

I live in Wacton, a small village on the borders of Great Moulton and Long Stratton. Wacton is one of the villages which the applicant has failed specifically to name as being affected by the project, merely referring to it as being part of a 'Southern Cluster', which also includes Great Moulton and Tivetshall.

I wish to address the question of cumulative effect which as I understand it, refers to the combined, overlapping impacts of multiple developments (or multiple impacts) from a single site. In particular I refer to the applicant's document APP/6.3.2.4 (Appendix 2.4 Cumulative Schemes).

NSIP applicants are required to include a description of likely significant effects of development on the environment resulting from 'the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects...' The phrase 'other and/or approved developments' is clarified as being taken to include existing developments and existing plans and projects that are 'reasonably foreseeable'.

If this 2,700 acre project is approved (and it will cover c. 5,000 acres if you include cable corridors) it will enable several other huge solar and solar-related projects which are proposed in the immediate vicinity, specifically Tasway Solar (3,600 acres), the as yet unnamed solar farm proposed by Noventum Power (2,500 acres) and the Field Long Stratton BESS (approx. 700 container-style units). These projects are all based around the Long Stratton area. With reference to APP/6.3.2.4 the applicant dismisses any mention of Tasway by stating 'The Tasway Energy Park has been placed on indefinite hold'. If East Pye is approved it will set a precedent for DCO approval, and as the applicant well knows, being given Gate 1 status, as is the case with Tasway means there is no date for connection but that it could well be approved in the future. Tasway has said it is 'actively reviewing next steps'; note that it has not withdrawn the project, merely delayed it. The applicant does not mention the Noventum project at all and has thus failed properly to address the cumulative issue.

The cumulative impact of these projects on the local area is unimaginable. The historically significant agricultural and rural landscape around the Long Stratton area will be unrecognisable, heavily industrialised and utterly destroyed. East Anglia is known as the bread basket of the United Kingdom. At a conservative estimate, approximately 9,000 acres of productive arable farmland will be taken out of production. What is so often not considered is the cumulative impact this will have on the local economy. Removing 9,000 acres is not just a matter of losing 9,000 acres of food production, enormously significant and important though that is. Loss of agricultural land of this magnitude will have an impact on all the associated industries: the local mill, agricultural machinery sales and servicing, seed companies, fertiliser companies, agronomists – the list goes on.

It is not only the agricultural sector that will suffer: South Norfolk is a tourist area – who is going to want to come and visit somewhere that is covered in solar panels? I see Norfolk is not planning to implement the new so-called 'Tourist Tax' – hardly surprising because if this project is approved there won't be any tourists to tax. Local attractions such as the Tank Museum and the Steam Museum in Forncett and other small local businesses predicated on tourism will be bereft of visitors. The travails of both food production and the hospitality industry have been at the forefront of the news lately – a project such as this will amplify the already desperate straits of these industries. Local jobs will be lost, the local economy will suffer. How the applicant can claim that the project will bring 'moderate beneficial socio-economic effects on jobs, employment and the supply chain' is beyond comprehension. South Norfolk council, responding to PEIR quotes the applicant's statement that 73 jobs will be created for people living in South Norfolk – if this plan is approved a great many more jobs and livelihoods in South Norfolk will be destroyed. Such jobs that might be created will not be for local people, but for workers who are shipped in to the various sites. Employment associated with this scheme is majorly focussed on the construction and decommission stages, in other words, temporary. However, the jobs that would be lost in the agricultural and tourism industries are long-term, permanent employments.

In conclusion I would ask the Examining Authority to consider the considerable cumulative impacts I have outlined that this project would have on the local landscape, environment, employment and quality of life of local residents, who after all, would have to live with this for the next 60 years. I would also ask the EA to include Tasway, the Noventum project and Field Bess Long Stratton when making their assessment.