

I am writing to object most strenuously to the proposal on several grounds including

1 the destruction of local habitats and the degradation of the landscape.

The proposed area to be covered by solar panels is not only huge but covers an area famed for its tranquil beauty so close to Oxford.

In Q2.3. 2 there is mention of the duty to have regard to preserving the fauna, flora etc and historical and archaeological interest. In reply, the applicant seems to believe that producing an Environmental Statement and Layout and Design principles covers these requirements. The fact is that the panels will cover an enormous area and the local environment will suffer however many statements they compose. There is a lot of talk these days about the loss of species and how we need to preserve our countryside. I don't think the applicant has really taken this on board.

I understand that Historic England objects to the proposal. The applicant has evidently taken each particular issue and decided that it is not actually all that bad. However, a view of solar panels on what was a view of a historic site – eg a church - is always going to be ugly and nitpicking about exactly how ugly doesn't seem right to me.

2 Use of agricultural land

At first, the applicant told everyone that the land to be covered was all poor quality. However, they now accept that 42% is BVA quality. I think that we should not cover good agricultural land for such a long period of time. The applicant notes that leaving land fallow is a common practice – however, this is not usually for more than a year or so. We live in difficult times and food security should be treated seriously.

3 The impact on local communities

I live in Witney, and often travel along the A40 past where the panels will be, and I visit friends in the area. I am concerned about the destruction of the countryside and the loss of beauty, local flora and fauna and so on. Those who live in the affected villages are threatened with the loss of their way of life, a collapse in house prices (already happening) and years of noise and pollution as the panels are built and lorries trundle along already congested roads. The general feeling locally is that it will destroy our area, will encourage more housing, especially when the panels are removed in the future (I know they deny this – but things can change and nobody has much faith in their promises) and that there are better ways to resource our need for electricity.

There is also a general belief that this whole process is a waste of time and effort as the decision has already been made and that the opinions of local people are not considered. I do hope that this is not true and that you will seriously look at the local impact on agriculture, local people and our environment..

Jennifer Smith

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