

I am a supporter of net zero and can fully see the effects of Climate Change on the world around us. However, I do not believe that building vast solar farms and alienating communities is the way to go about this. The obvious way to help us achieve net zero would be to put solar panels on residential, industrial and public properties (where possible), including making them compulsory on new-builds. Homes can also be better insulated. These steps would not only aid net zero, they would help people with the cost of living.

I oppose this development on 7 counts.

1. Mental health

I moved here in July 2023 following continuous [REDACTED] The noise of where I was living was affecting my health so badly that I just had to move. During a [REDACTED] I can't tolerate noise of any kind and I chose to live in this village for its peace and quiet. The noise from the building site for the solar farm will be intolerable for me and living here will make my life unbearable. The effect on my mental and physical health will be unendurable

2. Loss of productive farmland

Recent events such as Covid 19, the war in Ukraine and the possibility of trade tariffs with the US has shown us the vital need for self-sufficiency in food. A recent report by Tim Lang, emeritus professor of food policy at City St George's, University of London confirms the need for a national food programme and policy – the land needed for this is a vital component of any such policy. These views are also backed up by the National Preparedness Committee. This begs the question as to why we are covering 4,200 acres of agricultural land in solar panels when it could be growing the food we so desperately need to be producing to make us more self-sufficient. Lincolnshire is known as the "breadbasket" of England and produces 20% England's fresh vegetables; 20% of England's potatoes and roughly the same amount of England's sugar beet, as well as cereals, oilseed rape and protein crops. This solar farm will incorporate prime agricultural land which is a short-sighted policy. We can live without electricity – indeed we did for 1800 years: we can only live for a couple of months without food.

3. Environmental hazard and fire risk

The British Safety Council itself recognises the fire risk attending lithium batteries, a risk not just associated with the fire itself but also in terms of the release of noxious gases into the environment. The solar farm boundaries residential areas that will therefore be at risk

There are also environmental hazards associated with solar farms with the possibility of toxic chemicals leaching out from the panels themselves as well as from the lithium battery storage areas.

There also appears to have been little consideration given to the disposal of these panels. Many countries now designate solar panels as hazardous waste due to the presence of a cocktail of toxic chemicals. Where will these panels be sent to be disposed of? If they travel to another part of the UK or even abroad, that is more carbon miles.

4. Geographical location

Lincolnshire only averages 1,400 hours of sunshine each year so building solar farms here to help achieve net zero seems a strange choice. It seems a highly inefficient location. This combines with the fact that over time the panels degrade and, therefore, will become less efficient meaning that the lifetime production of energy from this farm will be limited. Added to that is the carbon cost of producing the panels and shipping them from China – hardly a way to reduce our carbon footprint.

5. Loss of habitat

Solar farms are known to damage and destroy the habitats of many insects, animals and birds. They increase the risk of collision hazards and they disrupt migratory routes. While walking my dog I have noticed what seems to be a [REDACTED] behind the playground which will be destroyed by this farm.

6. Visual impact

Tourists visit Lincolnshire for the rolling fields which will disappear under a mass of panels. The size of this solar industrialised area alone should be enough to disqualify it. 4,200 acres is the equivalent of over 2,000 football pitches and it will destroy forever the landscape of the area.

7. Traffic impact

Scopwick is a small village of approx. 800 people and is situated on a quiet B road, built to sustain a low number of cars on a daily basis. The amount of traffic that will result from the building of Springwell will be unsustainable over the 4 years it will take. The 600 workforce will almost double the population of our village – a village with no amenities (other than the pub) to accommodate them.