

Comments on submissions for Deadline 4

The beauty of the British Countryside should always take centre stage.

I Object to the Cottam Solar Scheme and concur with all other Interested Parties who have also opposed and raised objections during the period of the examination to date.

[https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN010133/EN010133-001638C8.2.12%20Aerial%20Flyover%20Footage%20using%20Google%20Earth%20Data%20\(Low%20Resolution\).mp4](https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN010133/EN010133-001638C8.2.12%20Aerial%20Flyover%20Footage%20using%20Google%20Earth%20Data%20(Low%20Resolution).mp4)

The aerial footage contained in the Google Earth video (REP4-104) in the above link of the four solar schemes on the Cottam Solar National Infrastructure website is heart-breaking and sickening to watch. I, along with everyone who has made formal representations/submissions to the Planning Inspectorate and who oppose the four projects of Cottam Solar, West Burton Solar, Gate Burton Solar and Tillbridge Solar, have known from the outset the horrifying and monstrous scale of these schemes amounting to 10,000 acres but to witness the aerial view on the Planning Inspectorate's website exposing the loss and destruction of the present wildlife diverse, uninterrupted countryside, productive agricultural land and the inescapable ruin of the 30 affected communities is soul destroying. Totally surrounding and overwhelming villages North, South, East and West. The scale of this destruction of the countryside and of the harm to the welfare and lives of the affected communities cannot be allowed to proceed. Rural areas are not industrial areas.

The Planning Inspectorate should also be aware that the aerial footage does not represent the total acreage involved as it does not include the Steeple Renewables or Luminous Energy Stow Park solar projects, which I believe it should as these two further projects bring the total acreage to 13,000 of industrialised solar zones, all within a 10 kilometre radius (6 miles). In total there are 27,000 acres of our farmland making Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire under threat from solar farm developments including, but not limited to, Voltis Solar (currently scoping), One Earth Solar, Fosse Green and Great North Road with at least 4 more to the south being Springwell, Heckington Fen, Beacon Fen and Mallard Pass.

This is not a delicate balance in any shape or form between protecting rural communities, levelling-up and recognising the climate emergency. We need to save and protect our countryside, farmland and rural communities from the folly of these schemes which are nothing short of environmental and psychological vandalism that will blight the English countryside for 60 years and more rooftop solar can contribute hugely towards the Government's aim.

I would like to see the Government apply the highest possible standards requiring rooftop solar panels to be installed on all new buildings (and in retrospect to suitable existing buildings be they residential and/or commercial/farm buildings). This approach also aligns with a more distributed model of energy generation which can enhance resilience and reduce transmission losses. It is a common sense immediate and long term approach to maximising carbon savings, lowering bills, sparing land for nature and farming and a sensible and fairer approach to levelling-up within ALL areas of the UK.

A recent new housing development in my local area has installed high quality integrated solar panels on the roofs all of the houses a builder to be commended.

In light of recent developments in the global energy market, particularly the return of oil and gas prices to levels seen before the geopolitical tensions in Ukraine, a significant shift in the energy sector's dynamics is underway. This casts a shadow of uncertainty over the financial viability of numerous large-scale solar projects planned for Lincolnshire and the Midlands.

What is the Applicant's response to this ?

The current trend is not isolated to the solar industry alone; the wider renewable sector, including electric vehicle adoption and wind energy production, is experiencing a palpable slowdown. Notably, wind energy firms are reporting substantial losses, prompting a re-evaluation of production scales. This backdrop of economic and operational recalibrations within the renewable energy markets necessitates a critical assessment of our energy strategies, particularly the emphasis on large-scale solar farms on agricultural land.

Furthermore, a recent Telegraph article featuring warnings from the Governor of the Bank of England underscores the risks we face as climate change risks fuelling inflation as crops fail.

Understanding Lincoln and Lincolnshire as a tourist destination is paramount in any planning deliberation with significant countryside impact. Tourism along with agriculture lies at the heart of Lincoln and Lincolnshire's economy. The visual impact of 4.5 metre high solar panels and all the associated paraphernalia will destroy the area. There will be no visual countryside and landscape benefits for tourists if these schemes go ahead which will result in the loss of livelihoods (local employment and income) to those holiday and historical destinations ie B&Bs, hotels, fishing holiday parks/lodges, shops, many other businesses and much more within the impact area and to Lincoln and Lincolnshire as a whole.

The pressing issue is not merely one of energy security but fundamentally of food security. It is important to prioritise both energy and food security. The decision to convert productive farmland into solar farms must be scrutinised in the context of our nation's ability to sustain its food supply. With the global population on the rise and climatic uncertainties impacting crop yields, the importance of safeguarding our agricultural resources cannot be overstated.

Mr Rishi Sunak confirmed in a speech at the National Farmers Union annual conference on Tuesday, 20 February 2024 that he believed 'food security' was a vital part of our national security and has reiterated this on several news programmes on National television.

Deadline 4 Submission - Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan Revision A - January 2024

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The Cottam Solar Project will not bring *long term* employment to local people in the area in fact quite the opposite will be true once such scheme(s) above is/are completed. This assertion is without doubt withering and dismissive as the Applicant states the scheme would require a large *skilled* workforce (not apprentices/labourers) and that such specialist employees will be brought in from *outside* the local area.

The Applicant does not state what the percentage of specialist employees from outside the local area will be – is this 10%, 50% or more yet they can estimate 64.2% of the labour requirement (is this unskilled labour) will be sourced from within the local impact area ?

Further the ongoing workforce associated with the operation of the Scheme throughout the Scheme's operation is, as stated by the Applicant likely to be limited to maintenance crews, landscaping teams, and occasional repair units. This would appear to be a skeleton number of employees/workforce therefore not bringing in long term employment to many, if any, local people.

No amount of mitigation put forward by Cottam Solar can compensate for the overall harm this (these four plus) projects would bring to this area.

P Mitchell

February 2024