

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to the Rosefield Farm project on the grounds of its impact on agricultural land, biodiversity, road safety and traffic, and the visual character and landscape of the area.

I fully recognise the importance of renewable energy and the need to increase the generation of low-carbon electricity. However, this does not mean that every location is appropriate for a large-scale solar installation. In this case, I believe the proposal would cause significant and disproportionate harm to the rural environment and the character of this part of Buckinghamshire.

1. Loss of agricultural land

The proposal would take a significant area of agricultural land out of productive agricultural use for the duration of the development.

Agricultural land is an important finite resource, and I am concerned that insufficient weight has been given to the long-term loss of productive farmland. This is particularly important where the land is capable of supporting food production.

The Council's emerging planning approach recognises the need to consider the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land carefully, requiring the benefits of development to outweigh the harm.

I therefore ask the Council to establish clearly:

- * the agricultural land classification of the whole site;
- * how much productive agricultural land would be taken out of use;
- * whether genuinely lower-grade or previously developed land has been considered;
- * whether rooftop, commercial, industrial or other less environmentally sensitive locations could accommodate equivalent renewable generation; and
- * whether the claimed benefits of this particular site genuinely outweigh the loss of agricultural land.

The fact that solar generation is renewable does not, in my view, remove the need to consider whether this is an appropriate location for it.

2. Biodiversity and the natural environment

I am also concerned about the potential effect on biodiversity.

The site forms part of a wider rural landscape rather than an isolated piece of land. Agricultural fields, hedgerows, field margins, trees, ditches and other features can provide important habitat and wildlife corridors.

The Council has stated that protecting Buckinghamshire's rural character and valued landscapes and enhancing biodiversity are important objectives.

I therefore ask that the Council scrutinise the ecological assessment carefully, particularly in relation to:

- * existing hedgerows and mature trees;
- * birds and bats;
- * mammals and other protected species;
- * insects and pollinators;
- * field margins and wildflower habitats;
- * ponds, ditches and drainage features;
- * wildlife movement across the wider landscape; and
- * the cumulative effect if other development is taking place nearby.

Any biodiversity benefits claimed through planting or habitat management should not simply be assumed to compensate for the ecological value of the existing agricultural landscape. The Council should be satisfied that the proposed measures are realistic, properly funded, enforceable and capable of being maintained for the lifetime of the development.

3. Road safety and traffic

The local road network is characteristic of a rural Buckinghamshire village.

I am concerned that the construction phase could create a significant increase in heavy goods vehicles, delivery vehicles, contractors' vehicles and other traffic using roads that were not designed for substantial construction traffic.

Particular consideration should be given to:

- * the suitability of the proposed access;
- * visibility at the site entrance;
- * the width and condition of surrounding roads;
- * passing opportunities;
- * bends and junctions;
- * pedestrian and cyclist safety;
- * construction-worker parking;
- * deliveries of panels and associated equipment;
- * abnormal or oversized loads;
- * mud and debris deposited on the highway; and
- * the cumulative effect of construction traffic on the village.

Even if the operational solar farm generates relatively little traffic, the construction period could have a substantial impact on highway safety and village amenity.

I therefore ask the Council to require a robust and site-specific assessment of construction traffic and access arrangements, rather than relying on assumptions based on solar farms in different locations.

4. Visual and landscape impact

The most significant concern is the transformation of an open rural landscape into what would effectively be a large-scale energy installation.

The proposal would introduce extensive rows of solar panels, security fencing, gates, access tracks, electrical infrastructure, substations, CCTV/security equipment and associated infrastructure into an area whose existing character is agricultural and rural.

The impact should not be assessed solely from immediately adjacent properties. It should also be considered from:

- * public footpaths and rights of way;

- * surrounding roads;
- * nearby villages and settlements;
- * elevated viewpoints;
- * neighbouring farmland; and
- * the wider landscape.

The cumulative visual effect of thousands of panels across a substantial area can be very different from that of individual rooftop solar installations.

I am particularly concerned that screening proposals may not adequately address the visual impact. New hedgerows and planting take years to mature, while the panels and associated infrastructure would be visible from the outset.

The Council's stated aim includes protecting Buckinghamshire's rural character and valued landscapes. I believe this proposal would conflict with that objective by introducing an industrial-scale development into an essentially rural setting.

5. Overall balance

I appreciate the contribution that renewable energy can make towards reducing carbon emissions. Nevertheless, the benefits of renewable energy generation need to be balanced against the environmental and planning consequences of where that generation is located.

In this case, I believe the proposal would result in:

- * the loss or substantial restriction of agricultural land;
- * potential harm to existing habitats and biodiversity;
- * increased construction traffic and potential highway-safety concerns;
- * a significant change to the established rural landscape; and
- * the introduction of extensive energy infrastructure into an area whose character is predominantly agricultural and rural.

I therefore respectfully request that Buckinghamshire Council refuse planning permission for the proposal.

I ask that the matters raised above are fully addressed through appropriate conditions, including robust controls over construction traffic, ecological protection, landscaping, restoration and decommissioning.

Thank you for considering my objection.