

**From:** Jo van Riemsdijk [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 30 August 2022 12:56  
**To:** Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] k; Planning@uttlesford.gov.uk  
**Subject:** Application number on S62A/22/0006 (and UTT/22/2046/PINS)

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Dear Sirs

My name is Jo van Riemsdijk [REDACTED]. My property will be one of the closest to this solar installation should it go ahead. I received no information from Statera in relation to the meeting and public consultation.

I would like to put forward my absolute **OBJECTION** to this proposed development as a close neighbour.

Statera are responsible for the lithium-ion battery which sits on the border between East Herts and Uttlesford on the Uttlesford side. It is a complete blot on the landscape. The plans submitted by Statera to Uttlesford showed a more agricultural looking building in their application – what we have got however, are several white boxes on the hill – visible from miles around. The planting around it is completely insubstantial and considering it was installed in 2017/18 and has been there for 5 years – is still completely exposed and a lot of what was planted is just dead! I do not believe for one second that this company will mitigate the industrial views that their solar installation will give – again from miles around. They are completely disinterested in the local population and how they have impacted our lives. It is clear that this battery facility was put in place as a precursor to the solar farm and despite it being stated in the application for it that it was to store excess energy at times of low demand and feed it back at times of high demand. It is clear that the company and landowner had the future solar installation in mind to begin with.

I would like to add in at this point that should this battery installation catch fire and a thermal runaway incident take place – any fire would not be able to be extinguished. There are no fire hydrants on site, there is not enough water coming into the villages of Stocking Pelham and Berden – the amounts required are 1,900 litres per minute for a minimum of 2 hours. We have less than half of this. In the eventuality of a fire – the question will be asked – how did this end up being put here when there was no way to contain or extinguish a fire!

**The cumulative effect of the solar farm and the adjacent industrial battery storage facility is unacceptable.**

The site is 177 acres – and covers 4 fields. It will run the entirety of the road that links Berden and Stocking Pelham linking the two villages with an industrial landscape. The landscape is currently rural and agricultural. The visual impact of such a huge solar farm would fundamentally change the character of the area.

The installation is far too large and the Government does not support large scale solar development of this sort. 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 location (i.e. next to the battery storage facility) has not been chosen because of its suitability but because it will be cheap for the developer.

### **Farmland Should be Used for Farming – Statera did not consider any other sites!!**

The land is predominantly Grade 2 and 3a Best and most versatile agricultural land. This land should be used for the growing of food, not renewable energy. Renewable energy sources should be on brownfield sites and also rooftops. Statera did not consider any other land for this installation – the presence of the battery and substation into which this installation will feed is the only reason it is being cited here.

Paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that the adverse impacts of solar farms must be addressed satisfactorily and that the cumulative landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development must be considered.

The cumulative impact of the hugely visible and poorly screened battery storage facility (built by Statera) and the proposed solar farm will completely industrialise this rural area.

### **NO local benefit:**

The scheme will not contribute to the energy needs of local residents. There is absolutely NO benefit whatsoever for the local community. It will be detrimental to our way and quality of life. There have been mentions of bribes in the form of modest community funds – but as a community of two villages (only one of which has been offered a community fund which is Berden) we will NOT be bought off as the loss of our rural environment and the stunning countryside is irreplaceable. Local residents will not get cheaper electricity and there will be a loss of rural amenities such as footpaths with beautiful and open views. The local community as a whole is very against this development.

### **The Industrialisation of our Countryside**

There are multiple local Public Rights of Ways within and immediately adjacent to the site. I am a regular and keen walker and walk most days on the PROWs which are around and throughout the site. I enjoy the beautiful rolling countryside and it contributes to my sense of wellbeing as I know that it does for all other local residents. There are plans to move some of the PROWs in order for this installation to go ahead. I don't want to walk in amongst the solar panels and through an industrial area. I enjoy seeing herds of deer, muntjacs, hares etc... Where are these wild animals supposed to go now – use the public footpaths with the dog walkers? The footpaths will herd deer and muntjacs onto the road – rather than allowing them to cross the open fields which could lead to accidents.

I often walk along footpath 25 which runs along the top of the site from Park Green to Crabb's Green and eventually connects with Ginns Road. This path forms part of a popular walk published by the 100 Parishes Org.



