

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to formally object to the above planning application for The Rosefield solar farm comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic panels, associated infrastructure including inverters, substations, battery storage, access tracks, fencing, CCTV and landscaping, on land in Steeple Claydon / Verney Junction

I am a local resident living in Edgcott, My property lies within a few miles of the proposed development boundary, and it is just another unnecessary infrastructure project that our community is being inflicted on, on top of EWR, HS2, the HMP Mega Prison at Springhill and the excessive housing developments around us.

My objection is based on the following material planning considerations, all of which I believe demonstrate that the proposal would cause significant and unacceptable harm that is not outweighed by any benefits.

1. Loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land

The application site comprises a substantial area of high-quality farmland. Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, paragraph 180) and the 25 Year Environment Plan is clear: the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) should be protected from irreversible development wherever possible. Large solar farms on BMV land sterilise productive soil for 30–40 years. Recent reports from the CPRE and the Trade and Agriculture Commission highlight that almost one-third of England's operational solar farms already sit on BMV land, contributing to a worrying loss of food-producing capacity at a time of global food-security pressures.

The applicant's claim that the land will be "enhanced for biodiversity" and returned to agriculture after decommissioning is unrealistic. Soil compaction from construction machinery, permanent shading under panels and altered drainage patterns make restoration to full productivity extremely difficult. This proposal represents an irreversible loss of a finite national resource. Brownfield land, rooftops and lower-grade agricultural land should be prioritised instead.

2. Harm to Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

The site lies within [insert relevant landscape designation if applicable, e.g. an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Green Belt, or open countryside valued in the Local Plan]. The development would introduce an industrial-scale array of panels, security fencing up to 2.5 metres high, access roads and large inverter/transformer buildings into what is currently open, rolling countryside.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted with the application underplays the harm. In reality, the solar farm would be visible from numerous public rights of way, residential properties and the wider landscape for many miles. The panels create a stark, reflective, geometric intrusion that fundamentally changes the rural character. Glint and glare effects have not been adequately assessed for nearby dwellings or road users.

This harm would be long-term (minimum 40 years) and contrary to Local Plan policies on protecting the countryside and NPPF paragraph 174, which requires development to be sympathetic to local landscape character.

3. Adverse Impact on Biodiversity and Protected Species

Although the applicant promotes "biodiversity net gain", the reality of large solar farms is often the opposite during construction and early operation. The site supports many known species if applicable, e.g. skylarks, hedgehogs, bats, dormice, or farmland birds. Ground-nesting birds such as skylark are particularly vulnerable; panels create permanent shade and reduce foraging habitat.

Recent planning decisions and ecological studies show that solar farms can disturb bat commuting routes, increase predation risk and fragment habitats. The submitted ecological surveys appear incomplete or insufficiently robust. A full Habitat Regulations Assessment should be required if the site is functionally linked to any nearby protected sites. The precautionary principle should apply: where significant harm cannot be ruled out, permission should be refused.

4. Noise, Glint/Glare and Amenity Impacts on Residents

Inverter stations and transformers generate continuous low-frequency hum, especially noticeable in the quiet rural environment at night. Residents within 500–800 metres will experience unacceptable disturbance.

Glint and glare from thousands of panels have not been properly modelled for all nearby properties and roads. This can cause distraction to drivers and loss of amenity for households. Cumulative effects with any existing or approved solar schemes in the area have not been adequately considered.

5. Highway Safety and Construction Impacts

The construction phase will involve hundreds of HGV movements on narrow rural lanes that are unsuitable for such traffic. The proposed access arrangements are inadequate and would create danger to other road users, cyclists and horse riders. Once operational, the site will still require regular maintenance visits, adding to long-term traffic movements.

6. The "Need" Argument Does Not Justify This Location

While I support renewable energy in principle, national policy (NPPF and National Policy Statement EN-1) requires that the benefits of renewable energy must be balanced against harm. There are many alternative sites on lower-grade land, industrial rooftops or previously developed land within the district and region. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that this particular greenfield site is the only or best option. Placing industrial development in open countryside simply because it is cheaper for the developer is not acceptable planning.

Conclusion

The proposed solar farm would cause significant, long-term and irreversible harm to the landscape, agricultural land, biodiversity and residential amenity. These harms substantially outweigh the limited and temporary contribution to renewable energy generation. The application is contrary to the Development Plan, the NPPF and national guidance on protecting the countryside and BMV land.

I therefore respectfully request that the Council refuse this application.

I would like to speak at the Planning Committee meeting if the application is recommended for approval.

Yours faithfully,

Esther Bush,

