

I wish to raise my objection to the entire West Burton Solar Project which should not be considered in isolation due the cumulative effects caused by the covering of 13,000 acres of productive farmland within a 10 km radius and surrounding over 30 picturesque villages.

The panels are around 4.5 metres high (the height of a bungalow gable) which not only will be obtrusive and difficult to screen locally but will ruin the view over the Trent Plain from the B1398 which runs along the high ground to the east along Lincoln Cliff, also from the A1500 and the Viewing Point at their intersection.

Currently, Lincolnshire provides over 12% of the food produced in the UK and it is predicted to lose around 30% of its land area due rising sea levels by the year 2050. It is therefore a complete nonsense to consider taking such a large area out of production with a rapidly increasing population, when international supplies of food are likely to be disrupted in future due to rising international tensions. Recent events in Ukraine have already demonstrated their effect on international grain supplies.

The eviction of tenant farmers from their land will not only lead to food shortages but also a loss of farming skills and will not benefit local people but simply enrich wealthy and often absentee landowners, who appear to have scant regard for the negative environmental and social impacts caused by ground based solar pv.

Solar pv is notoriously inefficient at northern latitudes providing a derisory average annual load factor of only 10% of the maximum design capacity. West Burton Solar will also monopolise national grid connections, preventing more efficient, flexible, reliable, high availability, and continuous base load installations such as multiple SMR nuclear modules to be installed at Cottam & West Burton, which have the required cooling water and infrastructure already installed.

56% of agricultural land in the UK is sited on flood plains and the Trent Valley is typical.

Surface water from West Burton Solar, along with the other 4 solar installations currently under consideration deliver through drainage ditches into the River Till, which in pumped into the Fosdyke Navigation Canal connecting to the Brayford Pool and the River Witham in the centre of Lincoln City.

Considering the huge area of industrialised landscape involved, it is quite surprising that no benthic and sessile study has been carried out on the River Till to determine the likely effects on the aquatic invertebrates and consequential impact on the food chain or wildlife.

In recent years, it has become more frequent during periods of heavy rain to shut down the River Till transfer pumps to protect Lincoln and allow thousands of acres of land in the Till catchment area to flood.

Quite apart from ruined agricultural crops due to the inundation, the land remains water logged for months, seriously interrupting farming practices with a resulting loss of production.

The Environmental Statements have completely misunderstood and misrepresented the change in the hydrology of the land as a result of covering such a large area with solar panels. Under storm conditions which we have experienced in 2007, 2019 and 2023, the surface water run off from this massive area would be spectacular and run from the panel drip line to create channelling and erosion, rather than using the whole surface area of the land as mitigation.

The cumulative effect of West Burton Solar with the other 4 projects amounting to 13,000 acres, should be considered along with the thousands of acres of land being frequently lost due to flooding within the 10 square kilometers.

The suggestion that sheep could graze beneath the panels, which deprive the soil beneath of sunlight and moisture is derisible and could only be grazed briefly and intermittently for 'weed control'. It is unlikely that any commercial shepherd would consider transporting a flock of sheep to graze beneath the solar arrays for such a derisory return in nutrients for the sheep.

In looking around the proposed sites, I note that there are ancient hedgerows and established trees, which would shade the panels if left in place and their removal would harm the existing environment and landscape.

Many people have made their home in this quiet area of West Lindsey and enjoy the peace, tranquility and the wildlife which is abundant and I fear a deterioration in our heath and well being if any of these schemes obtain approval.

West Burton 3 completely surrounds an ancient moated manor house at the side of the A1500, which was the home of St Hugh, Bishop of Stow and Lincoln who built Lincoln Cathedral and therefore part of our historical, cultural and religious heritage.

Despite its poor efficiency and availability, the most sensible place for solar pv is in the roofs of domestic, commercial and industrial buildings where power can be generated and supplied at the point of use to benefit the consumer directly, reduce the cost of their electricity and the demand on the national grid. It is estimated there is sufficient roof space in the UK to install 70GW of solar power. Germany has already taken this approach to solar and Italy have placed an embargo on solar being installed on agricultural land.

It really is time for an holistic approach to strategic planning to ensure that ground based solar is not pursued at the expense of food security, livelihoods, environment, history, culture, health and welfare.

In the early 90's I was privileged to serve as a Pollution Inspector with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, determining Integrated Pollution Control Applications from major industrial installations across the UK. The criteria we used to determine IPC applications was the 'Best Available Technique Not Entailing Excessive Cost' and the 'Best Practical Environmental Option'.

Installing inefficient, low availability, land based solar pv on productive agricultural land would not have been approved by myself or any of my former colleagues when applying the above criteria.

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