

On behalf of the Weel Solar Action Group that represents 35 Households in the Village of Weel, I would like the planning inspectorate to clarify their understanding of cumulative impact in regards to solar farm developments in our area.

The recent decision to allow the appeal from Albanwise Synergy for Carr Farm Solar Farm has had a deeply negative impact on the trust our community has on the planning process.

Our Parish council, our local elected councillors and our elected councillors on the East Riding council planning committee all refused or objected to the proposal.

But then in a completely opaque process the planning inspectorate overturned a decision that had a 9-3 majority on an local elected level. This is a disregard for local democracy that has been noted by us, East Riding Council, the BBC and Yorkshire post.

We attended countless meetings and consultations and submitted to 'Have your say' portals like this one. But in the end this engagement was just ignored, all the objections overlooked and the project waved through.

This leaves us uncertain about trusting in the process we are now being invited to take part in.

I know that the inspectorate with say, this invitation to 'Have your say' is not for the Albanwise Synergy project, it is for the Peartree Hill project. But this is a luxury that only the planning inspectorate has, and there is an unreality about it that causes further concern.

People in our community don't get to separate the different solar projects in our area into separate little pockets. We have to think about and engage with the first Albanwise 49.9MW project, the Boom Power 49.9MW project, the second Albanwise 49.9MW project, the Peartreehill 320MW project, the Drove Hill 49.9MW project and the Molescroft 49.9MW project that are all taking place within 5KM of our village.

If we don't 'have our say' or attend meetings and consultation events then we fear the planning inspectorate will just take the default position that we are all in agreement that they should go ahead.

At the start of this process, as a community, we were in support of green energy in our area. All we are asking for is balance, fairness and clarity.

We would like an answer to the following question -

When will the planning inspectorate refuse a solar farm based on cumulative impact?

UK Government Guidance states

'Cumulative visual impacts may arise where two or more of the same type of renewable energy development will be visible from the same point, or will be visible shortly after each other along the same journey.'

When upholding the appeal the planning inspectorate overruled this guidance. If the guidance is not applicable then when will cumulative impact be considered as a reason to reject or amend a proposal.

Until we have an answer to this question it is difficult for us to put energy into talking about Peartree Hill. But here are our initial thoughts -

We think that alongside all the other developments the project is too big.

That the screening needs to be improved.

That there needs to be better communication about noise levels from the project once it is installed.

We would like an agreement that if Peartree Hill is granted planning permission then that will be the end of new solar projects in our area. With no new projects being granted planning permission.

We hope you will consider these points and get back to us as soon as possible.