

The beauty of the British Countryside should always take centre stage.

I Object to the West Burton Solar Scheme and concur with all other Interested Parties who have also opposed and raised objections during the period of the examination to date.

I welcome the request for the Applicant to provide a video of Flyover of the land within the order limits as set out in the Planning Inspectorate's Action Points (No. 8) arising from Issue Specific Hearing 3 (ISH3) by Deadline 4. This will be most beneficial for all Interested Parties to view.

In the interim I felt it equally beneficial for the aerial footage contained in the Google Earth video of the Cottam Solar Scheme to be made available to the Planning Inspectorate (for the West Burton Solar Scheme) as this aerial footage also includes West Burton Solar, Gate Burton Solar and Tillbridge Solar which can be viewed in the link below:-

[https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN010133/EN010133-001638C8.2.12%20Aerial%20Flyover%20Footage%20using%20Google%20Earth%20Data%20\(Low%20Resolution\).mp4](https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN010133/EN010133-001638C8.2.12%20Aerial%20Flyover%20Footage%20using%20Google%20Earth%20Data%20(Low%20Resolution).mp4)

It is fair to say the above aerial footage of the four solar schemes on the Cottam Solar National Infrastructure website is heart-breaking and sickening to watch. I, along with everyone who has made formal representations/submissions to the Planning Inspectorate and who oppose West Burton Solar together with Cottam Solar, Gate Burton Solar and Tillbridge Solar, have known from the outset the horrifying and monstrous scale of these schemes amounting to 10,000 acres but to witness the aerial view on the Cottam Solar Planning Inspectorate's website exposing the loss and destruction of the present wildlife diverse, uninterrupted countryside, productive agricultural land and the inescapable ruin of the 30 affected communities is soul destroying. Totally surrounding and overwhelming villages North, South, East and West. The scale of this destruction of the countryside and of the harm to the welfare and lives of the affected communities cannot be allowed to proceed. Rural areas are not industrial areas.

The Examining Authority for West Burton Solar should also be aware that the aerial footage does not represent the total acreage involved as it does not include the Steeple Renewables or Luminous Energy Stow Park solar projects, which I believe it should as these two further projects bring the total acreage to 13,000 of industrialised solar zones, all within a 10 kilometre radius (6 miles). In total there are 27,000 acres of our farmland making Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire under threat from solar farm developments including, but not limited to, Voltis Solar (currently scoping), One Earth Solar, Fosse Green and Great North Road with at least 4 more to the south being Springwell, Heckington Fen, Beacon Fen and Mallard Pass. ***See map on page 4 below.***

This is not a delicate balance in any shape or form between protecting rural communities, levelling-up and recognising the climate emergency. We need to save and protect our countryside, farmland and rural communities from the folly of these schemes which are nothing short of environmental and psychological vandalism that will blight the English countryside for 60 years and more rooftop solar can contribute hugely towards the Government's aim.

I would like to see the Government apply the highest possible standards requiring rooftop solar panels to be installed on all new buildings (and in retrospect to suitable existing buildings be they residential and/or commercial/farm buildings). This approach also aligns with a more distributed model of energy generation which can enhance resilience and reduce transmission losses. It is a common sense immediate and long term approach to maximising carbon savings, lowering bills, sparing land for nature and farming and a sensible ***and fairer approach to levelling-up within ALL areas of the UK.***

A recent new housing development in my local area has installed high quality integrated solar panels on the roofs all of the houses a builder to be commended.

In light of recent developments in the global energy market, particularly the return of oil and gas prices to levels seen before the geopolitical tensions in Ukraine, a significant shift in the energy sector's dynamics is underway. This casts a shadow of uncertainty over the financial viability of numerous large-scale solar projects planned for Lincolnshire and the Midlands. ***What is the Applicant's response to this ?***

The current trend is not isolated to the solar industry alone; the wider renewable sector, including electric vehicle adoption and wind energy production, is experiencing a palpable slowdown. Notably, wind energy firms are reporting substantial losses, prompting a re-evaluation of production scales. This backdrop of economic and operational recalibrations within the

renewable energy markets necessitates a critical assessment of our energy strategies, particularly the emphasis on large-scale solar farms on agricultural land.

So, the pressing issue is not merely one of energy security but fundamentally of food security. It is important to prioritise both energy and food security. The decision to convert productive farmland into solar farms must be scrutinised in the context of our nation's ability to sustain its food supply. With the global population on the rise and climatic uncertainties impacting crop yields, the importance of safeguarding our agricultural resources cannot be overstated.

Furthermore, a recent Telegraph article featuring warnings from the Governor of the Bank of England underscores the risks we face as climate change risks fuelling inflation as crops fail.

A crop has already been destroyed in a large field opposite the West Burton 2 site and there may well be others in this area **See images on page 3 of 4 below.** The recent and extensive flooding of farmland around the UK including large areas of agricultural land within Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire in January 2024 should convey concern and pause for reflection as fields have remained waterlogged since then and the dykes surrounding these fields are full from the field run-off. If, as a result of climate change, our crop growing farmland is going to be under floodwater on a regular basis and crops fail then food shortages are liable to become the norm. Such a situation will be further aggravated if thousands upon thousands of acres of good quality food producing farmland (and that includes not only Grades 1, 2, 3 and 3a but especially 3b which does produce high yields) is sacrificed to millions upon millions of industrial scale solar panels and associated paraphernalia.

