

Comments on Mr Gareth Phillips

This is not a summary of an oral submission, rather my thoughts and comments on Mr Phillips submission made on behalf of the Applicant.

Mr Phillips repeatedly made derogatory comments about Sir Edward Leigh when he was no longer on the call. I was surprised this was allowed to continue as earlier in the hearing Mr Cridland had been reluctant to let IP Peter O' Grady read his poem entitled 'The Applicant' as he was concerned it might be offensive. I wonder whether Mr Phillips would have used such scathing language had Sir Edward Leigh still been on the call, or even in the room. He went on for some time about it not being a rash charge and that it was policy of Sir Edward Leigh's government. This does not mean Sir Edward agrees with the policy.

Mr Phillips stated that golf courses take up twice the amount of land than the amount proposed for solar. I find this a nonsensical comparison because golf is a pastime people enjoy participating in, a social activity. They bring income to the country in their own way. They do not look ugly or block views or have dangerous battery storage or come with all the other negatives that solar parks do. They can look spectacular and do not in anyway ruin landscapes. It was a pointless thing to say.

Mr Phillips stated that Defra is not concerned about a food crisis. That may or may not be the case. They are however, concerned about the future of hedgerows. Taken from their website they say "Currently, farmers must not remove hedgerows without prior notice given to local planning authorities, must maintain a buffer strip along their hedgerows, and must not cut or trim hedgerows during bird nesting and rearing season.

We want to ensure the regulations work for wildlife, the environment and for farmers. This consultation is seeking your views on the best way to maintain and improve existing protections, as well as our approach to enforcement. We are also seeking your views on where we should focus our ambitions for future hedgerow protections." I will make sure to put my views to them about the intention of these solar parks to remove miles and miles of hedgerows to make for an easier installation.

Mr Phillips referred to Lincolnshire and its history of being a power base, to quote him, in his very condescending manner, "the cooling towers give that game away". 100% incorrect. I suggest Mr Phillips has another look at his clients maps as he will find that the cooling towers are actually in Nottinghamshire. Not really an argument when you don't name the right county.

As an afterthought Mr Phillips went on to mention how he had listened to people's concerns about mental health. He stated this has been addressed in the Health Impact Assessment in the Environmental Statement Chapter 21. I personally couldn't find anything about mental health in that document, and who has been consulted on this? I have not received a questionnaire through my letterbox asking me how my mental health will be affected by these projects. So, how can they come to the conclusion that it won't be, which is what Mr Phillips seemed to be implying.

His statement about no one being concerned about or objecting to purchasing electrical goods which are made in China was clutching at straws. As consumers, unfortunately we don't have much choice unless we choose not to own a tv or any electrical kitchen goods as this is where manufacturers have chosen to source their parts. If I could buy a device which didn't contain any Chinese components, believe me I would.

I just find this while scheme a complete nonsense. I cannot get my head around the dichotomy of importing solar panels, potentially importing more food as a result of having less farm land, all producing a carbon footprint, in order to decarbonise the UK. Mind boggling.