

**ANDREW JONES MP**  
Harrogate & Knaresborough



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Richard Tallis

12 October 2021

Dear Mr Tallis

Further to our previous correspondence regarding the proposals for a solar farm near Scotton, I have received a response from Mr Raoul Tuffnell, Chief Development Officer at GRIDSERVE.

Please find a copy of Mr Tuffnell's response enclosed.

Whilst the finer details of any application will come forward when a formal submission is made, I am concerned about the impact of the solar farm on the villages of Scotton and Brearton.

I will be following this matter closely and will provide regular updates to affected residents.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Jones MP**

P.S. Keep up with local news at [www.communitynews.network](http://www.communitynews.network). Get regular updates direct to your inbox by completing and returning the enclosed siip free in the envelope provided.

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Andrew Jones MP  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT  
WESTMINSTER  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA  
ENGLAND

7th October 2021

Dear Mr Jones MP,

**Proposed Solar Farm at Scotton Village, Harrogate, HG5**

Thank you for your letter to our Chief Executive Officer, Mr Toddington Harper, which has been passed to me for response.

**Company Background**

GRIDSERVE's proposed Solar Farm at Lawrence House Farm, Low Moor Lane, Harrogate is an exciting project that will help to combat the ever-growing issues of Climate Change and Global Warming by using technology at the forefront of the industry in what will be one of the most advanced solar projects in the U.K. GRIDSERVE's ambition is to truly move the needle on climate change by providing clean, sustainable energy through the deployment of solar farms throughout the country, thus supporting Great Britain in meeting its renewable energy goals.

GRIDSERVE has a proven track record of developing, constructing and operating solar farms. In recent years, two of our large-scale solar farms were delivered in association with Warrington Borough Council: York Solar Farm was brought online in the Winter of 2019 and utilises 198 acres of grade 3 farmland to house 34.7MWp of solar and 30MWh of battery energy storage. Hull solar farm covers 131 acres, and includes 25.7MWp of solar and 30MWh of battery energy storage.

**The Proposal**

Should planning consent be granted, this solar farm would help offset the use of destructive carbon fuels by producing over 115,000kWh of clean energy each day. This is enough energy to power over 12,000 homes and save over 42,000 tonnes of carbon from our environment each year.

GRIDSERVE is fully aware of the concerns raised in your letter which are duly noted and are addressed in turn below:

*Proximity to Scotton Village*

The proposed site is located on Low Moore Lane to the north of Scotton. It is a key objective of GRIDSERVE to minimise disturbance to the local community. It is GRIDSERVE'S intention to review the developable area of the proposals to ensure a buffer between the village of Scotton and the solar farm. The topography of the site, the retention of existing landscape features where possible and the provision of new landscaping will also aid to maintain separation between the site and the

village. GRIDSERVE believes that the buffer between the village and the solar farm is required to address the concerns raised.

#### Proximity to Heritage Assets

It is acknowledged that site is bound by Grade II listed assets to the South. The design and proposals are being carefully considered and following a heritage assessment, the extent of the developable area will be further reviewed. This assessment will ensure that the heritage assets are not adversely affected by the proposed solar farm. Any proposed landscape enhancements will also consider the potential to bring biodiversity benefits.

#### Potential loss of Agricultural Land

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data shows that there are areas of Grade 2, Grade 3a, Grade 3b and Grade 4 land within the site. The majority of the site is land class 3 or worse, making the land, on average, a low enough grade to deem appropriate for development.

It is proposed that the land will be occupied for the lifespan of the lease ranging up to 30 years, however, solar PV has a minimal impact on the land beneath it. The method of installation used is designed to limit the disturbances caused through construction and operation. Furthermore, the quality of the arable land will increase over the lease period, making it a more valuable asset once the lease has concluded. Additionally, the design of the solar farm may offer grazing (as has been successful on other sites GRIDSERVE has developed) and we will continue to explore the potential for continued and traditional agricultural use.

A detailed Agricultural Land Classification survey will be conducted to examine soil profiles and key physical characteristics to the standard recommended by Natural England. The results will be used to more accurately classify the soil quality on site beyond the open source data available.

GRIDSERVE is also committed to not only avoid biodiversity and ecosystem loss during construction, but to providing a net gain of overall in biodiversity values on all of our solar farms. The wildlife haven we intend to specify will:

- Benefit the surrounding area by increasing pollinator species, thereby increasing the productivity of neighbouring agricultural land;
- Provide an educational opportunity for local schools to learn about the importance of re-balancing biodiversity, alongside a future-proof renewable energy generation scheme;
- Naturally re-energise the soil with recycled nutrients for whenever the land becomes undeveloped once more; and
- Increase biodiversity of the site through the introduction of wildflowers, bee havens, and supporting infrastructure for local mammalian and bird wildlife populations.

#### Public footpaths

As noted, there are two public rights of way that interact with the site: a footpath (reference 15.115/1/1) runs along the western boundary of Lawrence House Farm in the centre of the site, in a north-south direction to link with Brearton. A bridleway (reference 15.115/2/1) also runs across the site in a north south direction, originating from Low Moor Lane in the north and travel through the site to Kingfisher Caravan Park in the south.

GRIDSERVE will be designing the site so as not to disrupt the Public Rights of Way. Whilst fencing will need to be installed to secure the site these can be softened by hedgerow planting and can be set back adequately to avoid a corridor effect on what is a characteristically open landscape. We would like to work with path users to potentially promote understanding of the site and shape any mitigation or enhancement measures that could support these routes.


Impact from Construction traffic

The comments regarding construction traffic are noted. The proposals are currently being reviewed to ensure that there are no unacceptable impacts on the village, to include ensuring highway and pedestrian safety. Any planning application will be supported by a Construction Traffic Management Plan which will confirm the route for all construction related traffic and we have previously proposed restricted construction movement during key hours as well as specification and careful management of construction routes.

GRIDSERVE will be continuing to develop the scheme design based on feedback and will be engaging in a more formal pre-application consultation. I am very happy to discuss these points further immediately or indeed when our design is more progressed. We anticipate more formal pre-application engagement commencing early 2022.

We really do appreciate your letter and points raised and trust the above responses and subsequent design development will provide the assurances you and your community seek.

Yours faithfully,



**Raoul Tufnell**  
Chief Development Officer