
From: Judith Marrion [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 September 2026 13:59
To: Planning Control
Subject: Comment on ref: 25/01947/FP

[25/01947/FP](#)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a resident of Cottered to formally object to the proposed arrangements for construction traffic associated with the **Westfield Energy Conservation Park**, in particular the proposal to route construction traffic along the A507 through Cottered High Street and the associated proposal for **two-way traffic-light control immediately after the narrow bend on the A507 as traffic leaves Cottered towards Baldock.**

I believe the proposed arrangements give insufficient consideration to the existing highway constraints within Cottered, the existing 7.5-tonne restriction, the character and limitations of the A507 through the village, the potential cumulative impact of other developments, and the practical difficulties of enforcing the proposed construction traffic arrangements.

My concerns are as follows.

1. Existing 7.5-tonne HGV restriction through Cottered

The A507 through Cottered is already subject to a **7.5-tonne weight restriction.**

The Council should explain how routing substantial construction HGV traffic associated with the proposed development through the village is compatible with the purpose and objectives of that existing restriction.

If the road is considered unsuitable for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes under normal circumstances, it is difficult to understand why substantial numbers of construction HGVs should be permitted to use the same route for the duration of a major construction project.

2. Existing breaches of the 7.5-tonne restriction

Residents already regularly witness large HGVs travelling through Cottered despite the existing restriction.

Simply specifying an approved construction route does not guarantee that contractors and delivery drivers will comply with it.

The Council should therefore consider how compliance will actually be monitored and enforced, rather than relying solely on signs, route instructions or assurances from contractors.

3. Difficulty of enforcement

It is unrealistic to expect the police to continuously monitor HGV movements through Cottered throughout a major construction programme.

Any Construction Traffic Management Plan should therefore contain **proper, independently verifiable monitoring and enforceable measures**, rather than simply relying upon drivers following instructions.

If the proposed route is approved, there should be a clear mechanism for identifying breaches and taking meaningful action against contractors and haulage companies that fail to comply.

4. Existing A507 traffic

The A507 is already a busy route connecting the **A10 at Buntingford with the A1/A1(M) at Baldock**, carrying substantial volumes of cars and commercial vehicles.

Introducing significant additional construction HGV movements onto an already busy route, and then funnelling that traffic through the constrained section of Cottered, has the potential to cause considerable disruption.

The proposed traffic-light arrangement should therefore not be considered simply in isolation from existing traffic conditions.

5. Existing traffic survey data

It is understood that traffic counters have already been used on the A507 as part of assessments associated with the solar-farm proposals.

The Council should consider the **actual measured traffic flows** from those surveys when assessing the highway impact.

The assessment should not rely solely upon theoretical highway capacity calculations. The lived experience of residents, existing traffic volumes and the physical limitations of the road through Cottered are also important considerations.

6. Accidents and A507 closures

When the A507 is closed or obstructed, traffic diverts onto surrounding rural roads, many of which are narrow or effectively single-track.

This can already result in significant congestion and disruption.

The Council should therefore consider what would happen if the A507 were closed or obstructed while substantial numbers of construction HGVs were travelling through the area.

There is a real concern that construction traffic could be displaced onto unsuitable surrounding roads, creating additional problems for residents and other road users.

7. Emergency and highway resilience

The proposal should consider the consequences of an accident, road closure, roadworks or other unforeseen incident occurring while large numbers of construction vehicles are operating.

What is the contingency arrangement if the approved construction route becomes unavailable?

What alternative route would HGVs be expected to use, and are those alternative routes physically capable of accommodating the anticipated traffic?

The development should not proceed on the assumption that the A507 will always remain available.

8. Two separate solar developments

The highway assessment should recognise that there are **two significant solar developments in the wider area**:

- **Westfield Energy Conservation Park – [25/01947/FP](#)**
- **Beane Solar Farm – 3/24/2245/FUL**

These developments should not be considered independently where their construction periods and traffic movements could overlap.

9. Cumulative construction traffic

The Council should assess the **combined number of HGV and other construction vehicle movements** that could arise if both developments are constructed at the same time, or if their construction periods overlap.

It is important that the assessment considers the maximum reasonably foreseeable situation rather than treating each development as though it exists in isolation.

10. Cumulative scale and impact

The two developments should not be assessed as though each exists independently.

Their combined effects on **Cottered, the A507, surrounding rural roads and the wider countryside** should be properly considered.

The cumulative construction traffic, noise, disturbance and highway impacts could be substantially greater than those arising from either project considered individually.

11. Loss of agricultural land

The proposals involve the use of a very substantial area of countryside for energy infrastructure.

The Council should consider whether the loss or temporary displacement of productive agricultural land is justified and whether **more suitable alternatives** have been adequately considered.

This should be considered alongside the cumulative impact of other energy developments proposed in the area.

12. Landscape and rural character

Extensive solar arrays, battery storage, substations, fencing, access tracks and associated infrastructure would fundamentally alter the rural character of the landscape.

