

**7000acres Comments on the Applicant's Aerial Flyover Footage using Google Earth Data – dated 6 February 2024**

**Reference:** Deadline 4 Submission - C8.2.12 Aerial Flyover Footage using Google Earth Data (Low Resolution) (Video, 111MB)

**Deadline 5 – February 2024**

## **Introduction**

7000Acres has repeatedly raised concerns over how the Applicant has attempted to downplay the impact of this scheme, and the cumulative impact of the growing number of solar NSIPs in the region.

This footage using Google Earth is yet another attempt to conceal the true impact of this industrial scheme (Deadline 4 Submission - C8.2.12 Aerial Flyover Footage using Google Earth Data) .

## **Google Earth “Flyover”**

Google Earth imagery of rural locations is frequently several years out of date, so can the Applicant confirm this imagery is current? Commercial satellite data is readily available and would be a valid source of terrain imagery.

The “Flyover” does not display any means for the viewer to orientate themselves, such as a compass heading. The lack of orientation, combined with the random and meandering nature of the “flythrough”, varying speeds and heights makes it hard for a viewer to assess the scale of the multiple solar industrial NSIPs.

Some village names and terrain features have their names displayed but only for a short period of time; it would be useful to have village names displayed permanently.

Furthermore, the current imagery lacks the Steeple Solar, One Earth and Stow Park schemes, all of which have a significant cumulative effect on the visual impact in the region.

## **Industrial Nature of the Scheme**

The Applicant has made no attempt to show the industrial nature of their scheme. In particular, none of the solar panels are shown and neither is the BESS. By overlaying the current rural landscape with some pastel colours and field numbers downplays the visual impact the solar industrial scheme will actually have on the region.

By merely colouring in some fields the Applicant has made no attempt to show the vertical extent of their scheme. Furthermore, the pale colours used are not representative of the brutalist architecture being imposed on a rural area.

### **Visual Impact**

Even though the “flythrough” is incomplete and flawed, it starts to show the monumental impact that Cottam and the multiple other schemes will have on this farming region.

### **Further Examples of the Applicant Providing False Imagery**

When the photomontages provided by the Applicant are verified, some very concerning errors become apparent. The image below is from the Applicant’s submission - C6.4.8.14.76 Figure 8.14.76 LCC-C-I Viewpoint 76 Photography Photomontage. This photomontage allegedly shows 4.5 metre high sun tracking solar panels, facing east. What is actually shown appears to be 3.5m panels.



**Figure C6.4.8.14.76 Figure 8.14**

A representative of 7000Acres used a 4.5m long pole to compare the alleged height of the solar panels in the photomontage to the real world. It can be clearly seen that the 4.5m high pole extends above panels shown in the photomontage.



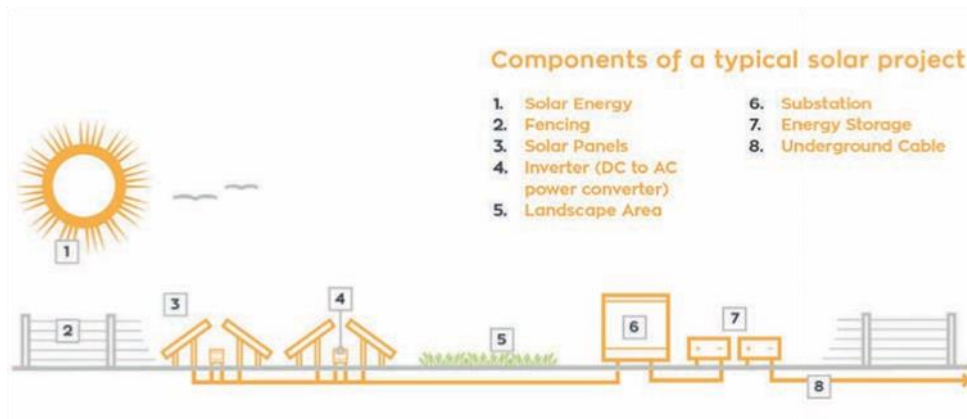
**Photographs Showing a 4.5m High Pole as a Reference**

Furthermore, the viewing point chosen is not representative of an upright average size human, but the viewpoint of a medium sized dog. A typical local hedge is circa 2m high, and many of the Applicant's viewpoints have been photographed from half way up the hedge, where the Applicant's representative must have been kneeling or sitting.

Additionally, the fencing shown on the left hand side of the photomontage appears to use wooden fence posts, with no fencing, CCTV or lighting structures in place.

Once again, the Applicant has not shown a reasonable worst case, but instead manipulated the viewing point and imagery to downplay the considerable visual impact of their scheme.

This is consistent with earlier material used by Island Green Power during the Public Consultation for the Cottam and West Burton schemes. This diagram clearly shows the solar panels being no higher than the security fencing, i.e. 2.5m high. Nowhere in the document sent to local residents, or on any of the material provided during the public meetings was it shown that the Applicant intended to use unprecedented 4.5m high tracking panels. Local residents had to interrogate the PEIR to find out the Applicant's true intent.



**Cottam and West Burton Phase 1 Consultation Leaflet (IGP, 2022)**

## Summary

In summary, the Applicant has a long track record of providing inaccurate and misleading imagery. This deliberately downplays the considerable impact from this scheme, and the cumulative impact from the numerous solar NSIPs in the local area.

The Google Earth “flythrough” does not give a true impression of the various schemes, because:

- it is incomplete and does not show all the relevant schemes, such as Steeple Solar;
- it does not show the industrial nature of the schemes, merely colouring parts of the rural landscape;
- it does not show the vertical extent of the solar panels, BESS and other industrial features;
- it is difficult to gain a true impression of the impact due to the lack of orientation cues (village names and a heading cue), the meandering way the flythrough occurs, along with varying heights and speeds.

Even taking into account the flaws detailed above, the “flythrough” has started to show the monumental impact this and the other solar NSIPs in the immediate area will have on the farming landscape.

This dissembling use of Google Earth is consistent with the other tactics the Applicant has employed to downplay the major impact that using 4.5m high sun tracking solar panels will have on this rural area. The Applicant has consistently failed to apply a reasonable worst-case assessment when assessing the impact on the landscape, instead they have made over reliance on “professional judgement”.

To assist the ExA, we will submit a copy of a map showing the latest update on the vast acreage covered by the solar NSIPs and sub NSIPs in the local area.

A note of caution, this map might shortly be out of date as we are aware of other solar NSIPs being launched in the coming months!