

I strongly oppose the proposed solar development in Keysoe and the surrounding areas. This location is not only productive farmland, but also a rural community where residents — many of whom are elderly rely on the peace, safety, and character of the environment. The area is used daily by local people, equestrians, cyclists, and drivers passing through. The proposal would harm farmland, wildlife, residential amenity, road safety, and the overall rural landscape. It is not an appropriate site for industrial scale solar infrastructure. You'll likely see the area degraded and leave the area if this goes ahead.

Below are 14 points outlining my objection.

1. Summary of My Position

I disagree with the proposed solar development in Keysoe and the surrounding areas. This location is predominantly productive farmland, supports significant wildlife, and is home to a large elderly population who rely on the tranquillity and rural character of the area. The proposal is not an appropriate use of this land and would harm the rural community, environment, and local economy.

2. Impact on Agricultural Land & Food Security

Keysoe consists of active, high value farmland. Removing this land for 30–40 years undermines domestic food production

conflicts with national food security objectives

disrupts local farming businesses

permanently alters soil structure, drainage, and agricultural capability

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises protecting best and most versatile agricultural land. The applicant has not demonstrated that alternative non agricultural sites have been considered.

3. Harm to Landscape, Wildlife & Rural Character

The Keysoe area is known for:

wildlife habitats

equestrian activity and competitions

quiet rural lanes

open countryside views

Industrial scale solar arrays introduce:

reflective panels

high fencing

security lighting

noise from inverters and maintenance vehicles

These features are visually intrusive, harmful to wildlife, and fundamentally change the rural character. For elderly residents, many of whom value the peaceful environment, this represents a significant negative impact on wellbeing.

4. More Suitable Alternative Locations

Solar infrastructure should be placed in areas that do not conflict with farming, wildlife, or residential amenity. Locations such as Grafham Water, industrial estates, brownfield land, and commercial rooftops are far more appropriate.

These alternatives:

avoid harm to farmland

minimise impact on wildlife

reduce visual intrusion

align better with public acceptance

The applicant has not demonstrated that such alternatives were properly explored.

5. Long Term Policy Considerations

Future governments are likely to place greater emphasis on protecting farmland and supporting domestic agriculture.

Approving large solar developments on productive farmland now risks undermining those future policy directions.

6. Cumulative Impact

Keysoe and nearby villages have already faced multiple energy related proposals. Individually, the combined cumulative impact on landscape, wildlife, traffic, and rural character becomes unacceptable.

The applicant has not provided a robust cumulative impact assessment.

7. Inadequate Local Infrastructure

The rural roads around Keysoe are:

narrow

unlit

heavily used by horses, cyclists, and elderly residents

unsuitable for HGVs and construction traffic

Solar developments require months of heavy vehicle movements. This poses safety risks and disrupts daily life. The transport assessment does not reflect real world conditions.

8. Harm to Equestrian Activity & Local Economy

Keysoe is known for equestrian centres, riding schools, and competitions. These activities rely on:

quiet surroundings

safe roads

uninterrupted bridleways

stable wildlife populations

Solar farms introduce noise, traffic, and visual disturbance that can spook horses, reduce visitor numbers, and harm local businesses. This economic impact has not been properly assessed.

9. Loss of Biodiversity & Habitat Fragmentation

Despite claims of “biodiversity gain,” solar farms often:

fence off large areas

restrict movement of deer, badgers, foxes, and other wildlife

remove hedgerows

reduce habitat connectivity

introduce artificial lighting that disrupts nocturnal species

Keysoe's wildlife corridors are already fragile. Fragmenting them further is contrary to DEFRA's biodiversity principles.

10. Visual Intrusion & Landscape Harm

Solar farms are industrial structures. Even with planting, they remain:

reflective

geometric

fenced

visible from footpaths, bridleways, and homes

Keysoe's open landscape means screening is ineffective. The proposal fails to respect the rural character valued by residents and visitors.

11. Lack of Community Benefit

The proposal offers no meaningful benefit to Keysoe residents:

no reduced energy bills

no community ownership

no local investment

no compensation for loss of amenity

National policy encourages renewable projects that work with communities. This proposal does not.

12. Better Alternatives Exist

Solar should be prioritised on:

rooftops

industrial estates

brownfield land

reservoirs (e.g., Grafham Water)

car parks

logistics centres

These locations avoid harm to farmland, wildlife, and rural communities. The applicant has not demonstrated that these alternatives were properly explored.

13. Long Term Reversibility Is Overstated

Developers often claim solar farms are "temporary," but:

soil compaction

drainage changes

loss of hedgerows

underground cabling

access tracks

all cause long term or permanent damage. The land may never return to its original state.

14. Conclusion

For all the reasons above, the Keysoe solar proposal is not appropriate for this location. Solar energy is important, but it must be delivered in a way that does not sacrifice farmland, wildlife habitats, or the wellbeing of rural communities. The applicant has not demonstrated that this site is suitable or that alternatives have been properly considered.

I therefore object to the proposal and request that it is not approved.