
From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0496 Site Address: Land at Greenfields Farm Thorney Edge Road Bagnall
Staffordshire ST9 9LA Stoke On Trent Comments by: Ian Dakin

From:
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Submission: Support

Comments: I am commenting as I wish to support the planning application SMD/2021/0496 for the installation of a solar farm on land at Greenfields farm, near Bagnall.

This solar farm will provide green electricity to the national grid which will form part of the solution to global warming.

Rejecting applications such as this is short sighted and will add to the worsening climate crisis. Photo voltaic cells are a tried and tested technology that will form part of our path to tackling climate change. Such farms have been installed all over the UK and the rest of the world. They provide green energy and also an income for farmers. Objections on the basis of 'Also, the technology is changing at pace', as stated in the consultation with Cheddleton Parish Council, do not seem to be a reason for objection either in terms of technology or planning law. Solar farms clearly are a suitable means of generating green energy.

The environmental and financial benefits of this proposed development are substantial and, in my opinion, outweigh objections.

We know from the recent report on climate change from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the climate crisis is very real and is affecting our climate - including here in the Moorlands - adversely already. The crisis is hitting us harder and faster than previously predicted. To tackle this we all have to take action. That action must include allowing renewable energy generation now. We can't defer to a later date. Objection means not doing what we can to help reduce climate change.

Objections on the basis of changing the view of greenbelt land from Wetley Moor do need consideration and firm commitments to screening. However, the view from Wetley Moor already contains many constructions, including the large electrical substation that the proposed development will be adjacent to. The substation is substantially higher than the proposed solar farm and is made of concrete and metal and has numerous power lines and pylons associated with it that are also in view from Wetley Moor.

There seems to be some concerns with regard to fire safety following an article in the Daily Mail, 10th July 2021. There seem to be erroneous views on lack of health and safety oversight of battery facilities. As far as I am aware there has been only 1 fire related to a solar battery facility in the UK. The fire did not leave the facility, was under control quickly and did not lead to any injuries to the public. The article also erroneously states these facilities are not covered by UK Safety laws as the HSE have stated that they are not subject to the COMAH Regulations. The

COMAH Regulations do not apply as they are designed for very different circumstances. However, the Health and Safety Executive would apply various other legal controls including the health and Safety at Work Act, The management of health and Safety at Work regulations and the Dangerous Substances, Explosive Atmospheres regulations. These are all adequate controls on safety. In fact the HSE have considered advances in green technology and published a report addressing battery storage safety – HSE Foresight Report 2017/18 -m Energy- this was developed by the health and Safety laboratory foresight centre. It would seem to risk to human life is well controlled, covered by legislation and has been considered. The hazard to human health from climate change is far higher. Therefore on this issue the benefit of developing the solar farm far outweighs other safety considerations.

Further, both Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Cheddleton Parish Council have declared climate emergencies. For the declaration from Cheddleton Parish Council minutes are available here.

http://cheddleton-pc.org/ESW/Files/5_MIN_COUNCIL_11-20.pdf

Objection to the development of solar farms clearly goes against these declarations.

We must support development that can positively benefit the environment by tackling climate change and help local farmers financially. The benefits of local green energy generation are clear.

Cllr Ian Dakin, 46 Grange Road Cheddleton.

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