

7000 Acres

7000 Acres Response to the Cottam Solar Project Ltd Application on the subject of:

Land Productivity

Deadline 1 Submission – 17th October 2023

Land Productivity:

Within EN010133-000238-C6.2.18 ES Chapter 18_Socio Economics Tourism and Recreation there is no mention of the existing crop production that will be lost if the acreage is covered in solar panels.

There is also no mention of the associated businesses that will be impacted by this loss of crop production. However within section 18.7.48 it states that the Scheme is estimated to displace approximately 17 agricultural sector jobs in the Local Impact Area, this is estimated to have an economic impact of £800,000, based on a GVA per worker of £49,074 (Ref 18.60).

This impact will reduce the value of the local agricultural economy (£265 million) by approximately 0.3%. It also states that the Scheme is likely to bring a direct benefit to local landowners through payment of annual ground rent which is anticipated to be in the region of £2.4 million per annum which demonstrates the greed of the landowners at the expense of the local employees.

It further states within section 18.10.22 that the anticipated cumulative effect of the other identified local projects on the agricultural economy is a peak loss of approximately £2.0 million per annum by 2026.

The developer, Island Green Power, should provide an assessment of this topic of Land Productivity with quantifiable data covering:

- a) What crops have been produced in the past?
- b) What quantity and grade of crops have been produced?
- c) What percentage of UK production is this?
- d) Where else are these crops produced that can replace the lost production?

Recognising land use pressure as a cross-cutting national challenge, the Geospatial Commission initiated the National Land Data Programme (NLDP) which has explored key land use challenges and demonstrated where innovative data analysis and evidence can support better land use decisions.

The impacts of land use changes at a systems level are not always well understood. For example, if we convert agricultural land to use for energy production we would need to consider whether this would necessitate increased food imports to meet our supply needs and therefore if it would relocate rather than resolve negative environmental impacts.

IGP should also explain how they have integrated the concept of “agrivoltaics” i.e. systems in which farmland is effectively combined with solar power.