

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 19 March 2023 22:43

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 Harry Clark, and I live at [REDACTED]

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

The Government does not support large scale solar development – why should Uttlesford?

- In October 2021 (in the run up to COP 26), the Government published its Net Zero Strategy (Build Back Greener). This Strategy does NOT support the construction of industrial scale solar farms. It's focus on renewable energy is almost entirely on off-shore wind energy with a commitment to generate 40GW of energy from offshore wind by 2030. This target was first set in 2020 in the Government's 10 point plan for a Green Industrial revolution which said that this quadrupling in offshore wind capacity would generate enough energy to power every home in the country.
- The focus on wind power explains why there are very few references to solar power in the Net Zero Strategy. Where solar is referenced, the focus is on "unsubsidised rooftop solar", retrofitting solar on houses and small scale community solar projects.
- The East of England (including Uttlesford) has a key role to play in National renewable energy plans because 60% of the current offshore wind projects will come onshore along the East Coast. In fact, National Grid's Electricity 10 year Statement (published in 2020) says that the large amount of generation to be connected in the East of England means that power generation in the East of England will exceed local demand; so the East of England will be a power

exporting region. We do not need more renewable energy in Uttlesford!

- Low Carbon make frequent references to the fact that Uttlesford DC declared a climate emergency in 2019. But this is not a planning policy and is not relevant for the purposes of determining planning applications.

The Noise associated with the development has not been fully considered and is not acceptable

- Low Carbon claim that the noise generated from the development will be minimal. However, they say that the inverters and accompanying batteries will be located at edge of the development zones.
- Table 11 of their Noise Assessment indicates that noise generated by the solar farm may exceed the noise target at by 1dB at the Brick House. This will impact multiple households on Brick House End particularly as the prevailing wind direction is from the South.
- There is NO background noise at present – this is quiet rural area.
- When there are periods of exceptionally hot weather, it is necessary to install temporary cooling equipment to prevent overheating of inverters. This is extremely noisy. Low Carbon make no mention of this equipment.

Low Carbon has ignored the views of local residents

- Low Carbon says that it has listened to all views expressed by local people during the pre-application consultation and has made appropriate changes to the proposed development to address and mitigate concerns raised where possible. This is not true.
- Low Carbon received 133 comments on its proposal on its consultation website. Only 7 of those comments supported the development. Therefore 95% of the people responding were

against the development. In addition Low Carbon received 69 emails objecting to its proposal.

- In the Consultation report which accompanies the Planning application Low Carbon admit that 5% of respondents were positive toward the proposals, 4% neutral and 92% negative. However, this does not reflect the comments sent by email.
- Low Carbon claims to have given “meaningful consideration” to the 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.
- The 7 visual assessment submitted as part of the planning application were not shared as part of the consultation.
- Low Carbon claim that the evolution of the proposal is significant – it is not. It will still have an overwhelming impact on the countryside and on enjoyment of local residents.
- The overwhelming feedback was that the development should not go ahead. This has been ignored

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.

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. The will be a substation measuring up to five metres long and three metres wide will be delivered to site individually by 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.
- All vehicles will pass directly in front of the primary school in Clavering – I am concerned about the safety of primary school children
- One of access routes will also pass directly in front of a secondary school – Joyce Franklin Academy – – I am concerned about the safety of secondary school children.
- Lorries cannot possibly get under the low bridge in Newport.
- Permanent access to the site will be along a protected lane.

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 report 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 Lane 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 strongly object to this enormous proposed development which will destroy our precious countryside and farmland, and endanger our wildlife habitats.

Please do not allow this to happen!

Yours sincerely

Mr H Clark