

IP REFERENCE: 20038532

WEST BURTON SOLAR SCHEME

I write to submit the concerns I have relative to the procedural timetable as set out in your letter dated 10 August 2023 ref EN010132.

There is insufficient time allowed between the dates for Preliminary Meetings, Hearings and other aspects of the Island Green Power West Burton Solar and Cottam Solar Projects, which are running concurrently, to read the documents, understand the complex information and procedures and to meet the deadlines given by the Planning Inspectorate for interested parties to take on board as these examinations are now overlapping. Why have these schemes not been examined together as ONE, especially as West Burton and Cottam are running concurrently and both were submitted by the same company, Island Green Power ?

I may be mistaken but I understood from information provided by the Planning Inspectorate that the examination timetables for these 4 NSIP applications within a few miles of each other and surrounding 30 communities in the West Lindsey District Council area would be prepared so as not to cause overlapping specifically to allow interested parties to engage fully with the process. As this has not happened here I can see that Island Green Power is receiving an unfair advantage in respect of West Burton Solar and Cottam Solar – the consequence of this is that interested parties and the 30 affected communities are being woefully disadvantaged.

Most people are not familiar with this type of examination procedure and the tight time frames specified in the examination timetables are not conducive to people being able to understand and familiarise themselves and act on the matters at each stage in the process. I am aware the outcome of these tight timescales have triggered some interested parties to feel overwhelmed, disadvantaged and excluded and question whether they should continue to take part in the examination process, including myself.

Furthermore, the Gate Burton Solar application is presently with the Examining Authority (and shortly to follow Tillbridge Solar), 4 enormous NSIP projects on 10,000 acres of farmland, within a very few miles of each other. Each scheme has meant the people affected by them have had to engage with the examination process individually for each one, a massive undertaking which can cause an individual to lose track of where they are in the process. This would not have happened had all four schemes been considered as ONE.

The scale and cumulative effects of these 4 NSIP projects in our small rural area is prejudicial to the area where I live and to the lives of those residents of the 30 affected communities.

Excluded, disadvantaged and discriminated from fully participating in the process at the September 2023 meetings arranged by the Planning Inspectorate for these projects (7th September West Burton & 5th and 6th September Cottam) that are taking place as yet again (as per the Gate Burton Solar meeting dates in July) are during work days when many people will be unable to attend.

I note the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, has decided the West Burton Solar application should be examined by a Panel of 2. This also applies to Cottam Solar and Gate Burton Solar. As an interested party I question if a Panel of 2 for each of these immense solar projects is a sufficient number to consider the full context of this (these) applications given the amount of documents to be reviewed. I do have concerns as to whether the current NSIP process can meet the demands of these multiple NSIP schemes.

D C Mitchell

19 August 2023