

## **BYERS GILL SOLAR ARRAY**

### **PRELIMINARY MEETING AT DARLINGTON 23 JULY 2024**

#### **Registration identification numbers 20047831 and 20047832**

Following today's preliminary meeting into the above application, I raised the following questions on behalf of CPRE, the countryside charity (Durham branch) and/or Durham Bird Club. Some of these may appear to be age old and settled, but I believe that they have never been satisfactorily answered.

- 1) a) What is the estimated output from the site and will this be given as Direct Current (from the panels) or after conversion to Alternating Current for transmission to the grid? (I understood that the AC amount is relevant but should be grateful if this is confirmed and whether it is likely to be significantly different from the DC output)  
  
b) I have raised seasonal differences in correspondence and believe estimates for Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter should be given.  
  
c) the purpose of this is to see just how much electricity is generated for the grid which I believe should be brought into the planning balance in determining whether the loss of agricultural and other land for this purpose is outweighed by the benefits of renewable energy.
- 2) What is the agricultural grade of the land (I have not yet found the classification)? I am aware that there is very little Best and Most Versatile land in the North East (only about 2% of land in county Durham is BMV) but this does not mean either that the land is not productive or that it has other values eg for landscape, biodiversity or recreation.
- 3) Has any consideration been given to the Discover Brightwater project (see [Brightwater Landscape Partnership \(discoverbrightwater.com\)](https://discoverbrightwater.com) ). This project has sought to improve the area around the river Skerne from Hurworth Burn Reservoir in the north to the Bridge over the River Skerne in Darlington. I have not seen anything from Durham Wildlife Trust or any referenced to the project so far from my reading and wonder if it has been considered.
- 4) The cumulative impact was raised by a number of people. There is a large scale proposal at Brafferton in the west (now under development) and two large scale proposals at Redmarshall in the east which I believe now have permission and will be very close to this proposed development. What consideration will be given to the cumulative effect of these proposals, including from a sequential point of view?
- 5) As is recognised in the application, the roads in this area are popular with cyclists (myself included). A safety issue has been mentioned but I recognise

paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this respect. However, I raised the issue of amenity and the effect that construction traffic may have, presumably for a considerable period, on the enjoyment of cyclists in this area. Will this be a factor that is taken into account as well as highway safety?

Richard Cowen

23 July 2024