

Hail Weston Parish Council would like to highlight what it considers to be the following main issues and impacts from the proposed development:

- **Impact on biodiversity and habitats:** the site of the proposed development is a threat to the habitat of a number of protected species (such as the great crested newt), as well as posing a risk to the habitats of birds, bats and other animals. In addition to habitat loss, fencing surrounding the development will also likely have an impact on these species' habitats. There may be a further impact on these habitats and species from night-time effects during the project's construction and operation phases.
- **Impact on living conditions during the construction phase:** residents will be impacted by noise from construction on the site as well as from increased traffic to the site. Construction during dry weather will also lead to an increase in dust from the site that could impact local residents.
- **Impact highways safety and traffic generation:** there will be an increased risk of harm to road users during the construction phase, as well as increased traffic. Rural roads such as the B645 are unsuitable for the anticipated construction traffic, specifically HGV movements, oversized loads and likely road closures. Safety on these roads is already a concern, with accidents common despite the continued increase in traffic-calming measures that have been added to try to address this.
- **Scale of the development:** in what is a predominantly rural area, the scale of the development is overbearing and out of character with the surrounding area, fundamentally changing the rural character of the area in which it is located.
- **Plans for decommissioning:** There is no clear, funded plan for restoration of the site after the 40-year lease period, when the installed solar panels will no longer be viable.
- **Absence of benefits to local communities, such as Hail Weston, hosting the proposed development:** Hail Weston is situated in a rural area, with it and most of the villages surrounding the solar park dependent upon oil. Residents are limited in their option to decarbonise their heating, with some of the most viable options (e.g. air source heat pumps) resulting in increased energy consumption making them more vulnerable to spiralling costs due to higher energy prices. Given that the proposed development will generate power for in excess of 100,000 homes, a way should be found to provide local, sustainable, secure, and economic energy to the villages that are to be impacted by the scheme, thus supporting their transition to a low carbon future, rather than allowing all energy generated to be supplied to the National Grid. Local communities benefitting from local renewable schemes would be a sustainable and resilient solution. In

addition, it would help gain community support and build resilience in rural communities limited by insufficient infrastructure and funds.

Hail Weston Parish Council will continue to raise the above issues during the Examination phase in the hope that they can be addressed. As, until the above concerns are addressed, we would urge the Planning Inspectorate to recommend refusal of the proposed development.