

EDGCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

**Application by Rosefield Energyfarm Limited (the Applicant)
for an Order granting Development Consent
for the Rosefield Solar Farm**

Consultation Response by Edgcott Parish Council

Clerk


1 Darley's Close

Grendon Underwood
Aylesbury

Buckinghamshire HP18 0SE

Tel: 01296 770568

edgcottparishclerk@gmail.com

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ROSEFIELD SOLAR FARM

The loss of any more agricultural land in the UK is a great concern bearing in mind the reliance on food imported from overseas and the ongoing trading problems at a time of continuing conflict in many parts of the world.

Buckinghamshire and this area in particular has already lost and is still losing significant areas of farmland due to other infrastructure projects such as HS2, EWR, the Energy from Waste site and the new MEGA prison which will compromise food production.

The loss of such a massive amount of agricultural land for a solar farm is counter to the country's need to improve its food security. Recent updates to the National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF) confirms at Footnote 62 that "The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development".

There has been a failure to provide clear and convincing justification that this is the most suitable site for the development of a solar farm. There has also been a failure to show that any efforts have been made to seek alternative sites. There are brownfield sites, numerous large-scale warehouses, other large buildings and new housing developments which are better suited to increasing the solar capacity of Buckinghamshire.

The cumulative effect of this proposed Rosefield Solar Farm, the nearby BESS applications, the Tuckey Farm Solar Panel Site and the Winslow Road substation expansion must be taken into account. All of these energy projects are inextricably linked and will further industrialise this part of Buckinghamshire. The proposed Rosefield Solar Farm is the catalyst for these nearby energy projects which will have a serious negative impact on the local communities. These energy projects will also add to the serious decline in the availability of agricultural land in this part of Bucks.

Battery storage on site is a major concern as potential fire risks are widely acknowledged. This rural location has difficult road access for emergency services, and the likelihood is that in the event of a fire the fire service will just allow it to burn out resulting in long term environmental damage. The large amount of plant and machinery on site raises serious concerns in respect of noise pollution, light pollution and air quality not just for the public but also for the wildlife and their habitat.

The development would be intrusive and highly visible from a large number of nearby heritage assets, including Claydon House, and would negatively impact on how they are viewed and enjoyed by current & future generations. The site includes ancient woodland at the northern end of Bernwood Forest and in particular Sheephouse Wood and Finemere Wood adjoin the site. Grendon Wood, Doddershall Wood and Ham Green Wood are all nearby. All five woods are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are statutorily protected from harm under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The development is therefore contrary to policy BE1 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan(VALP) and Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Covering such a large area of agricultural land with solar panels will result in a loss or at best a dispersal of much wildlife and a Biodiversity Net Gain is impossible to envisage particularly in the short to medium term. If any gains are generated on site it is likely that they would fall below the thresholds set nationally contrary to policy NE1 of the VALP and Section 15 of the NPPF.

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Local roads have been struggling to cope in recent years with the massive amount of HGV traffic serving HS2 and EWR. This will be exacerbated not only by these energy projects but also the approved mega prison nearby. All of this construction activity will continue into the next decade and with local roads already in chaos then any further development will only worsen the situation.

The proposal will do irretrievable damage to the rural area by increasing traffic particularly during construction, spoiling views, and harming the landscape, disrupting wildlife, damaging heritage and causing harm to the wellbeing of local people. The development of this greenfield site, by virtue of its layout and scale, would result in a significant loss of open countryside and would result in adverse landscape and visual impacts on the site and would give rise to harmful effects on the character of this area. The scale of the development and its damaging implications in a rural area is contrary to the adopted VALP policies BE2, NE4 and NE5 and Section 2 of the NPPF.

Being a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project it is appreciated that the usual planning process is not followed but the Development Consent Order should not ignore the national and local planning policies referred to in this submission.

More appropriate sites should be found.