

From: [Ian Podmore](#)
To: [Ben Haywood](#); [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Cc: [Swindlehurst, Lyn \(Cllr\)](#); LPA Approved
Subject: SMD/2022/0444 and SMD/2022/0548 27 March 2024
Date: 10:08:55
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

URGENT ATTENTION PLEASE

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Ben,

Since the two major BESS Battery storage applications were approved in Rowanall back in 2022, the learning experience about the significant dangers of this new emergent technology has become much clearer and the Fire and Rescue approval criteria for such installations has since been significantly strengthened leaving these two already approved developments now completely noncompliant.

Now that's bad news, but even worse, I discover that at the time, of the original hearing, no Fire and Rescue assessment was ever requested or considered. This gross Council failing must be immediately corrected retrospectively having regard to the fact that no construction work has yet begun, and that SMD/2022/0444 is no more than 40metres from the public highway Rowanall Road and the nearest now even more vulnerable residences.

In the case of SMD/2022/0548 this site is most dangerously located immediately under the high voltage overhead mains feed-in cabling route to the transformer station carried directly over this site on greatly reduced height pylons. This makes the high voltage mains input dangerously close within only feet, of the tops of these battery enclosures. This is of grave concern since these BESS battery storage systems already have the worst explosion and fire record of any battery banks, which are considered to cause at least one serious fire during their lifetime.

Having drawn your attention of this unacceptable residential risk NOW, before the commencement of any construction work on either site, we expect you to reassess this clearly over excessive environment and welfare risk and insist on an immediate retrospective review of both sites and if necessary a redesign of the layout to ensure compliance with current Fire and Rescue approval criteria?

Please confirm your intended actions in view of the prompt need for immediate Council mitigating decision making
Thank you Ian Podmore

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

Subject: Fwd: LPA Approved SMD/2022/0444 and SMD/2022/0548

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Ben,

Further to my email yesterday below, I note having just reviewed the details again of the 2 above approved Battery Storage site original applications, that no Fire and Rescue reports were even requested, so no individual or cumulative fire risk assessment on these two neighbouring sites have ever been considered!

This in itself that has to be a huge failing on behalf of the Council and in the circumstances now, in view of the much strengthened national criteria, must be an essential reason for urgently reviewing the fire and rescue risk on these two sites which are so closely located within 50 metres of residential properties?

Sincerely Ian Podmore

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

Subject: Re: LPA Approved SMD/2022/0444 and SMD/2022/0548

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Ben,

Thanks.

This may well be a case where the Council's 'Duty of Care' to protect the safety and welfare of Moorlands residents is the overriding intelligent decision rather than blindly following 'the rulebook' in circumstances where common sense should prevail?

After all, the consequences of a serious human tragedy involving BESS Batteries with already the worst explosion and fire record given the statistics that these Battery storage facilities involve at least one serious fire during their lifetime, presents a very significant open avoidable risk for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council . Doing nothing at this juncture would also leave the closest residents with a greater open risk than other local residents who may well be better protected should any of the other 3 pending validated Battery Storage applications in Rownall and Bagnall eventually receive LPA consent! Furthermore, it would also surely be a serious irresponsible failure of the Council to do nothing to close this new additional risk now, and act to indemnify their own position, knowing that the fire and rescue safety criteria has been substantially strengthened since 2022 and having the situation now drawn to the LPA's attention, most importantly before commencement of any on site construction?
Sincerely Ian Podmore
Sent from my iPad

On 20 Mar 2024, at 13:33, Ben Hurst <> wrote:

Dear Mr Podmore

I am responding in Ben Haywood's absence. I am not familiar with the site but I think I understand the concern raised. I have been through the planning conditions on the decision notices and I am not sure that the planning authority can enforce fire regulations through planning control.

Prior to and during construction I think fire regulations would be enforced as part of the Building Regulations by a Building Inspector. Thereafter, I think it is a matter for the fire and rescue authority.

If there is an enforcement matter here for our Building Control service then I am sure that Ben will raise it as a matter on his return from leave.

Kind Regards

Ben Hurst

Subject: Re: LPA Approved SMD/2022/0444 and SMD/2022/0548

Peter,
I absolutely concur, and I'm told it's in the LPA's gift and responsibility to ensure the latest fire and safety criteria is met as the construction work is yet to commence.
Sincerely Ian Podmore
Sent from my iPad

On 19 Mar 2024, at 15:14, Wilkinson, Peter (CLLR) <> wrote:

Afternoon Mr Podmore,
I tend to agree with your concerns and I feel we should protect the residents of the Moorlands.
So can I ask the question that if construction has not commenced then the developer should

comply with current fire regulations.

This is new technology that most of us are unfamiliar with but we have got to ensure it is delivered in the right manner when approved.

Regards Councillor Peter Wilkinson

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

Subject: Fwd: LPA Approved SMD/2022/0444 and SMD/2022/0548

Peter,

Rownall and Bagnall resident residents are becoming increasingly concerned about the higher than necessary and acceptable fire and safety risk exposure to these two approved Battery Banks.

The minimum fire and safety criteria for these highly dangerous and noisy installations has been substantially strengthened since 2022 but our local fire department considers that because the proposals previously met the criteria at the time, it still stands despite being less than 50 metres from the closest homes. In the circumstances as no construction has yet started, we locally feel it is now absolutely necessary to review and upgrade the fire and safety requirements inline with the current criteria to ensure maximal protection for the closest of residents.

This seems particularly relevant having regard for the learning experiences with these BESS batteries already proven to have the worst record of any for explosion and fire. It is for this reason that we believe every precautionary measure must be taken now to avoid any foreseeable possible disastrous emergency

Regards Ian Podmore

Rownall Ridge

Rownall

Wetley Rocks

ST9 0BT

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<image1.jpeg>

<image2.jpeg>

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