



Points to make in the 3-minute presentation on the Belvoir Solar Farm

- 1 MBCs Local Plan policy requires development to conserve and where possible enhance the existing landscape character. Bottesford's Neighbourhood Plan requires new development to be sensitive to its landscape setting and to protect key views (one of which will be harmed by this proposal). Sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Plan is development which safeguards the integrity and function of the landscape character.
- 2 The existing landscape character is one of long open views with fields bounded by hedges of varying heights (as confirming by the Principal Landscape Architect for Cornwall Environmental Consultants commissioned by MBC to review the landscape impact of this proposal).
- 3 The solar farm will cover 15 fields and measures 2.5 km from north to south and 1km wide at its widest points. The scheme proposes uniform hedge heights of 3m to screen the panels, but hedge heights presently vary and are frequently 2m not 3m high, which in part allows for the long views. This landscape characteristic cannot be mimicked, or the panels would be more visible.
- 4 JBM wrote to Bottesford Parish Council on 11th August stating that the proposal will bring 'significant enhancements to the amenity of residents', it will not. The current footpaths provide long views of a rural, agriculture landscape. Cornwall Environmental Consultants have commented that 2,280 m of the public rights of way that run along the boundary of the site will have an existing or proposed hedge on one side and a site fence on the other (and no hedge). This is the case for the whole of the public right of way along Winter Beck.
- 5 The mitigation proposed would not respect or enhance the existing landscape as JBM suggest but it will turn it into an industrial uniform landscape, not forgetting that the infrastructure to provide the point of connection and inverters which will be permanent.
- 6 JBM also noted in their letter that adjustments have been made following discussion with Bottesford Parish Council – i.e. a setback from Muston and a setback from the Grantham Canal. JBM contend that this is 'above and beyond what we have done on other schemes'. MBC are reminded that these adjustments were not solely based on comments from the Parish Council but also reflect concerns raised by Historic England. The fact that JBM have made these adjustments demonstrates the sensitivity of the landscape around the site, with designated heritage and environmental assets, and the unsuitability of a proposal of this scale in this location. By way of a reminder the heritage assets are around Muston, the grasslands at Muston are a SSSI and National Nature Reserve and the Grantham Canal, which is a Local Wildlife Site.
- 7 The NPPF para 174 requires planning decisions to protect and enhance valued landscapes. MBC must also consider the cumulative impact of this proposal along with the other solar farm schemes that already have permission within 5km of this site. If approved, the defining characteristic of the Vale of Belvoir will be solar farms. What a demise that will be for a landscape that until recently was promoted for consideration as an Area of Outstanding National Beauty.
- 8 Approval of this scheme will harm the valued landscape of the Vale, as such the proposal is contrary to national, local and neighbourhood plan policy and should be refused.

Helen Metcalfe for Bottesford Parish Council 15.8.23.