

The applicant claims that the impact of vehicles on public rights of way (PROW) will be no more than the impact of farming vehicles. With respect this is absolute rubbish. First farm vehicles do not cross the PROW on a daily basis. Whilst there is increased activity during the harvesting and sowing periods it is nothing in comparison to the number of vehicles that will be accessing the sites and crossing the PROW.

The applicant mentions temporary diversions, and when the ExA questioned as to whether that would be for the entire length of the construction period, the applicant was only able to reply "it would not be, we don't think for any of the public rights of way for the full extent of the construction period". Surely at this stage the applicant should know whether or not that is the case!

When the ExA questioned the applicant on whether or not any surveys have been undertaken on the PROW before the application was submitted, the applicant replied "no". No surveys have been done to date". How can the applicant comment on the effects of the project on the PROW if they have not carried out any meaningful surveys? As someone affected by the implications to the PROW I am offended that the applicant has put so little effort into understanding the affect on users of their proposals.

There are serious safety concerns regarding the crossing points of PROW which the applicant has neither properly assessed or addressed. Can the ExA please ensure that this issue is addressed.

In reply to the ExA's question as to what method would be used again the applicant showed how little research and understanding they have with their reply "method that's yet to be determined, but I imagine it would be CCTV". Surely at this stage of the process the ExA would expect and demand that the applicant were better prepared?

The applicant admits that it will take some time for the planting to establish that is supposed to reduce the visibility of the fencing surrounding the PROW, the applicant plans to plant hedging whips which are known to take many many years to establish. Has the applicant considered the implications from needing to water these whips in the early years, more traffic movement, increased need for water. In the current climate of year on year rising temperatures failure of whips is a real risk. Has the applicant made allowance to replace failed whips? Why hasn't the applicant considered the use of more mature plants which will establish quicker, if properly maintained, thereby giving quicker cover.

Regarding the crossing of the Pertenhall Brook the applicant maintains that the crossing would be suitable for construction. Was this assessment carried out by Wallingford Hydro Solutions carried out on site? In which case it would be very obvious that the crossing is by no means suitable for construction traffic, or is it yet another example of the applicant thinking that this process can be managed from a desk?

It was very disappointing that the applicant didn't think it worthwhile confirming decommissioning in relation to PROW at the end of the project. Again another example of how little worth they attribute to the countryside and its users.

Councillor [REDACTED] made several points about the landscape and visual effects and whether safer routes had been considered. The applicant did not answer her questions I hope that they will be addressed by this next deadline.

In response to the British Horse Society the applicant stated that hedgerow screening would effectively be established before year 10 point. There is a solar development very near to this site that was finished over 6 years ago and the hedging nowhere near screens the panels, and in fact in many places has completely failed. The panels on this other site are much lower than the proposed panels in this application and therefore more than 10 years will be required to provide any meaningful screening.

In response to [REDACTED] the applicant admitted that the PROW management scheme is a document to manage the rights of way rather than an assessment of the impacts of the scheme. I do not believe the applicant is giving enough consideration to the impacts on PROW.

The applicant quotes the methodology shown in Appendix 5.2 assessing the visualizations in landscape terms. Again I would like to impress on the ExA the value in visiting the site to assess the impacts for yourself.

In response to the points made on behalf of the Ramblers groups the applicant appears to have little regard for the loss of views that the application will cause. Walking through corridors of metal fencing, screened or otherwise, cannot be compared to the impact of walking across open countryside and experiencing the views. The applicant states that there is no requirement for this, again an example of their disregard to the impacts on the community. The applicant shows no regard for the Great Staughton Neighbourhood plan, I would like to think that the ExA will have more regard for this important document.

The applicant was not able/prepared to state that the hedging used would be British sourced. Stating yet again that would be considered post approval. Yet another example of the lack of preparation pre consent.

With regard to the points made by the Ramblers Groups the applicant appears to have no regard to the loss of views that the proposal will cause. Walking through corridors of metal fencing screened, after many years if at all, does not compensate for the ability to walk across and benefit from open views. The applicant simply says it is not a requirement – again proof of their lack of regard to the issues of the loss of land and subsequent amenities. The applicant also has shown no regard for the Great Staughton Neighbourhood plan, a strongly thought out and approved document. Again I would ask the ExA to give such an important document consideration in reaching his decision.

The applicant was asked to confirm that the hedging would be British sourced, but as with many other questions, has stated that this would be considered post consent. Yet another example of how little preparation they are prepared to do prior to consent. How are they able to correctly calculate carbon emissions if they don't know where the hedging is being sourced?

I understand that the ExA made an unaccompanied site visit just before this PROW hearing, but I would hope and urge the ExA that as a result of the very valid points raised at this hearing the ExA feels that another site visit would help him have a more informed opinion on these issues.

The local planning authorities questioned the significance attributed to the visual amenity. The applicant did not respond to these points at the hearing, but I am sure the ExA will require that they do so.

The applicant makes heavy reference to the enhancement from screen planting but does not recognise that this will in fact reduce any views even more. The applicant suggest that the community might like to use the community benefit fund for future creation of enhancement of PROW's – not much of a legacy fund if it has to be used to address issues that the applicant should have dealt with in the first place!

National policy states that the Secretary of State should consider imposing requirements to ensure the functionality and

connectivity of the green infrastructure network and to improve the network and other areas of open space, including among other things, public rights of way. The applicant should be required to address these issues and not just say they are not a planning requirement.

There is insufficient technical detail on the PROW corridors and again the applicant proposes to provide this at a later date. How can a considered judgement be made with such information not yet available. Access for all needs to be considered, not just able-bodied persons. The applicant also needs to further consider safety issues on the PROW crossing points.

It is concerning that whilst Cambridge Fire and Rescue Service agree the general principles of the battery safety management plan, all matters are subject to detail that is not currently available, and any assurances provided by the applicant within the statement of common ground must be met and evidenced to the satisfaction of the fire authority. I would like assurance from the ExA that it will be contingent on there being full agreement with CF&RS before consent can be granted.

CF&RS require support from the Applicant to ensure suitable training for batteries and any specialist equipment that may be required. I would hope that the ExA would instruct the applicant to provide all the necessary support (including financial) required.

The ExA acknowledged during the hearing that battery safety management is an evolving science, although how any such plan can be devised when details of the type of battery, chemical mix and quantities, hazardous substances are not yet known/specified. I would ask the ExA to ensure that all this information is given in detail so that both the ExA and the host authorities can be certain that any management and safety management plans are adequate for the site and the surrounding areas.

The host authorities acknowledged that this is a highly specialized field, moving apace both technically and with potential changes in regulations and legislations. The host authorities therefore require some form of resource paid for by the applicant in order that they may appoint the necessary specialists to review the plan and to ensure that they are able to discharge their duties in reviewing such a plan. I would like the ExA to insist that the applicant meets the costs necessary for the host authorities to discharge their duties in this respect.

At the hearing the applicant was not prepared/able to respond to the question regarding gate one status for the BESS – I find it alarming at this stage that the application needed to confirm the position on the gate one “in due course” rather than at the hearing. I am sure the ExA will also be concerned by this.

According to the applicants figures the total lifecycle carbon emissions are actually greater than the carbon savings claimed by the developer. I must therefore ask the ExA how this scheme can satisfy the “national interest” test?

There is a gas pipeline very close to the BESS site. The applicant has not confirmed whether or not this pipeline is “live”. It is essential that this question is answered as the safety implications of siting a BESS so close to a live gas pipeline are horrendous