

Admin

eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Application by BSSL Cambsbed 1 Limited for an order granting development consent for the East Park Energy project (EN010141)

Shaun Woodward : Resident of [REDACTED]. OBJECTION .

Dear Mr Sword

This is the second part of my comments to accompany that sent earlier on PROW. This is for the BESS section of the hearing. I hope it can be included. I duplicate my note from that submission for your reference.

Unexpectedly, due to my [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
As a result, despite registering I will no longer be able to speak at the hearings tomorrow (9th Jun). As such I would be very grateful, if in my absence you could read out my comments below, consider the points raised and request a response from the applicant. I apologise for the late hour of this submission, due to only being back from hospital a few hours ago.

Many thanks in anticipation

Kind regards

Shaun Woodward

Further Issue Specific Hearing (ISH3)

East Park Energy BESS

I wish to make a single, simple point regarding the East Park Energy application for the BESS element of the solar scheme application.

It appears the applicant is seeking for much of the detail design and layout for this aspect of the application and it's compound to be finalised beyond the DCO being granted.

Despite assurances I believe strongly that for such a substantial (and some would say controversial) development on this scale, the lack of fixed design detail and actualities mean robust testing and scrutiny cannot be properly made by the inspectorate, or third parties, which includes those responsible for the eventual safety of the site. Surely the applicant must be required to submit a full and complete final design, showing the layout and location, and positioning of all related elements on the landscape. It cannot be correct for details of a specific design to be decided and plans amended post DCO when the spotlight has moved and public scrutiny is no longer able to easily test the application.

This 'push the details down the line' approach to planning may well be a standard and acceptable method in other areas of national planning where roads and bridges are concerned, but the siting of BESS and associated infrastructure can cause severe harm to residents and localities in the event of failure and should be defined from the outset. The applicant does expect some 'failure of components' as they state so in their maintenance replacement notes for components including cells. I quote ref: EN010141-000856-8.36 Technical Note on replacement Works PO1

36. 2.3.37 Over time, individual modules, racks or containers could also become unreliable, suffer faults, or require replacement following damage or abnormal operation.

There have been numerous well documented thermal runaway events with solar schemes both under construction and at operational stages. As with aircraft, most will

fly for a lifetime, but when problems occur the final result is almost always catastrophic. This is how I view current BESS technology, it may well never fail over a 40 year life, but if it does there must be thorough detailed plans for how to deal with it from the outset, not finalised later when beyond proper public scrutiny post DCO.

I feel sure the applicant will dismiss my comments, but that does not mean they are of no merit. I hope the inspector we'll give weight to this issue in his appraisal and demand a full and proper detailed design and layout, specific, not general mitigation for that design and a full and proper maintenance and safety schedule for a specific design and layout before granting a DCO.

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Further Issue Specific Hearing (ISH3)

Public Rights of way

I have a number of concerns about public rights of way which have been noted in previous submissions, but there are specific additional issues which I would like to raise. I would be grateful for a clear and direct response from the applicant to the inspector on these points.

The EPE application is noted as a 'Temporary' development of 40 years duration. Actually with the planning, post DOC work, construction and decommissioning cycles it will be nearer a 45+ year engagement for those residents affected by it. Irrespective, the applicant claims the site will be returned to its current status after 40 years fulfilling the 'Temporary' claim.

I contest this:-

The application shows around 120,000 individual plantings comprising hedging, trees and woodland planting. This equates to around 17km of hedging, over 40 acres of woodland planting and 350+ trees and represents a significant addition to the current landscape irrespective of any infrastructure, new roads and solar panels. Much of the planting will constrain miles of footpath and bridleways, many which currently traversing open fields currently growing wheat and offer wide vistas. This planting will be tightly accompanied by 60km of ugly metal security fencing. In time, the planting will be embedded and likely intertwine into the fencing which will make it difficult to remove one from the other.

In 40 yrs, after the solar infrastructure is removed from the site, the applicant states the planting will remain, and it will become the landowners responsibility. I suggest that with mature planting along both sides of footpaths across open fields it will be very difficult in future for farmers with heavy equipment to resume agricultural work (as currently undertaken) without removing not just fencing but hedging too due to

irregularly divided fields demanded by screen hedging. On this scale, removing the hedging and fencing in 40 years will negatively impact biodiversity claims and creating a shock to local wildlife at that time.

Secondly, 120,000 plantings (whose sole function is to screen the solar site) will also gradually obscure and change the current open views and vista, the very character of the countryside as it is now. It cannot claim to screen the site and not do so. In time this will create a significant material change to the locality and current landscape, and is certainly not in line with concept of TEMPORARY unless it were eventually removed along with all infrastructure. This would be a significant, disruptive and large scale change.

Thirdly, the 3 year construction and planting phases will disrupt the flora and fauna of the countryside. The 20 year recycling phase (...even if split into 20% renewal per annum over 5 years which equals 139,152 panels), and eventual 40 year removal stage over 2 years will add more stress and disruption to wildlife.

I suggest to conform to the 'temporary' status of the application the 120,000 plantings will need to be removed after 40 years to return the landscape to it's current open status. If the inspector feels the benefit of such planting should remain after the removal of the infrastructure in 40 years, then the application cannot in any real sense retain the status of 'temporary'.

The Chelsea flower show is 'temporary', this wholesale replanting to try and hide thousands of solar panels across this site represents serious and permanent material change to the open rolling landscape which exists now.

To reconfirm, the scale of planting suggested by the applicant is only required because the applicant has chosen to site panels in many areas which are unsuitable on the grounds of visibility, due to being close and visible from residents homes and also from many vantages, access roads and public rights or way. Squeezing panels into areas which are close to rights of way and habitation I believe should weigh heavily against it. If were not so the applicant would not be attempting this charade of screening what cannot be hidden with such volume planting.