

Comment for planning application 22/01682/F

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	Leslie Scott
Address	Upper Woods Farm, Street From Woodeaton To Beckley, Noke, Oxford, OX3 9TF
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I request you refuse planning consent for this proposed, highly inappropriate development of 70+ acres of Otmoor.</p> <p>In 1997, Otmoor was recognised of such great national conservation value that a nature reserve was established at its heart. The reserve, now 1,000 acres, is managed by the RSPB. Backed by local and national support, this charity has spent the last 25 years working to return Otmoor to the wetland wilderness it was up until this common land was alienated, enclosed and drained 200 years ago.</p> <p>This project to restore and protect Oxfordshire's ancient moorland is a great success - birds, and nature lovers now flock to the site. I have seen this for myself having co-owned and lived on a 100 acre farm (predominantly pasture, trees and hedgerows) on the edge of the reserve since 1999.</p> <p>But it is early days, and it is still very much a work in progress.</p> <p>And, the simple truth is that - apart from the blindingly obvious, devastating visual impact of installing 47,000 x 3m solar panels abutting this nature reserve (that no amount of ever-green, inappropriate planting will shield from sight) - no one knows precisely what impact this industrial size development (electricity factory) would have on this still fragile ecosystem, with its growing population of wild and migratory birds and other wildlife - certainly NOT the applicants.</p> <p>This country faces huge problems due to the historic lack of action to mitigate the effects of climate change. This is why I applaud CDC's Climate Action Framework with its commitment to increase the district's solar energy production by a factor of 5, by 2030. But I do not think CDC should be panicked (or hoodwinked) into throwing other equally key aspirations to the wind - eg the Framework highlights as vitally important preserving Oxfordshire's green spaces and improving access to them. Such growth must be strategically planned and phased, and the electricity grid in Oxfordshire must be developed in a way that accommodates this planned growth.</p> <p>If there has been a follow-up to the Framework and a detailed strategic plan now exist, it doesn't seem to be in the public domain. It is therefore impossible to tell how many, if any, sites for solar energy generation have been identified for development within Cherwell district to ensure CDC will reach its ambitious target. And it is impossible for anyone (public, planners, developers et al) to judge the significance or otherwise of the possible output from this electricity factory - without being able to view this in the context of a strategic plan.</p> <p>Of great concern to me is that this lack of a transparent plan leaves the county's vital, green and rural spaces vulnerable to exploitation by 'greenwashing', opportunistic, private landowners - as in this case.</p> <p>The applicant may well own a parcel of agricultural land within Otmoor, but this should not entitle him, or anyone else, to profit HUGELY from this at the expense of either the local communities or the residents of Oxfordshire and beyond.</p> <p>The Otmoor basin may no longer be a wetland held in common for the villagers of the 'seven</p>

towns' that surround it - to graze, fish, shoot wildfowl or wonder at will - but, as with all green space with the Green Belt, it should be regarded as an incredibly valuable common or public asset. And all of us will be immeasurably poorer if this industrial structure is permitted to encroach upon this deeply rural, but easily accessible, sphere of Oxfordshire countryside.

Again, I entreat you, on behalf future generations, to leave Otmoor intact by refusing planning permission.

Received Date

18/07/2022 17:20:38

Attachments