these narrow country roads during possibly 104+ weeks of construction
– Take 2175 acres of high quality food-producing arable greenfield land out of production for 35-40 years minimum, maybe forever.
– Probably Not use sheep for grazing, nor cover the fields in wildflowers.
– Export all generated electricity out of Rutland.
– Not reduce Rutland carbon footprint.
No End or Removal Plan or Date that gives the villages involved any knowledge that that the landscape would return to its current state.
Wildlife and Bio Diversity
There are endangered and protected species like curlews, fritillary butterflies and roe deer, but there will be no connectivity between habitats because wildlife corridors will be destroyed. Thousands of deer in Greatford and surrounding areas currently residing within woodlands will be channelled to graze and roam where? Accidents to road users due to fencing. This is altering or displacing long existing habitats just to suit a development, and then claiming biodiversity has improved!
We believe in helping preserve our existing local flora and fauna who call this area home. Many of the existing fields in the solar panel areas show Farmer led already long established Bio diversity paid for by Government / tax payer as margins or Stewardship schemes.- which incidently the Developer has shunned the maintenance of in the latest submission. What hope have we that the proposed new plantings and walks will be maintained and what will happen if they don't. Long gone the contractors will be and the site sold on. Take the National Grid Power substation on Uffington Lane as a clear example- installed in 2015 with circa 25% at best of the proposed and installed screening has taken and not been managed to provide what it should have. We have been told by Mallard Pass there will be a hotline to ring to report issues of screening.....!, also that the farmers involved are already leaving there hedges untrimmed to help hide the areas where panels will be.
Integrity / Company Deliverance:
Personally and for the 2 companies I am a Director of I have received minimal correspondence through out the process to date. Despite being one of the largest boundary facers in the proposal. Having attended all the Mallard Pass attended consultations and put in submissions and stated both the personal and Business issues verbally and in writing that this proposal would affect us- All have been either shrouded and not answered or have to driven from our end to gain answers. This is not only stressful but un helpful.
Size, Scale and Agricultural Land Use:
Mallard Pass Needs to be this size to be “Economically Viable” This means the site is not suitable. Mallard Pass PR’ and Planning (like a lot of these proposed developments)Teams worked with Cleeve Hill 350 MW delivered on ½ size amount of land. They are maximizing the greed that the substation can take on extra unsuitable ground to profiteer
The loss of such a large area of prime agricultural land in at a time of global food insecurity is absurd. This land already grows and produces good crops of wheat, barley beans etc and in a time where food prices are rocketing, to lose such a substantial amount of farm land will have a long lasting effect as crop prices in the UK rise due to the war in Ukraine, it feels like this scheme is purely for profit. Agricultural land in this area does not come on to the market very often, and if approved this scheme now pricies out anyone wanting to buy land in the future due to the lack of land and the price the land will now be worth and what these land owners could puish land prices too for farmers who actually want to farm.
Again the point that because there is already a sub station in position there highlights that it is profit driven as it will be saving your Company money but not having to install one. Also under RHI why did ANY of these farmers NOT put Solar in and maximise or diversify themselves.... on there own 2 feet....!!
Solar panels are best placed on the 250,000 hectares (625,000 acres) of south facing commercial rooftops where they will not compromise the success of our agricultural industry.”
former Environment Secretary, Elizabeth Truss
This statement was agreed with by Sarah Price at consultation 1 at Essendine Village Hall!
Widely known that approximately 25 acres of land is required for every 5 MW of solar installation, according to the Solar Farm Association on that basis 1400 or say 1500 acres is max required
MPSF had taken little account of any differentiation between Grade 3a and Grade 3b agricultural land in drawing up the scheme until that information was sought by Locals despite the fact that paragraph 112 of the Framework requires planning authorities to seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. – In experience and Lack of Knowledge.
Farm land should not not only be classified on grade alone to satisfy the production of arable crops. We at Mallard Point Vineyard are testament to that growing high quality and high value top fruit in the production of grapes is proof and that at

over 150 acres next door of south facing land could do the same- a proper diversification in farming.
The PPG advises that ‘large scale’ solar farms are to be ‘focussed’ on previously developed and non agricultural land but does not preclude such development on agricultural land. The PPG (2014) section on renewable energy for example is clear that local planning authorities should encourage the effective use of land "...by focusing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land,.
Part of solving climate change is to reduce the carbon miles that our food incurs, as 45% of the food eaten in the UK is imported. Building Un viable and inefficient solar farms on 2175 acres more land than required of high quality UK farmland makes NO sense in reducing this large carbon footprint. How can Mallard Pass prove they can offset this…
Only this week- reported in the Daily Telegraph 13/06/23 Coal fired Power stations were fired up as the technology of current panels where not able to deal with the heat wave and sunshine the country was dealing with.....! As the benchmark temperature was superseded and this makes them LESS Efficient. - At this time we are yet to even know the panels
Surely another part of solving climate change is to reduce the amount of resources that are wasted. Electricity is lost the further it travels in the network.
MPSF BEING built close to a substation to reduce the developers loss, but due to the connection type into the grid, this electricity then travels 10’s if not 100’s of miles to get to where it will actually be used at the consumers expense.
Flooding
the kinetic energy of the water draining from the solar panel could be as much as 10 times greater than that of rainfall. Thus, because the energy of the water draining from the panels is much higher, it is very possible that soil below the base of the solar panel could erode owing to the concentrated flow of water off the panel..” and that if the land underneath and surrounding the panels is not correctly managed (such as due to compaction via use of machinery) then the runoff is likely to be “..increased significantly and the peak discharge increased by approximately 100%.” This means the solar panels may increase flooding and soil erosion depending on the soil and how it is managed.
