

From:
To: [DCAdmin](#)
Subject: Planning Application Number 2021/62/93644
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Planning Application No. 2021/62/93644/E
Location: Low Farm, Wakefield Road, Flockton, Huddersfield, WF4 4BB
Erection and operation of grid-connected solar photovoltaic farm, with ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements

This is an objection.

There is no doubt about it, world CO2 emissions have to be addressed, the need for greener energy has never been greater, but to even consider allowing a large scale solar farm on arable farmland, in greenbelt, is totally preposterous. Productive farmland is a finite resource and should not ever be misused, especially on our small island, with an ever growing population, particularly in the volatile world in which we live.

Solar farms have been around for some time, therefore studies are available that examine the advantages and disadvantages. There seems to be very little that is 'green' about the production of the solar panels – their manufacture leaves a huge carbon footprint, most are manufactured on the other side of the world. Their life expectancy is relatively short, and the disposal of the 'spent' panels is both expensive and difficult to recycle, leaving future generations to deal with the prospect of discarded 'panel mountains' leaking dangerous heavy metals. Whilst solar farms may work well in hot countries, especially deserts, their performance in producing electricity is poor in the wet and cloudy northern hemisphere. It has been reported that, because of the British Weather, most solar farms in the UK will never get beyond 12 per cent of their full generating potential in any given year.

Way back in October 2014 when Liz Truss was Environment Secretary (with reference to the use of farmland) she stated that:

"I'm very concerned that a lot of land is being taken up with solar farms. They are ugly, a blight on the countryside, and push production of meat and other traditional British produce overseas," said Ms Truss, pointing out that the UK already has 250 solar farms. "I'm not against them per se – they're fine on commercial roofs and school roofs – but it's a big problem if we are using land that can grow crops, fruit and vegetables," she added. (Source: Independent 19 10 2014).

It is suggested in these proposals that this particular solar farm will produce energy for up to 15,200 homes - is it too simple to suggest that the solution is easy - incentivise 15,200 home owners to install solar panels on their roofs. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that this use of solar panels is rather more effective.

To take 75 hectares of land - that's a little over 186 acres, or 105 football pitches - situated in greenbelt, on productive, good quality farmland, for the construction of such a project would reduce this area to an industrial landscape and just the mere thought of it, is already having a devastating effect on local residents who call this place home. The prospect of having the present view of rolling green fields, replaced with a dazzling sea of glass and metal, rack upon rack of them, coupled with CCTV, along with the security fencing and deer fencing, let alone the health concerns raised in various studies and reports, can surely

not be good for either short term or long term mental health. No residents space should be compromised with either being overlooked or overshadowed, let alone have to live with the disturbance from the noise generating equipment on the site, buzzing in the background night and day.

This development is unacceptable both in terms of loss of residential amenity of neighbours and the detrimental impact it will have on the character of the neighbourhood. This area is a precious pocket of greenbelt – a real precious gem – surrounded by a largely urban population. This Local Green Space is enjoyed by many who visit from the Kirklees, Wakefield and Barnsley areas, and others who come from further afield, rambling, cycling and running clubs and the like, not to mention those who live in the surrounding local villages, who treasure the use of this space on a daily basis. They all seek green therapy, the chance to engage with nature. This is the home to a rich and varied range of wild life – some are protected species - and it is heartening to see the large numbers of people who thoroughly enjoy spending their leisure time walking, jogging, horse riding, cycling, birdwatching and so on, in this area. The visual impact of banks of solar panels will have a huge detrimental impact on the area and force those of who live relatively near, to travel further afield to find such amenity. We lose these areas at our peril – lock down made us really appreciate how important green space is. Furthermore, is there a danger of eroding the green corridor, so essential for the free movement of our wild animals?

With reference to the Consultation Response submitted by Natural England to Kirklees in relation to this planning application, it is beyond belief that this body deems that, *'the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes'*. It must be pointed out that protected or not, this development will have a devastating effect on our landscape. Indeed, since when was greenbelt deemed as an unprotected area? Are there not protected species of wildlife that live in this area?

Let us be under no illusion – this would be a very large solar farm, my research, according to 2020 figures, seems to indicate that if this was operational right now, it would rank in the top 5 biggest solar farms in the country. (Interesting to note also, that 3, out of the 5 solar farms, which are operational are situated on former runways/airfields – Lyneham Solar Farm, Wroughton Airfield Solar Park, West Raynham Solar Farm). Therefore, would it be the case that if this development is allowed it would become a significant and defining characteristic effecting the quality of the existing landscape which is currently a landscape essentially rural in character?

Within little more than a stone's throw from the edge of this proposed site is a national treasure, the National Coal Mining Museum, some of its buildings are grade II listed, this is also one of the most popular tourist attractions in our area. This museum attracts thousands of visitors each year from all over the country and beyond. Careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness and impact of placing a solar farm on its door step. A photovoltaic development would not enhance the historic environment. This is our **historic heritage**, the Museum is an irreplaceable asset and resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to its significance for existing and future generations.

Without doubt, Kirklees Authority, along with all local authorities, has a responsibility to help increase the use and supply of green energy but this must not override environmental protections or the planning concerns of the local community. **Meeting energy targets should never be used to justify the wrong type of development in the wrong environment.**

