

I live in Hempnall which, like the neighbouring villages of Brooke, Fritton, Long Stratton, Morningthorpe, Saxlingham Nethergate, Woodton, to name a few, appears will be surrounded by the proposed solar panels and related infrastructure building and construction work. Apart from living within the 'epicentre' of the scheme, my journey to work regularly takes me through to Diss, as well as to Framlingham and Harleston via Fritton. This means I may 'experience' much of the activity the proposed sites may generate across a number of sites.

It must be questioned as to the actual need for the sites selected. There appears to be a reliance on a general national need for solar (despite a regional need already met through other prioritised schemes) but nothing as to why any of these sites are specifically needed. And, with the scale of the project, some 2700 acres, with some sites (Site 7) being significantly bigger than any of the others, the scheme risks the widescale industrialisation of open countryside and destroying the area's rural character. If considered alongside other solar projects, the Pylons Corridor etc, all being proposed at the same time, the cumulative impact of these multiple projects and related infrastructure places a particularly excessive burden on Norfolk and disproportionately on South Norfolk.

There is also the use of agricultural land generally. There does not appear to have been any robust assessment and exploration of possible alternatives such as rooftops, car parks, brownfield, or generally less sensitive landscapes.

As mentioned above with regards the local character of Hempnall and the surrounding areas in South Norfolk, these are rural by nature, with unsurprisingly many many small narrow roads, hundreds of listed buildings, home to many groups of rare botany, barbastelle bats, White Clawed Crayfish, and other wildlife.

Others will have submitted evidence to this effect far more eloquently than I.

The project will, if allowed, cause considerable and prolonged disruption, irreparable damage, which any proposed planting, re-planting mitigations could take decades to address, if indeed they do. For example, some construction traffic appears to be routed to travel through The Street and The Krons in Hempnall - The Street is a small two-way street wide enough (just) for 2 cars. However, residents do park all along one side. It is already extremely difficult to pass through generally, and it begs the question how would any larger vehicles manage? Regular farm traffic struggles. The same can be said of The Krons apart from the fact that road is barely wide enough for two cars. I am of the opinion that widening roads is not the answer as this is yet more loss of yet more wildlife, hedgerows, which form a key aspect of the area landscape. Again, others will have submitted evidence to this effect far more eloquently than I.

Construction traffic coming through Hempnall and along Broaden Lane is a particular concern to me given my home is on Broaden Lane at the end of the village. Also, fyi, my home was not named correctly on the applicants' land maps, and this was pointed out. I also have concerns with regards the activity and installations at Site 7 to the eastern side of Broaden Lane. This backs onto land behind Bainards Rise and I have concerns with regards noise, both during construction/installation, but also beyond and of course, aside from the issues I have already raised generally re landscape, wildlife etc, I have very real concerns about safety and the visual impact.

I noted that the construction period is approximately 24 months and also the volumes of the additional traffic expected in the applicants Construction Traffic Management Plan at Table 4.1:

Generally, I read all these tomes with a deep, deep feeling of apprehension and extreme anxiety. Given the extent of the project and the location of Hempnall at its centre, it appears to me that every route in and out of the village and surrounding areas will be impacted and have significant amounts of prolonged construction activity, which is having a seriously detrimental impact on my own well-being and enjoyment of my home and the area in which I live.

I personally have not felt particularly included with regards the process. Some of this is due to the sheer volume of documents to navigate and try to understand which I haven't been able to do through complete overwhelm. I'm grateful to those who have been able to pore their way through the great tomes and represent the needs of the villages and people. Also, I was not able to engage in any hearings because of work commitments and the nature of my work, meaning I couldn't take time off or sit undisturbed at a computer over the 3 days either. I have been able to watch them afterwards and read the transcripts, but I still felt somewhat excluded. I was also not at home for a week and was unable to access the recordings or transcripts adequately.

I do want to also emphasise the impact of the project on my wellbeing. The uncertainty of the project does nothing to help with anyone who wishes to sell their home. My home has been valued very recently, however, if I were to sell, I have been advised that it would struggle to sell because of the uncertainty surrounding the project. Should the proposals be approved, who knows what the value of my home would be then. As a stand-alone issue, knowing my home could be impacted is worry enough. Like many people, my home constitutes a sizeable investment of time, money and sacrifices to achieve a home in which we want to feel safe and secure. I'm sure that local businesses who may be affected will have similar concerns.

There is also the continued concern I have about how we will be affected by noise, both from the activity around the panels, and the work to install and maintain them as well as their presence. It is a constant worry and source of extreme stress and anxiety which fills me with dread. The worry of the potential noise, intrusion, destruction of the landscape, from actual sites and the related infrastructure activity which I have mentioned, is overwhelming and encompassing. It feels as though there will be nothing left of the beautiful countryside in this part of South Norfolk, the very reason why people chose to live here and I fail to see that there is any benefit to the local communities that outweighs the extent of the harm that will be done if the proposals are approved.