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From: Ron Gore [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 August 2024 18:29
To: Cottam Solar Project
Subject: Cottam Solar Park
Attachments: solar farms West Burton & Cottam Energy Parks .docx; Solar Panels disposal.docx

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]

I have attached my original submission which was sent both from me as an individual and from the Kexby Parish Council. These solar farms in our locality are already getting the rubber stamp from the new government. I would expect the examining body would take seriously the knock on effects of siting 4 massive solar farms in a 6 mile radius surrounding 30 small villages will cause and pause for thought on the impact these are going to have on these communities for years to come.

I have also attached an article from 2 years ago which is very relevant regarding the aftermath once these 'solar' farms are redundant. What are the regulations which binds the developers to the clearing up their mess both during construction and more importantly when these farms are no longer part of the energy mix. If these farms were actually going to benefit the country in some way then at least the developers could locate the economic benefit in the production of the materials to create them but as we know, the developers know and the government knows, the only people that will benefit are the developers who are based elsewhere, at the expense again of the tax payers

It is evident that the government think solar power is a meaningful source of energy if they are willing to allow good farmland to carpet them with massive solar farms. Yet even someone with a rudimentary knowledge of power demand would realise that our peak demand time coincides with winter when these panels are least productive. The subject of solar panels on roofs is constantly mentioned but consistently ignored by all shades of government. If people can put them on their roofs why can't the government stipulate that all new builds should incorporate solar panels, is the answer that the government has very little interest?

If all these solar farms go ahead it will be a calamity for the communities, offer no benefit to them and take valuable farm land out of product for over 50 years. Is this the legacy that our politicians are leaving. Once upon a time you could cycle around the lanes and be able to look across the fields to look at the wild life, stock, what's being grown in addition to community husbandry. Now all we see are high hedges already over 12ft specifically grown to hide the ugly site of these proposed solar farms and we end up cycling down darkened lanes particularly on dull cloudy days.

Lets hope the government comes to it's senses and realises there are alternatives to decimating peoples lives in far away places from the places to consume the most. All rural people ask for is some equity and balance which seems in short supply judging by the number of massive solar farms developers are hoping to cover our region in.

Yours sincerely
Ron Gore
Chairman Kexby PC

West Burton & Cottam Energy Parks

The Planning Inspectorate
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23/3/2023

Representation of the Kexby Parish Council on the Proposed Solar Farms

As Chairman of the Parish Council I am writing on behalf of the parishioner of Kexby Parish to register our opposition to the proposed large scale Solar Farm developments in our immediate vicinity comprising Cottam Solar Project, West Burton Solar Project, (both proposed by Island Green Power), Gate Burton Energy Park (proposed by Low Carbon) and Tillbridge Solar (proposed by Tillbridge Solar Ltd).

Our parish sits amidst these numerous projects and our concern is the cumulative effect the proposed 4 projects will have on the local landscape and its inhabitants. Whilst we accept there is a need to address the effects of climate change and that solar energy has a part to play, this must be balanced with the effect of situating such large project, as proposed above, around communities.

Since the parishes were advised of these projects coupled with the consultation by the relevant proposers there was a perception by parishioners that as these come under the umbrella of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) then as communities we have no say in the matter because this will be decided by central government. This perception has been reinforced by the amount of preparatory/investigative work carried out by the project proposers over the last year and as a parish councilor we have found it a challenge to rectify this perception and get the engagement of parts of the communities. That said, even the findings of the developers has shown that the communities are overwhelmingly against these due in part to the magnitude in such a small populated area.

There are many concerns that the parishioners have which will no doubt be reflected in other parishes affected one of which is that each of these projects should not be considered in isolation but all 4 projects together so that the inspectorate can see the collective impact these will have on the area.

Other areas of concern are:

Developers

The selective presentation by the proposers regarding the effectiveness of solar power does not stand scrutiny in that they suggest the solar array would produce on average 30% of their rated output where in reality they produce around 11% simply because of other factors outside their control i.e. weather and annual yearly cycle. We are led to believe they are referring to the panel performance based on a sunny day in mid-year when we have better weather and longer days, unlike mid-December. The added factor to this is that the energy demand is greatest when the panels produce the least if any, and as the battery storage of any energy is only good for approximately 2 hours, by the time of peak demand, 6pm, the batteries are likely to be flat.

Looking at the National Grid ESO web site, even there they only attribute 4.4% to Solar supply and as mentioned already this site shows the demand on the grid at different times and in mid-June at 4am the demand was 15GW whereas in Mid-December at 5pm the demand was 46GW and this is when the solar farms produce the least.

Are these developers just looking for an easy option with sighting these solar farms in close proximity to each other with the overarching comment that they are here because of access to the grid. As we well know, as is evidenced by

the number of wind farms out at sea, that access to the grid can effectively be made from any number of locations, including Europe, what it would require is the developers actively looking for sites spread further afield and laying the necessary infrastructure to connect. Would the fact that this adds cost to the project making it less attractive. It would be prudent to mention here that the developers of the first farms are just that, they are not the builders and if they secure planning they will be offering this to the market so any added costs that could be negated, i.e. extra cabling to connect to the grid would be a disincentive, something the developers want to avoid.

Energy Mix

It is abundantly clear that keeping the lights on is not going to happen using solar power alone even if the technology to put an array in space where there is 24hr sun was a serious option. It is evident that we are going to need other forms of energy production and Solar power is at the bottom of the list for cost efficiency and reliability, with wind farms also offering an unreliable source again due to the weather.

