SUNNICA ENERGY FARM

Examination

Summary of Written Representation by Mr AJ Munro, of Chippenham, Cambridgeshire

Andrew Munro BSc CEng MICE MCIHT

WRITTEN REPRESENTATION SUMMARY

Andrew Munro is a Chartered Civil Engineer working on major infrastructure projects since 1978, including planning inquiries and development consent orders and is an Interested Party in the Examination (ID 20030808). This is a summery of his written representation.

He believes the case for utility-scale solar in this location is not, in his opinion, proven.

The application lacks detail and using the Rochdale Envelope to defer fundamental considerations after consent is unreasonable. The need for 'flexibility' does not give developers an excuse to provide inadequate descriptions of their projects.

The Rochdale Envelope approach was not intended to confer this degree of freedom to the Applicant. A minimum amount of detail must be provided for the impacts to be understood. This is not reasonable for local people unfamiliar with the process, who are entitled to understand exactly how it might affect them.

The lack of detail on the most significant industrialisation element of the proposals is unreasonable.

The impact of the scheme on UK food security is significant considering the number of solar schemes nationally and in this area. But there is a risk that the land will never be decommissioned and will become "brownfield" land unless it is restored.

The Applicant has underestimated the heritage impact of the scheme, including upon Chippenham Park.

Only 11% of the rated maximum output will reach the National Grid on average over a year. The inefficiency of PV means that larger areas of land are needed than for any other generation technology.

There is an acute lack of information in the application on proposals for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). If consented, Sunnica could become, within the DCO limits, the largest BESS system in the world.

The safety and regulation of BESS are in doubt following numerous thermal runaway incidents.

The Sunnica project is not carbon neutral or carbon negative, but it will be carbon-positive, creating more carbon over its life than it saves. The design is undoubtedly due to the unusual strung-out design, driven by land availability rather than a cohesive design process. More than 1 million PV panels are highly likely to be shipped halfway around the world.

I am particularly disappointed to see the historic Chippenham Park dominated by solar PV and for much of the green space around here to be covered by solar panels.

I have no objection to other local solar PV schemes. It is the overbearing scale of Sunnica and the detriment to the local area that I object to. A much smaller scheme would be far more acceptable, provided it fits in with the landscape.