

I live on Topcroft Street in Topcroft and I am concerned about the effect the East Pye Solar proposal could have on the village and on our day-to-day lives.

Traffic and road safety

One of my biggest concerns is construction traffic.

I appreciate that Topcroft Street is not shown as an official construction route, but it is a direct route from the B1332/Norwich Road through Topcroft. I therefore think it is important that the possibility of vehicles using local roads as a cut-through or alternative route is properly considered.

The roads around Topcroft are typical country roads. They are narrow in places, have bends and limited passing places, and are used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders as well as local residents.

I don't think you can fully appreciate what it is like for a large HGV to meet another vehicle, cyclist or horse on these roads just by looking at a map. I am concerned about the safety of people using the roads and also about the effect on verges and road surfaces.

There is also the noise and vibration from heavy vehicles to consider. If there are large numbers of vehicle movements over a long construction period, this would be more than just a minor inconvenience for people living here.

Noise and disturbance

Topcroft is a quiet village, and that is one of the things that makes it a good place to live.

I am concerned about the amount of noise and general disturbance that would come with the construction of a project of this size. There would be HGVs, deliveries and machinery, potentially for a considerable length of time.

I am also concerned about the possibility of ongoing noise from things such as inverters and substations once the site is operating. A low-level continuous noise might not sound significant on paper, but in a quiet rural area it can become very noticeable, especially in the evening and at night.

What happens to the countryside?

I am also worried about the gradual change to the countryside around us.

It isn't just the solar panels. There will be fencing, access tracks, substations and other equipment, and all of this changes the look and feel of the area.

There are already a lot of renewable energy developments and other energy infrastructure being proposed across East Anglia. I think the Examining Authority needs to look at the bigger picture and consider what the combined effect of all this development is going to be on our countryside and rural communities.

Does East Pye Solar actually need to happen?

I am not against renewable energy. I understand why we need to produce more energy from renewable sources.

What I question is whether this particular development is necessary when East Anglia is already producing a very large amount of renewable energy and accommodating so much energy infrastructure.

If the area is already making such a significant contribution, I think it is reasonable to ask what extra benefit East Pye Solar would actually provide and whether that benefit is enough to justify the damage and disruption it would cause.

From where I live, it is difficult to see how the benefits can outweigh the impact on the countryside and the people who live here.

Overall

My concern is that the impact of this development is being looked at as a series of separate issues when, for people living locally, they all add up.

It could mean more construction traffic, safety concerns, noise and vibration, disturbance and a further change to the rural character of the area.

I would ask the Examining Authority to look carefully at the effect on villages such as Topcroft, including people who may not live next to a solar field but could still be affected by the wider construction and transport activity.

I believe the benefits of East Pye Solar need to be weighed very carefully against the harm it could cause. I am not convinced that the additional benefit justifies the impact on our local community and countryside.