

From:
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
Date: 28 March 2024 11:37:08

Application Reference No. : SMD/2023/0523

Site Address: Land At Rownall Farm Rownall Road Wetley Rocks Staffordshire ST9 0BT

Comments by: JOHN E M PRYSZLAK

From:

MILL HOUSE
THE GREEN
BAGNALL
STOKE ON TRENT
Staffordshire
ST9 9JR

Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments: REFERENCE APPLICATION.

SMD/2023/0523. Rownall solar farm

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

I strongly object to the above mentioned application for the following reasons :

The site consists of agricultural land within the green belt. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development in the green belt which is harmful by definition. The development would therefore compromise openness by replacing open fields with a development of industrial character and appearance. The fundamental aim of the green belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. This is also confirmed by the NPPF.

Policy SS10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan sets out the strategy for rural areas of the district such as this. Need alone should not be sufficient justification. The fact that the applicants are attempting to conceal the development confirms that it is an eyesore being harmful to the landscape, having a visual impact on the countryside location, representing as it would an urban form of built development.

The site slopes gently from North to South and covering some 57.23 hectares cannot be fully screened, being visible from Bagnall, Wetley Rocks and even Mow Cop !!

The Impact Assessment claims it would not be " out of scale with the character of the local landscape and would be absorbed within the wider landscape and as such would be appropriate". ???

Should this application be approved, there is also potential for additional applications in the immediate vicinity to be approved as this will set a precedence.

It appears the planning department is considering the applications individually which is a very short sighted approach by the department. The applications need to be considered with all the additional applications in mind.

The LVIA states that it assesses the additional CUMULATIVE effects of the proposed development in combination with other consented and pending planning solar schemes. The report mentions only 3 pending planning applications in the vicinity with discussions originally carried out with the planning department in 2021 which were not responded to.

In my view the LVIA is out of date (last updated May 2022) and should be re addressed taking into account all the current applications. The cumulative destruction of this enormous area is totally inappropriate and should not be treated individually.

As a general rule it takes about 200 acres to generate the same electricity by solar panels as one north sea wind turbine. This represents a grossly inefficient use of precious land.

The panels only work during the daytime, whereas demand for domestic electricity goes on for 24 hours, hence the requirement for expensive battery storage. Solar farms also produce maximum electricity in the summer when demand is lowest, unlike wind turbines.

I would also question if SMDC are in fact receiving any of the electricity or is it going to Stoke on Trent. ? They are committed to making SMDC carbon neutral by 2030 does this site contribute to that commitment ?

The site appears to be accessed by one single road which the planning statement confirms is "around 6.0m wide therefore allows 2 HGV's to pass" It fails to state the length of the road which is about 6.0 m wide. It also acknowledges that the road width varies between 4.1 and 5.4m wide which clearly is unsuitable for HGV's.

Bearing the above in mind, I would request the planning department to register my strong objection.

Kind regards

JOHN PRYSZLAK

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