

I wish to register my strongest possible objection to the proposed Rosefield Solar Farm development. This proposal represents a large-scale industrialisation of open countryside and productive agricultural land, and it would result in significant, long-term harm to the landscape, biodiversity, local infrastructure, residential amenity, equestrian access, and food security. The cumulative impacts of this proposal, particularly in the context of ongoing disruption from HS2 and East West Rail (EWR), have not been adequately justified and should lead to a refusal of planning permission.

1. Industrialisation of Open Countryside

The proposal is not a modest renewable energy scheme but an industrial-scale development covering a vast area of rural land. The introduction of extensive solar arrays, battery storage units, inverters, transformers, security fencing, CCTV infrastructure, and access tracks would fundamentally alter the character of what is currently open, agricultural countryside.

This is not simply a temporary or reversible change. The scale and density of the infrastructure would industrialise the landscape for decades. The visual impact of rows of panels, substations and associated equipment would erode the rural character that defines this area and that residents deliberately chose as their home environment. The countryside would no longer function as open farmland but as an energy generation site.

The cumulative impact must also be considered. Our area has already endured significant landscape transformation due to HS2 and East West Rail. The addition of another large infrastructure project would compound this harm and further degrade the remaining rural setting.

2. Inefficiency and Alternative Renewable Options

While renewable energy generation is important, the location and method must be appropriate. Solar farms of this scale are a highly land-intensive approach. There are alternative means of generating renewable energy that do not require sacrificing large areas of productive farmland.

If solar power is to be prioritised, rooftop solar on industrial and commercial buildings should be maximised before open countryside is developed. There are extensive warehouse and industrial roof spaces along the A421 corridor between Milton Keynes and Junction 13 of the M1, and in many other nearby employment zones. These sites already have grid connections, are visually appropriate, and would avoid any loss of agricultural land, biodiversity habitat, or residential amenity.

Furthermore, there are questions regarding the long-term efficiency and durability of solar panels. Panels degrade over time, and there is uncertainty about their lifespan, maintenance, and disposal. The environmental cost of manufacturing, transporting, installing, and eventually decommissioning and disposing of panels and battery systems must be properly assessed. This includes embedded carbon, waste management, and potential contamination risks from battery storage. It is not clear that the full life-cycle environmental impact has been transparently evaluated.

Large-scale solar installations are also known to increase localised air temperatures due to the heat absorption properties of the panels. This can alter the microclimate within and around the site, affecting soil conditions, vegetation patterns, and wildlife behaviour. The potential consequences for surrounding ecosystems should not be underestimated.

3. Loss of High-Quality Agricultural Land and Food Security

The proposed development would result in the loss of productive farmland that has supported local farming families for generations. This land produces high-quality crops and livestock that contribute to the UK food supply. In the current climate of global instability and food insecurity, it is short-sighted to remove substantial areas of agricultural land from production.

The grading of the land and its classification should be scrutinised carefully. Practical agricultural performance should carry significant weight. The farmers currently working this land produce excellent crops and cattle, demonstrating its productivity and value. To displace farming operations for industrial energy infrastructure undermines both rural livelihoods and national food resilience.

The long-term impact on local farming families cannot be dismissed. These are multi-generational businesses embedded within the local economy. The permanent or long-term removal of land from agricultural use could jeopardise their viability.

4. Cumulative Infrastructure Impact and Traffic

Residents in this area have already experienced severe disruption from HS2 and EWR. Heavy goods vehicle movements, road closures, diversions, and prolonged construction works have significantly affected daily life, safety, and wellbeing. The solar farm construction phase, projected to last at least 18 months, would involve the movement of hundreds of lorries transporting panels, mounting structures, cabling, battery units, and heavy equipment. Local roads are already under strain and are not designed for sustained heavy construction traffic. Additional HGV movements would exacerbate congestion, increase road damage, and pose safety risks.

