

Final Hearings: Environmental Issues

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In any relationship-professional or private- there must be TRUST! On such an incredibly important issue as this NSIP,

My questions are:

Do I trust this process? Do I trust the Applicant; Do I trust the Government to do what is best long term?

As an Interested Party I have attended initial community meetings; all hearings to date; supported the walkabout by the ExA on Bridleways and Pathways; attended the Compulsory Acquisition meeting at Essendine Village Hall. I have submitted written representations whenever requested by MPSL and the ExA. In addition to all my prior reasons against this Application by Mallard Pass Solar Farm Limited for an order granting Development consent for the Mallard Pass Solar Farm, it is at this point in the process after CAH2, ISH4, ISH5 and the DCO, that I wish to draw your attention to even more aspects against this plan:

1. Speaking publicly is an extremely difficult skill and all those Interested and Affected Parties registered to speak will have deliberated for hours to ensure their opposing reasons were justified, clarified and evidenced in the strongest possible way. Their submissions may have included past facts but ones which were deliberately re-emphasised to make their new points crystal clear. It was therefore incredibly difficult having been asked to speak but not to repeat any points already mentioned. To scan through notes trying not only to remember past points and so not repeat them during their delivery but also to feel their contribution as being very disjointed was a very difficult situation given the public arena. This was both embarrassing and disappointing in the deepest way possible. These moments are minimal anyway. The Applicant was always given the right to respond (have the last word). This additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant.
2. It has to be emphasised that many of these parish councillors, IP's and other public responsible roles are held by those residents wanting to contribute to their localities without any form of remuneration. Their roles are taken on through a sense of total commitment and dedication to their rural communities and care for the people. These IP's are contributing because of their desire to preserve the British Countryside and way of life. They will be the most affected by this tragedy of imposed industrialisation for a minimum of 60 years. At the very least their diminished input has contributed to a demeaning feeling and lack of worth/ value within this process within this country.
3. I attended the Compulsory Acquisition Meeting (CAM) held at the Essendine Village Hall. Compulsory Acquisition had only been included by the Applicant in these latter stages and not at the beginning of this Planning Application notification. One extremely important example of an issue that emerged from the AP's concerns was that not all cable routes had been explored fully by the Applicant prior to this application. Compulsory Acquisition may not have been in any way necessary. There were many other concerns. This demonstrates insufficient investigation in order to cause minimal impact to the rural area and residents. This additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant.
4. At the CAM too there was angry opinion from the floor that the Applicant delivered facts "as if it was a done deal!" "Nobody wants this here or anywhere"! The word "arrogance" was used. This anger continued throughout particularly through the discussion of "this is

the first time 60 years has been mentioned". The attendees were shocked at this late stage that such a decision had been changed. The Applicant gave no planning reasons for this decision other than giving the status of semi-permanent to the Application. This reinforced mistrust as to further unknown changes and/ or those to come!

5. At the CAM when questioned regarding the sourcing of the solar panels the Applicant stated this to be unknown at this time! With a multi- billion-pound project at this stage of the planning procedure in this country I fail to believe this most important factor not to have been secured! I actually find this not only unbelievable but by holding back this information a demonstrable reinforcement of my mistrust of the Applicant together with their lack of integrity both in business and as honest human beings!
6. The Applicant explained on many occasions throughout the CAM and Hearings (past and present) that many details of this application are not decided upon, or included. For instance, there are no sufficient cable trench designs, installation methodology and operation and maintenance regime details. There are many options left open. The Applicant categorically stated these are not necessary or required at this stage of the process and will be submitted only at the Detailed Design stage. So, even at this late stage of the application the ExA did still require fundamental details which should have been considered and/ or provided to fully understand any impact of this development. This indicates to me negligence in originating this application as well as not providing the expected level of sufficient detail that is required for the ExA to understand the complete picture. At this final stage the Applicant should be able to answer all posed questions. They couldn't. The Applicant stated in response to so many questions that only in the detailed CEMP (s) submitted for approval will the necessary detailed clarification be included for this development.

'The final programme dependent on the layout design and potential environmental constraints on the timing of construction activities and the detailed construction programme will be set out in the detailed CEMP(s) submitted for approval to match with the overall phasing programme that is submitted pursuant to Requirement 3 of the DCO.'

Without complete transparency and all requested information, I/we cannot scrutinise the details in order to make any crucial further objections. This additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant.

7. The Development status has been recently changed from a permanent status to a semi-permanent one of 60 years. If construction is completed by 2028, this would take this change of land use up to potentially 2088. From the very start in October 2021, the Applicant explained to the residents that local farmers targeted by the Applicant had already agreed to lease some of their farmland for this industrial use. How can it be possible to change the time status at this late stage? Was this a contract already sealed as we were led to believe or not? This action has split communities irreconcilably. This additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant.
8. During the operational 60 years the Applicant/ owner of this development could have changed hands many times. The Applicant did not give any coherent reason for this change other than the Applicant would receive a further 20 years of income! This flagrant method of corporate profiteering will inevitably be transferred onto the consumer. (I recognise that the charges for grid electricity, should this Plan be granted, would already have to include the costs, share-holding profits and farmers annual remunerations for this corporate developer). The decommissioning would rest on who knows? At one point the Applicant did say it would fall onto the County Councils! The Government shall relinquish their

governance of their planning vision if permission to this development is granted This additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant as well as the process.

