

Sturton by Stow Parish Council – Deadline 3 submission.

General observation

Solar projects are termed Strategic National Infrastructure Projects when over 50MW.

The following terms are used extensively during the initial and subsequent engagements; Harvest, capture, farm, grazing and park among others – these terms invoke and promote a sense of rural scenes yet they are infrastructure projects; using valuable farmland in this particular location, to produce power. Power generating stations are not farms or parks.

The terminology around these projects needs to change, to reflect what they actually are; infrastructure sites. Despite the efforts of DCO's, in 40, 50 or 60 years or when decommissioning actually happens the sites will, most likely, be classed as brownfield industrialised sites and will never come back into agricultural use.

The PV panels do not 'capture' or 'harvest' solar rays. The solar rays happen to fall on the PV arrays. Land surrounding these sites, on environmental plans, may state 'grazing site'. This needs to be avoided unless actual grazing is going to happen and can be demonstrated as part of the planning forecast process.

The very nature of the solar PV technology means that in the area of Gate Burton, Cottam, West Burton and Tillbridge Solar, these projects will need to use vast amounts of farmland; They are electricity generating sites. This is mass industrialisation of our countryside, a valuable and finite resource.

They should be referred to as Electricity Generating Sites not solar farms.

Noise has not been adequately addressed for post construction. There is proposed mitigation whilst construction is happening. Since there are no operational sites of this size anywhere in the UK, let alone the combined size of the four projects at varying stages of consideration, there is little information and data available.

- What will a rain/hail storm actually sound like?
- What will the impact of wind be through the structures of these sites?
- What level of noise can be expected from transformers?
- What will the thermal properties produced by sunlight striking the panels have on the locations?
- What microclimate impacts can the local residents expect?
- What mitigation will the applicant take to minimise such impacts?

Document EN010131 App 3.1 states in 10.4.13 item B that '*Construction will be undertaken in the winter months*'

Does the applicant have working knowledge of winter earthworks construction?