

Open Floor Hearing on Tuesday 21 April 2022

Individual Speaker - Sir Michael Pitt

My name is Sir Mike Pitt and today I am giving my personal point of view.

We have to be realistic. Government policy and the opportunity to connect up to the National Grid at Melksham are the reasons why a major solar installation is under consideration in Wiltshire. **My big question is 'Why locate it at Lime Down'.**

The Applicant accepts that any location for a solar park within a radius of 20km of Melksham is worthy of consideration. I am familiar with this part of Wiltshire. I had my childhood in Poulshot, did most of my courting in Melksham, went to school and got married in Devizes, we lived with my wife's parents at Christian Malford and built our house in Semington. Furthermore, I worked in both Trowbridge and Swindon.

In my view Lime Down is one of the worst possible locations and I hope the Examining Authority will carefully consider the following questions:

1. Firstly, **Why would a developer consider the Cotswolds to be a suitable location for such a massive solar installation?** The Lake District, the Yorkshire Moors and the Cotswolds are ranked as the three most beautiful landscapes in England. All of the other sites considered by the Applicant are outside of the Cotswolds.
2. Secondly, **Why choose a site so remote from the National Grid?** Lime Down requires the construction of 22km of 400kV underground cable, involving tunneling under the M4 motorway and crossing a high pressure oil pipeline, the A4, the A420 and numerous other obstacles. This would be a massive civil engineering project and totally unnecessary in my opinion. Alternative sites are much closer to Melksham than Lime Down and do not need to tunnel under the M4.
3. Thirdly, **Why propose 878 hectares of industrial infrastructure so close to nine South Cotswolds villages?** The footprint of Lime Down is 5kms from north to south and 10kms from east to west. There is no need to cause such harm to the environment and local communities.
4. Fourthly, **I question the Developer's ability to safely manage thousands of heavy lorry movements on our narrow country lanes?** Other sites are served by main roads.

This is not to mention the Cotswold National Landscape and numerous other concerns.

If we have to have a major solar installation near Melksham, it must be in a location which minimises the damage to the environment and to quality of life. I love this county and hope we can preserve it for our children and our children's children

Thank you