

By email, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

To whom it may concern,

**Re North East Derbyshire District Council Planning Development proposal :- 20/01282/FL  
Proposed photovoltaic solar park and associated infrastructure (Affecting a public right of  
way)(Major Development)| Upper Delves Farm Pit Lane Shirland Alfreton DE55 6AU**

CPRE Derbyshire is realistic about the expansion of renewable energy generation as a critical part of delivering our net carbon neutral targets. We are supportive in principle of well-planned development of this nature that also accounts thoroughly for local needs.

In practice, however, we apply the same principles to evaluate the location, design and impact of such sites as to any other development taking place in the countryside and considering national and local planning policy.

Our primary focus and objective is to ensure that sensitive landscapes are protected from detrimental impacts of development and in line with the NPPF guidelines on sustainability, are preserved for both current and future generations from the perspective of distinctive landscape character assets as well as important access and amenity to cherished green spaces conveniently close to where people live.

The value of countryside to people's wellbeing and as a buffer against climate change has never been more obvious and its heritage value, once lost or seriously degraded is virtually impossible to retrieve. Development proposals in open countryside or on undeveloped green field sites, we believe must be considered holistically in terms of what these places mean to people and contribute to communities now and for the future.

**Having conducted an extensive site visit at Upper Delves Farm, Shirland, re the proposed solar development location, the neighbouring areas, and having reviewed all the relevant documentation, it is our considered opinion that this application should be refused.**

The detrimental impact on what is clearly high value landscape (acknowledged as such within the application submission) is unacceptable. The development site lies in the open countryside within an attractive pastoral landscape of small grassland fields bounded by hedgerows and mature trees. As suggested by the County Archaeologist this landscape may even be medieval in origin and therefore significant weight should be given to the inherent value of this landscape setting which would be significantly damaged by the introduction of modern industrial features such as solar panels. We are deeply concerned re the specific location to the loss of and damage to the existing hedgerows and mature trees on the proposed site. We do not believe that the applicant has made sufficient attempts to protect these essential wildlife corridors in their submission papers.

Whilst this site is not immediately overlooked by roads, the open and sloping site would mean the development is highly visible from several well used local footpaths, and to the village of Shirland.

We are disappointed in the non-robust nature of community engagement that has taken place to date for the local Kronos Solar applications. It appears to fall far short of recommended best practice in working with local communities for mutually satisfactory outcomes from such developments. We also believe that the proposed investment will impact on some local businesses that run holiday lets and Shirland Golf Course, which backs onto the proposed Solar site, would lose potential

wedding bookings, having recently invested in club house extensions and a marquee to support these activities.

CPRE, the countryside charity is committed to supporting solar energy but will always oppose harmful developments. Solar photovoltaics are an important part of our energy supply in the climate emergency, but huge greenfield sites which damage our countryside ignore the huge potential of roof-mounted solar.

CPRE is a passionate advocate for climate action, and we have clearly stated our support for renewable energy, but the need for energy does not justify damaging developments. We support schemes that minimise landscape impacts, secure real nature recovery opportunities and enjoy the support of local communities. Schemes that fail to meet these expectations, like this one, must be refused.

The location of choice for solar developments has become valuable farmland, ignoring the 250,000 hectares of south-facing commercial roof space (enough to meet half the UK's electricity demand) not to mention domestic roofs and surface car parks that could be harnessed with little impact on landscape, tranquillity and cultural heritage.

By enabling greenfield solar you are actively courting public opposition to solar energy and putting progress towards net zero at risk.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Ydlibi (Chair – CPRE Derbyshire)





