

IP REFERENCE: 20037189
COTTAM SOLAR 1, 2 AND 3

Sirs,

On 10th July I received notification from NI Mail Distribution of the Preliminary Meeting (Rule 6 letter) Ref EN010133 stating the examination for Island Green Power Cottam Solar 1, 2 and 3 is starting on 5th and 6th September. I am dismayed to note this is immediately prior to the examination start of the Island Green Power West Burton Solar 1, 2 and 3 Project on 7th September. Gate Burton Solar examination is already underway.

I am of the understanding the Inspectorate previously stated these 4 schemes, which are affecting 30 communities, (4 schemes includes Tillbridge Solar), totalling 10,000 acres, and all proposed within a few miles of one another, could not be examined together. These schemes would be examined independently on completely different timelines to enable Interested Parties (IPs) to manage and read the multitudinous amount of examination documentation and be able to make submissions accordingly.

1. That these two schemes, Cottam Solar and West Burton Solar, are going to be running concurrently, is discriminatory. To bestow Island Green Power with such an advantage is playing into the hands of the developers and to absolutely, unfairly, disadvantage Interested Parties and the affected communities in this way is unjust and woeful.

2. I am not the only one who will not have enough time to adequately assess each scheme, to make my submissions, to attend hearings and to participate in the process (unless I am awake 24 hours a day, seven days a week for an indefinite period) while endeavouring to honour my other commitments and lead a normal life!

3. Seeking to understand the terminology, keep on top of all the original and updated examination documentation on the project webpage of the Planning Inspectorate's website, purely for the Gate Burton Solar Project process is causing me alarm and I already feel at saturation point, notwithstanding Island Green Power's Cottam Solar site and the West Burton Solar site examinations now running immediately alongside each other.

4. This decision also puts an inexcusable amount of pressure on me as an IP, and conceivably other IPs, to keep track of and produce comprehensible and co-ordinated responses by the due dates/deadlines for submissions now arising and to which project they relate with a high risk of losing track of where each one is in the process.

5. I conclude this to be both prejudicial to me and again possibly other IP's, and is adding further unnecessary confusion to an already difficult to follow process, made worse by the use of similar project names....ie West Burton Solar and another developer naming their proposal Gate Burton....

6. These tight timescales are overwhelming for some interested parties that I am aware of, they feel disadvantaged and question whether they will continue to engage with the examination process. I am also in that category.

7. As the West Burton and Cottam Solar schemes are now both ready to be examined, a total colossal 5,532 acres on so many piecemeal sites, which will engulf my village and neighbouring villages North, South, East and West and have been submitted by the same company, IGP, just WHY can't they be examined as ONE scheme? These schemes are all in West Lindsey District Council and jointly affect us and the area. Such change would specifically make the examination process more manageable and be more accessible for all interested parties to be able to participate.

8. If each scheme is to be considered separately a sensible period between each, which I think is fair and reasonable, would be a gap of circa 6 months.

9. The cumulative effects of these 4 NSIP projects in our small rural area on 10,000 acres of BMV agricultural land is prejudicial to the people and area where I live and to the lives of those residents of the 30 affected communities. They are not the only solar projects in Lincolnshire as there are at least 9 large solar schemes proposed for the County. Lincolnshire County Council and the District Council had previously requested the Inspectorate at the Gate Burton Open Floor Hearing 1 on Wednesday, 4 July 2023, that to be able to deal with these applications and give them the attention to detail that is required they hoped they would be given time between each examination commencing and preferably not to run concurrently. This request appears to have been disregarded by the Inspectorate.

10. If the public were not feeling excluded and disadvantaged previously they most certainly can now. It shows that public participation in this process is of minor importance to the Inspectorate and this is of concern as, lamentably, the invitation to the Preliminary Meeting and Open Floor Hearing for the Cottam Solar Project are scheduled for Tuesday 5th and Wednesday 6th September at a time when people are at work or returning from holiday prior to the new school term starting on 5th September and many will be unable to attend. The same applies for the West Burton Solar Project Preliminary Meeting date of Thursday, 7th September.

11. I am concerned vis-a-vis the Planning Inspectorate's own capacity to give the necessary level of attention and examination to these immense multiple NSIP solar schemes. I question whether the current NSIP process is adequate to meet these demands as Cottam Solar, West Burton and Gate Burton solar projects will each be examined by a panel of just 2 ?

Sincerely,

Patricia Mitchell

18 August 2023