

East Pye Solar

The proposed solar development known as 'East Pye Solar Farm' is proposed to occupy land encompassing the majority of the village I live in, Hempnall, along with many other surrounding areas. These areas, once grouped together, will form the overall development area through a series of tenuous connections, resulting in the project being classed as nationally significant and outwith of local decision making.

Any democratic process would allow persons affected by development the opportunity to register their views and concerns and have those views and concerns form an integral part of the planning process, as is common practice in planning law.

In this case, there would appear to be a tentative approach to this process and suggestion that a positive determination of the application has already been decided.

This seems rather undemocratic but perhaps is to be expected in the UK at this time.

I am therefore concerned that the views and opinions that are being voiced locally will not be given a fair and open platform, nor will they be genuinely taken into consideration when a decision is considered or made at an elite level.

South Norfolk has for generations been a predominantly agricultural area producing food for human and animal use. The need for this is still relevant and may be more so should the population continue to grow. I feel that importing food, for both human and animal consumption, would conflict with the reasoning behind the drive to become more environmentally aware. We already have available land space for some of our needs and reducing this would only make us reliant on more imports and the environmental harm that would ensue. I therefore consider that converting valuable agricultural land, of whatever classification, to energy production rather than for food would be extremely shortsighted and potentially harmful to our security as a nation.

The scale of the individual sites, taken on their own, would be perhaps more palatable for the local population. Grouping multiple sites over a large area and calling it one site seems a little economical with the truth. Smaller sites and less of them spread over a wider area would have less impact on Hempnall and the surrounding settlements than the current proposal but I suppose not as profitable for those who receive the financial benefits. I believe this proposal, in its current form, to be driven by financial incentive given to the landowners and the need to keep the decision making away from local residents, who are likely to be resistant once the scale is realised. I feel that the scale and dominance of the development site on existing settlements is vastly out of proportion and should not be permitted.

From a personal point of view, I enjoy the open rural nature of the countryside around Hempnall and use its many lanes and footpaths around the proposed locations for dog walking and cycling. I feel the industrialisation that the proposed development will bring to this rural setting will have a significant negative effect on the nature and wildlife in these areas and will impact on the potential positive health

and wellbeing benefits for the local residents that such areas provide. Mental health issues are an integral part of modern life and the loss of access to uncluttered and calming environments will only lead to exacerbation of this issue.

Do we need more energy.? Yes, if we want to continue to grow. That said, reliance on one form of energy is negligent and will leave the country in a vulnerable position when the weather does not accommodate our needs. I believe it is prudent to have an array of options to draw on to provide resilience and allow for growth and prosperity.

The current path to net zero, whilst admirable but perhaps more politically driven than through pragmatic choice, will result in low growth, lower living standards and leave us more open to those with hostile intent.

I believe that the reliance on this form of energy production and associated low carbon methods is not suitable at this time and other solutions should be engineered that have a practical and sustainable outcome.

Do I support this application, no I do not. I believe it will radically change the local landscape, reduce societal cohesion and result in this part of the UK be altered beyond recognition for the financial benefit and ideology of the elite few.

Mark Woods

