

# FRECKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk to the Council

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26<sup>th</sup> July 2019

RTRB-LUUI-AGBY  
C/O Newgate Communications  
50 Basinghall Street  
London  
EC2V 5DE

Dear Sirs

## **Sunnica Energy Farm**

In regards to the proposal of Sunnica Energy Farm I would like to inform you that Freckenham Parish Council object to the proposal in its current form and at its current scale, subject to a proposed residents survey.

## **In Summary**

- The size of the total site
- The loss of productive agricultural land
- Loss of country side views
- Noise pollution from construction and removal of the panels
- Loss of habitats for wildlife
- Operational noise and light pollution
- Negative affect on village settings
- Effect on human health including mental health
- Effect on property values in the area
- Potential Change of use from farm land

The outline of the land boundaries is totally incorrect as it includes areas where landowners have not even given consent to lease or “even been approached by Sunnica”

The Parish Council are also very concerned that the consultation period was too short and lacked valuable information for the Parish Council to gather more information on the site and Solar Farms to respond to the consultation in more detail.

However we have a meeting planned with yourselves on or around 6<sup>th</sup> September and as you have informed us you will take our further comments into consideration after we have had this meeting.

## **Details of objection**

In regards to the proposal of Sunnica Energy Farm I would like to inform you that Freckenham Parish Council object to the proposal based on the following points:

- 1) The size of the total site proposed, as the Sunnica East site occupies all the land between the village of Freckenham and the surrounding villages of Worlington, Badlingham and West Row. Its impact on the local area is disproportionate.

- 2) The close proximity of the site to the village settlement boundary, e.g.
  - 2.1) the site boundary is within 30 metres of housing association properties in East View, Freckenham, designed for occupation by elderly residents in the area.
  - 2.2) The site completely encloses a farmhouse on the North side of the village
  - 2.3) The site boundary directly abuts gardens and amenity land for properties on the Eastern side of the village on Mildenhall Road and Elms Road.
- 3) The loss of productive agricultural land which is in constant use for crop production and livestock rearing.
- 4) The inclusion of smaller parcels of land in the proposal that are owned by local landowners who have not been identified by Sunnica before the consultation started.
- 5) The loss of valuable country side views across the important Breckland landscape:
  - 5.1) From properties in the village adjoining the site, and from the upper storeys of properties with views over the site,
  - 5.2) From registered footpaths and bridleways adjoining or passing through the site, all of which are in constant use.
  - 5.3) From roads such as:
    - 5.3.1) Mildenhall Road leading to Worlington (site both sides for about 1 mile)
    - 5.3.2) West Row Road leading to West Row (site both sides for about 1 mile)
    - 5.3.3) Elms Road leading to Badlingham and Red Lodge (site on one side for approximately ½ mile, then on both sides for a further ½ mile)
- 6) The loss of habitats for wildlife in the area such as:
  - 6.1) The managed habitats for stone curlews between Freckenham, Worlington and West Row,
  - 6.2) The deer habitats between Freckenham and Worlington, where the deer move freely between the woodland habitats and the Lea Brook.
- 7) The lack of any coherent and written design guidelines or constraints in any of the published consultation literature, with only vague statements of intention, such as:
  - 7.1) No information about the style or height of the panels proposed (e.g. east/west or south facing, size or height above the ground)
  - 7.2) Very limited information about the siting of any battery storage facilities, expected to be in containers or buildings at a height of 2 storeys which would be clearly visible given the flat landscape in the area.
  - 7.3) No information about the proposal for the siting or design of inverters which would generate constant background humming noise while the panels or battery storage facilities are operating.
  - 7.4) No information about the design or method of screening and hedging with typical heights, typical widths of any field margins or green areas used in mitigation, or type and heights of fencing used as the boundary for security purposes.
- 8) The noise pollution and traffic movements from construction and removal of the panels

- 9) The operational noise and light pollution from security required to protect the site
  
- 10) The blanket closure of footpaths, bridleways and green lanes, all in constant use, for a period of up to two years while construction of the site progresses, and the effect on the physical health of villagers unable to use these routes and forced to walk on busy roads (many without designated footpaths) instead.
  
- 11) The effect on the mental health of villagers concerned about the lack of meaningful engagement with the local community about the location and design of the site.
  
- 12) The negative affect on village settings, and the negative effect on property values while the scheme is proposed due to the confusion about the impact of the scheme.
  
- 13) The bundling together of the proposed 3 solar sites and battery storage facilities into a single application, resulting in to the NSIP classification which excludes the normal planning mechanisms and well-known consultation mechanisms in place for the local area.

The Parish Council are also very concerned that the consultation period was too short and poorly advertised.

- 14) Information leaflets were posted to residents in plain white envelopes, which meant that many villagers were unaware of their content or importance and simply discarded them as if they were irrelevant marketing materials
  
- 15) The design of the leaflets was very poor with very small text, lack of contrast between text and background, and a lack of description about the proposal, all of which excluded visually impaired residents from the communication.
  
- 16) A similar lack of descriptive information in local paid Newspaper advertisements, with small text sizes used.
  
- 17) Consultation events were not signposted or advertised outside the venues, either in advance or on the day.
  
- 18) Adjoining villages such as Fordham and Isleham had only days to respond to the scheme before the closing date, with their public exhibitions taking place on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July respectively.

This lack of time, clarity and engagement by Sunnica has meant that Freckenham Parish Council have severe concerns about the effectiveness of the consultation in properly presenting the true impact of the scheme on parishioners and the local area.

However, through public Parish Council meetings, and engagement with parishioners, community organisations and groups in the village, the Parish Council has resolved to object to the proposal.

*Freckenham Parish Council does not support the current Sunnica proposal in its current form or at its current scale.*

Yours sincerely

*J. Coe*

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Clerk to the Parish Council