

From:
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
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Application Reference No. : SMD/2023/0568

Site Address: Cellarhead Electricity Substation Rownall Road Wetley Rocks Staffordshire ST9 0BS

Comments by: Ian Podmore Private freehold resident

From:

Rownall Ridge (formerly Rownall Hall)
Rownall Road
Rownall Wetley Rocks
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Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments:

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

In 2022 the National Grid paid £215m* (and £650m* in the last decade) to Wind Generating operators for surplus electricity generated which exceeded the current receiving capacity of the National Grid and could not be accommodated.

These 'Constraint Payments' paid to essentially turn off these very many wind turbines, are set to only increase, forecasted to be as much as £2.5bn*, as more and more Government subsidised wind generation investment is planned in the coming years.

Who pays for this outrageous and still building annual cost, we do! Every UK household currently pays around £150* per year and it's likely to rise well above inflation each year for the foreseeable future in order to fund this colossal 'out of control' annual 'Constraint Payment'.

On top of this £Constraint Payment levy, every UK household also pays around a further £200* per year in £Green Levies£ designed to £encourage the development of sustainable energy generation£.

If this highly destructive huge Solar Farm proposal were to receive planning consent from our own LPA by some wholly unjust means, decided in the same manner driven by the assumed precedent having previously approved two local Battery Storage developments in Green Belt, then our local residents will £pay£ the ultimate cost. Most unfairly, each highly disadvantaged long embedded local resident would still have to continue to pay £350* per year in these green levies for the privilege of living on the £doorstep£ of the largest Solar Farm in the in the Country in Green Belt approved by an LPA. If this isn't enough our long-suffering residents will also have to endure all of the highly negative impacts of the two already approved neighbouring 20 acres of highly dangerous £Battery Storage£ installations, with the prospect of perhaps another two in Rownall, soon to receive consent, as already two more validated Battery Storage applications remain currently pending.

The logical assumption would be to believe that the National Grids first priority should be to invest in developing their own infrastructure and increase their capacity to receive all of the country's wind power generation bringing an end to all £Constraint Payments! However, it seems the National Grid have an alternative lower cost, short term strategy, involving the encouragement of third-party private investment backed amazingly, by continuing Government subsidies to build Solar Farms and Battery Storage facilities £as close as possible£ to the £point of high demand£. In this case, close to the city of Stoke on Trent, even if it means positioning such invasive installations within highly rural agricultural communities wholly inside our own Green Belt.

Solar Farms being so very much less efficient are very poor substitutes for highly efficient wind generation and if the National Grid were to decide to step up their own investment, these leased Solar Farms could well become absolutely redundant long before the end of their 40-year leases. By that time who pays the restorative costs, most probably not the operators who by then would have declared £indemnity bankruptcy£ having made all of their windfall profits in the previous years.

One day, it might dawn on the local £planners£ that the real long term sustainable power generation potential lies already on our £doorstep£, in harnessing all of our own free waterpower. In the Staffs Moorlands waterpower is just the obvious choice, and with one of the positive impacts of £global warming£ being increased rainfall, it's going to become even more available, unobtrusive, abundant and low cost. It's nothing new, our past generations did so very successfully right here in the Staffs Moorlands, and we could still capture the free enormous power reserves of the river Trent, Churnet, Manifold, and Dove.

The real irony of this situation is, my grandfather did just that, operating half a dozen water mills in North Staffs, the biggest being Consall Mill which delivered 12,000HP night and day, 365 days of the year!

*The source of all above quoted monetary values believed accurate, is the Internet, as of January 2024, the detailed information being readily available online for public verification.

If the Local Planning Authority were to grant consent to this abhorrent application remaining blinkered and continuing to act only reactively in decision making and taking no comprehensive account of all the cumulative adverse consequences, then I would suggest that the closest residential properties, most impacted, justify significant appropriate compensation.

The huge negative overwhelming impact to this rural community means that a realistic compensation would still only represent a very very small part of the operator's huge profit generation. This is more than affordable given that the Government is presently considering the exceptional introduction of an industry sector 'windfall tax' in recognition of the very high profit creation capability of such projects

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