



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
From the Secretary of State for Environment, Food
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Chris Skidmore MP
Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London, SW1H 0ET

3rd June 2019

Dear Chris,

CLEVE HILL SOLAR PARK, KENT

I am writing to you in your capacity as Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth, on behalf of Helen Whatley MP. Helen has been approached by a number of organisations regarding the location and potential impacts of the proposed solar farm in her Kent constituency.

The proposed solar farm development would cover over 890 acres, and as such would be five times the size of the largest solar schemes (either consented or planned) in the UK to date. The proposed location is also directly adjacent to the Thames Estuary, and its borders to the west and north are designated habitats, including internationally designated coastal habitats. There is a further designated wildlife site less than 1km to the east.

The organisations which have raised concerns with this proposal include Kent Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and CPRE, and I have outlined the key concerns below:

- Impact on internationally and nationally designated sites to the north, west and east, including direct habitat loss as well as loss of functional support habitats for the nationally and internationally designated wildlife sites. These sites are an example of the sort of land Defra would seek to integrate into a Nature Recovery Network.
- Flood risk in this coastal location, and potential conflict with an Environment Agency coastal realignment scheme under consideration at this site.
- Proximity to key settlements (Faversham, Whitstable) and associated loss of amenity associated with development of this land which is directly adjacent to the coastal path.

Are you able to provide me with an update on the BEIS position on this proposal, and how your department envisage these significant environmental sensitivities being reflected in the decision?

Many thanks for your support.

With every good wish,

Yours,
Michael

Michael Gove

CC Helen Whatley MP