

From: John [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2023 11:26
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Objection to solar farm, application number S62A/2022/011

Objection to Solar Farm on land east of Pelham substation, Maggots End Manuden, application number S62A/2022/011

My name is Pauline Brown address [REDACTED]

I am writing to object to the application to construct a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar arrays together with (among other things) battery storage, inverter cabins, a substation, fencing and CCTV cameras on land east of Pelham Substation

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 land identified by Low Carbon as the site for solar Farm extends to 196 acres.
- If approved, this would be the biggest solar farm in Uttlesford by some margin and one of the biggest in Essex.
- The visual impact of such a huge solar farm would fundamentally change the character of the area.
- The scheme is not designed to meet the energy needs of local residents, it is to feed the national grid.

The site is not flat and is not suitable for a solar farm

- In their Planning document Low Carbon refer to the Planning Guidance in relation to Renewables and low carbon energy. Paragraph 7 of this Guidance considers the criteria that should apply in relation to planning applications and notes that *"local topography is an important factor in assessing whether ... large scale solar farms could have a damaging effect on landscape and recognise that the impact can be as great in predominately flat landscapes as in hilly or mountainous areas"*.
- The majority of the site is sloping and it is not possible to "hide" the solar farm.
- As the Heritage Statement notes "The topography of the site varies from approximately 105m above sea level and rises to approximately 120m above sea level in the northern and western extents of the site".
- There is a significant slope which rises up from Brick House End to Battles Wood (which is at the northern point of the site). The OS Map shows the contours of the eastern boundary of the site adjacent to Brick House End to be 108m above sea level. Battles Wood is therefore around 12m higher. As the panels are over 3m high, it follows that they will be completely visible to walker, cyclist, rider or road user as they travel along Brick House End. It will be impossible to mitigate the significant visual impact of this industrial development by planting a hedge.

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

- Low Carbon defines visual amenity as the "Overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area."
- There are eight local Public Rights of Ways within and immediately adjacent to the site comprising of one Bridleway and seven Footpaths.
- As a local resident I frequently walk [with friends/with my dog] along these footpaths.
- I often walk along Brick House End. Because the fields slope upwards, the solar farm will be visible at all times of year.

- Access to open countryside is particularly important these days – it makes a significant contribution to my mental well being.
- I often do a triangular walk along Brick House End, along the footpath PROW 5_52 and back along Park Green. This walk will be ruined by the appearance of solar panels. I do not accept that the impact can be satisfactorily mitigated by planting

I am concerned about the impact of the development on the rich variety of wildlife on the site

- The site for the development is rich in ecology.
- Page 36 of the Ecological Impact Assessment concludes that it is possible that Greater crested newts are present on the site given that their presence has been detected in five ponds in close proximity to the site.
- A number of red listed bird species noted as being present on the site including skylarks, yellow hammers, yellow wagtails, linnets and song thrushes.
- A study carried out in 2016 estimated that utility-scale solar farms in the USA killed nearly 140,000 birds annually. One leading theory suggests birds mistake the glare from solar panels for the surface of a lake and swoop in for a landing, with deadly results.
- The Ecological Impact Assessment notes that hares are seen on the site but concludes that they are unlikely to be affected! How can this be true when their habitat is being ruined and the site is being surrounded by 2m high perimeter fence.
- I frequently see Roe deer wandering across the site because they shelter in Battles Wood. These beautiful creatures will be lost.
- Add your own comments about animal and bird life that you have seen.

A solar farm should not be built next to ancient woodlands

- The solar farm will completely change the character of Battles Wood. This is an ancient woodland and home to many wild animals including badgers and deer.
- Pump Spring is also an important woodland which is shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map. It will be completely surrounded by solar panels.

The visual impact of this huge development cannot be satisfactorily mitigated

- The land to the East of Brick House End (in front of Battles Wood) slopes upwards towards the wood.
- The land to the West of the development is a huge open field – there are no existing hedgerows.
- The Planning Committee must visit the site to understand the to full impact that this development will have
- The drawings of the panels submitted show that they will be 3.2 metres high
- Low Carbon's claim that "the proposed development could be effectively integrated and assimilated into the surrounding landscape" is ridiculous
- The pictures submitted as part of the planning application were taken when there were still leaves on hedges and trees. These plants are deciduous – they will not provide effective screening in winter.
- The planting around the existing battery plant adjacent to the Substation at Stocking Pelham demonstrates that hedges do not provide adequate screening.
- The RHS says that it will take between 20 and 50 years for hawthorn hedges to achieve their full height – this is more than half of the life of the solar farm
- It is unrealistic to expect hedgerows to thrive where low quality plants are planted and then left. Young plants need to be watered in case of prolonged dry spells and/or heat waves, especially during the 2-3 first years after planting.

Yours Sincerely
Pauline Brown