

Gate Burton Deadline 5 Submission 20th November 2023

Alarming the overall total solar development from the 5 major proposals in NE Lincolnshire, including Gate Burton Energy Park, is now approaching 15000 acres which is an unbelievable area and will obviously be disastrous for the local community. The mass of representations already submitted will clearly cover the many general objections so I will not repeat them again here. However, there are certain human and physical issues that may have been somewhat understated which I would like to emphasise.

I have to say that overall there is a general feeling from the local community, which emanates from the manner these proposals are being projected and processed, in that we are going to have little say on the outcome. We are simply being told, by the Developers, what their intentions are with little interest shown for the impact it will have on the area, environment and our lives. The message that implicitly comes across is that it's all for the good of the nation and our charge towards zero emissions. The local population clearly don't matter.

This is totally at odds with the Prime Minister's message that of 'Consent not Imposition' when he spoke of on shore wind turbines during his review on how we achieve net zero by 2050.

I do believe that it is difficult to imagine the scale of these overall proposals; communities up and down the country have talked about 'massive' solar farms being developed in their area but these are rarely much greater than 250 acres, so on that scale you would have to rate the NE Lincolnshire proposals as galactic! Reference has been made to an overall figure of just 1% of the country being affected by solar energy clearly in an attempt to underplay the proposals. But in West Lindsey this figure is greater than 5%. But it is not only the size but also the sheer density of their construction, the farms are all being condensed into a relatively small area in order to achieve savings utilising the grid connections of the three abandoned power stations. In our area they are almost side by side and back to back, taking over almost 50% of the green belt area. This is vandalism on a grand scale.

Please imagine what impact this will have on the immediate area. Villages and communities that have existed for 1000 years, originally based essentially on agriculture, will be destroyed, our hamlet Brampton was even mentioned in the Doomsday book! No one will want to live in an industrial desert, property values will plummet and the whole area will essentially become sidelined. With no thought of compensation or mitigation being offered, apart from screening and footpaths, the power companies will literally be destroying the local lives, wellbeing and property investment within the 30+ villages closely affected by the proposals. Yet quite to the contrary the power companies are offering vast rents to land owners and farmers in order to utilise their land for the solar farms. Where is the equity in that?

It is small wonder then that the vast majority of the local population are opposed to these schemes, a fact that was actually recognised in the Cottam and West Burton Phase 2 Consultation Summary report dated September 2022 where they reported 77% were opposed and only 12% supported the proposals. Of course since then 3 more schemes have been proposed so I am certain that the extent of objection will have increased significantly.

In conclusion, it is also ironic that I am making these concerns at the very time a recent wildlife and state of nature report 'highlights that the UK is one of the most nature depleted places on the planet'. Small wonder this is the case when today, consideration is being given to turning over vast swathes of greenbelt and farmland into a grossly inefficient source of energy production. Instead of recognising the damage this will cause to wildlife, too hear some of the nonsense statements emanating from some of the power companies you would think they are doing nature a great service. Clearly they are either in denial or selflessly not interested.

In percentage terms how much of the Nations energy will the destruction of 15,000 acres of green belt contribute over a twelve month period, I would love to know? The power companies publish all sorts of misleading figures, how many houses they will supply, which of course will be in peak summer when demand is low, they never mention the winter months when the output will be zero. This stupidity and potential damage has got to be stopped, recognise it for what it is, purely a money making and profiteering venture.