

Comment for planning application 22/01682/F

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| Application Number | 22/01682/F |
| Location | Land North Of Manor Farm Noke |
| Proposal | Development of a ground mounted solar farm incorporating the installation of solar PV panels, associated infrastructure and access, as well as landscape planting and designated ecological enhancement areas. |
| Case Officer | James Kirkham |
| Organisation Name | Jocelyne Bangham Hughes |
| Address | River View, The Walk, Islip, Kidlington, OX5 2SD |
| Type of Comment | Objection |
| Type | neighbour |
| Comments | <p>1. Inappropriate scale of industrial development (95.3 acres) in a rural setting with cultural (historic Otmoor landscape), biodiversity and amenity values - the proposed development is far larger than the reservoir area in the adjacent Otmoor RSPB reserve, and far greater than the combined areas of the villages of Noke and Islip (see Google Satellite for instant visualization of the proportional size). This is the wrong place for a development of this size (area of 95.3 acres, temporary access road across the Oxfordshire Way, and panel height of 2.8 metres).</p> <p>2. The development is in the Green Belt and would cause a significant, adverse effect to the openness of the Green Belt at this location. With climate change and energy insecurity we urgently need renewable energy, but in the right place. We also need our land for agriculture, biodiversity and human well-being, and we need to wisely balance these uses via an Oxfordshire-wide Planning Strategy for Renewable Energy, rather than reacting to speculative developers in an ad hoc way (such as the Noke proposal). There are brown field sites long the M40 and A34 arteries; brown field sites e.g. ex-MOD land, within the Cherwell District, where solar panels could be installed in an un-obtrusive way; as well as numerous roofs on the many new housing and warehouse developments in and around Bicester, Banbury, Didcot etc.</p> <p>3. Impacts on migratory birds flying to the Otmoor RSPB reserve, and birds and bats moving between the numerous permanent and seasonal wetlands and wetland restoration projects in the Upper Thames and Upper River Ray - reflective panels may be confused with reflective water surfaces (the 'lake effect'). Waterbirds may land/collide in the panels mistaking them for water. Harrison et al. (2017) Natural England Report, NEER012, undertook an extensive literature review on impacts of solar PV panels on birds and bats. They conclude that: "protected areas should be avoided when considering site selection of solar PV developments, with some sources suggesting that locations close to protected areas should also be avoided.. Solar panels have the capacity to reflect polarised light, which can attract polarotactic insects, which has the potential to impact their reproductive biology. The polarising effect of solar panels may also induce drinking behaviour in some bird taxa, where the birds mistake the panels for water.."</p> <p>4. Visual intrusion to the unique Otmoor wetland landscape of central England - individual panels will be 2.8 metres high and would be visible from the Oxfordshire Way between Islip and Noke; from the elevation of Beckley; and at particular vantage points from footpaths in and around Noke and Oddington. The proposed hedging/screening/trees is intended to block the panels from view, but there will also be a high security fence/deer fence around the development. It will take at least 15 years (duration of the development is 40 years) for the proposed hedgerows/trees to grow to a sufficient height to block the panels from view (see Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, p.7, parag. 2.9) . From higher ground the panels will be visible despite the planting; and the same in winter months when deciduous, native trees will drop their leaves.</p> |
| Received Date | 08/07/2022 11:17:14 |
| Attachments | |