If the solar farm is built, the path will run between solar panels and fencing to the west and the east. I also regularly walk from the top of the site (near Park Green Common) along footpath 26. This path follows the hill all the way down to the track that runs parallel to Ginns Road (and to the South of Berden Hall). If the solar farm is developed it will mean walking this path with a fence and solar panels on all of its western side and some of its eastern side. The solar farm will be visible from this footpath at all times of year.

I also walk up the private substation road – which is regularly used by families teaching children to ride bikes and dog walkers. There is no screening along this road – this will mean the solar panels are very visible. In the winter with less leaf cover – this will be visible from my garden!

### **The site is not flat and is not suitable for a solar farm:**

The majority of the site is sloping and it is not possible to “hide” the solar farm. As with the battery – it will be visible from miles around.

There is a significant slope which rises up from Ginns Road to the top of the site. The OS Map shows the contours of the Northern boundary of the site (parallel to Ginns Road) to be 111m above sea level. However, the top of the site is 125m above sea level i.e. around 12m higher. As the panels are over 3m high, it follows that the panels will be completely visible to walker, cyclist, rider or road user as they travel along Ginns Road. It will be impossible to mitigate the significant visual impact of this industrial development by planting hedges adjacent to Ginns Road. Hedges do not provide adequate screening in winter.

### **NOISE:**

I am extremely concerned about noise. From my bedroom window there is a continuous hum – which can be particularly noticeable at night. The battery was switched off during June / early July and there was a noticeable lack of noise! It has been switched back on again and the humming has been so intrusive on some days that Herts Environmental Health have decided to put noise monitoring equipment in place at our home to monitor the low frequency noise. My concern is that any noise generating collateral put in place around the existing substation will simply exacerbate the noise and make living here simply unbearable. Statera claim that the noise generated from the development will be minimal. However, the inverters will be noisy and will add to the noise from the substation and the current battery plant. This will be even worse if the Crabb’s Green battery is built.

When there are periods of exceptionally hot weather, it is necessary to install temporary cooling equipment to prevent overheating of inverters. This is extremely noisy. Statera make no mention of this equipment. If we continue to have summers like the one we’ve just had – the noise will be clearly audible.

### **40 years is not temporary!**

40 years is not a temporary installation! The likelihood of this site being turned into a brownfield site within this time is very high. The likelihood of solar technology to become advanced and much more efficient within 40 years is extremely high which would leave such enormous installations redundant. You cannot just turn land into being productive again for the growing of food. There are several planning appeal decisions where the Secretary of State has rejected the argument of 40 years being a temporary amount of time for a structure or installation. One such example is an appeal against a solar farm at Five Oak Green near Tonbridge (ref 2226557). The Secretary of State said that 25 years was a considerable period of time and the reversibility of the proposal was given no weight. A similar conclusion was drawn relating to Huddleston Farm near Horsham (ref. 2218035) where it was 30 years in question. This installation is for 40 years! It is not temporary to the current local population!

### **Local highways are not suitable for such large and heavy construction vehicles:**

I am also extremely concerned about the construction route. The report put forward by the applicant suggests that there will be several HGV journeys coming through Little Hadham, Albury – through the Wash and up Ginns Road. This route is used for school runs, the school buses, horseriders (there are local stables), cyclists. It is predominantly a very narrow and often single track road in already poor

repair. The report put forward by the applicant indicates that the site will be open from 7:00am Monday to Saturday – giving residents of these villages only one and a half days per week of peace without huge lorries going backwards and forwards through our villages. This will be both disruptive and highly dangerous to other road users and residents. The report mistakenly assumes that there is a slip road from the A120 which would mean avoiding the village of Little Hadham – this is not in existence and would mean that all HGVs would need to go through the village – which has hundreds of parked cars along the road. Hertfordshire Highways have suggested that the route be changed to come through Berden – this is equally as hazardous with several pinch points and very narrow roads.

The presence of the Pelham substation should not mean that our beautiful rural area should be industrialised and that we should expect to live within energy generating collateral. **Please refuse permission** for this inconsiderate solar application and make companies like this look for more appropriate sites on brownfield sites and commercial rooftops which will not impact on local residents nor take arable farmland out of production!

Kind regards

**Jo van Riemsdijk**

