

ISH7 Cumulative Effects 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Martin Philpott – Great Stainton Parish Meeting

Through these hearings we have heard much about the high volume of solar farms locally, which due to the Norton grid connection has led to a severe concentration and clustering of solar farms, this clustering of solar farms compounds the adverse effects on the community from loss of amenity, increased adverse visual impacts, adverse impacts on villages & heritage assets, residents mental health and wellbeing.

Although the solar farms are generally described as temporary as they will revert back to agricultural land at the end of life, they are generally planned to be operational for a period of 40 years which for many in the community will make them a permanent feature for the remainder of their lives.

Whilst little can be done about those solar farms that are already operational or have passed planning and due to be constructed, it is essential through this planning process for Byers Gill that if passed that we have done everything practicable with respect to mitigations to reduce the adverse effects on the community.

I would like to refer to my previous written submission reference REP4-022 in which we advised that the residents of Great Stainton had identified and prioritised land in panel Area D which they want removed as a village due to the proximity of the panels to the village and residents' properties. And the extent of visibility of the solar panels due to the short distances from people's homes and the undulating lay of the land which means the panels cannot effectively be mitigated with screening.

Although RWE agreed with the priority areas that we had identified for removal they could not or would not make a commitment to remove them, yesterday we were advised by Andy Anderson that the panel coverage of Byers Gill is 1.6 and comparable solar farms are now typically working on a coverage of 1.2 which if applied to Byers Gill could result in a reduction of circa 170 acres of land for the same planned MW output.

With this in mind it would now appear reasonable to expect RWE as a responsible developer to make a firm commitment to remove the areas of land previously identified and requested by all of villages that will be impacted by this development if passed.

Following my oral submission at the ISH7 Cumulative Effects 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (as detailed above) RWE's lawyer stated that he believed that the solar farm working with 1.2 coverage had tracking type panels. If this is the case, I understand that this is completely different type of panel and could not be used on Byers Gill under the current application.