

Lynne Baldwin

From: Planning
Sent: 17 July 2022 18:38
To: DC Support
Subject: FW: 22/01682/F: Land North Of Manor Farm, Noke.

-----Original Message-----

From: Horton cum Studley Parish Council Clerk <clerk@horton-cum-studley.org.uk>

Sent: 17 July 2022 17:26

To: Planning <Planning@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>

Subject: 22/01682/F: Land North Of Manor Farm, Noke.

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Dear Planning,

22/01682/F: Land North Of Manor Farm, Noke.

Horton cum Studley Parish Council objects to this planning application on the following grounds:

(a) Ecological impact: the proximity of the solar farm to the RSPB

Bird Reserve on Otmoor, where cranes bred successfully for the very first time last year, it is home to bitterns, turtle doves and marsh harriers. The solar farm would be less than 400metres away from the Bird Reserve and only just over 1 km away from the permanently flooded area within it. Wetland birds and insect life are attracted to the large shiny surfaces of water bodies. Over 100 acres of shiny panels could disorient migrating and other birds.

(b) Green Belt: the solar park would fall entirely within the Green

Belt. Para 151 of the NPPF National Planning Policy Framework) states that renewable energy projects are inappropriate developments on Green Belt land, and should only be allowed in 'very special circumstances' – which we do not believe apply here. Solar panels should not be sited on agricultural land. We suggest that it would be better to use the roofs of the vast new warehouses being built in towns such as Bicester.

c) The applicant acknowledges that the solar development will have an adverse affect, and that even after mitigation through planting eventually becomes effective after ten years the adverse impact will still be minor to moderate. The applicant relies entirely for mitigation on the effect of existing vegetation screening the site and the eventual effect of further screening to be planted around and within it. The existing tree and hedge screening would only have a filtering effect on the industrial structures involved in a solar farm, doing little to mask their alien and industrial nature – and then only in the summer when leaves are on the trees. This cannot be addressed by planting alien evergreen hedges or conifer trees which would be inappropriate in a rural setting like this.

d) Renewable Energy: The application is for a solar farm with a stated capacity of approximately 25MW, said to provide enough energy to power approximately 7,000 homes. However, in the Network Availability Assessment 18 MW not 25 MW is stated to be the peak to export to the grid, and also that lower figure will itself reduce to 10 MW after forty years as the efficiency of the solar panels declines. That is an average capacity over the lifetime of the project of 14MW, only just over half the claimed 25 MW. None of these figures were challenged by the applicant's agent at a recent meeting in Noke. Additionally, those figures are peak output, not merely in summer but on the very sunniest (most irradiated) foreseeable day in summer. Summer irradiation is five times as high in the summer months as the winter, so the average output over the lifetime of the project would be around 7 MW. The seasonal

nature of solar energy production means that it requires back up from other more reliable sources for most of the year. All these factors mean that the renewable energy produced by the site would be insignificant both in terms of Cherwell overall usage, and the District's Climate Emergency objective of zero carbon by 2030. The site's insignificant and intermittent contribution to the District's zero carbon objectives would be wholly inadequate to outweigh the cumulative adverse consequences of the development.

Best wishes,
Alexia

Alexia Lewis, Clerk
Horton cum Studley Parish Council
<http://horton-cum-studley.org.uk/>

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