

P-06-1377 Decline planning permission for the development planned proposed as Parc Solar Caenewydd, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 29.11.23

In the attached document it states the Development is of National Significance. Whilst this is appreciated there needs to be a significant consideration as to how the local population is going to be affected by this development.

It is also stated that the process is rigorous. If the process is rigorous I ask that the following information be considered as well as the local opposition as indicated in the volume of signatures of objection in the petition.

The volume of signatures against this development need to be considered as this is the view of the local population. The developer has failed to engage fully with the public. Whilst they have held 'roadshows' these were poorly advertised and this resulted in not many of the local population being aware of this development. Further the roadshows were held in locations not readily accessible to the local population. The example of this being the roadshow in Loughor held in a location with limited on road parking. When I attended this event there was nowhere to easily park due to local residents parking as well as the developers cars taking up the remainder of the on street parking. Thus many people that I saw at this time who were going to attend drove past.

Thus the developers have not fully engaged with the local population fully due to:

1. poor advertising;
2. lack of access to the events held;
3. late provision of the documents relating to development being available online.

Many of the people that I have spoken to gathering signatures for this petition have stated that this development is one of the best kept local secrets.

Even now the petition is closed there continues to be a large volume of people making contact asking as to how they can object to this development. This is not easy for the public to see within the public domain.

The areas bordering the development in Garden Village; Llewitha and parts of Fforstafch did not have an opportunity to engage with the developer as the road shows were held a distance away from the development area and not adjacent to it.

Significantly the committee is asked to consider how the tenant farmers are going to be affected. A number of people have approached the tenant farmers to ask about the development. The tenant farmers have stated they have been told they are not to speak to the public regarding the development or the landowners will end their lease and evict them. How is this a fair process in a democratic society?

The landowner and developers have stated that the farm will continue to function in its current form even with panels with sheep roaming between the panels. This is a cattle farm and a farm that grows produce. The farmer can not suddenly stop farming cattle and then farm sheep. That is like asking a brain surgeon to do heart surgery. The techniques are totally different. The positioning of the panels on fertile land used for growing will affect the ability to grow produce. Produce that is sold in the farm shop.

Further the studies the developer has commissioned available on their website have not been performed by local expert groups aware of the local wildlife or have been undertaken as desktop studies. These studies should have been undertaken by local experts/ expert groups familiar with the land and none should have been desktop exercises. There seems to be no great significance given to how the Owl and Bat populations on the farm will be affected.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to net zero. Whilst these panels may produce 'green power'; how will they contribute to loss of local produce production? There would be a need for produce to be purchased into the shop to be sold that will require vehicles to deliver this. That would not be net zero. There is more likely to be a loss of the shop all together in the medium to long term due to loss of custom. This will allow the developer/ land owner to have the next phase of holiday accommodation development.

Significantly the local farm and shop provide a vital service to the local community. The farm shop sells produce from the farm; supports small local businesses selling their products such as cheese, cakes, bread and milk. If this development occurs it will not only affect the farm, farm shop, local community but have an economic impact also on other businesses. The developer states that this will not occur; however I have seen no economic studies or reports undertaken by the developer to support their assumption there will be no negative impact. There is no document or study undertaken to examine the economic impact of the business of the farm shop.

When people come to visit the farm shop they also are able to visit the animals such as cattle, ducks etc. This is how children learn about animals. If the developers go ahead, ask a local child in 20 years and they are unlikely to see a cow in reality locally. Even the pumpkins the farm grows attract many visitors. Children get an opportunity to learn about the farm and how things are grown.

The developer and land owner also states the farmer has been offered alternate land and the farm buildings will remain. Where is this new land they are offered? This has not been shared publicly. Does this land have intact fences for the animals? Is the land suitable for growing the produce? Is it adjacent to the current farm? Will the farmer need to drive between sites and thus affect vehicle emissions locally as well as traffic flow? There is no land adjacent to the current farm and from my research the nearest land owned by the landowner that could be used by the farmer is some distance away.

Consideration needs to be given to the visual impact of this development on the edge and on access roads to the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This will be a blight on the local landscape for at least the next 40 years.

I ask that the committee consider these aspects and listen to the views of the public so this can be further debated in the Senedd.

Yours sincerely;

Richard Lake