

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	
Name	Ann Henman
Address	Otmoor Cottage, Church Street, Beckley Oxford OX3 9UT
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>As a resident of Beckley whose property overlooks the proposed development, and seeing daily the diverse people from a wide variety of geographical areas and walks of life who walk past my house on their way to and from the area in the proposal, I am compelled to register my deepest objection to approving this application. The site in question is not suitable for a solar farm of this size and construction, and in no way do the alleged benefits of the proposal begin to match the many benefits that will be lost. I am an advocate of the need for increased development of renewable energy from non-carbon sources, but do not agree in placing such a facility in the Green Belt, next to an important wetland RSPB reserve, adjacent to well-used and needed walking trails, and vital to the visual landscape both adjacent to, and over-looking, the site.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the problems that would be caused by the solar farm being so close to the RSPB Bird Reserve on Otmoor, home to many unique species, including breeding cranes, bitterns, turtle doves and marsh harriers. The Ecological Survey carried out for the developer concentrated on the wildlife recorded within the solar farm area and concluded that "impacts to any off-site designated sites are highly unlikely due to distances and nature of the work" - a statement disputed by people with more expertise than I have who I believe will also be submitting objections the site application.</p> <p>The solar farm 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 I do not believe apply here. Otmoor is no sunnier than any other patch of land in southern England. Electricity can be generated anywhere, including roofs of warehouses and other industrial buildings and homes, and distributed everywhere through the existing electrical distribution network. Placing solar panels next to public footpaths, and destroying the present sense of openness and long range views, does not compensate for what will be lost. There will clearly be a substantial adverse effect on the Green Belt and the development will therefore be contrary to ESD5.</p> <p>A stand-out feature of Otmoor and the surrounding area is its open, undeveloped character, a rare haven for wildlife and humans alike and 108 acres of panelling would subvert its character considerably. If a solar farm is allowed here, in such a unique habitat, solar farms could be allowed anywhere. I welcome solar farms as part of our zero-carbon future, but the challenge is to meet that environmental priority while not trampling on other ones: the preservation of precious landscapes and protection of fragile biodiversity.</p> <p>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. The solar farm would remove a site which is presently growing a large area of wheat (of which there is a global shortage) and linseed (which is a bio-mass crop where the seeds go to bio-fuel and the stems to heating, and already contributing to Cherwell's Climate Emergency objectives). Food can be produced only on suitably good, fertile, agricultural land, which this demonstrably is.</p> <p>I therefore urge this proposal be rejected and more appropriate plans for increased</p>

development of renewable energy from non-carbon sources be pursued. ,

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Attachments