
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/2023/0568 Site Address: Cellarhead Electricity Substation Rownall Road Wetley Rocks Staffordshire ST9 OBS Comments by: Ian Podmore Private Rownall Freehold Resident

From:

Rownall Ridge (formerly Rownall Hall)
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Submission: Objection

Comments: WITHOUT PREJUDICE

National Grid Lawful Development Certificate Application SMD/2023/0568

The exceptional powers of the National Grid as an 'Essential National Utility', greatly compromise the public's ability to input and influence but, that is no reason for the Council to discharge their responsibility to protect the Green Belt and the immediate residential community.

This is clearly part of the greater overall plan to build a substantial 'sustainable energy generation and storage hub' relating to 4 other associated developments on up to 250 acres of presently Green Belt land at Rownall.

This proposed further enlargement of the National Grid facility presumably to occupy the remaining undeveloped area within the existing compound, has the potential to double the size of this unsightly and very noisy facility which will also doubtless add considerably to residents existing levels of significant sufferance?

In recent years the growth of this once small sub transformer station already equals a major National Grid facility, and clearly now this planned further extension adds to the cumulative local residential impact which includes, the recent 2 adjacent major Battery storage site approvals each occupying 10 acres and the 150acre Rownall Solar Farm application.

Local residents and daily commuters between Bagnall, Werrington and Cellarhead have already suffered lengthy delays and significant inconvenience over the last year as a result presumably, of the first preparatory phase of this overall greater plan being, the laying of high-capacity cabling along the entire length of Bagnall Road from this facility down into Milton, connecting into the greater Potteries network!

Issues

1. The Landscape & Visual impact is already becoming seriously a much bigger undesirable issue in this Green Belt area which is not so far from the doubly protected western boundary of the 'Staffordshire Masterplan'. The rural residential community will once again be seriously permanently affected by greatly damaged views to the rural landscape. The original site location decided upon in the 1960's, was carefully selected as it sat in a natural hollow somewhat hidden from view but it's expansion over recent years has already varied in structural design and height, and now features very high overhead 'cathedral like' gantries which being so tall already protrude well above the 'natural hollow' and are now clearly visible from Rownall Road and Thorney Edge Road. If this facility is set to double in size, then the prominence of this site locally can only become much more dominant and unsightly carbuncle.

2. Noise & Sustained expansion of this site over the years, has already resulted in a marked increase in transformer noise, now audible throughout the night inside local residential homes up to a 1/2 mile away. The nauseating continuous transformer 'hum' has become much louder as additional banks of transformers have been added and now the cumulative noise level is most intrusive and on occasions dependent upon the weather, wind direction, and presumably the operational activity levels, the noise can become intolerable. The noise levels now seem to peak at night resulting in challenging sleeping conditions even inside near homes. This highly irritating transformer noise also features frequent 'extremely arresting loud bangs' presumably being the associated discharge of static electricity? Each disturbing event is preceded by a sudden loud audible warning siren to personnel which, is also loudly heard over the neighbouring residential community in Rownall. This siren being almost as loud as the 'discharge bangs', disturbs wildlife and clearly irritates our local residents. One assumes that all of this, is going to become much worse?

The existing intrusive impact from this facility must be measured then added to that envisaged resulting from this new planned development and then again added to the overall cumulative (yet to be estimated) impact of all the other 4 major related neighbouring new proposals, i.e. the two already approved Battery Storage developments, the likely 3rd Battery Storage site at Newfields Farm and the impact of the recently submitted huge 170-acre 49.99MW Rownall Solar Farm application.

Once again, it's timely now to consider and control the overall anticipated detrimental environment and residential community impacts of all these colossal major developments before continuing to consider this application in isolation. There is obviously now a very clear urgent need for the Council to immediately commission an overall independent professional 'impact assessment' to identify the likely cumulative effects on the immediate environment and residential rural residential community.

(2 photographs posted separately on the Council application portal taken from my own home at Rownall Ridge shows not only the already extremely close proximity but also the unsightly towering overhead Concrete Gantries).

Sincerely Ian Podmore

Rownall Ridge (formerly Rownall Hall)

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