Soil comes in many different forms.
The area here is a predominantly clay topsoil, with a Limestone subsoil. Clay soils are wonderfully fertile soils, and we previously discussed the high grade of soil we have here. However, when clay soils are worked during wet periods they are prone to compaction. Farmers around here avoid working the land when it is wet. And if they absolutely have to they’ll stick very closely to the existing tramlines in the field. This isn’t just to avoid getting stuck, it is to avoid unnecessarily compacting the soil When soil becomes waterlogged it has reached its “field capacity”. With our current rainfall and with local field capacity is reached on between 120 and 150 days per year. This doesn’t mean just the winter months. We can have wet spells in spring and autumn and dry winters, so field capacity can be reached several times in a year and for variable periods. Hence our roads and fields flood several times through the year, not only in winter.
Once compacted the soils ability to absorb and hold water is reduced, and it also prevents water from seeping down further into any groundwater stores too. Therefore more water becomes available for flooding both on the surface and further downstream. LAND does not uncompact themselves. It requires aerating, and ideally having organic matter worked into it. So each year, once the crops are harvested, you’ll undoubtedly be familiar with the smell of the “September Surprise” when the farmers are spreading the well rotted manure onto the fields, ready for them to then subsoil (plough) the land. This process undoes any compaction from the year, and the mixed in manure adds extra structure (as well as nutrients) to the soil.
in order to get the solar panels and infrastructure in place the developers will need to work all over the land. They will touch almost the entire site area during the construction. Not just tramlines like the farmers. The entire area will be trodden on with heavy machinery, lighter machinery, and workers. This means the entire site area will be contractors building the solar farms are going to go home for a few days because they risk damaging the soil? Of course not! They will be on a schedule, with penalty clauses for delay, so they will carry on regardless of soil conditions and the mess they are making just to get the job done. We are told that their job will last around 18 – 24 months which must result in some working when the ground is unsuitable because of waterlogging. It won’t matter to them if the end result is a compacted messy mud bath that causes long term flooding to the local residents. So long as they get paid on time and in full.
Conditions of section 106 agreements for working times, routes, noise and access. Can not at this point or in future guarantee this impossible
Remember that a farmer will subsoil after harvest to remove as much compaction as possible. Contractors won’t be able to plough their damage out because they will have planted solar panels all over the fields and buried cables which would be pulled out by deep cultivation. Therefore the damage they do to field drainage will last 40 years, and the surrounding area will have to put up with the ensuing flooding.
And remember we can also have flooding during spring and summer when the fields have well established crops in them. The grass the developers plan on planting will have only a minimal counter effect on the severe compaction.
Construction Plan
No firm knowledge of the clear multiple year construction is yet to be given – another marker of a lack of information and feeding when suitable – this is down to mitigation... Due to the scale it is widely known the impacts this development will have on main and rural arterial roads and networks. The impact for us our business for access and for visitors – Traffic and noise wise will put people of visiting or wanting to stay as the tranquillity of a peaceful and enjoyable tourist attraction will be lost and need to be won back.
Impact on Tourism:
We have a Vineyard on the field below the aforementioned start of the Park Farm field side of Mallard Pass Proposal, which we have in the last year opened up to the general public to visit as part of a scenic place to visit in Rutland, offering Picnics and Tours and Tastings. With the planned Solar overlooking with the ugly security fencing you are planning on installing along our boundary, this will have a negative impact on a Tourism site and will deter potential customers this along with the mentioned Traffic and noise during construction. Further more the planned compulsory acquisition and deletion of access to our business by extinguishing access rights despite us being left in the dark for over a 6 months and taking legal advice and stress that this has had to possibly loose our only access and Rigjht of way only again at the pen floor hearing s for this to be redacted – BUT NOT AS REQUESTED ACTIONED IN MAP AND FORMAL LEGAL WRITING.
We invite you (Planning Inspectorate to visit as part of the visits scheduled).
Permissive path:

It is proposed a footpath to go along our boundary to which we object due to the increase in trespassing and the risk of vandalism. We are yet (again) to be advised if the proposed permissive path is to be on the track or in the field? We have a right of way along the track. Secondly, it is not safe for people to cross the road from the pavement at the corner to access the permissive path, there have been numerous accidents here including 2 x fatalities over the last few years.
Noise and Traffic Disturbance:
The impact that this scheme will have on Essendine will be obscene. The sheer volume of proposed traffic, lorries and cars, coming in and out of the village each day during the build phase will destroy the village. You are planning on coming off the A1 and driving past 3 schools in Casterton, at school drop off and collection, this road cannot cope with the current amount of traffic and adding on the propose lorries and cars you will be having to site each day will be catastrophic. In addition, the small country roads in this area cannot cope with the increase in traffic. The road that goes between Essendine to Uffington, where you are building your primary construction compound, opposite the Ryhall sub station, along with the fields which will house solar panels, this is a small road and when driving along, if you come across another vehicle you have to pull off the road. Are you planning on having this road closed during the installation for your private use? You also state that, “The only link within the study area required to accommodate two-way HGV flows is Uffington Lane, where the primary construction compound is to be situated,” the road can only cope with one HGV travelling in one direction, there certainly is not enough room for two-way. You suggest that, “minor works” to the junction, “including widening and implementing a give-way arrangement to ensure HGV’s can pass simultaneously”, is absolute nonsense. Currently if a HGV wishes to pull onto the Uffington Lane road currently any vehicle already stationery on it is required to pull out onto the A6121, I believe the volume of traffic that currently utilises the A6121 has been underestimated, especially as that section of road is still a 60mph zone.
LASTLY I WISH TO SPEAK AT THE NEXT PROPOSED Open Floor HEARINGS