The cumulative impact of multiple major infrastructure projects on the same rural road network must be properly assessed. The planning authority should consider whether this community has already borne more than its fair share of infrastructure disruption.

5. Impact on Equestrian Users and Bridleways

This proposal would have a severe impact on equestrian users and the bridleway network. I personally ride my horse on local roads and bridleways and have already experienced years of restricted access due to HS2 and EWR traffic. Increased heavy traffic has made many routes unsafe, forcing riders off the roads.

The current proposal would remove or severely affect one of the few remaining off-road bridleway routes available. The documentation appears to reference footpaths but does not adequately address bridleways, despite much of the right-of-way network across the site being designated for equestrian use.

The loss or degradation of bridleways is not a minor issue. Bridleways are vital infrastructure for rural communities, supporting equestrian activity, mental wellbeing, and safe recreation. Diverting or enclosing them within an industrial solar site fundamentally changes their character and usability. Horses are sensitive animals; the presence of fencing, reflective panels, inverters, and unfamiliar infrastructure can create safety risks.

The planning authority must give due weight to the protection of bridleways and equestrian access, particularly in a community that has already suffered prolonged access restrictions from other major projects.

6. Noise and Residential Amenity

The impact on residential amenity cannot be overstated. Residents chose to live in this area for its peace, quiet, and rural character. The introduction of battery storage containers, cooling systems, inverters, and transformers raises serious concerns regarding operational noise.

Battery energy storage systems require active cooling and monitoring, which can generate continuous low-frequency noise. In rural environments, where background noise levels are low, even modest industrial noise can be intrusive, particularly at night. The potential for 24-hour operational noise must be thoroughly assessed, including cumulative impacts with existing infrastructure.

During the construction phase, the impact would be immediate and severe. Continuous vehicle movements, machinery operation, groundworks, and installation activities over an 18-month period would significantly affect residents' quality of life, sleep, and mental wellbeing.

7. Biodiversity and Ecological Impact

HS2 and EWR have already caused extensive habitat fragmentation, loss of hedgerows, and disturbance to wildlife.

Displaced wildlife is frequently observed around Calvert Green, Runts Wood, and surrounding fields and hedgerows. The local ecosystem is already under strain.

The proposed solar farm would further fragment habitats and replace open farmland and hedgerow corridors with fenced, industrial infrastructure. While some solar developers claim biodiversity enhancements, these measures rarely compensate for the scale of habitat loss and landscape change involved.

There are rare and protected species of birds, bats, and other wildlife known to frequent this area. Solar panels can disrupt feeding grounds, nesting sites, and commuting routes. Bats, in particular, rely on hedgerow corridors and open foraging land. Ground-nesting birds are also vulnerable to disturbance.

The cumulative ecological impact of multiple large infrastructure schemes in the same locality must be considered holistically. Piecemeal assessment underestimates the real damage being done.

8. Health and Wellbeing

The ongoing stress caused by successive major developments in this area should not be ignored. Residents have endured years of uncertainty, disruption, traffic, and environmental change. The addition of another long-term industrial project would compound this burden.

Rural living provides mental health benefits associated with tranquillity, open space, and connection to nature. Replacing open farmland with industrial solar arrays and battery infrastructure erodes these benefits and alters the fundamental character of daily life.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed Rosefield Solar Farm would:

Industrialise open countryside on a vast scale.

Remove productive agricultural land from food production.

Harm rural livelihoods.

Exacerbate traffic and infrastructure pressures in an already overstretched area.

Damage bridleways and equestrian access.

Introduce operational noise and long-term residential disturbance.

Further fragment habitats and threaten local biodiversity.

Compound the cumulative harm caused by HS2 and EWR.

Renewable energy is important, but it must be delivered in the right place and in the right way. Brownfield land, industrial rooftops, and less sensitive locations should be prioritised before sacrificing productive farmland and established rural communities.

For all the reasons outlined above, I strongly object to this application and urge the planning authority to refuse permission.