

Comments on submissions for Deadline 4 and Other Issues

Dear Sirs

The scale of the Cottam Solar Project dwarfs the local settlements, communities and landscape it surrounds. The further NSIP schemes (Gate Burton, West Burton, Tillbridge and the more recent Steeple Renewables proposal) combine to create a solar landscape across an area which has impact on a regional scale. Therefore, the region's character and reason for existence is being proposed to be removed and replaced with an industrial complex. The land will be removed from food production and in all likelihood, not returned to farming due to contamination, soil damage and loss of skills and knowledge.

The loss and harms to communities, landscape, wildlife, livelihoods, farming, economy, archaeology, habitats, plant life, soil life and people's health is immeasurable. The Applicant proports to have all the answers and indeed reiterates time and time again the same answers to questions put to them. I have been involved in the National Infrastructure Planning Regime process across most of the above projects and it is apparent that true discourse and debate to provide wide and in-depth evidence from all parties, for the Examining Authority to assess, is not allowed in the current process. From the start, with the Consultation Process, the balance of power has been in favour of the Applicant and the NIP regime enables and perpetuates this imbalance to the detriment of locals and interested parties.

All these harms will be suffered by us and indeed the nation (due to food production/security impacts) and all the benefits will be enjoyed by a few investors. Aside from this, the Cottam scheme, along with the others cited, will occupy grid connections which will be needed for truly beneficial and reliable energy production schemes for the nation. In particular, I draw your attention to the site of the ex-power station at West Burton, which has been selected by the UK Government as a site for fusion reactor(s). The area of land utilised by such projects will be miniscule in comparison to the area of land needed by the solar industry.

The aerial flyover footage (C8.2.12) does not show the Steeple Renewables proposal and so is not representative of the impact of cumulative effect. The concentration of these schemes in a 10km radius is disproportionate and increases and magnifies impacts and harms. No brownfield sites have been proposed in the design of these schemes and therefore, are not in line with current Government thinking and policies. Also, the footage does not indicate or represent the size of the 4.5m panels.

The landscape and area selected by the developer is historic and valuable in many ways. There are possibilities for further yet undiscovered archaeology in this region and nature recovery is now on the agenda if land and habitats remain available. Alongside these aspects, the landscape character of the locality and region will be radically changed by these proposals. This impact is not acceptable.