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26 April 2022

Dear Mrs. Curley,

Consultation from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in connection with an application to them for Planning Permission for installation of solar farm with battery storage facility and associated works at Upper Newton Farm, Draycott Road, Upper Tean.

I refer to your consultation letter dated 29 March 2022 in connection with the above, and write to confirm the observations of Staffordshire County Council, acting as the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority.

Background

The proposal would involve the erection of a 27 MW solar farm, together with a 30MW battery storage unit, and associated infrastructure, on 42 hectares of low-grade agricultural land, adjacent to and existing solar farm.

Observations

Our records confirm that the south-western edge of the site falls within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSA) for Superficial Sand and Gravel, as defined in the [Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire \(2015 – 2030\)](#). .

Paragraph 212 of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) and Policy 3 of the [Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire \(2015 – 2030\)](#) aim to protect mineral resources from sterilisation by other forms of development. Specifically,

Policy 3.2 states that:

Within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, non-mineral development except for those types of development set out in Appendix 6, should not be permitted until the prospective developer has produced evidence prior to determination of the planning application to demonstrate:

- a. the existence, the quantity, the quality and the value of the underlying or adjacent mineral resource; and
- b. that proposals for non-mineral development in the vicinity of permitted mineral sites or mineral site allocations would not unduly restrict the mineral operations.

Furthermore, Policy 3.3 states:

Within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, where important mineral resources do exist, except for those types of development set out in appendix 6, non-mineral development should not be permitted unless it has been demonstrated that:

- a. the non-mineral development is temporary and does not permanently sterilise the mineral; or,
- b. the material planning benefits of the non-mineral development would outweigh the material planning benefits of the underlying or adjacent mineral; or,
- c. it is not practicable or environmentally acceptable in the foreseeable future to extract the mineral.

In this case, however, the Planning Statement makes it clear that the nature of the development is temporary. The solar panels, battery storage installation, and all associated structures would be removed after a planned lifetime of 40 years, and the site returned to agriculture.

Conclusions

Having regard to the policies, guidance and observations referred to above, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development would not lead to the permanent sterilisation of significant mineral resources.

Therefore, in accordance with the powers contained in the 'Scheme of Delegation to Officers', this letter confirms that Staffordshire County Council, acting as the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority, has **no objection** to the planning application for installation of solar farm with battery storage facility, and associated works, at Upper Newton Farm, Draycott Road, Upper Tean, for the reasons described above.

I trust that Staffordshire County Council's observations will be taken into account in reaching a decision on the application.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Christelow

Senior Planning Officer

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