The effect should be assessed not only within the immediate development site but also in relation to the approach to and setting of Cottered and the surrounding countryside.

The cumulative visual effect of multiple energy developments should also be taken into account.

13. Habitats, wildlife and established hedgerows

The environmental assessment should properly consider the impacts of the development and its construction traffic on **habitats, wildlife and established hedgerows**.

Particular attention should be given to the potential loss, damage or fragmentation of established hedgerows and wildlife corridors and to the effects of construction activity, vehicle movements, lighting and noise.

14. Wider environmental effects

The Council should consider the combined environmental consequences of the development and associated infrastructure, rather than assessing individual elements in isolation.

This should include the effects of construction activity, access tracks, substations, battery/storage infrastructure, cabling, fencing and vehicle movements, together with their cumulative impacts on the surrounding rural environment.

15. Heritage and historic landscape

Cottered is a historic rural village and the surrounding landscape contributes significantly to its character and setting.

The Council should consider the effect of such extensive development and associated construction activity on the **historic rural landscape and nearby heritage assets**.

This should include not only the physical development itself but also the associated traffic, road infrastructure and visual intrusion.

16. Noise and disturbance

Construction noise, HGV movements and other vehicle activity could have a significant effect on residents.

In addition, any potential operational noise from **battery storage, electrical infrastructure, substations and associated equipment** should be properly assessed.

The assessment should consider cumulative noise impacts, particularly if more than one development is constructed or operated within the same general area.

17. Planning Committee site visit

I respectfully request that members of the Planning Committee undertake a **site visit to Cottered during a normal busy period** before reaching a decision.

Members should be able to experience for themselves:

- the existing A507 traffic;
- the narrow bend where the proposed traffic-light controls are to be located;
- the character and layout of Cottered High Street;
- the limitations of the surrounding rural roads;
- the interaction between HGVs, cars, pedestrians and residents; and
- the potential consequences of routing substantial construction traffic through the village.

A site visit would provide a much clearer understanding of the practical highway conditions than plans and traffic modelling alone.

18. If permission is nevertheless granted

If permission is ultimately granted, I request that **strict and genuinely enforceable conditions** are imposed.

These should include, as a minimum:

- clearly defined and approved HGV routes;
- independent monitoring of construction vehicle movements;
- vehicle tracking or other appropriate monitoring technology;
- clearly specified construction hours;

- restrictions on unsuitable vehicle routes;
- a robust residents' complaints procedure;
- a named person responsible for responding to complaints;
- prompt investigation of alleged breaches;
- meaningful sanctions where contractors breach agreed routes or conditions; and
- clear contingency arrangements for accidents, road closures or other disruption on the A507.

Conditions should be sufficiently precise and enforceable to provide genuine protection for residents rather than simply relying on contractors' voluntary compliance.

The proposed traffic-light arrangement

I am particularly concerned about the proposed location of the **two-way traffic-light controls immediately after the narrow bend as traffic leaves Cottered towards Baldock.**

This is not simply a matter of placing temporary traffic lights on an otherwise unrestricted road. The location is within a constrained village environment and close to a bend, with existing traffic using the A507 and limited alternative routes.

The introduction of construction HGVs together with traffic-light control has the potential to create queues, delays and conflicts between vehicles approaching from opposite directions.

The Council should therefore require clear evidence demonstrating:

1. that the proposed traffic-light location is safe;
2. that adequate visibility is available;
3. that queues will not extend into the bend or other constrained sections;
4. that emergency vehicles will be able to pass;
5. what happens when traffic queues build up;
6. how pedestrians and other vulnerable road users will be protected;
7. how the arrangement will operate during peak traffic periods; and
8. how the system will be managed if the A507 becomes congested or is temporarily blocked.

The traffic-light arrangement should not be regarded as automatically resolving the underlying suitability of the proposed HGV route.

Conclusion

I therefore respectfully ask the Planning and Highways Authorities to give careful consideration to whether the proposed routing of substantial construction traffic through Cottered is appropriate given the **existing 7.5-tonne restriction, the physical constraints of the A507 through the village, existing traffic levels, the history of**

HGV breaches, the narrow surrounding rural roads and the potential cumulative impact of the two proposed solar developments.

Most importantly, the assessment should consider what will actually happen on the ground rather than relying solely upon theoretical traffic capacity and an assumption that all construction vehicles will comply with the proposed routing arrangements.

The proposed traffic-light system should not be viewed in isolation. It is a response to a highway constraint that already exists, and that constraint needs to be properly understood before substantial additional HGV traffic is introduced.

I respectfully request that the application and associated Construction Traffic Management Plan are reviewed in light of these concerns and that the Planning Committee undertake a site visit to Cottered before making its decision.

I therefore object to the proposed construction traffic routing through Cottered and the associated temporary traffic-light arrangements in their current form.

Yours faithfully,

Judith Marrion
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