

From: Michael Cosgrove [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 August 2022 11:12
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 Michael Cosgrove
[REDACTED]

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

The size of the development simply too big!

- Uttlesford's Policy ENV15 says that small scale renewable energy development schemes to meet local needs will be supported providing it can be demonstrated that they do not adversely affect i) The character of sensitive landscapes; ii) Nature conservation interests; or iii) Residential and recreational amenity
- This is not a "small scale" scheme.
- The area covered by solar panels is even larger than the area which was contemplated at the time of the application to Uttlesford District Council for a Screening Opinion.
- The land identified by Statera as the site for Berden Hall solar Farm extends to 177 acres of productive farm land.
- The visual impact of such a huge solar farm would fundamentally change the character of the area.
- The scheme will not contribute to the energy needs of local residents.

I am keen walker – I don't want to walk through a solar farm

- There are multiple local Public Rights of Ways within and immediately adjacent to the site.
- As a local resident I frequently walk along these footpaths which will now be surrounded by solar panels and border by fencing. I do not want to walk along a corridor!
- The planting adjacent to the existing battery plant adjacent to the Substation at Stocking Pelham demonstrates that hedges do not provide adequate screening.
- The corridors proposed between solar panels will prevent me from seeing the countryside and enjoying the countryside as I currently experience it.

Statera have not demonstrated that the use of high quality agricultural land is necessary

- Eddie Hughes MP, a Minister at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

confirmed in June 2021 that the statements made by Eric Pickles in 2015 are still applicable. Therefore, Uttlesford must consider whether the use of agricultural land has been shown to be necessary.

- Uttlesford's Policy ENV5 also says that development of the best and most versatile agricultural land will only be permitted where opportunities have been assessed for accommodating development on previously developed sites or within existing development limits. Where development of agricultural land is required, developers should seek to use areas of poorer quality except where other sustainability considerations suggest otherwise.

- As the land identified for development is high-quality agricultural land its use must be justified by the most compelling evidence.

- In the FAQ document published by Statera on their development website:
[REDACTED] the developer says the following:

Question: What other locations did you consider? Answer: None!

- 19 October 2014, , Liz Truss (then a DEFRA Minister) said the following:

“English farmland is some of the best in the world and I want to see it dedicated to growing quality food and crops. I do not want to see its productive potential wasted and its appearance blighted by solar farms. Farming is what our farms are for and it is what keeps our landscape beautiful. I am committed to food production in this country and it makes my heart sink to see row upon row of solar panels where once there was a field of wheat or grassland for livestock to graze. That is why I am scrapping farming subsidies for solar fields. Solar panels are best placed on the 250,000 hectares of south facing commercial rooftops where they will not compromise the success of our agricultural industry”.

In summary I do not believe that there is any practical way that the impact of this development can be made acceptable due to its location and scale.

Sites for renewable energy forms such as this should be driven by a properly considered master-planned approach and not led by private developers making speculative applications of this type.

Best Regards

Michael Cosgrove