



Kettering
TOWN COUNCIL

Community • Environment • Heritage

Kettering Town Council
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15th July 2024

Open letter to councillors on North Northamptonshire Council

Dear Cllr

BURTON WOLD

We are writing an open letter as a concerned Town Council, representing over 55,000 residents, in support of the letter you have already received from other town and parish councils in North Northamptonshire on this issue. We would, like them, wish to express our strong objection to the revised Kettering Energy Park Master Plan development by First Renewables Ltd.

The new revisions presented at the public meeting in Finedon and on the First Renewables web site have done little to alter the concerns and objections of our constituents. This development clearly does not have the support of local residents, and would be a disaster for the local area.

We strongly urge the Council to consider our concerns below and ensure they meet their obligations under Policy 26 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (NNJCS) before lending its support to this development.

Policy 26 of the NNJCS explicitly emphasises the importance of ensuring that any proposed developments are sustainable, environmentally friendly, and meet the needs of the local population. The Kettering Energy Park fails to align with these core principles, as it poses significant risks to our natural resources, wildlife habitats, and the delicate ecological balance of the area. The revisions proposed by the developer do nothing to alter its failure to align with those core principles.

The proposed site sits in open countryside adjoining the Nene Valley from which it will be highly visible. There are no confirmed customers wishing to locate to this development, so it is entirely speculative, financially motivated and contrary to sustainable development. The reduction in height from 30 meters to 25 meters whilst a positive start is not sufficient, given the location is on one of the highest points in North Northamptonshire making it the most visible site in the county. The UK Warehousing Association reports that the average warehouse height in the UK has risen from 11 meters to 14 meters, 25 meters is double this height.

Many recent reports including the Climate Change Committee's 2022 report to Parliament note that action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel if



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the UK is to meet its net zero carbon status by 2050. The location of this site being in open countryside with no proposed public transport links contradicts this.

The scale of the site would see the potential for over 11000 vehicle movements per day and the resulting significant increase in traffic through Finedon at the A510/A6 roundabout would bring the town to a standstill at certain times of the day. The road network through all surrounding villages would see a significant increase in volumes resulting in a negative impact on air pollution, noise, congestion and quality of life.

The wind farm and the electricity they generate are not owned or controlled by the proposer, therefore any claims regarding the use of generated power from the wind farm to power the developments are as it stands at the moment misleading and incorrect. This fundamentally calls into question the whole basis of the proposal and is a constraint to delivery of the Master Plan. The consented solar farm which has yet to be built does not have the capacity to provide renewable energy on a 24-hr x 365-day basis and so any development would be reliant upon the import of electricity from the National Grid, in direct conflict with the Joint Core Strategy and the marketed purpose of an Energy Park.

As part of the revisions there has been much made of the reduction in area of the warehouse footprint, but little is made of the offsetting increase in Hydroponics and/or Advanced agriculture. This increase will undoubtedly require more energy and 24/7 lighting which will significantly increase the light pollution in the area.

The farmland on the Burton Wold is categorised as a combination of best and most versatile land and good grade 3b land and should be conserved in accordance with the National Planning Policy framework paragraph 180. In fact, we all take pride in local businesses like Weetabix promoting this land and the high-quality local produce it delivers. It is unacceptable to be ripping this land up and reducing food security further.

This is a beautiful area close to Burton Latimer and is the last bit of open countryside that the residents of Burton Latimer can access directly. The site is home to a number of at risk and endangered species (including those protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act) whose rearing, nesting, and feeding areas would be irrevocable destroyed by the development, causing a direct threat to survival, and leading to local extinction. The areas assigned for biodiversity net gains will in no way offset the damage caused by this development and to achieve this the developer will in all likelihood end up buying statutory biodiversity credits which whilst achieving a paper gain will in fact result in a loss to the local population.

Considering these issues, we believe that the Kettering Energy Park is not, as currently proposed, in the best interest of our communities. We implore the Council to reconsider this development and instead focus on alternative renewable energy



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solutions that are in harmony with the local environment and enjoy the backing of the people they will impact.

We request that the Council does not support this development as currently described in the draft masterplan. It is imperative that the Council upholds Policy 26 and prioritises the long-term well-being of its constituents over short-sighted development proposals which would appear to be more about additional warehousing than green energy.

We urge you to act in the best interest of the local electorate and ensure that our collective voices are heard and respected. Let us work together to find sustainable solutions that protect our environment and enhance the quality of life for current and future generations in our communities.

Yours sincerely

Martin Hammond,
Town Clerk



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Yours sincerely