

GABE IP-248

IP 20037283

LOW CARBON GATE BURTON ENERGY PARK DEADLINE 3 – 1 SEPTEMBER 2023

OPEN FLOOR HEARING TUESDAY, 22ND AUGUST, 2023 - RISEHOLME AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

I concur fully with Interested Parties (IPs) in attendance at this Hearing who spoke so compellingly against the Low Carbon Gate Burton and cumulative effects of Cottam, West Burton and Tillbridge Solar projects.

TOURISM

I was perturbed to note in the document below Low Carbon Quote: The impact on tourism was scoped out of the socio-economic chapter due to the unlikely impact of the Scheme and cumulative schemes. Unquote.

I refer the Examining Authority to Section 2.14 Local Economy & Community Benefits - Page 97 of the Applicant's Responses to Interested Parties Relevant Representations Document Reference EN010131/APP/8.1 dated July 2023.

Objections were raised by a significant number of IPs to the adverse impacts of Gate Burton solar and the 3 additional schemes above on tourism in the area, in particular on those communities locally affected by the solar projects on holiday lodges, b&bs, hotels, Fishing holiday parks and shops.

I ask the Examining Authority to reinstate Tourism centred on the facts and comments contained herein:-

A. Low Carbon assert the Tourism receptors of Le Chateau, located near the proposed Gate Burton Site and the Black Swan Guest House in Marton village will not be negatively impacted by their NSIP Scheme, nor by cumulative schemes. This assertion is without doubt withering and dismissive. Occupation by construction workforce would be temporary only leaving long term after effects with no visual countryside and landscape benefits for tourists if these schemes go ahead. I deem Low Carbon's mitigation is interrelated to the reciprocal protective provisions arrangement entered into by each of the four aforementioned parties confirmed in their respective Relevant Representations.

FOR CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ON TOURISM – SEE APPENDIX 1 ATTACHED

The following is fact :-

- The Greater Lincolnshire's Visitor Economy is currently estimated to be worth over £2.39bn per annum with long-term growth potential. It is high-quality and varied offered across city, coast and countryside and supports at least 30,000 full time equivalent jobs. It is absolutely essential to the area.
- The 30 affected villages are Lincolnshire's countryside, they are visitor destinations, they are part of the 10,000 acres therefore tourism should not be scoped out of the examination process.
- These villages and their surroundings have history in abundance. (see Map 2) attached.
- They help support the local economy and currently benefit by drawing in tourism to their b&bs, fishing holiday parks, tea shops, hostleries, other shops and businesses, etc.
- Tourism and visitor footfall is an important feature of these areas all year round.

There are an absolute minimum of 35 holiday cottages/b&bs/Retreats/Inns in the communities that will be affected by the solar projects, notwithstanding a range of shops and other businesses. This is not a finite list.

B. In the same section of the above Relevant Representation Document, the Applicant's mitigation refers to a survey conducted in Cornwall in 2013 on "the impact of renewable energy farms on visitors to Cornwall" in which it states "...visitors are more likely to visit, which is likely to be as a result of those that find such developments attractive"... ! The survey is 10 years out of date. The accuracy of the percentages and other information quoted by Low Carbon illustrating this survey as mitigation is undeniably questionable in 2023. Low Carbon are manipulating the narrative to suit their purpose, this is desperation. In 2013 solar energy projects in Cornwall were situate on around 25 acres of land this is in stark contrast to the proposed four schemes, three under examination. This makes a nonsense of Low Carbon's mitigation. Cornwall's economy is not dissimilar to Lincolnshire, largely dependent upon agriculture followed by tourism. These are fundamental to Lincolnshire. If Cornwall was confronted today with 10,000 acres of its farmland being procured for 4 solar projects I frankly believe people would find it abhorrent and protest and object as I and the 30 affected communities are doing here.

P A Mitchell

31 August 2023