

Good evening, I am Sophie and I live on Talbots End Lane. I am an environmental scientist and specialised in renewable energy. I am here tonight to question the integrity of the planning proposal for Varley Solar Development. I believe that there has been a deliberate architecture of deception throughout the proposal from RES (developer's) and their paid for consultation papers. I will now outline and evidence some of what these deceptions are:

In the proposal RES have stated the development would have the capacity of up to 25MW of renewable energy. I have contacted RES to discuss and understand their calculations but have not heard back. Therefore, using my qualified and professional expertise I have undertaken my own calculations and I believe that the figures of capacity of renewable energy stated are over estimated to the tune of 20%. I will include the maths behind this in my written submission.

May I stress that the wording RES use is capacity – there is nothing I have found which documents how they aim to achieve this capacity or even if that is their intention to reach capacity. When working out the capacity of energy output in such an unreliable source as solar it would be more representative to inform the planners of the minimum to maximum range of realistic and achievable output. By only providing a figure for capacity is misleading, especially if it is over stated in the first place.

This figure of 25MW is then used to calculate the CO2 emissions saved and number of households to benefit from clean energy. Hopefully you can see by having a misleading baseline figure for the energy output then distorts all other claims being made based on this figure.

Critically, as we know, the site will be decommissioned at the end of its life, in 50 years. Nowhere have I seen a Decommissioning Strategy to inform us who will be accountable for the decommissioning, how it will be achieved, the negative environmental impact of decommissioning 160 end of life arrays and its supporting infrastructure and what will happen to the land after this time? What will become of 53 ha of land, having been an industrial landscape for the past half of a century.

I was interested to see the Transport Plan stating only 520 vehicle movements during the construction phase. Where is the evidence of research to show that this is accurate and how and who will be held accountable to this number? It is only the contractor who can answer that question accurately who I assume has not yet been appointed as the proposal is still in planning.

In the Noise report and Glare report, both commissioned by the developers, I believe that there has been a conversion of opinion into fact.

This is evident in the Noise report where the zones of noise surrounding the inherently noisy transformer stations (buzzing, cooling fans and water pumps) is stated as "LOW" but that is then interpreted to mean "No impact" and they cite the NO-Impact as a decision.

Similarly in the Glare report we are told it is not an issue but in the exact current site there are small arrays which are around 1.5m lower than the proposed. These can be extremely visible through the existing 3m hedging with high glares to us from inside our home.

When comparing the Heritage report performed by Pegasus group on behalf of RES with the Conservation report performed by Rob Nicholson from South Gloucestershire council, he raises a number of significant discrepancies and he concludes his report with a recommendation to refuse the development. I know who I trust more between, a desk-based report paid for by the developer and a qualified expert from our own council.

The local engagement I believe has been a sham for marketing and indoctrination. The questionnaire for example asked people's personal views not related to the development, the time frame given for the meeting in the Village Hall was extraordinarily and unnecessarily short. They have then attempted to pass off necessary requirements for the site as to 'how they have listened to the public'. As an example, it is obvious that the junction of Farleigh Lane and Talbots End Lane is un-navigable to articulated or above 12-tonne trucks, so to pass off that they are now providing an access track over the fields to the north of Varley Farm as a conscientious gift from an understanding developer is misleading at best.

Additionally, why is it not being proposed that the new bypass could be used for all site traffic instead of still using the single carriage way of Farleigh Lane and by so inconveniencing local users unnecessarily?

There is minimal provision made for the water management strategy for the site. Converting over 130 acres from rural land to an industrialised landscape, a construction yard and the angled surfaces of the actual solar arrays will have a profound effect on the way precipitation is absorbed, the speed of that absorption and evaporation. This is a gross omission in an area which already gets completely flooded tracks, low lying runoff ditches and in our case a cellar that floods in heavy rain. It therefore should be provided for.

The planning proposal and associated marketing materials focus solely on the positives of solar energy. However, it is important to understand the whole picture to make a fair assessment. Here are a few other considerations:

This development will lead to the loss of 130 acres of fertile farm land which reduced the UK's valuable food production capacity and exacerbating food insecurity (now also critically affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine).

The manufacturing of solar arrays includes mining for solar panel materials creating greenhouse gas emissions. Solar panel facilities are often powered by fossil fuels themselves and creating air pollution, and a huge amount of transportation and water is required for the cooling process. Additionally, the energy required to recycle the solar arrays at end of life is currently not available and diminishes the already un-viable proposal.

I, am opposed to this development. But I would like you all to consider that how can any of us support a proposal when the supplied documents are biased, misleading and lacking critical information for us to form a fully informed and accurate answer.