

The text below summarises the presentation which I was unable to complete fully due to lack of Time during the ISH on 16/10/2024.

The Byers Gill Solar development needs to be considered as part of an overall change to the nature of this rural part of County Durham the clustering of Solar developments is becoming the norm throughout the UK. This clustering exaggerates and concentrates all of the issues being discussed throughout the hearings.

There are numerous examples of this taking place across the country but our focus must understandably remain on Byers Gill.

During your visit on 17th Oct I hope you will be able to consider the cumulative effect of the numerous developments many of which are already agreed and have planning consent at local authority level.

The figure of 1.0% of all UK land given over to Solar power generation is often quoted as the requirement to achieve the Net Zero target nationally. This may well be the case on a National Level, however when this is considered on a local level particularly in the case of Byers Gill and the associated close proximity installations it is significantly higher.

To assist with this consideration I would like to draw your attention to Darlington Borough councils Local impact report document number REP-1-023

Section 5

Page 22 Section 5.6.4 to 5.6.5

It Describes the following

The farmland concerned is located between Darlington/Newton Aycliffe and Stockton-on-Tees. The gap between the edge of the major urban areas is approximately 12km. The Solar

Panel Areas extend across 8km of this gap. The gap contains an additional seven solar farms which already have consent or are under construction.

This has already been highlighted in the submission by Bishopton Villages Action Group in the response to the examining authorities rule 6 letter on 10 JULY 2024

The Panel Areas will cover approximately 20% of all land within the 25km² geographic area. The Panel Areas cover 57 separate field enclosures.

These figures were provided by DBC in August 2024 this was before the recent overturning of a rejected planning application at Spenymoor for the Hett Solar power development another site over 282 Acres of land.

This further adds to the clustering of developments.

A number of other sites are also known to be in the process of being submitted for planning approval. With landowners being actively pursued to acquire more land. Understandably this cannot be considered by the Exa.

The figure of 20% of all Land in the geographic area converted to Solar power generation will therefore continue to increase and is currently a very conservative estimate.

The result of this significant change to a predominantly rural landscape will result in a substantial and fundamental shift from Rural to Industrial land use.

It will also lead to an almost uninterrupted corridor of Solar development across a large part of Darlington Borough and County Durham.

In order to break up this potentially continuous stretch of Solar power developments I would encourage the Examining authority to reject this development proposal and allow a break in the saturation coverage of Solar development in this area.