

West Burton Solar OFH 8th November 2023. Sturton by Stow Parish Council

One of our last comments during the preliminary hearing was the unreliable nature of the broadband connection in our rural area and, specifically for this reason, the use of virtual hearings would be inappropriate if local residents were to engage in a meaningful manner. The Inspector should note that had the examination process started on 7th September, as scheduled, anyone wishing to contribute via an online platform would have found their broadband had failed. The failure commenced at approximately 14.30 and lasted almost 20 hours. The use of virtual only events should be entirely avoided.

The applicant uses terms such as emergency, urgency, haste and there is a pressing need for change, but this cannot be at any cost. The UK cannot shoulder a reduction of carbon for the entire world – we are allegedly responsible for approximately 1% of carbon emissions worldwide. The term Net Zero is used quite freely throughout the documentation; if this, and other projects, currently in differing stages of application are to be used for offsetting current carbon emissions for Net Zero; any potential for carbon reduction becomes a cynical tick box exercise. The whole point of Net Zero is to **reduce** carbon emissions.

This, and other locally sited proposals, are using the Planning Inspectorate in an inappropriate way. All of the (currently) three projects in this area have been submitted in concurrent form. This is not fair to the public whom will bear the brunt of all construction and the aftermath of the permanence of the proposals. We do, however, acknowledge Dr Mageean's decision to adjourn the Preliminary Hearing in September. This has allowed us to engage with all the projects more effectively.

The amount of documentation, which is often repeating the same statements, processes or arguments over several documents, is nonsensical. Reading the same thing over several supposed differing documents is an excessive time-wasting exercise.

Will the inspectorate be able to have discretion if a submission by an IP contains an error whereby the reference is to a different NSIP? Would the IP be informed and able

to correct their submission? There is significant risk of confusion due to the similar names and numbering of West Burton (00132), Gate Burton (00131) and Cottam (00133).

The applicant has one goal, which is not an altruistic production of energy for use by the UK; but to make money. The generation of electricity is a by-product in order to realise profit. Many renewable sources already have to be recompensed to turn off their production. This is a complete waste of money. Solar works when the sun shines, this is generally when there is the least need. Clearly the gain for this, and other applicants, to have to stop production will be considerable.

The draft DCO raises concern. The Order is underpinned by Schedules which are not final documents but illustrative, suppositions and assumptions. The applicant should be using defined plans showing actual placements of equipment; actual trench corridors; actual figures. Why is the applicant not imparting definitive and factual information. To comment on illustration, supposition and assumption does not allow for informed decision.

Why is this application, West Burton, being routed to West Burton power station when it is actually closer to Cottam than the application named Cottam? This is nonsensical and will result in destruction of flora and fauna which could be entirely avoided. This implies that the applicant has colluded with other developers whose applications have only just been announced and not because of supposed grid capacity constraints.

Solar, in the right location on roofs of dwellings or warehousing, even car parks would be beneficial but to take enormous areas of productive farmland out of use and industrialise this beautiful part of Lincolnshire is reckless and lacking judgement. The applicant seeks to marginalise the AGLV (area of great landscape value) designation. The local residents, which will be severely impacted by all of these schemes, disagree with their approach.

There is no forethought regarding food security. No-one can eat solar panels. Where will the products no longer being grown be sourced from. There is already food

depravation in other parts of the world; to imply the UK can just import food is an arrogant and dangerous as well as insecure stance to take.

Sheep, yet again. The applicant cannot seriously expect sheep to be used for consistent grass management or to supposedly improve the soils in readiness for returning to agricultural use in many years hence. There are simply not enough sheep, shepherds or infrastructure and we cannot see that this land will ever be returned to agricultural use so many years into the future.

There is no reference to the type of PV panel, which we could find. Does the applicant know what they intend to install or will this be left to the ultimate developer post consent? There is no reference to where the panels will be manufactured, the human cost to this is not being taken into account.

How much carbon will this, and other projects, release during the excavation of the bare earth minerals, the manufacture, transport and installation? The carbon cost of these projects must be enormous. The only references to carbon offset would appear to take into account an approximation of the amount of gas use which may be reduced. The generation capacity of this project cannot guarantee what will be generating at any one time in order to facilitate this reduction assumption.

There is no upper limit to the dDCO for generation capacity – Why? This will leave the site open to being used for additional development. Using the excuse that the grid connection licence will limit the capacity is not acceptable. This site could be used for additional forms of generation, unless explicitly excluded from the dDCO. The applicant will argue that their certified documents will preclude additional generation, but even something which has 'in perpetuity' on a previous granting can be easily overturned for a subsequent application.

The applicant may argue that the Development Consent Order already covers the decommissioning and subsequent repatriation but this is only a proposed scenario at this point in time. Decommissioning should be clearly set out.

I shall conclude Sturton by Stow Parish Council's representation here so as to allow time for others to make theirs; our separate submission will contain more detail.