

The Planning Inspectorate,  
Major Casework Team,  
Room 3J Kite Wing,  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square,  
Bristol, BS1 6PN

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**OBJECTION to Berden Hall Solar Farm: Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/22/0006 and UTT/22/2046/PINS (Uttlesford),**

I am concerned that these proposals do not take proper account of Government Guidelines and will subject this rural area to a development of solar power on an industrial scale.

The Government have already stated that offshore wind turbines will provide enough power to provide every home in the country.

Government planning guidelines state: Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

There are three proposals in this geographical area in various stages of submission, totalling over 600 acres of prime farm land to be given over to solar panels. This is administered by two district councils which means the total picture is not represented in any of the individual proposals. There are also proposals for two substantial, 50MW, battery energy storage units which are quite a danger. In total, a truly industrial scale proposal.

The Berden Hall proposal is a substantial part of this and must really be considered in the context of the other proposals as the impact on the locality will be very serious.

These solar farms are all going onto prime grade 2 farm land which will impact our ability to produce the food we need. We already import well over 50% of the food we require which makes us very vulnerable to the increased prices of imported food and the cost of transporting it to this country. This at a time when we are facing the highest inflation for a lifetime.

Our nearest town, Bishops Cleeve has seen enormous housing development in recent years, over 2000 houses have been built in the last 5 years, all on prime farm land again, and none have solar panels on the roofs.

Only by having a full and detailed review of all these proposals can a sensible decision be arrived at on any one of them.

On a broader scale, wind powered turbines are several times more efficient, are offshore and have little or no impact on our ability to produce the food we need.

I am also concerned that no appeal is possible against this proposal because it is not being dealt with by Uttlesford District Council. They are the organisation that represent the local district and should be best placed to represent the impact on the locality.

Whilst I understand Uttlesford District Council do not have a current District Plan, the plan of 2005 does state:

Policy ENV5 - Protection of Agricultural Land 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.

Policy ENV15 - Renewable Energy Small scale renewable energy development schemes to meet local needs will be permitted if they do not adversely affect the character of sensitive landscapes, nature conservation interests or residential and recreational amenity

The NPPF (July 2021 revision) guidelines state;

Para 174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

Footnote 58 Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

I urge you to reject this proposal until it can be properly considered by reference to a plan for the area and in the light of other proposals of a similar nature.

Yours faithfully



Jennifer Ann Arnell

Copy to Uttlesford District Council, Planning Dept