

Booth, Elliott

From: Leanne Carroll [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 August 2024 06:23
To: Byers Gill Solar
Subject: Submission

Categories: Deadline

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Hello,

Submission for 13 August 2024 - Deadline 1

My registration identification number is: **20048731**

I am local to the northern part of Darlington and regularly walk the many footpaths of Skerningham, Barmpton and Ketton Country, taking my camera with me on all of my outings to take photos of the lovely wildlife I see as I go.

I am concerned that the applicant has failed to undertake any formal surveys for deer across the site.

As a side note, they say that both red and muntjac deer have been observed. There are no red deer here, just roe and muntjac.

The local deer population can move freely and safely across this vast expanse of land, which has no roads running through it, and the wind farm at Moor House also does not lock them out.

The deer have many available areas away from footpaths to lie-up and can easily avoid people out enjoying the countryside on walks, horse-back or bikes because they can jump the fences around farm fields to get away. Juveniles however can only manage to scale the fences once they've grown up a bit which is why quiet areas are so important for them.

With a large garden-village development planned at Skerningham, the deer could lose a large chunk of their available habitat and many of their current quiet lying-up spots there will be opened up to cater for the influx of new residents and their recreational needs!

In winter, the deer like to come together in large groups and I have seen many such gatherings where the solar farm would be. Please see my personal short video, which I hope you enjoy too:

<https://youtu.be/ggHlMvfJwTM?si=aArrmfvdY0wxB1oa>

What happens if a deer or a group of deer are going along one of the corridors and a dog walker is coming one way say and a horse-rider the other? Where do the deer go when deer fences will be stopping them from entering the solar-panel fields?

I am worried they could end up injuring themselves or those people using the paths in their panic. You sometimes see deer on building sites that are hemmed in by fencing and they crash into it because they are so scared. Or even run into roads and oncoming traffic:

<https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/its-heartbreaking-footage-shows-trapped-24020334>

These fences are also preventing the deer from using their established, traditional routes, discriminating against them and potentially keeping them away from some of their lying-up areas.

It looks as if other animals, like badgers and hares, will be able to get into the operational fields but through small gates only. Again, there is the worry they will encounter people if they venture into one of the corridors and not be able to easily find their way back through. Why can the fences not be constructed to not touch the ground thus leaving clearance the entire length for such creatures to come and go as they please?

When the solar-panel support legs are pile-driven into the ground, has the applicant looked at how vibrations might affect the underground tunnels and chambers of any nearby badger setts and fox earths?

My other point I wish to make is that there will be enough disturbance in our local countryside for residents and wildlife without this solar farm -from a large garden village at Skertingham and beyond that, and closer to the Byers Gill fields, from the installation of a large water pipeline. Not to mention a new bypass if funding becomes available.

This countryside to the north of Darlington is described as quality countryside in Darlington Borough Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Jewel in the Crown of Darlington's countryside provision. It hosted the Great North Walk one year and part of it featured in the book *The Best Walks in Britain*:

The village of Brafferton lies in a small area of rolling countryside steeped in history, known locally as 'Ketton Country'. The walk is an easy ramble along old tracks, green lanes and ancient highways of outstanding beauty.

Yours sincerely,

Leanne Carroll.