

NMPC Planning Committee: 24/01859/FUL Solar Installation

Speaking Notes

David Maclean, chairman NMPC Planning Committee

Good morning.

We readily acknowledge that solar power is needed but in the right place and not at the expense of BMV agricultural land.

This application has been beset by inaccurate and misleading information, and an arrogant approach by the applicants. With over 300 public objections and critical comments from many consultees, we retain a wide range of concerns with this application. Transport issues.

The new Officer Comments about our transport Reports do not engage with the points we are making. It is very easy to kick this can down the lane as he suggests but if there is no safe and satisfactory way of mitigating issues that are inherent in these proposals in a detailed CEMP what happens then? In our strong view it is much better to assess the actual situation now, before coming to any decision, than to be faced with an impossible situation later.

We understand that transport issues are not normally considered now, but NPPF 115 allows Highways to assess for capacity, congestion and highway safety to ensure that the issues have been properly mitigated. In this case the applicant has completely failed to convince that they will be mitigated successfully. Graham Bellamy, our transport consultant, considers that it would be reckless to grant planning permission now. Reckless is an interesting word to use here - the applicants have been casting around for a safe and sensible route to access their desired site and this is their third attempt. But each time they have completely failed to demonstrate that they have an acceptable scheme of mitigation measures to ensure that the NPPF requirements can be met.

This plan now proposes to bring traffic down through the centre of N Mundham, around narrow double bends and then onto a single track country lane with few passing places for light vehicles and only one potential HGV to HGV passing place in the whole 2.4km route.

With traffic lights in N Mundham past the Church there's nowhere for any queues to form where vehicles can pass each other, never mind pass an HGV. But I'm sure you will have noticed all these salient features during your site visit.

These quiet country lanes are used on a daily basis by walkers, including with pushchairs, horse riders and trotters, and cyclists – in fact the whole of this proposed route is on the National Cycle Network.

The applicant has admitted that we will be living with this shambles for up to 18 months and that doesn't account for the essential mid-life equipment updates.

Please do not approve this application until your planning officer has got some credible answers from Highways, and the applicant has convinced us all that any route with an acceptable scheme of mitigation measures can be achieved.

You are allowed to do this, and any delay to your decision, in our view, is due to incompetence by the applicant.

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