

TWC/2020/0851

Roden Solar Farm

Ercall Magna Parish Council fully supports green energy initiatives, however in this application we have several major concerns which we believe have not been satisfactory addressed despite us raising the issues.

The site covers an area of 133 hectares (125 football pitches) of arable farmland and is the largest proposed site in the region, offering no contribution to reduce the carbon footprint to either the Parish or the Borough. Arable land that could be used for food production post Brexit.

The loss of the land also reduces the area which is earmarked for chicken waste disposal from the two chicken shed developments, one proposed and one existing, that belong to Walker Holding Estates, the current landowners of this site.

Paragraph 8.36 of the report states there are no other developments that may impact on the area but this is incorrect (I refer to the previous paragraph) and therefore negates the statement made of there will be no further accumulative impact on the area or indeed the Parish. Over the past several years Ercall Magna Parish has had a series of large industrial agricultural developments and the Greenhouse Village development agreed which have indeed impacted on the community as a whole.

The applicant is not a recognised Power Company but is representing a consortium company which operates purely for profit, We are concerned that during its life, ownership will change and accountability lost.

In this application, if permission was to be granted, there is no realistic viable land management plan and we refute paragraph 8.35 of the report relating to the use of wildflowers and their management as a viable option. This also applies to paragraph 8.18. The other suggested option of sheep grazing is also not viable because of the difficulties of shepherding a flock of sufficient numbers to graze the land. In real terms the real option would be pesticides such as Round Up.

Although community gain is not part of the planning procedure, the poor response to our request to date, reflects the lack of positive community engagement that has been present throughout this process. This, therefore, supports our view of lack of positive community engagement with residents.

In Paragraph 8.94 in the report reference is made that the application is “**being broadly**” in compliance with ER1 and NE2, which we believe is not sufficient. It should be either compliant or not.

JDM and Pegasus have only supplied how the site will be decommissioned but there is no sound financial package to implement it, which we believe will leave the Council and landowner with the problem of clearing the site at the end of its life in 40 years. At the very least funding should be in place prior to work commencing.

In its present form, this application is not fit for purpose. Until the arguments from our Parish representatives which include the points regarding our main issues of a sound land management plan and strong decommissioning structure are in place, we

believe it is not possible to make a safe decision either way. At the very least we believe the decision should be deferred to enable the application to be presented in a more open and honest way.