

I am concerned about the cumulative impact of multiple major infrastructure projects already affecting this area, including HS2 (High Speed Two), East West Rail, with the addition of new substations, battery storage proposals, and other current large scale planning applications. While renewable energy generation is important, concentrating several large-scale developments in the same rural locality places a disproportionate burden on local communities and the landscape. In planning terms, the cumulative impact on the character of the area, infrastructure and residents has not been adequately addressed. Residents in the area have endured years of construction upheaval and this has been detrimental to their mental health and well-being.

The proposed construction period of approximately 2.5 years would generate an additional significant increase in construction traffic on narrow rural lanes that were not designed for frequent HGV movements. This raises concerns regarding highway safety, congestion, and disruption to residents, local businesses, and school traffic. The scale and duration of construction would result in prolonged disruption to the local community and cause further deterioration of already poor road conditions.

The site is currently used extensively for recreation via established public rights of way. The diversion or movement of footpaths, combined with construction traffic and heavy machinery, would reduce safe access and enjoyment of the countryside. Once operational, the presence of security fencing, CCTV and lighting would introduce an industrial character to the landscape, harming the tranquillity and rural amenity that local residents value. As with other infrastructure projects in the area, this will cause considerable damage to the environment and displacement of wildlife which currently exist. The proposed Battery Energy Storage System and collector compound raise additional safety concerns. Battery storage facilities are known to carry fire risks and require rapid emergency response capability. Given the rural road network, distance from emergency services and the reduction of fire station appliances and stations in the locale, and ongoing infrastructure works in the area, this location appears unsuitable for such infrastructure.

The site and surrounding fields support a range of local wildlife and habitats. The scale of the development, together with fencing, infrastructure and long construction period, risks disturbing and fragmenting these habitats. As with other infrastructure projects in the area, this will cause considerable damage to the environment and displacement of wildlife which currently exist. This is contrary to planning objectives that seek to protect biodiversity and the natural environment. While renewable energy development is supported in principle, planning policy also requires development to be located in appropriate places and to avoid unacceptable harm to local communities, the countryside and biodiversity. Given the cumulative infrastructure already affecting this area and the industrial scale of the proposal, this site is not an appropriate location for such a development and I wish to strongly object to this proposed Solar facility.