

Relevant Representation West Burton

Firstly, thank you for your time in reading and considering my representation.

At this point I would like to say that I am in favour of greener energy and support striving towards net zero compliance however the manner in which we are going about this with this proposal is against ESNZ guidelines, and is not the most effective way of balancing / reducing our carbon footprint.

Having attended presentations / open forums it is very evident they are currently unable to answer all questions posed and extremely vague on others.

My concerns for consideration are as follows: -

1 or 4 applications?

The west Burton application I believe should not be taken in isolation I understand there are 2 more applications to be submitted, the 4 applications are all joined up via cabling and are therefore one development they should be viewed as one and the total effects taken into consideration. They are also sharing legal team as well as supplies of materials – same factory in China to produce panels

UK Food Provision & Security

Our country currently is far from self-sufficient particularly in the production of food and the loss of potentially up to 10,000 acres (with 4 submissions) will put additional strain on the crop supply. The land I understand is classed as 3b however this figure was measured during the 1980's and has very little value today as farming methods have significantly changed. A truer reflection would be based upon yield of which this land is classed as very high.

Permission to retest the land quality has been denied by the land owners – this need to be investigated and a detailed analysis produced with the class and yield statistics.

We see the effects of war and how food is being used as a weapon – without land where will the food come from to satisfy our increasing population – bringing it in from overseas will leave us very open to the dictators and war loads of this world. WE MUST REVERSE THE YEAR ON YEAR DECLINE OF UK FOOD PRODUCTION.

Local Community

The effect on the community cannot be truly accurately measured until after the event however what can be foreseen is the loss of employment, housing of tenant farmers, impact on farm suppliers (machinery, crop support, service industry etc).

The personal effect on the hundreds of villages and visitors is again unmeasurable at this stage I assume this will include many of the following: - mental health, loss of the local countryside enjoyment, employment, hospitality sector, property values, minimum of 4 years of construction traffic, permanent security driving round 24/7 CCTV etc.

There are dwellings / villages that are very close to the proposal and studies have highlighted the requirement for a safe distance from the panels and batteries. A minimum of 2KM is recommended, developers have no knowledge of this or are following the available science.

Village curtilage - all villages have a legal curtilage around them to protect from this type of development – yet again they have no knowledge of this and therefore are possibly encroaching into this area.

They are talking about giving back to the communities free charging points etc, - just an unwelcome sweetener

The Planned Area

The area along the development is of historic interest and value known as the Lincoln Cliff / Jurassic Ridge with currently outstanding views across the Trent Valley. Supporting 3 open water reservoirs with a mass of migratory birds and associated wildlife for consideration. Within the development area there are also historic buildings / village that will be heavily affected by the development.

This area also has a high level of wildlife and biodiversity that will be negatively affected.

The application wishes to have the option of removing all hedgerows yet again unmeasurable effect on carbon absorption and wildlife impact.

Wildlife movements will be heavily restricted by the fencing in of the panels for security. Currently the government have committed to a world plan on reducing the effect on biodiversity – how does this development possible fit with these commitments? They say they are setting aside areas in proportion to the development however cannot say where & size.

Project Economics

When comparing the economics / performance of solar with others it is very clear that this type of renewable energy is well behind other more favourable methods wind, wave etc and produces more damage to the environment in panel construction / shipping therefore taking a longer period to achieve a negative impact.

Having spoken to the developers they are unable to answer / no comment on several points that I see as additional concerns about these projects.

The land, use of after the period of industrialisation – I understand that restoration to farming land cannot take place, wasteland or industrial buildings?

I believe after 10 years the land will have acquired change of use status and therefore housing can then be built as the solar revolution will be overtaken.

Decommissioning – who will be picking up the considerable future bill ££? I note that several councils are already footing the costs of failed projects. What considerations / money reserves will be ring fenced or is the tax payer expected to foot the bill?

Currently the panels will all finish up in landfill as recycling is not available, will the cost will be met by the tax payer?

Batteries & converters they are unable to provide satisfactory answers to noise levels, fire security and health exposure risks. I have seen currently no risk assessment from the Fire Brigade on tackling a fire nor facilities on site to tackle this situation.

On the subject of an incident, they cannot confirm a distance cordon and the decommission process with the contaminated land. An emergency evacuation plan is not available for viewing / reviewing.

Solar panels – I understand that the production of these is in China and they are being produced by the Uyghur people. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Supporting this would be in itself an acknowledgement of support.

Representation Summary

I have spoken to the Department of Energy Security & Net Zero about the current strategy, the information provided clearly details that this planning application has failed to meet the strategy guidelines and therefore I must question the true reasons for this development / application.

Solar has a part to offer in our drive to net zero and power security however a balanced common-sense approach must take place. I note that Portsmouth council have introduced a solar on roof policy – a sensible approach and well accepted. This roof top approach is now gaining approval across Europe and is surely a far better alternative

To lose 3500 to 10,000 acres of performing farm land is mind blowing when other solutions are clearly available. The Department of Energy Security & Net Zero document on planning needs to be satisfied in all areas.

My simple common-sense approach would be ensuring we have exhausted all other areas, brown land, disused airfields etc as well as introducing solar as part of all future commercial building applications and retro fitting with government financial support to all large roof areas.

Should we still be unable to achieve our targets then careful consideration of other land can take place but remember we need to be able to produce food to feed our population.

It is very evident that this is very much a commercial exercise as a large return £ on an investment strategy that government has not taken a sensible approach – knee jerk reaction leading to profiteering of so-called green companies.

A final note the planning process for an average local is not easy and having so many deadlines in a short timeframe means items are not given the time they deserve naturally this impacts on all involved.

Thank you for your time in taking my comments into consideration.

Regards

Andy Johnson