The energy mix is going to have to include other forms of 'on tap' energy supply such as Hydro, Nuclear even fossil fuels (Gas, Oil and Diesel).

The proposed solar projects make no attempt to match the power produced to when it is needed basically because even with the large-scale batteries these can only store energy for a few hours which means that solar farms and their storage parks take up an immense amount of land whilst providing a limited contribution to the electricity system, and therefore represent an inefficient use of land.

Land

The scale of the 4 solar farms is in the region of 10,000 acres of agricultural land and a lot of conversations have gone on about the grade of the land and that it is sub-standard for crops. Another solar farm project in the area has been shelved due to the land being incorrectly categorized.

Perhaps scrutiny of these Agricultural Land Classification results might well find that the proposed land falls into both DEFRA 3a & 3b classifications, we are also aware that DEFRA may be reclassifying 3b agricultural land to bring it under the 'reserved for food production' umbrella although getting accurate information is a challenge. As you will appreciate the cost of getting an 'independent' ALC for the land could well be quite expensive considering the area within these proposals and we have been given an estimate of £70K a figure likely to be out of the reach of these communities.

Regional Issues:

As a Parish council we are concerned that the combined impact of these 4 Solar Farms will have a detrimental effect in several areas which would likely be irreversible for decades after these projects have served their purpose.

Food & Farming: Using arable land for solar energy will displace the production of existing crops, food, animal feed and energy crops. It makes no sense, from an environmental perspective, to cease farming here and import more crops.

Employment: Solar Farms will destroy agricultural jobs, skills and livelihoods and create few new skilled jobs to replace them. It is more than likely there will be a net reduction in employment and employment opportunities particularly in relation to seasonal work demands and this in an area with relatively few opportunities.

In addition to there being no economic benefit to the communities affected consideration should also be given to those Tenant farmers who may have no say in whether parts of their farm are made over to Solar. This may make the remaining farm less viable, so even if they are being subsidized for this loss it will still result in under active farmers deciding to leave the industry or go elsewhere.

Wildlife & Habitat: No matter what the precautions and assurances, it will not be possible to deliver and install millions of solar panels, pour thousands of tonnes of concrete, as well as installing containers with batteries and switchgear, all surrounded by miles of fencing, without damaging habitat. Solar Farms of the magnitude being proposed (2000MW) only exist in countries that have vast open spaces coupled with high sunlight levels in areas of low population density. They are not situated around several small communities.

The installation of high fencing covering 10,000 acres is going to impact virtually every aspect of the countryside for both the wildlife movement and inhabitants who live, work, and visit the area. Details of which foot paths and bridleways affected have yet to be identified

Visual: The cumulative scale of the development is unprecedented, and the impact of such a development is unknown around communities, if these solar farms were to proceed then the implication is that the communities and habitat are irrelevant. The development would change the character and nature of the areas for over 50 years and in a time when the mental health and wellbeing of people is under the microscope, the introduction of such a seismic change needs extensive consultation and investigation.

Disturbance during Construction: Rural communities are underrepresented in the wider scheme due to the relatively low population, and one of the main visual impacts is the state of our rural road network. These have been neglected for over a decade and potholes are not repaired properly but holes just have a dollop of tarmac drop in and the vehicle runs over it. This results in very uneven road with hole developing again regularly. The impact of the volume of traffic during both the construction and decommissioning phases, in terms of road safety, noise, disruption, damage to an already damaged road system is of concern to all who live in the area. The roads already show they are inadequate for the farming and other regular traffic which would need to be completely rebuilt placing a huge burden on the local communities.

Connecting to the Grid: These four proposed solar farms spread over 10,000 acres and consisting of 10 separate sections will each need to be connected to the grid resulting in extensive civil works causing further ecological disruption and damage the surrounding area. The proposed enormous 500MW battery storage area at Willingham by Stow will be potential fire risk as evidenced by the fire at a small 20MW battery unit in Liverpool that took 59hrs to extinguish.

To conclude, our position is clear, the community is against the proposed large-scale solar farm developments because of their limited contribution to decarbonization and the adverse consequences arising from using productive farm land in this way.

Yours Sincerely

Ron Gore
Chairman
Kexby Parish Council
West Lindsey District

Landfill looms for fading solar panels

Millions of solar panels in California could be dumped in landfill sites as they reach the end of their life cycle (Keiran Southern writes).

Over the past two decades, more than 1.3 million homeowners and builders have taken advantage of financial incentives to install solar panels on their rooftops.

But with a lifespan of 25 to 30 years, defunct panels are now starting to pile up as landfill, raising fears they will contaminate groundwater with toxic metals such as lead, selenium and cadmium.

Sam Vanderhoof, a solar industry expert and chief executive of Recycle PV Solar, told the *Los Angeles Times* that only one in ten panels was recycled because the process is expensive and time-consuming.

Recycling a panel costs about \$20 to \$30, but \$1 to \$2 to send to landfill, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

“The industry is supposed to be green,” Vanderhoof said. “But in reality, it’s all about the money.”

California, with abundant year-round sunshine, was a pioneer in the adoption of solar power.

In 2006 the state launched an initiative that issued \$3.3 billion in subsidies for installing panels on rooftops. While the drive was considered a success, officials are now grappling with how to safely dispose of the panels.

Serasu Duran, assistant professor at the University of Calgary’s Haskayne School of Business in Canada, warned last year that the industry was “woefully unprepared for the deluge of waste that is likely to come”.

Duran told the *LA Times*: “While all the focus has been on building this renewable capacity, not much consideration has been put on the end of life of these technologies.”