

I live in the hamlet of Knaith at the very edge of the Gate Burton project and my visual outlook and the disruption that will be caused to the close local area during construction, together with 3m high security fencing, 5m camera posts and CCTV monitoring on a 24 hour basis is not only an intrusion on my personal liberty but is going to destroy a way of life and the landscape for in excess of 60 years.

The combined effect of this project both in terms of the panels and associated ground works and the civil engineering works for connectivity will offer little protection for wildlife and for the environment as a whole. The impact on the road network locally with many thousands of HGV journeys over the period of construction, is immeasurable in terms of disruption to local businesses and residents. Are the bridges of sufficient strength to carry such weights?

Might I give an example of how disruptive this is going to be and the level of damage to small country roads that will occur?

For the last month the main road from Lea to Willingham from the A156 has been closed and the official diversion route has been through Marton and up to Sturton and back to Willingham, however with the use of SatNav systems being ever more prevalent the road (Knaith Hill) on which I and others live, including young children, and the elderly, Knaith hill is a single track lane without passing places and with no public footpath has been used as a cut through by HGVs, the main bus from Gainsborough to Lincoln (both ways) and a massive increase in passenger vehicle traffic in general as well as an increase in heavy farm equipment, which has caused severe damage to the road surface as well as damage to verges, overhanging trees as well as congestion and arguments about right of way etc.

The council has only this week put up No HGV and no through road signs; this has improved the situation but not stopped it.

Now imagine THREE YEARS of this. It will destroy road surfaces, increase accidents and worsen the already fragile mental states of our residents who have chosen to live in this historic and beautiful location.

A question that I have and as yet has been unanswered and that I would ask the inspectorate to address for me please is to do with the area marked in Pink on the indicative concept master plan as being a development exclusion zone.

Whilst I understand the basic meaning of this, it has been brought to my notice that areas of this exclusion zone are to be used for equipment and plant storage and bearing in mind my comments above, it is unrealistic to expect such as small single track lane through a residential area to be able to cope both from an ability to carry such potential weight and volume of traffic but also to do this safely.

On the DCO application in location drawing GH1446625001-OLLP-2 it now shows an area previously shown as exclusion zone in the indicative concept master plan at the top of Knaith Hill marked as Knaith Park now to be included in the Order limits area. Which is it Exclusion zone or an area to be used for panels or other uses?

The question really is will this area be kept as an exclusion zone, is it the applicants intention to use it as a storage area or is it going to be used for panels and what provision in the proposal is there for maintaining and repairing the inevitable damage caused to existing infrastructure during and after the project period?

The proposal for The Gate Burton Solar project, whilst a separate proposal, really should be viewed not only on its own merit but should be considered as a part of the 4 projects in total that are being proposed by companies very closely associated with each other, in a close

geographical area and in a very similar time scale, as the total impact on both quality food producing land, loss of related jobs and the aesthetic effect on over 10,000 acres would be so destructive that it should be rejected as a whole or should be scaled back to a reasonable and acceptable size, we should bear in mind that whilst energy resilience is important, food security is even more so and really does impact on national security and well being.

The local residents who have chosen to live here because of the peace and quiet together with the rural outlook are being disenfranchised and disregarded in the matter.

The panels proposed for the Gate Burton project at 3.5 metres high will have a massive negative effect on both the visual and aesthetic beauty of the area. Not only are farmers affected, but residents in the villages around, some of which lie within an Area of Great Landscape Value, and who have chosen to live in these rural areas will have their quality of life changed forever, not just long term but also the disruption caused during the construction phase will have severe effects on freedom and mental health.

The physical size of the project(s) is really only now being realised and the lack of accurate information by Low Carbon Energy and others, together with their minimalist consultation process has not allowed for proper understanding of the scale of the project and the associated disruption for little national gain. Solar is at best only 12% efficient. For example the Substation which will dominate the landscape and have up to four transformers and would have a maximum footprint of up to 220m x 130m and up to 13m in height should be described as a power factory in an area of natural beauty.

Close to the small villages, the risk of failure and subsequent fire and pollution hazards from this facility have never been locally consulted upon, although in the consultation document it is highlighted that a water supply with storage is to be installed, showing that the developers themselves have concerns. It would seem to make more sense to locate all battery storage facilities close to the actual national grid connection at Cottam power station on Brownfield land not in fields close to residential homes, doctors, schools etc.

The connectivity for the project encompasses many km of cable and multiple associated connections on various parcels of land encompassing some 180 hectares of agricultural land and involves massive civil works across the region and under the tidal river Trent. The planning process for this has never been fully consulted upon and greater understanding of this major element should be sought. The combined effect of this project both in terms of the panels and associated ground works and the civil engineering works for connectivity will offer little protection for wildlife and for the environment as a whole.

The extended construction period of 3+ years includes for 12 hour working days over 5 days and reduced hours on a Saturday in a relatively quiet rural area, will cause immense disruption and the 400 construction workers will add considerable load to the existing rural road network as well as destroying the tourism element of the area through not only the physical disruption of the works involved but by simply taking over rental accommodation both holiday lets, B&B etc but also domestic rental properties in Gainsborough and the surrounding areas which will inevitably have the effect of increasing rental prices in a town already deprived and struggling to offer residents affordable housing.

The manufacturing process in its self is a toxic one and that the panels are produced in China where investment in and use of fossil fuel power stations is at an all time high. Using more fossil fuel generated electricity to produce the solar panels frankly makes no sense.

In addition simply the costs involved in transporting such volumes of panels over long distances negates any gains from the further ill considered installation of solar factories, for that is what these huge scale projects are, not solar farms.

In summary, due to the scale of the four applications and the close time scales involved, the Gate Burton project along with the other 3 projects on the table for the local area should be considered as one.

- The consultation undertaken by Low Carbon Energy and others was inadequate and not undertaken in good faith.
- The actual long term benefits of solar power on this scale are negated by the costs in terms of damage to the environment and the overall high carbon costs involved in the manufacture and transportation of the panels, assorted equipment and disruption both short and longer term to the local area and population.
- This project not only will affect the liberty and health of the local population today but will impact upon future generations to come.
- This form of “renewable” energy is at best highly inefficient and when that power is truly needed to supplement the national grid they are performing at their worst i.e. winter evenings when there is no sunlight.

Please reject this and the other associated projects before it is too late, for the various companies to apply for permission as separate projects is plainly wrong, they are trying to disguise the size of the overall project and as such should be rejected .