

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 February 2023 16:09
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Objection to Solar Farm on Land East of Pelham substation, Maggots End Manuden - Application number: S62A/2022/0011

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 Maggots End Road Manuden CM23 1BJ. My name is Mrs Sarah Owen and I live at [REDACTED]

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

Berden is soon to lose it's identity as a village and will be known as an energy factory!

We have had the substation and related pylons on our doorstep, blotting our landscape for several decades now and that was accompanied by a battery farm several years ago, adding a further eyesore to our landscape, taking over further valuable agricultural land and adding another huge safety risk to our village.

The land around Berden is high grade agricultural land. Government policy says high quality farm land should not be used for solar factories. Farm land should be used for farming. The UK needs to be more self sufficient in the amount of food we produce for consumption. Taking our high grade agricultural land away from farming and handing it over to solar factories will have the opposite effect. We already import 48% of the total food consumed. Handing over farmland to solar factories will increase the amount of food imported which surely goes against all green polices and makes a mockery of the reasons for installing solar factories. Now is the time to become more self sufficient in food production and reduce the amount of food we import. Rishi Sunak recently quoted to the Countryside Alliance " Food production and food security have never been so important and I will always back our farmers, to whom we owe so much. They - and our wider rural communities - are part of the solution to the environmental challenges we face, not the problem."

Solar energy is incredibly inefficient. The Government's Build Back Greener Strategy promotes the use of offshore wind for a reason. A single wind turbine will generate almost as much energy as the whole of Pelham Solar in the course of a year. This would allow us to to keep our farmland for use it was intended. A no-brainer don't you think?

Government planning policy recognises the value of the countryside and that it should be preserved. Government planning policy says planning decisions should "contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside". I fail to see how the installation of a solar factory in our beautiful countryside achieves that. Who ever said they were moving to the countryside to look at rolling fields of solar panels? Nobody!! Ever!!

We do not need to further industrialise our countryside to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Solar panels may have a role to play but not by creating solar factories on agricultural land which helps form our beautiful countryside. Solar panels belong on the rooves of industrial and commercial

buildings as well as houses. There are enormous housing developments around this area which all could be fitted with solar panels with no negative impact on the environment. Why not make a policy that all new builds should be fitted with solar panels, thereby making new developments self sufficient in power.

The new housing development Stortford Fields promotes the site by saying it is close to beautiful countryside. Ironic when it is built on what was formerly agricultural farmland and beautiful countryside! If we continue to build houses and install solar factories on our agricultural land there will be no beautiful countryside to enjoy!

You can window dress this solar factory as much as you like - sheep grazing around the panels, wild flowers planted for our bees!! Oh please!! Our agricultural land provides a greater haven for wildlife than a solar factory could ever achieve. The conservation strips which surround many of these fields are full of wild flowers for our bees. The fields themselves are havens for hares, deer, birds of prey and many other birds and animals. Leave them alone!

Sarah Owen