

Further to my objections stated in the Relevant Representation stage, as an architect, I would like to take issue with the proposed buildings in the Gate Burton Energy Park with this Written Representation.

First of all it should be noted that it is likely that the proposal would not be classed as a permitted development and, if submitted to the Local Authority, I would expect the planning department to object to the poor design quality of the proposed Warehouse and Storage Building. The appearance of the building is totally inappropriate to its countryside setting, with the mono-pitch roof in particular, at odds with the local vernacular. The proposed materials on the elevation drawing appear to show blockwork as a facing material which illustrates the lack of attempt at good quality design. I would expect that a building in a futuristic development such as this would show more design flair and attempt to enhance its immediate setting. At least it ought to be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

The building is situated within a compound that also includes the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and it would seem to me to be highly dangerous to collect so many of these batteries so close together. The submission documents refer to 156 no. BESS containers when the plan drawing indicates 240 no., which seems to illustrate the applicants disregard for accuracy in these matters.

We are all aware that solar is an intermittent generating technology which requires a storage system to make it viable but not only is it uncertain that this can be realised, but there is great concern that BESS have a tendency to catch fire. Lithium battery fires are caused by a phenomenon called thermal runaway. In these situations, the increased temperature in the battery, caused by regular charging and discharging of power, triggers it to raise temperatures even higher. As a result, the battery may become too hot to touch, smoke, catch fire, eject gas, or explode. The environmental pollution caused by the fire smoke and the toxic materials that could leak and contaminate the ground have a serious impact on biodiversity and can be hard to measure. All these consequences are unlikely to be reversed after a fire has happened. It is evident from video footage of electric cars and buses that when they catch fire they easily transmit the fire to adjacent vehicles, therefore a BESS fire in the proposed compound could transmit to adjacent storage units. This could result in a disaster of enormous proportions.

In my opinion the above scenario is enough not to risk the approval of this proposal which relies on importing systems from China who are not renowned for quality products. Can you rely on cheap Chinese products to be safe in use? If something is cheap it is usually inferior.

I am in favour of solar panels on roof tops or car parks or brown field sites, but I strongly object to solar panels on this scale on farm land. We need the crops to provide the food security we need and we do not need the kind of energy security that takes this away and leaves us with an ugly industrialised landscape that could prove to be, in more ways than one, an unmitigated disaster.