

From: Barbara Cheney [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 March 2023 12:10
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
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Subject: Objection to a Solar Farm on land east of Pelham substation - Application Ref S62A/2022/0011

I am writing to object to the application to construct a solar farm on land near Pelham Substation, Maggots End Road, Manuden CM23 1BJ.

1. 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 farm land 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.

2. The local roads are not suitable for such large construction vehicles

- The supporting text for Uttlesford Policy ENV15 states development will only be permitted in locations where the local road network is capable of handling any additional traffic generated by the proposal.
- Low Carbon estimate that there will be a total of 922 vehicle movements during construction.
- This includes a total of around 749 deliveries by 15.4 metre articulated vehicles and of 59 deliveries by 10-metre-long rigid HGVs. There will be a substation measuring up to five metres long and three metres wide which will be delivered to site individually by a 15.4 metre artic vehicle.
- The road between Manuden and Clavering is a small country road. It is barely wide enough to accommodate two regular cars. Cars currently need to stop in order to allow tractors to pass. It is completely unsuitable for articulated lorries or large HGVs.
- Access point off the road is simply not suitable for vehicles of this size..
- Permanent access to the site will be along a protected lane.

3. As a keen walker in a lovely rural area, I do not 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 often walk along these footpaths.
- Access to open countryside is particularly important – it makes a significant contribution to mental well being.
- The planting adjacent to the existing battery plant adjacent to the Substation at Stocking Pelham demonstrates that hedges do not provide adequate screening.

- The 10m wide corridor proposed will prevent me from seeing the countryside and enjoying the views as I am currently able to do.

4. The size of the development is 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 the character of sensitive landscapes, nature conservation interests or residential and recreational amenities.

- 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 scheme will not contribute to the energy needs of local residents

5. Low Carbon has not demonstrated that the use of high quality agricultural land is necessary

- Eddie Hughes MP, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed in June 2021 that the statements made by Eric Pickles in 2015 are still applicable. Therefore, Uttlesford must consider whether the use of agricultural land has been shown to be necessary.
- Uttlesford's Policy ENV5 also says that 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.
- As the land identified for development is high-quality agricultural land its use must be justified by the most compelling evidence.
- No evidence has been provided by Low Carbon to demonstrate that there has been consideration of other sites for a solar farm.

I hope my views will be taken into account and that this application will be rejected.

Barbara Cheney

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