Mr Rishi Sunak confirmed in a speech at the National Farmers Union annual conference on Tuesday, 20 February 2024 that he believed 'food security' was a vital part of our national security and has reiterated this on several news programmes on National television.

Understanding Lincoln and Lincolnshire as a tourist destination is paramount in any planning deliberation with significant countryside impact. Tourism along with agriculture lies at the heart of Lincoln and Lincolnshire's economy. The visual impact of 4.5 metre high solar panels and all the associated paraphernalia will destroy the area. There will be no visual countryside and landscape benefits for tourists if these schemes go ahead which will result in the loss of livelihoods (employment and income) to those local holiday and historical destinations ie B&Bs, hotels, fishing holiday parks/lodges, shops, many other businesses and much more of the 30 affected communities within the impact area and to Lincoln and Lincolnshire as a whole.

Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan

The West Burton Solar Project will not bring **long term** employment to local people in the area in fact quite the opposite will be true once such scheme(s) above is/are completed. This assertion is without doubt withering and dismissive.

No amount of mitigation put forward by West Burton Solar can compensate for the overall harm this (these four plus) projects would bring to this area.

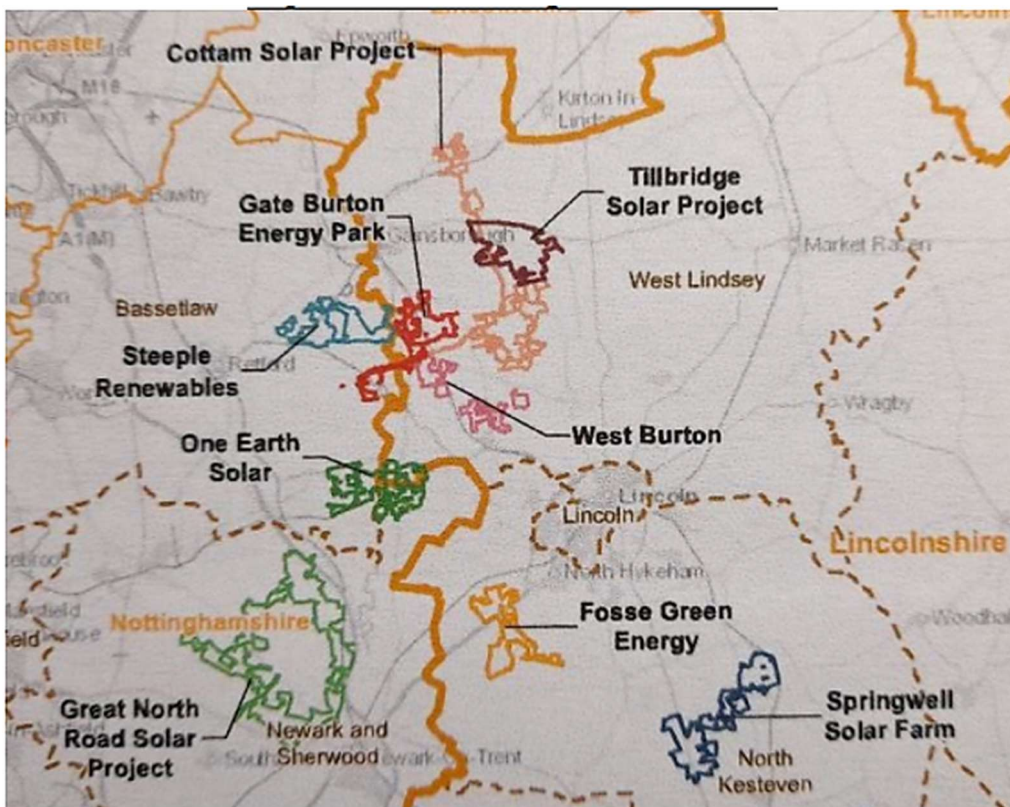
P Mitchell

February 2024

The enormous field below which is on a gradient and is opposite West Burton 2, is experiencing excessive waterlogging as is West Burton 2 and West Burton 1, preventing access by agricultural vehicles onto the land and the run off into the field drainage ditches are beyond full. Images of the serious flooding on more than one occasion in 2023 and 2024 of Lincoln and surrounding areas including the Solar project sites were submitted by the writer to the Examining Authority at Deadlines 1 and 3. **How does The Applicant propose to prevent greater flooding occurring when there is excessively saturated farmland which is then followed with heavy and continuous rain or snowmelt for long periods and 4.5m solar panels are covering the land ?** Waterlogged fields are causing crops to fail and in the images below it can be seen the young crop planted last year is dead - it has been destroyed.



MAP 1 AND 2 – THE NUMBER OF NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE SOLAR SCHEME PROJECTS NEAR LINCOLN - PLUNDERING 27,000 ACRES OF FOOD PRODUCING FARMLAND SHOWN IN PINK. SCHEME NAMES SHOWN ON MAP 2



MAP 2