

From: Will Cooper [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 March 2023 11:55
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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

Dear Sir or Madam,

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 near Pelham Substation Maggots End Road Manuden CM23 1BJ.

My name is William Cooper, and I live at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

The size of the development is excessive.

- 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 Pelham Spring solar Farm extends to 196 acres. This important fact is not mentioned in the Planning Statement.
- 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 development will have a negative impact 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 around the US may kill 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.
- Roe deer are present on the site because and shelter in Battles Wood. These animals will be lost as the herd is forced to disperse.

The development will have a negative impact on 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 and other man-made infrastructure.

The development is not appropriate for a countryside site.

- The development proposed by Low Carbon can only be described as industrial.
- In addition to large numbers of solar PV panels (the exact quantity is not specified) the development will include: 26 containerised inverters; 40 containerised battery storage units a DNO substation and Customer substation.
- National policy includes an environmental objective - to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- A massive solar farm/industrial development does not enhance the natural environment and will have a severe negative impact.
- The site is very close to the numerous listed buildings and scheduled monuments and therefore does not enhance the historic environment but will have a negative impact on the historic environment.
- The development is not compatible with Uttlesford's policy S7 which says that the countryside will be protected for its own sake.

The proposed site will not remain in agricultural use

- Paragraph 170 of the Planning Guidance on renewable and low carbon energy says where a proposal involves greenfield land it must proposal allows for continued agricultural use.
- Low Carbon have not provided any assurance on this point. They simply claim that “notwithstanding, the development would not result in the permanent loss of agricultural land” and that “Agricultural activities could coincide with the solar farm, such as sheep grazing, and following cessation of use, the land will be returned to full agricultural use”.
- This is not sufficient and does not satisfy the requirement.

Farmland should be used for farming

- Low Carbon suggest that the majority of the land on the site is Grade 2 agricultural land. Over 81% of the site has been classified by Low Carbon as “best and most versatile” agricultural land.
- The Agricultural assessment is unreliable, because it does not reflect the actual site which is the subject of the planning application. For example, the area immediately to the West of Battles Hall has been included in the assessment but this is not part of the site.
- This is productive farmland which should be used for farming.
- We currently import more than 40 per cent of our food, and recent threats by countries to ban exports of vaccinations have highlighted the threat that similar bans could be imposed on food if countries are themselves short of supplies in the future.
- It is predicted that we will need to produce 56 per cent more food by 2050 due to increasing populations. We have not increased food production by 56 per cent in the last 30 years, and if we continue to build on farmland we have no hope of achieving it in the next 30 years either.

Yours faithfully,
William Cooper

Will Cooper

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