



EN0110018 Clean Air Solar Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification

Statement – Rowley Parish Council: Statutory Consultee

Rowley Parish Council strongly opposes the Clean Air Solar Farm and offers the following objections which it believes are based on material planning considerations to be as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Impact on Agricultural Land

The Parish Council's main material concern is the scale of this proposed development and the resultant loss of arable farmland – it is our firm belief that converting productive farmland into solar installations will threaten local food production and disrupt historical and traditional farming practices. A fundamental concern has to be the loss of livelihood (and possible homes) of a number of tenant farmers currently on the land concerned – many of these families have been custodians and protectors of our countryside for decades and their removal from the landscape will have a direct impact on the environment.

The Parish Council has calculated that the proposed Clean Air Solar Farm will take up in the region of 2,853 acres of fertile farmland thereby adding to the reduction of the UK's valuable food production capacity for forty years and exacerbating food insecurity, a point picked up as a priority by the incoming Prime Minister himself. The Parish Council has calculated that the actual crop loss is potentially in the region of 7,132 tonnes annually of varied crops (including barley and wheat). How anyone can justify the loss of this level of food production each year for 40 years, is frankly beyond belief and for Rowley Parish Council, this material consideration alone is sufficient reason to strongly oppose the proposed Clean Air Solar farm.

Cumulative impact

Rowley Parish Council is extremely concerned about the proliferation of solar farms in our area, and the cumulative impact on landscape and infrastructure which the Council believes will be significant. The Parish Council points to the recent approval of the massive Peartree Solar Farm.

The Government's own guidelines state that solar farms should:

- only take up 0.4% of all UK land according to the governments 'most ambitious scenarios'
- occupy no more than 0.6% of the UK's utilised agricultural land by 2030.

Source - [Ground mounted solar energy plants: predicted land use - GOV.UK](#)

We believe the current percentage of land covered or designated for solar farm development in East Yorkshire is over 10%

Biodiversity and Ecology

There are also concerns about habitat fragmentation and loss, as large solar farms can disrupt wildlife migration patterns and reduce biodiversity at a time wildlife in the area is seriously threatened by development including other solar farms, housing and new road structures (Jocks Lodge)

From the outset, construction will cause soil erosion and land degradation and in the case of the land required for the Clean Air development, will require clearance of considerable areas of vegetation, which will displace wildlife and reduce available food, shelter, and breeding sites, potentially isolating populations and increasing vulnerability to extinction. The Parish Council also believes that panel glare and heat can disorient birds and insects, leading to collisions or behavioural changes

Traffic and Infrastructure

The construction of a development on the scale of the Clean Air Solar Farm will have a massive environmental impact on the area, and in particular due to the roads which are narrow and wholly unsuitable for construction traffic. Experience shows that where such developments happen in rural areas, this results in serious highways issues such as speeding lorries endangering both people and wildlife, destruction of ancient hedgerows and increase in carbon pollution.

Local Democracy

Although this may not be considered a material consideration, as a Parish Council and tier of local government, we believe it is important as a matter of the integrity of democracy to take the views of local people into account. The Parish Council has undertaken consultation sessions with our residents, and it is evident that the proposed development is strongly opposed by the local community. In addition, our local MP Sir David Davis is also supporting the views of his constituents.

Other considerations

The Parish Council has also considered the broader impact on the environment, and that although solar energy is generally environmentally friendly, solar farms are not without potential negative effects. We have already expressed our concerns for the impact of construction and operation but there are questions about the long-term restoration of land after decommissioning.

The Parish Council is aware of large-scale wind farm development in the area (Dogger Bank projects) and would point out that as a general rule, it takes about 200 acres (80 hectares) to generate the same annual electricity energy through a solar farm as just ONE OFFSHORE wind turbine.

This represents a grossly inefficient use of precious land, whatever its quality. But it does mean that we could replace a proposed solar farm by using wind power located in the North Sea and still claim the offsetting of existing carbon rich electricity generation, but without suffering the inefficiencies of solar farms and loss of food production

It is an accepted fact that Solar farms do not generate consistent power due to the need for constant sunshine – cloudy or overcast skies reduce electricity generation from the panels. In addition, the panels only work during daylight whereas demand for electricity is continuous for 24 hours. Hence, there is a necessity for battery storage to concentrate the electricity before it can be input to the grid. The Parish Council is aware of previous serious fires at these installations and noting that the area in question has extensive chalk foundation, the consequences of a fire would be catastrophic.

With hardly any electricity generated during the winter months, the average energy produced by a solar farm is only 11% of the installed capacity of the panels. Another gross inefficiency. In comparison, a North Sea wind turbine generates over 40% of its rated output on average throughout the year. Compared with other renewable sources, such as wind turbines, we believe solar farm energy is highly inefficient – the Parish Council believes this is important to note as our areas is already involved and contributing to the Dogger Bank developments and we consider that we are already more than ‘doing our bit’ for climate change.

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