

From: Liz Lynch [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 March 2023 15:13
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 near Pelham Substation Maggots End Road Manuden CM23 1BJ

My name is Elizabeth Lynch, and I live at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

Health and Mental Wellbeing

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] In real terms this means I have not been able to meet friends or attend any social gatherings for the past 36 months. At the time of writing, it is impossible to say when, or if, this might change. My daily life has been turned upside down in all respects but one. Prior to the virus I took enormous comfort and enjoyment from walking the country lanes and footpaths with my husband, and our dogs. In particular, the walk along the lane from East End to Manuden affords huge panoramic views. The exercise, scenery and wildlife enables me to maintain a sense of normality regardless of my underlying health conditions. By prudent navigation, in an aim to avoid coming into contact with others, I have been able to continue this routine which has allowed me to escape from what would otherwise be complete isolation at my house and garden.

Low Carbons' application seeks to eliminate any remaining freedom I have since their proposal would corrupt and destroy a serene and beautiful area of the countryside.

Solar Farm location suitability and alternatives

Low Carbon claim to have selected the location planned for development location from a number of potential candidates. No evidence of any comparison study has been provided to support this statement. In reality the location is suitable purely due to the existence of the Stocking Pelham electricity buildings which would reduce National Grid connection costs. For such a major development, in terms of proposed buildings, long-term standing panels, farm land desecration and wildlife destruction this rationale is entirely unsupportable.

If Solar panels are considered to be a strategic solution to the regions' energy needs, the positioning of any supporting infrastructure should also be subject to strategic planning. Such planning would outline and enforce the need to fully utilise less intrusive locations before consideration is given to the use of 196 acres of prime arable land in close proximity to listed structures and residential buildings. Within both Essex and Hertfordshire there are numerous new housing developments and industrial units where roof installations could be used. The counties also support large swathes of Highway corridors, former landfills and existing or former large and small airfields.

The roads to and from the planned development already suffer from the volume of existing heavy traffic and those in the immediate vicinity are mostly lanes with single track vehicle capability. Any additional vehicle volume would be unsupportable.

Emergency support service needs in the area would also be compromised with severe consequences.

A number of schools in the area would also be affected as these would be passed by the proposed routes.

General use of high-quality agricultural land for purposes other than farming

I note 2 statements made at Governmental and Council levels:

1. 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.
2. Uttlesford's Policy ENV5 - 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 and Low Carbon have cannot and have not, provided any justification.

The development proposal is based on generating renewable energy to better meet current and future demands. We are also collectively facing net carbon targets. Given that the UK is importing in the region of 40% of our food consumption the removal of 196 acres of Grade 2 agricultural land seems counter intuitive when offset against the associated carbon generation involved in import transportation.

Meaningless Pre-application Consultations by Low Carbon

I, along with many others, have now completed two Low Carbon solicited questionnaires. Low Carbon says they noted comments received and made appropriate changes to the proposed development to address and mitigate concerns raised where possible. This is not true.

Data cited by Low Carbon implied a 92% to 95% objection rate. Even at these levels the views of local residents are clear but Low Carbon failed to include 69 further objection emails which therefore indicates an objection rate of 97%. This is an overwhelming statement by residents but also demonstrates falsification of available data by the developers. This cannot be acceptable within a planning application. Low Carbon claim to have applied "meaningful consideration" to feedback received from the local community and has made a number of additions and changes to the design of the proposed development. There is no evidence of this. Their latest submission, following an earlier planning rejection, reflects meaningless alterations and still ignores the local community.

Overall impact on Wildlife and Landscape destruction

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 extent of development represents an industrial change.

It does not meet local needs. There will be zero benefit to local residents and the wider regional needs would be better served via offshore wind turbine initiatives.

It will adversely affect the character of a sensitive landscape. Views from listed buildings and structures together with local residents and lane/path users will have their peaceful and attractive views exchanged for intrusive support buildings and endless metal framed structures.

It will adversely affect Nature conservation:

Roe deer are current residents utilising the fields, Battles Wood, and small Copses as overnight respite. Long established routes are used to gain access and the insertion of proposed fenced areas would cause migration via unfamiliar areas to relocate. The result would be loss of deer and worse still a high probability of human fatality due to road accidents.

Hares are more prevalent in these fields than in any other local area. A positive outcome following disturbance is unlikely.

Nesting Larks and Lapwing are present and an absolute pleasure to hear and see. Their habitat will be destroyed and they will either meet accidental deaths by contact with the added structures or move away from the area entirely.

Noise Disturbance during Construction and beyond

Development construction will involve extensive ground and building elevation. Current work on the Bishops Stortford to Standon by-pass can be clearly heard from Furneux Pelham which is around three miles distant. The planned development is nearer at around three quarters of a mile.

Local residents currently suffer with noise emanating from the existing Substation and Battery plant. These installations produce a constant humming noise which varies in impact based on wind speed, wind direction and seasons. The addition of any noise from Solar panels or support equipment such as battery storage or cooling apparatus is unacceptable.

I made a conscious decision to live in the countryside whilst giving due consideration to all of the benefits and downsides. Please leave the countryside as countryside unless there are no other alternatives, The planning application from Low Carbon is ill conceived, opportunistic and solely profit based. It is inappropriate for this countryside location.

I request that each planning committee reject the application outright.

With kind regards

Elizabeth Lynch