

Reference: Planning Application 2021/93644, Wakefield Road, Flockton, WF4 4BB

I write in objection to the proposed development of a solar farm adjacent to Wakefield Road, Flockton.

This site is arable farmland in a protected greenbelt area, in an otherwise largely urban landscape. We lose these precious areas at our peril, as once lost, they cannot be replaced.

This development will turn productive farmland into industrial land and in so doing, destroy the bio-diversity (enhanced or not), of this otherwise attractive area. It can't escape the planners notice that part of the Kirklees way passes through the site. Britain was recently criticized as having lost more of its bio-diversity than corresponding countries, this can be described as a bio-diversity crisis, yet, here we go again, proposing to lose more. I am also at a loss as to see how the erection of a '2 metre high' deer fence will enhance bio-diversity, I would have thought its effect will be the exact opposite. Research in the USA has shown that solar farms have a pronounced negative effect on both plants and animals as well as health issues for those living close by.

The pros or cons of solar power and its effectiveness as a means of renewable energy, are debatable, but should it be necessary there is plenty of already degraded former industrial land nearby, where they could be located; not forgetting the huge number of residential and warehouse properties that could be financially encouraged to host them.

In order to be 'green' and prevent further global warming we need to produce more of our food locally. The loss of farmland will inevitably lead to the requirement to import more of our food stuff, from who knows where, maybe Australia, or New Zealand, on a boat, or by air, not very 'green' or very fresh! This may not trouble the electricity generators, who no doubt see profit in this venture, but it troubles me.

Of course, Global Warming is a pressing issue that needs to be and should have been addressed years ago, but Solar Energy in this format, in a wet, dull, small island, is NOT the answer, it's being carried along on a political mantra of 'we must do something, this is something, we'll do this', whilst the alternatives, water and tidal power, are proven to work better. We have already experienced one period this summer where there was insufficient wind and sun to satisfy electricity needs. Erecting more will not produce more sun or create more wind.

Building a solar farm replaces grass, crops and trees that do absorb CO₂ with concrete and 'glass' that does not. Not only that, the concrete and glass produce huge amounts of CO₂ in their manufacture and installation. Hardly very 'green' or environmentally friendly. Once 'down', concrete will permanently reduce this farm to industrial grade land; once again not very 'green'.

The applicant predicts (a prediction is not a fact) that this site will produce up to 49.9 MW of energy (a prediction,) and a surprisingly precise one, as the figures I have researched show that 500KW is produced by every acre on solar farms. At 185 acres that equates to 92.5 MW! Now why would that figure be understated? Is it that this location is a poor one? Is this to avoid a different planning system? The application claims this will supply approximately 15,200 homes (a prediction), with electricity per year. So, let's examine these predictions. By examining several sources, I have found a typical home, containing 4-5 people requires at least 4Kw of electricity, so, 250 homes require 1Mw. It requires 2 acres to produce 1 MW from solar power, providing factors such as sunshine and a temperature of 15-35C is maintained, less of either reduces output. According to records from the Grange Moor weather station, the average temperature taken over the last 10 years for this area

never exceeds 14C in the warmest month. An already inefficient system becomes even less efficient. So, the figures they give, by my calculations, seem somewhat wide of the mark.

Has Yorkshire not been scarred enough by past industrialisation? Are we starting again? As the applicant states the electricity is to power homes, then I suggest putting the panels on the roofs of these homes! Same result, no land lost. Is this development about 'green' issues or about profit?

How many homes will benefit and how much electricity is produced however, will not affect the flow of cash. How much do you think will end up in Kirklees? So, the residents will lose their greenbelt, the country will lose its farmland and the money will end up somewhere else.

As a comparison, a wind turbine is, in terms of CO2, 'cleaner than a solar panel and can produce 48,000 times (once more researched) the amount of energy per KWh, than a solar panel and providing the wind blows, it works in the dark. Why even consider solar? Further researching showed the least efficient method of electricity production is solar. The 2020 figures I found suggests, at its best, about 20% efficiency for solar, way below all the alternatives and that solar panels chronically 'under-perform' and degrade much faster than anticipated. As their power output fluctuates so much, they are little use as a reliable source of power.

Solar farms, are not only an inefficient way of providing power, (by definition they only work when the sun shines), they are visually awful to look at, why else would they wish to erect a fence, it's not just to keep out the deer. This site is not 'tucked away', but right next to a busy main road, in an otherwise beautiful location. This is an area where the residents of Kirklees go to relax and enjoy nature, I can't see people flocking to observe the eyesore of a solar farm and a 2 metre high fence.

As this country has a National Grid, electricity production can be, within reason, anywhere; it does not and should not, need to be using green belt land, the very purpose of which was to prevent such unnecessary exploitation. This land is productive arable farmland. Liz Truss stated (Subsidies for solar farms to be cut to safeguard farmland: Gov.Uk website) published October 2014

- *'English farmland is some of the best in the world and I want to see it dedicated to growing quality food and crops. I do not want to see its productive potential wasted and its appearance blighted by solar farms. Farming is what our farms are for and it is what keeps our landscape beautiful.'*

I agree! 185 acres of arable land cannot be replaced by a few grazing sheep and the pretence of being 'green'.

From where do you think the materials to make these panels come? Once again, my research shows (source: www.power-technology.com) 77% comes from the Xingjiang region of China, where slavery and human rights abuse against the Uyghurs is reported as rampant. Is this something in which Kirklees wants to be complicit? Where are these panels made? Almost certainly South East Asia, or China. China, a country that is increasing coal production, to power industry, to make solar panels. I ask again, when will this madness stop?

Kirklees, do not foist this on residents regardless of their wishes. Many industrial planning mistakes have been made in the past, don't make another. I urge the planners to think carefully and reject this short-sighted destructive plan and point the applicants to areas and methods of production that are more appropriate.