

I am writing to say that I have friends and family, and I include myself in the fact that the sunnica scheme is impacting upon mental health already. It is extremely distressing to know that the scheme will take up so much of the visual countryside we have known and love for many years. I moved to Cambridgeshire and Suffolk in 1976 and I have lived in both of these areas ever since. If this scheme is allowed to progress the countryside views as we know it will be decimated for 40 years! There are children who are not yet born who will never see this land restored at least until middle age. This is a travesty to the English Countryside. If this needs to be on land and not industrial- why is in so close to so many villages? This is awful and the planning inspectorate needs to take seriously the negative impact n mental health that this is causing and will continue to cause. There is emerging evidence that there are higher rates of mental disorders in urban settings than in rural areas, and that the lack of contact with nature is associated with a remarkable rate of psychological distress (Ventriglio, et al., 2022). In 2010 authors reported higher rates of mental disorders more urbanised area than rural ones, in particular anxiety and depressive disorders, ranging from 21% to 38% of prevalence (Peen, Schoevers and Beekman, 2010). Please do not allow this to impact on the 40,000 + people who will be encased in this awful money-making venture. This is not at all about the environment or green energy as one field of wind turbines would produce easily as much power as this scheme. This is about a failing company (have the inspectorate done the research on how quickly sunnica were cobbled together and looked into company viability?) wanting a "get rich quick" venture at the expense of our countryside. The sunnica scheme people are merely lining up this venture to sell on. At the start of this process, they did not have any details of the panels, how they would be maintained or how they would be disposed of, this information has been scrapped together as they have gone along.

Can I remind the inspectorate that Sunnica would be Europe's largest solar farm, spanning 1,130 hectares (2,792 acres) around encasing villages near Newmarket, Suffolk, and Fordham Cambridgeshire. The affected villages and number of populations impacted- Isleham 2300, Worlington 526, Freckenham 344, Chippenham and Badlingham 517, Snailwell 224, West Row 2854, Fordham 2712, Burwell 6309, and comes very close to schools in Red Lodge 3834, and edges onto Mildenhall 21098. (Total impact- 40,718 people). The above is probably an under estimate.

Also, as a strong supporter of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, can I also highlight that England is already densely populated at 434 people per square kilometre. We need our rural spaces- not to mention that we need to be able to feed ourselves. It is key that the UK can produce its own food. The research on it is extensive. A report from stated that "Without expansion in the area of land and/or further significant increases in yields, the UK may face large deficits in domestic feed barley production and, for that matter, meat supply in the future. Hence, agricultural and food security policy needs to consider, principally, the effect of agricultural land use change on key crops, such as barley." (Yawson, et al., 2017)

Returning to the issue of poor mental health and distress, this should not be taken lightly. There are many elderly folks in these villages who are not able to write in, be up to date with internet and social media and have not been able to send in their voice. There is already untold distress from this scheme and I hope that the planning inspectorate will give great consideration to the impact of living in a solar plant will have. Thank you,

Linda Homan

References

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