

FOSSE GREEN ENERGY EXAMINATION
LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL IMPACT REPORT
VISITOR ECONOMY IMPACT

COMMENTS – ANDREW KEELING (IP Ref: ██████████)

1. My Visitor Economy Credentials

I am a resident of Bassingham. I have recently retired from a 40-year career in tourism. For the last 20 years of my career, I was one of the leading tourism consultants in the UK. I have been involved in supporting the development of Lincolnshire's visitor economy for over 30 years, firstly in my role as the Regional Tourism Development Manager for the East Midlands Tourist Board, and then as a tourism consultant, undertaking numerous tourism strategy, research and consultancy assignments for Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Tourism and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership. I believe therefore that I have the experience and knowledge to give an expert opinion on the likely impact of the Fosse Green Energy project on the visitor economy of the surrounding area.

2. My Comments

Paragraphs 16.12 to 16.15 of the LIR provide Lincolnshire County Council's assessment of the impact of the Fosse Green Energy proposals on the visitor economy. The Council raises concerns about the potential negative impact on the visitor economy from the visual degradation of the countryside that will result from the Fosse Green Energy project. I fully agree with this view, but believe that the Council, and the applicant, fail to fully understand the impacts on the visitor economy.

The Council's assessment focuses largely on the impacts on the visitor attractions and hospitality and retail businesses in the villages on the Lincoln Cliff Edge. They are most likely to be affected in terms of lost trade from walkers and walking groups using the Viking Way as a result of disruption during the construction, replacement and decommissioning of the cable corridor, and the cumulative impacts of all of the renewable energy infrastructure in the area that is looking to connect to the proposed Navenby substation.

The Council's, and the applicant's, assessments of visitor economy impact fail to recognise the potential impacts on the non-serviced accommodation sector in the area that immediately surrounds the Fosse Green Energy site. Para 12.5.29 of Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement (Document AS-016) only considers the impacts on serviced accommodation. The area immediately surrounding the Fosse Green Energy site is home to several non-serviced accommodation businesses, including the Cathedral View Holiday Park (which will be surrounded on three sides by solar panels in the Fosse Green Energy scheme) and Thorpe Park Lodges site in Thorpe-on-the-Hill; the Oakhill Leisure touring caravan and camping site at Norton Disney; two touring caravan, motorhome and camping sites at Haddington and Norton Disney; an eco-cabin site at Norton Disney and a number of holiday rental properties. The rural setting of these visitor accommodation businesses is a key part of their appeal as places to stay. The visual impact of the Fosse Green Energy on the local countryside is thus likely to impact on their future trading and investment potential, and could threaten their future viability.

The Council's, and the applicant's, assessments of visitor economy impact fail to consider how the Fosse Green Energy project might affect future investment in visitor accommodation. There is evidence of potential for new investment in the area's visitor accommodation offer. A site at Thurlby for a lakeside holiday park, with planning permission

for 103 holiday lodges, is currently being marketed. The site of the former Dovecote pub and restaurant off the A46 at Swinderby has previously been marketed for a hotel and leisure development and remains a potential investment opportunity site. Para 12.5.43 of Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement fails to mention these potential leisure development sites. There could also be opportunities for farms to diversify into a range of visitor accommodation options, including touring caravan and camping, glamping, eco-lodges and cabins, holiday cottages and farmhouse bed & breakfast accommodation. Approval of the Fosse Green Energy scheme is likely to deter such future investment in the area's visitor accommodation offer.

Paragraphs 16.16 to 16.18 consider the potential impacts of the Fosse Green Energy project on visitor attractions and recreational facilities. At paragraph 16.16, the Holmes Parish Woodland in Bassingham also needs to be noted as a recreational facility. It has been developed by local volunteers and with the support of Bassingham Parish Council. It includes a nature trail, picnic area, and a riverside walk with countryside views, which will be affected by clearly visible solar panels on the opposite side of the River Witham if the Fosse Green Energy project goes ahead.

Paragraph 16.17 fails to note that The Five Bells pub in Bassingham and Green Man pub at Norton Disney need to be added to Table 12-21 of Chapter 12 of the ES (document AS-016).

The assessment of the impacts on recreational receptors and Public Rights of Way fails to understand that the areas immediately surrounding the Fosse Green Energy site attract visiting walkers and walking groups, including those visiting their friends and relatives in the area, that often frequent the pubs and cafes in Bassingham, Aubourn, Norton Disney and Thorpe-on-the-Hill. The degradation of the walking routes around these villages that will result from the Fosse Green Energy project is likely to result in a loss of this trade for these businesses.

The assessment of the impacts on visitor attractions makes no reference to the recently completed Bomber County Gateway Lancaster aircraft landmark art installation at Norton Disney. It provides a significant addition to Lincolnshire's aviation heritage offer, complementing the International Bomber Command Centre, Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and various RAF airfield heritage centres. It has the potential therefore to provide a significant boost to the area's visitor economy.

For all of the above reasons, I believe that the County Council and applicant have significantly underestimated the likely impact of the Fosse Green Energy project on the area's visitor economy. I suggest therefore that in the overall determination of the DCO application the ExA should give greater weight to the potential negative impacts on the visitor economy than the LIR suggests.