

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
Date: 12 May 2024 20:22:13

Application Reference No. : SMD/2023/0639

Site Address: Land at Greenfields Farm Thorney Edge Road Bagnall Staffordshire ST9 9LA Stoke On Trent

Comments by: Helen Bridgett

From:

Cheadle Road
Wetley Rocks
Leek

Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments: I would firstly like to repeat these words from the portal, someone else's representation with which I totally agree. Comments: It is a deep concern that this application wants to avoid the proper consideration these very substantial industrial developments deserve. If they don't want to carry out an EIA the question is why not? Surely if they truly believed in their scheme they would absolutely want to prove that it passed all the necessary criteria, after all the local communities are going to be stuck with the results for many decades - and in reality lose this rural greenbelt environment permanently. This is the same greenbelt where others cannot get a modest extension in their back garden because of the Greenbelt restrictions. We are clearly being played here with 7 applications up till now (how many more to come?) which have a cumulative impact and really should be considered as one. They have already dodged having to carry out a proper biodiversity assessment using the official metric under the Environment Act 2021 which would have required them to prove a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, whilst other applicants have been volunteering this for some time. If they had any confidence in their scheme they would have volunteered this too. The developers here need to stop hiding and prove their case. No surprise they won't though as taken all together this scheme is larger than any of the top five UK solar farms (see nxtgenenergy.co.uk), with all of them being on flat land where they are not overseen and very readily screened - mostly on airfield/ex-airfields and none to my knowledge on Greenbelt. The general argument in these applications seems to be each new application is justified by the previous one, and before that by the fact that in bygone age, with no interest in the environment or local communities, the CEGB imposed lines of pylons and large substation in just about the most visually obtrusive locations possible. The logical conclusion to this is that the whole of the greenbelt becomes one huge solar farm and collection of Battery Energy Storage systems (BESS). Presumably having made their money they would then have to stop at the edge of the Greenbelt, as outside where the planning restrictions are lower the land becomes correspondingly more expensive. With this in mind they should probably try SSSIs where planning restrictions are even greater and land prices even lower. This is a cynical use of the Greenbelt exploiting its development limitations for others, maximising private profit at the expense of costs to the community. Yes, connection to the grid is cheap here too in a further boost to private profits, but the grid is old and set up for a previous era and needs appropriately upgrading to bring on-stream all the great opportunities for offshore wind, solar where it should be, and the various other forms of sustainable generation which are not in the same locations as the old fossil fuel power stations. Yes we need sustainable energy, but good schemes in the right places. This is neither, poorly designed with no regard for the sloping elevated landform or local community and much of the detail on the likes of existing screening is also misrepresented. This will simply give green energy schemes a bad name and make it more difficult to get good schemes accepted in the right places. Planning needs to do its job here and balance private profit with public cost. The applicants need to play fair accept this piecemeal way of trying to sneak in a mega development without the necessary assessments is completely unacceptable and agree to the necessary EIA. By any standards 5 BESS applications here is surely pushing their luck, with these systems not being without their risks and these multiplied by the concentration here. Such a concentration would also make a tempting target for any with ill intent towards key infrastructure. I have pasted them here, from Ms Blessington's representation. I hope this will be taken into account.

My own reasons for objection are drawn from the NPPF and from Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan -

Adopted 2020. As follows, the application is contra to the following:

National Planning Policy Framework - section 15, paragraph 174 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

It is recognised by leading environmental organisations that development of this kind should be first and foremost on brownfield

land. Recycling brownfield sites is the most sustainable option and is especially suitable for developments of an industrial nature such as this. NPPF section 15 para 174(b) states that „planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and

the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Adopted 2020

6.63 The development of renewable energy sources will also often be in rural areas but such development will almost always have an environmental cost as well as benefits. Such proposals must be weighed against the continuing commitment to protect the environment. The scale and design of such schemes will therefore be of paramount importance and should accord with Policy SD 2.

6.67 The Green Belt serves a number of purposes which are derived from Government policy in the NPPF and the former Staffordshire Structure Plan. The Green Belt keeps land open and free from development over a long period, which extends beyond the plan period, in order to give assurance that its boundaries will endure. National policy on Green Belts is set out in the NPPF and will apply to the whole of the Green Belt. The Green Belt Review assessed the Green Belt in the District against the five purposes of the Green Belt. The Green Belt boundary (as revised) is identified on the Policies Maps.

6. Maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

The Churnet Valley is claimed to be protected. The western boundary of the Churnet Valley Master Plan runs north/south along Rownall Road from its junction with Mill Lane. Everything east of Rownall Road falls within the so called extra protected Churnet Valley Master Plan.

Other Rural Areas Strategy

Policy SS 10

Other Rural Areas Strategy

The other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages.

These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

3. Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by: Ensuring renewable energy schemes are of an appropriate scale, type and location.

The cumulative effect of multiple applications upon this area appears to be of no consequence to the planners, and the people who live here will suffer intolerable consequences.

Do you really need to print out this Email? Be green - keep it on the screen.

This email is intended for the addressee(s) only and may contain sensitive, privileged or confidential information that could be protectively marked. If you are not the addressee please do not use the information in any way. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender immediately and delete it from your system. Thank you.

The Council may be required to disclose this email or any responses to it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The way in which we handle personal information is set out in our privacy notice and is available at <https://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/YourData>