9. During questioning by the ExA, the Applicant categorically stated that there would be negligible additional impacts on the area or the communities by the 60-year status of the development. This was vehemently challenged. This status placed into question the need for replacement of all panels during a 2-year period after 25 to 30 years (panel lifetime expectation). This in turn, questions the repeat of the transport from source to the replacement of panels and all those convertors etc, within this development. The impact would be similar to the original construction impacts. This in turn questions the carbon footprint of the replacements. This then in turn prompted the “scientific expert” to comment, that trace materials used to construct solar panels are already diminishing at a fast rate. To put forward the argument of technological advances is the biggest unknown both in rate as well as appropriateness. This additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant.
10. I am dumbfounded to read that the Applicant states there are a number of different determinants of health. Only when all the determinants combine together, will the Applicant acknowledge there will be a significant adverse effect on health. This is not true. This removal of a natural rural landscape and replacement with one of industrial urbanisation is profound. Every single change will have an enormous detrimental impact upon every single resident within these communities. The alteration of landscape and view; the altered environmental features; the quality of people’s lives; the misery of the impact of changes to roads, traffic, travel, pollution during construction particularly; people’s natural recreation and amenity; the loss of the natural established biodiversity; the impact of constant 24 hour noise for 60 years at various levels; the impact list is endless. These losses can never be mitigated. A loss means it’s gone. Transposing flowers (orchids) and skylarks to another location is not sufficient. The biodiverse ecology has formed at their present locations because they are naturally viable at those specific microclimatic surroundings. Yet despite these losses and unnatural replacements with remedial mitigations, the Applicant trivialises the impact that will be made for the rest of people’s lives and indeed the natural world, in this location on both their physical and mental health and wellbeing. In fact, for the next 60 years until at least 2088! Lives as well as livelihoods - gone. This additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant.
11. I am astounded to read, that the Applicant does not consider the level of interest around food security as important and/or relevant. This must also link to the use of BMV land proposed within this development which is extremely significant. To commit the reduction of BMV land for 60 years could be construed as irresponsible at the very least. To ignore the balance and implications of reducing the food producing land as well as to house and produce electricity for the UK, is gross incompetence. This development by the Applicant reflects both. It is paramount that the use of our land is maximised for the good of the people as well as address global warming. Food security stops food transportation and imports and subsequently directly decreases carbonisation of our world. Additionally, I am very disappointed at the proven inadequacy and inaccuracy of the soil sampling for BMV rating of the land in question, by the Applicant. MPAG (Mallard Pass Action Group) had to raise funds to employ a soil consultant to provide additional BMV Auger values for some of the required land. This has consequently cast serious doubts on the accuracy of the remaining land BMV rating, by the Applicant. This rating is crucial to ensure no land is

removed from food production and ensure food security for the growing population of the UK. This is the reasoning behind using more suitable sites for solar panels (brownfield, all roofs etc). Food security is part of the solution towards Net Zero and so is vitally important AND relevant. Demonstrating such a dismissive attitude towards food production and security as well as providing insufficient BMV testing and rating additionally contributes to the lack of trust felt towards the Applicant.

Conclusion:

We, as a community are desperate to have a life and a world, safe to pass on to the future generations. Everywhere in the UK communities are endeavouring to make a difference. Farmers committing to regenerative farming reinforcing their serious guardianship of the land; householders and businesses covering roofs with solar panels to meet their needs and supply the grid- minimising the carbon footprint; communities committing wholeheartedly to making changes that make a difference e.g., Forest Green Rovers Football Club; offshore wind turbines maximising this island uniqueness/advantage; consideration and development of nuclear and wave renewable usage.

These efforts need support and encouragement.

The Applicant supports the following interpretive view of paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

‘Although valued by the local community- no evidence from desk or field studies- to suggest these features are of particular or elevated value in comparison to the surrounding area. Therefore, it is assessed that the landscape within the order limits would be of local /district value. The proposed development impact therefore needs to be seen in the context that the area which it is located is NOT a valued landscape and should not be considered a countryside area of intrinsic character and beauty. ‘

To demean and denigrate the homes and environment within this country, and its people, is abhorrent. I do not trust the Applicant in any way and would not feel safe in their hands to be allowed to lead and deliver this monumental development by dictating how and where this country should plan its journey towards Net Zero!

This is significant mental injury for all affected persons.

This is our home. We care. The Applicant does not. To get the balance right would be world leading!

I do not trust this Applicant.

I hope with all my heart that all the arguments I and all other IP's AP's and Groups representing the communities against this Application by MPSFL demonstrate the genuine desire to strive for the very best for our future world.

This is not against solar as a renewable it's against their use and the exploitation of people, in this way.

I thank you for taking the time to read my written representation.

I strongly urge you to reject this planning submission.

Linda Davies