

I wish to submit the following closing statement for consideration by the examining authority.

I have read submissions and responses made by the applicant over this examination process and also observed some of the hearings. I remain deeply concerned by this proposed industrial energy project that would be entirely unsuitable in this beautiful rural part of the UK.

I will not repeat my earlier submissions but would like to emphasise how worried I remain by the proposal, particularly its impact on the increase in HGV and other traffic, and its damage to the landscape - a landscape whose beauty, in Sherston where I live, is recognised by its proximity to the Cotswold National Landscape. The negative impact of these issues is magnified by the length of the project.

The applicant admitted in the hearings that their figures were (at least) 34% understated for HGVs. The roads around Sherston and indeed the whole project area are not in any way suitable for high levels of HGV traffic. They are also not suitable for the projected (and also certainly underestimated) increase in non HGV traffic. This is an area that is served by lanes that are in many places single track, have a lot of blind bends and are used frequently by cyclists, runners and walkers.

The applicant has not given adequate reassurance that they would have strong workable procedures to ensure that drivers of vehicles during construction, operation and decommission would stick to the defined routes nor how they would properly manage the HGVs on these narrow roads. I remain certain that the access to M4/ Chippenham station from Sherston would become impassable for me and so make my daily life much more difficult.

The applicant themselves has recognised that the Fosse and routes connecting through it are heavily used by cyclists. The projected increase in traffic, and particularly HGVs, will make the narrow lanes around Sherston impassable and dangerous for local users whether in car, on bicycle or on foot.

I am aware that the scale of the development has been scaled back along the Fosse Way and edge of AONB. However, the setting of Sherston as a rural village will be materially affected by the overwhelming majority of the project where the panels and infrastructure are maintained.

Furthermore, the fields along the Fosse are still going to be used for cabling whilst almost one and a half acres at the Grittleton junction end will be destroyed and used as an extra-long vehicle turning point. The applicant states that mitigation measures will reduce the visual effect over time. I do not believe that trees and hedgerows are likely to cover 4.5m panels in anything under 15 years - and that's assuming no more summer droughts.

The applicant persists in its description of the proposed project as "temporary". This is not true. The project will be in place for a lifetime for those who are now in their teens. Moreover the period of construction and decommission will take years, causing extreme conditions and cost to all persons who live and transit the area.

I still take no comfort from the applicant's aim to return the land to its original use and condition "as far as practicable".

There remain limited safeguards in the proposal to ensure even this relatively low aspiration.

(For all the reasons given above, I again urge the Planning Inspectorate to refuse the application.)