

***Land at Rookery Farm, Granborough, Buckinghamshire MK18 3NJ 23/03875/APP:  
Development of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), connected directly to the  
national grid with associated infrastructure including access, drainage, and  
landscaping.***

The Parish Council formally met to consider this planning application on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

Prior to the meeting the Parish Council held a public forum to listen and understand any concerns of residents, and also delivered a questionnaire to every dwelling in the village.

At the Parish Council meeting there was a further opportunity for the public to speak on this matter and 5 residents made comments.

It was reported that 272 questionnaire responses were received, representing approximately 50% of the total village population. 230 (85%) were against the application, and 42 (15%) were in favour of the application or were undecided.

The Parish Council considered the planning application in the context of material planning consideration and the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 20 December 2023 commonly abbreviated to the NPPF,
- The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan adopted by the Council in 2021, and
- The Granborough Neighbourhood Plan 2022.

The following was agreed.

**A. To object to the planning application on the following grounds:**

**1. Excessive scale of the development:**

The proposed development in terms of its overall size and scale is excessive in this rural area having regard to various reports including:

- I. The National Grid 'Energy Scenario' report 2022 showing a need for 20,000 MW battery storage by 2030 and 35,000 MW battery storage by 2050, and
- II. The 'Renewable UK' energy report showing that 31,500 MW battery storage has already been consented with 27,400 MW in planning and 25,400 MW not yet submitted,

which indicates that the East Claydon BESS site is not required to meet national targets and that there is no need for a BESS of this scale.

**2. Environmental impact:**

The proposed development in terms of its overall size and scale is excessive in this rural area having regard to the environment, including the impact on existing wildlife, ecology, and biodiversity. It is not considered that the proposed mitigation measures outweigh any stated benefits.

In addition, any fire within the site will have an adverse impact on the local environment due to the toxicity from fumes as well as polluting the ground and waters courses from contaminated water used to extinguish a fire.

### **3. Effect on the existing landscape including visual intrusion:**

The proposed development in terms of its overall size and scale including the 'customer substation fire walls' is excessive and incongruous in this rural area having regard to the existing landscape and topography of the site thereby having an adverse impact when viewed from the higher ground in Granborough and East Claydon and from the immediate vicinity, including public footpaths.

### **4. Fire safety:**

The nature of the development presents a considerable fire risk and fear of fire. It has not been demonstrated that there will be adequate mitigation measures to control:

- thermal runaway
- the release of toxic fumes
- prevention of pollution on the surrounding land and water courses
- suitable permanent fire access to the equipment

### **5. Inappropriate location:**

It has not been adequately demonstrated that there is an imperative need for this to be sited in this rural location on open farmland and it has not been further demonstrated that other suitable sites, including previously developed (brownfield sites), have been extensively investigated and considered as an alternative and more appropriate location for this type of development.

### **6. Cumulative impact:**

The cumulative effect of the development and other nearby proposals will take up over 1000 hectares of existing farmland which will have an adverse effect on the rural character of the area as well as taking out valuable land for food production having regard to:

- I. the current proposal
- II. an extant planning consent for a solar farm at Tuckey Farm on the northern boundary of Granborough (Bucks Council Planning reference 19/00983/APP)
- III. a proposal for a solar farm at Wings Farm (Bucks Council Planning reference 23/01939/SO), and
- IV. proposed development for a solar farm and battery storage known locally as The Rosefield development (The Planning Inspectorate reference EN010158).

### **7. Noise:**

There has not been an adequate noise assessment of the proposal in relation to the potential impact on the users of the adjacent footpaths.

- B. That in the event that Buckinghamshire Council as the Local Planning Authority determining this planning application decide to approve the application, then planning conditions should be imposed covering the following matters:**

- a. Highways and traffic – only using the proposed haul route at all times except for the 4 abnormal indivisible loads (AILs) as referred to in the planning application,
- b. No increase in height of the buildings/structures above that shown on the existing application,
- c. Landscape improvement to be undertaken in advance of the development and to include mature planting,
- d. Restriction on working hours and not to allow working on any weekends and bank holidays,
- e. Controls on lighting during construction and operation of the site,
- f. Controls on noise levels from generators during construction and when the site is operational,
- g. Vehicles to be able to turn within the site to allow forward movement and to avoid reversing,
- h. Wheel wash facilities to be provided before development commences and operated during the entire construction period,
- i. Independent verification of the Fire Controls,
- j. Details of the restoration of the site to be submitted, agreed and carried out in accordance with approved details,
- k. Audited details for the maintenance /funding/management of green and planted areas to be submitted and approved.

In the context of j and k above it is suggested that these may be covered by a formal section 106 legal agreement between Buckinghamshire Council and the applicant.

- C. That The Parish Council will ask that the three ward councillors covering Granborough formally request that the application is determined by a Planning Committee (i.e. not under officer delegated powers) and to further seek that it is determined at the North Buckinghamshire Planning Committee.**