

2 New Cottages
Sheephurst Lane
Marden
TN12 9NY

22nd June 2022

The Planning Department,
Maidstone Borough Council

Dear Sirs,

Re: Planning Application Ref: 22/501335/FULL

I have no objection *per se* to the proposal to install a solar farm at Sheephurst Lane, Marden, as outlined in the planning application referenced above.

However, I have the **strongest possible objection to the proposed construction traffic routing** as detailed in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), notably section 4 et seq and appendices, and the Design and Access Statement section 7.7.5.

OBJECTIONS TO PROSED ROUTE

My objections are based on the following points:

The Constructors claim that as the proposed route was deemed suitable for a previously constructed solar farm at Widehurst Farm is completely spurious. The access to that site was FROM Plain Road and, therefore, the only possible route to that site (as admitted in the CTMP para 4.4.).

Whilst both Plain Road and Sheephurst Lane are bi-directional, both are narrow, extremely so for some distances, with no passing places. Sheephurst Lane is particularly winding with a number of bends having poor visibility to oncoming traffic. Each of these roads has a single-track bridge, that on Sheephurst Lane being a very narrow humped-back bridge, with signs of grounding by large vehicles embedded in the road surface, something that will occur with articulated low-loaders bringing in plant and machinery. Two HGVs have difficulty in passing each other for much of the length of the lane. It is also a bus route and has heavy and frequent usage by large farm vehicles, including combine harvesters, again causing regular problems for these vehicles passing other that can only be exacerbated by construction traffic using this route.

The route goes through the middle of Marden village. This is a very busy village with a significant built-up area along the proposed route, with a considerable amount of on-road parking by both residents and those using village businesses either as customers or suppliers delivering to them, these latter often, again, using large vehicles.

The junction of Maidstone Road, (B2079) and High St., Marden is a notorious bottle-neck with poor sweep lines especially for articulated vehicles. Over the past few years, properties at this junction (notably 'Cornerways') have been damaged by over-swing by articulated lorries; the same occurring at the junction of High St., and Albion Road ('The Farm Shop')

There has been a major housing development in Albion Road (110+ dwellings) since the solar farm installation at Widehurst Farm (CTMP 4.4) that has brought vastly increased traffic movement in this area, both vehicular and pedestrian.

The route along Albion Road, Plain Road and Sheephurst Lane also sees considerable usage by recreational cyclists, even on weekdays, posing them increased risks if faced with additional heavy traffic.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE ROUTE.

I propose that instead of the route described in the CTMP, construction traffic uses a different and far more sensible route that is far less invasive and intrusive on the local area, has a better, wider road system that is therefore safer and less hazardous for ALL road users. It is white-line marked for almost its entire length (unlike the CTMP route) and had no passing issues. It is, in fact, also shorter than that in the CTMP.

Taking the starting point as the A229/B2079 junction in keeping with the CTMP para 4.2, construction traffic would take the B2079 then turn right onto Underlyn Lane (this is already the officially signposted route for all HGVs wishing to enter the Marden industrial estate).

Continue along Underlyn Lane before turning onto Green Lane, along its entire length to the junction with the B2162 at Collier Street. Turn Left.

Continue along the B2162 to the junction with Sheephurst Lane. Turn left.

Continue along Sheephurst Lane, reaching the solar farm site from the West.

All of Sheephurst Lane, Green Lane and the B2162 between the junctions of these two roads are subject to a 7.5 gtw limit. However, this restriction is nullified using **either** route as the final delivery point is within the restricted area.

To reiterate:

- this alternative route is wider, with few bends and a good road surface and therefore safer;

- there are no narrow or humped-backed bridges or other pinch-points;
- there is ample width along the entire route for lorries to pass;
- it does not pass through any significant built-up areas and has fewer hazards such as parked cars;
- Swept paths at junctions are far better;
- this route, from A229 to site, is actually shorter (4.8 miles) than that outlined in the CTMP (5.4 miles);

CONCLUSION AND SUBMISSION

I ask that the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) part of this planning application ref: 22/501335/FULL is rejected in its current form in favour of the route I have described above.

Yours faithfully,

GRAHAM TIPPEN

A copy of this letter has also been sent by post.