

COMMON DETERMINATION: EPL OPEN HEARING SUBMISSION

Sir, my name is Derek Burles and I am the author of the common determination submission to the Secretaries of State, concerning both this application and the recent EDF planning appeal, which was copied to you and subsequently added to the examination file.

The purpose of my submission is to facilitate the principle of common determination of both the EDF appeal and the Stonestreet Green application. This in an effort to achieve 2 goals. One, recognition that there is considerable merit and logic in both schemes being heard and determined on a common and consistent basis. And two, that the cumulative impact of both schemes is taken into full and proper account. This is particularly pertinent given a mandate formed by the community at a meeting in November 2022 that the Stonestreet Green Solar scheme should be opposed on the grounds of size, position and cumulative impact, a decision taken in specific consideration of one scheme, but with the knowledge that the second EDF scheme was also in play.

Of course, the most obvious interpretation of cumulative impact is that a combination of the existing Partridge Farm solar array and the planned addition of the Stonestreet Green and EDF schemes will occupy a total in excess of 700 acres, on adjoining land, representing more than 20% of the acreage of the Aldington parish footprint, in some parts in very close proximity to the village environs, literally at the bottom of some resident's gardens. What's more, the recently approved and related Welsh Power and Pivot Power schemes add further to the impact in the ugly form of industrialisation at the northern end of Church Lane, with Pivot Power's planning application clearly indicating that there's more to follow.

Continuing with the theme of cumulative impact, I would like to turn to its effect on the hearts and minds of the community throughout the entire gamut of consultation, construction and operation, where residents are currently into the 4th year of this process and all its attendant uncertainty, including the threat of devaluation of their homes.

Starting with the contemptible behaviour of both EPL 001 Limited and EDF during the consultation phases of both schemes, where the former conducted a process that was sham like in its undertaking.

Looking ahead to the construction phase, the principle of common determination has the potential to ensure that the building of both schemes, if approved, is conducted with the community's best interests in mind, especially if there is scope for both schemes to be constructed at the same time. In which circumstances the decisions of Kent County Council to refuse the closure of Church Lane to northbound traffic (in the context of the EDF scheme) and ignore the appalling safety record and cramped layout of the Smeeth crossroads might be reconsidered in the context of a common construction and transport plan.

Otherwise, we need to consider the very realistic prospect of repeated blockages of Church Lane due to opposing traffic flows and the closure of Smeeth crossroads due to accidents, combined with the influx of literally hundreds of traffic movements on a daily basis, courtesy of component transportation on HGVs, construction workers going to and from, plus other visitors to the sites.

Let's think about the chaos that would ensue and the impact on residents going about their everyday life. But the situation could get worse, seriously worse. From time to time, the adjacent stretch of the M20 motorway is closed, due to accidents and incidents. During

which time, the principal option for motorway traffic is to use the A20, where the pinch-point under the railway bridges in Sellindge leads to long delays in both directions of the A20, past the junction with Church Lane and through the Smeeth crossroads.

Furthermore, in such circumstances, some locals and Satnav users will often take to the B2067 and then attempt to use Church Lane and roads leading to Smeeth crossroads as a means of rejoining the A20 and in turn the M20, or vice versa.

Potentially creating circumstances where chaos and severe inconvenience leads to tragedy, when ambulances are no longer able to reach either patient's homes or the William Harvey hospital and the Fire Brigade are unable to attend fires.

Moving on, may I conclude my input by turning to key issues concerning both the EDF and the EPL schemes, where there is considerable merit and logic in them being heard and determined on a common, consistent basis. In which context, I think of the combined and/or cumulative environmental effects of both schemes, along with landscape, visualisation, heritage, ecology, ornithology, biodiversity, PROWs and many more.

I thank you for allowing me to make this submission and sincerely trust that the merit and logic of common determination can find its way into the outcome of both this and the EDF scheme.

Sir, may I enquire: were you to see merit in the concept of common determination and given the complex situation potentially embracing 2 secretaries of state and the EDF planning appeal that has completed its public inquiry. Are there potential provisions available to you that would enable this submission to move forward?

Sir, would it be helpful to provide you with a copy of my notes?

ENDS

25th February 2025