

From: Beverley Morris [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 August 2022 17:19
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Berden Hall Farm (Pelham Solar)

Application number on S62A/22/0006 (and UTT/22/2046/PINS)

I am writing to object to the proposal by Statera to construct a solar farm on 177 acres of land at Berden Hall Farm.

My name is Dr Beverley Morris [REDACTED]

The reason for my objection is as follows:

The proposed 'solar farm' and battery have not been planned with the local environment, global environment, the British people or local people in mind. Both the size and nature of the proposed facility are detrimental to the fragile ecosystem in the area, essential food production, preservation of the character of the British countryside, the wellbeing of local people, the long-term energy needs of the UK, and the wider environmental needs of the planet.

The proposed development does not meet Uttlesford's Policy ENV15 which states that it would support small scale renewable energy development schemes that meet local needs and that can demonstrate they do not adversely affect i) the character of sensitive landscapes; ii) nature conservation interests; or iii) residential and recreational amenity. This proposal is highly detrimental to all three of those elements.

Calling a structure of this type a 'farm' is a disingenuous misnomer. It will destroy 177 acres of productive farmland and fragile habitat for wildlife. As a nation, we are desperate for ways to become less reliant on imported food and we are ranked worst of the G7 nations for losing wildlife and wild spaces (May 2021). This solar facility, owned by a Danish company, will have a devastating effect on local wildlife and people in both the short and long term. There has not been a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis undertaken, including the impact on the mental health, physical fitness and wellbeing of local people at the loss of green space. I walk in this area every day, along Ginns Road and past Berden Hall, taking photographs and writing poetry inspired by the area. I have chosen to live in this village for the past 22 years to protect my mental health and wellbeing. I have been a vegetarian, climate campaigner, wildlife advocate and walker for 40 years and this type of ill-thought through proposal, under the guise of being environmentally responsible, strikes at the heart of everything I believe in. The increasing number of applications associated with this facility, at a time when people are fearful for energy supplies, feels like a cynical and concerted attack by big business on a small village. It amounts to corporate bullying.

In the long-term, the likelihood is that the current owners of this proposal, Stratera, will be bought out by a major fossil fuel company if the facility goes ahead. This adds to the green-washing effect in the fossil fuel industry. The UK should not be enabling further damage to the planet, either through the decimation of productive farmland and precious habitat for wildlife or through support for profit-driven global corporations. Renewable energy should protect the planet, not harm it. Renewable energy should benefit people, not companies. At a time when energy companies are making billions whilst energy bills are spiralling out of control, all proposals should be formulated to reduce our reliance on such a short-sighted approach to how we use the precious resources on our planet.

Construction of a facility that is industrial in size and nature cannot be sustained by the local infrastructure. Small village roads are not built for the number and size of lorries that will be needed to build this facility. Narrow roads, with hedgerows full of birds, mammals and insects will be damaged. This will be yet another devastating impact on wildlife and local people. Again, the cumulative effect of the facility and associated battery will magnify the impact of this proposal.

The area contains several listed buildings including Berden Hall, St Nicholas Church and The Crump. All of these will be adversely affected visually and by the frequency of construction traffic. This is in contravention to Section 16 of the NPPF: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Countryside and productive farmland is irreplaceable. There is a mental and physical health crisis in the UK and this type of development takes away a resource that supports people to stay fit and healthy.

There are no benefits to local people as we will lose something precious and receive nothing in return. The perceived contribution to the national energy supply is spurious as the proposed technology is old and inefficient in the proposed location and the costs to the planet outweigh the benefits.

Statera also failed to consult with local people. There are c 271 properties in Stocking Pelham and Berden but only 71 were contacted by Statera. This does not constitute a meaningful consultation.

No project that is designed to last 40 years can be considered temporary. This is another disingenuous representation of the proposal. Also, the Government does not support such large scale facilities in the Net Zero policy. This facility would run contrary to the national plans for renewable energy. The East of England already provides an excess of renewable energy through existing solar facilities and wind generation. This latest proposal, and the associated battery, do not make any environmental sense.

My questions are:

- who has undertaken an independent evaluation of the impact on food production, the local ecosystem and the mental health of local people?
- how much will each resident receive to improve the insulation and energy efficiency of their own homes to reduce the need for energy?
- what consideration has been given to the cumulative effect of the proposed facility and battery, particularly in relation to the overall size and effective screening?
- how has Statera demonstrated that the use of agricultural land is necessary?
- what alternatives has Statera considered? For example, providing every house in the area with solar panels, solar tiles, solar film, wind turbines, air source pumps or insulation for their homes and properties.
- how effective is solar capture in a country where light is inconsistent? The proposed solar panels will not perform at an optimal level on cloudy days or at temperatures in excess of 25 degrees. They will also require cooling solutions, which create noise pollution, in warm weather. There are much more efficient options available that have not been explored (such as the technology available from Maxeon Solar Technologies). Why is this?
- What other locations have been considered? For example, brown field or industrial areas such as Stansted airport

- How does Statera propose to maintain the land once it has installed panels? Will there be regular weeding and will all screening be maintained to ensure it grows rather than being allowed to die, further exacerbating the destruction of habitat for birds and insects?
- how will local roads and hedgerows be protected from construction traffic?
- How does this proposal contribute to the stated local and national government aims of protecting wildlife and the character of a local area? How is an industrial facility of this size enhancing the countryside? How does the proposed screening mitigate the loss of habitat and visual appeal of greenbelt land?
- what are the benefits to local people?
- why has there not been any assessment of the noise impact from the plant required to cool the system in warm weather?
- why has there not been a meaningful consultation with local people?

Yours faithfully

Dr Beverley Morris