

From: Katherine Evans [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 January 2024 00:36
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: re: S62A/22/0006 Solar Farm at Berden Hall Farm Ginns Road Berden

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Please find below the response on behalf of the Essex Local Access Forum (ELAF).

ELAF is an independent statutory advisory body set up under Section 94 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. A LAF's statutory function is to *"advise as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and as to such other matters as may be prescribed"*.

It is noted that the enjoyment of users of the public rights of way will be negatively affected by the proposed solar panel installation. Whilst the increasing supply and use of renewable energy is a must, so is people's mental health as it has been shown that taking some regular exercise is beneficial. NPPF paragraph 102 (was 98) states that.... *"Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities,.."*. The objective must be to develop brown field sites and solar on roof-tops, over car parks, etc. first.

ELAF are pleased to see the commitment to the provision of an off-road permissive path along the south side of Pelham Road / Ginns Road between Berden PROW 22 in the east and Berden PROW 27 in the west. However, in keeping with ELAF's *"access for all"* objectives and NPPF paragraphs 108 & 104 (were 104 & 100), this off-road path should be a wider multi-user route available to all non-motorised users - cyclists, horse-riders, walkers and mobility-impaired users (e.g. wheelchair users, users with buggies, walking aids, etc). The width of the path should therefore be 3 metres, preferably 3.5 metres.

ELAF support the mitigations and conditions number 5 and 6 regarding PROWs in Essex County Council Highways response of 8 March 2023.

It is noted that no mention has been made of the Registered Common (CL83) and Access Land at Park Green which is at the higher south end of the proposed site, adjacent to Berden PROW 25, 23 and 57. Park Green Common is also an Uttlesford District recognised "Natural and Semi-natural green space" as Park Green Nature Reserve.

Katherine Evans
Chairman - Essex Local Access Forum (ELAF)
email: [REDACTED]