

ISH 2, Session 1 – Landscape and Land Use

There is little doubt that the impact of the size of this and the other sites currently or imminently undergoing NSIP oversight is huge.

Gate Burton DCO is expected to cover 1436 hectares - 3548 acres, a huge area.

The cumulative effect to include;

West Burton 1050 hectares (2550 acres – 480MW),

Cottam 1150 hectares (2800 acres -600MW)

Tillbridge 1400 hectares (3459 acres – 500MW)

a total of 5036 hectares or 12357 acres is, quite simply, incomprehensible.

The prospective order limit of Gate Burton to cover 3548 acres to generate 500MW would appear, when compared to other projects, to be significantly more land hungry. The question has to be why? There is little difference in the type of land proposed by each site – it is all relatively flat.

The applicant is using the current land classification by DEFRA of mainly grade 3b. This classification should not be used to marginalise the productivity of the land. This land is used for varied crops, successfully, and the classification of 3b should not be used to suggest this land is unproductive.

The UK is becoming more at risk of food insecurity. Land cannot be made. The continual pressure to industrialise the farmland of this country is not being addressed.

The open vista, which is currently enjoyed travelling (by whatever means) through our countryside, is important. The applicant has sought to mitigate the invasive spectre of panels by using hedging to try to screen the site. This only serves to increase the impact of reduced sightlines. The effect of using hedging as screening will also reduce the field of vision and will result in quite literal tunnel vision. This is an unacceptable impact on residents and visitors throughout our countryside.

There are many studies which show benefits to mental wellbeing by being in a rural and open landscape. The use of hedging, even though this is a natural boundary treatment, will when used excessively, have the potential to overwhelm. This point needs careful consideration. Just because something is screened does not remove the knowledge that it is there.

The change to the landscape will go from being open and visuals for miles; to being constrained. This will be an important consideration for PROW's and more crucial for residences.

The traffic flow assessment uses data collected in March/April 2022 and covers the main 'A' highway routes for Gate Burton site (A156, A15, A1500 & A631); the cumulative oversight should be reflected to ensure that, in the event of construction overlap, the total movements for each additional site are included. There was discussion regarding the potential for developer collaboration with traffic movement but given the distances between each site and the sheer volume of construction materials, this seems very unlikely to be viable in practise.

There will be multiple B and C class roads to be used, cumulatively, which is not reflected by any assessment or monitoring data.

Whilst the applicant will only want to give information on their main road use, the cumulative effect cannot be ignored in the 'worst-case scenario' of multiple construction sites happening concurrently.

The number and timing of multiple street closures or restrictions will have severe impacts on surrounding roads and highways.

The village of Sturton by Stow is dissected by A1500. Any increase with traffic flow will need to take this important point into consideration. The local CSW (Community Speed Watch) data for March/April 2022 is detailed below, only vehicles exceeding 36mph in the 30 zone are recorded:

A1500 03/03/22 - 358 vehicles (08.30-09.30) -10 recorded over 36mph
A1500 20/04/22 - 520 vehicles (16.00-17.00) -10 recorded over 36mph
B1241 19/03/22 - 228 vehicles (10.30-11.30) – 1 recorded over 36mph
B1241 11/04/22 - 245 vehicles (09.00-10.00) – 19 recorded over 36mph

It is recognised that the above data is a snapshot of a one-hour period only. Any increase is significant to A1500 in particular and will need careful consideration from the applicant.

All traffic impacts are exclusively local, concentrated and cannot be mitigated.