

Comments for Planning Application 22/501335/FULL

Application Summary

Application Number: 22/501335/FULL

Address: Land North Of Little Cheveney Farm Sheephurst Lane Marden Kent

Proposal: Installation of a renewable energy led generating station comprising of ground-mounted solar arrays, associated electricity generation infrastructure and other ancillary equipment comprising of storage containers, access tracks, fencing, gates and CCTV together with the creation of woodland and biodiversity enhancements.

Case Officer: Marion Geary

Customer Details

Name: Mrs Susan Pressley

Address: Old Chapel Studio, Plain Road, Marden Tonbridge, Kent TN12 9LS

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: We object to this planning application for a number of reasons.

- We were not notified of the proposal to build an electricity generation factory as big as the footprint of Marden on valuable agricultural land, despite living nearby and on the suggested route for all construction traffic. The community of Marden and Collier Street has not been consulted as claimed.

- Agricultural land of this quality (2, 3a and 3b) should be retained for farming - it is not low grade as claimed and has been farmed to provide food for generations. Farmland is known to mitigate climate change and this farm is on a flood plain that absorbs excess water and prevents the re-routing of floodwater into residential areas.

- The Government has identified the importance of food security and the UK's increasingly apparent vulnerability in a global market where much of our food is imported. The invasion of Ukraine, where a large proportion of the world's grain is produced, has highlighted the need for the UK to be more self-sufficient and the Government is planning to incentivise farmers to produce more crops. If this landowner does not wish to farm it, perhaps it should be sold to someone who does.

- This proposal not only intends to destroy productive farmland, it represents a serious threat to wildlife in the displacement of countless species of all kinds, including deer that will be forced onto the roads or onto the railway.

- Agricultural land should not be used for this type of industrialisation - brownfield sites are far more suitable. Building hard infrastructure with new roads on this vast site is totally unsuitable for the open countryside. Solar panels should be placed on the roofs of new houses and industrial units (for the benefit of the owners) and on brownfield sites where farmland is not being taken out of service.

- Local authorities are expected to protect and enhance valued landscapes and biodiversity sites, and recognise the character, beauty and heritage of the rural environment. This environmentally damaging development would be a terrible blot on the landscape and blight neighbouring properties.

- The proposed Construction Traffic Management Plan shows the route for huge construction vehicles via Plain Road and Sheephurst Lane. These are both narrow winding country lanes where often there is not enough width of road for two cars to easily pass. There are very few passing places and residents regularly experience damage to their boundaries due to large vehicles attempting to pass each other without due care and consideration. Both lanes have single track bridges and are on bus routes. This route is completely unsuitable. The traffic surveys took place in July and August during school summer holidays and no doubt this was deliberate in order to show fewer vehicle movements than would be normal throughout the rest of the year. This is very disingenuous.

- Solar energy is known to be far less efficient than off-shore wind power, so why ruin our countryside and destroy biodiversity with a proposal that goes against the principles of conservation and negatively impacts our rural community in so many significant ways? We are very much against this proposal.