
From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
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Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : SMD/2024/0240 Site Address: Land Adjoining New House Farm Luzlow Lane Bagnall
Staffordshire ST9 9JZ Stoke-On-Trent Comments by: Anthony Smith

From:

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Submission: Objection

Comments: Objection to SMD/2024/0240

I am formally objecting to this Screening Opinion application which is within my community due to the following:

1 The site will be visible from both residential properties and for people travelling through the area.

2 Batteries onsite will create a considerable fire/explosion risk with hazard to health and life both human and wildlife. The site is in close proximity to residential properties and there is an existing electricity pylon and overhead cables running through where the site application is for. These will run overhead / nearby the BESS site causing a further fire risk. In the event of a fire this would be catastrophic putting people, property and wildlife immediately at risk, not only from fire but also from the toxic fumes emitted by the batteries causing hazard to life. The long-term effects to humans from exposure to the batteries caused by living in close proximity is not known posing a further risk.

3 The noise levels from the site will disturb neighbouring households. It is a rural area with very low noise impact at present and should the application be passed the community will be subjected to higher noise levels from the site causing a disturbance and affecting quality of life. The application states that there will also be fencing, lighting and CCTV erected which will be clearly visible at night causing light pollution. This site will also cause devaluation to properties and land in the area due to the immediate health and safety concerns and the devastation on the visual impact of the area.

4 The site will also mean increased traffic in the area. The roads are semi-rural and cannot cope with HGV or other industrial vehicles. The increased traffic volume will cause further noise, pollution, disturbance and wear and tear on roads that already cannot cope.

¿ The site will lead to the destruction of Wildlife habitats. The area is currently home to curlews, red kite and barn owls not to mention numerous other forms of wildlife. This area is used and enjoyed by the public for leisure pursuits with walkers, horse riders and cyclists regularly using the area, in particular the roads that run alongside the proposed site. The proposed site lies within a ¿site of special scientific interest¿ (SSSI) because of Wetley Moor Common which is lowland heath land. It is a known and recorded habitat of wildlife including whitethroat, linnet, skylark, reed bunting and Grasshopper Warbler. Parts of the application are extremely close to the common and this wildlife has also been seen on neighbouring land. The site also lies within the National Landscape character 64 Potteries and Churnet Valley. This site application will lead to significant direct threats to the environment.

¿ Planning policy states that Green Belt should only be used in exceptional special circumstances. Government policy also states that good quality farmland / Green Belt should be protected. The owner of the proposed site does not live within the local community or area. People who are not part of the community are destroying and financially benefiting from these applications with no consideration to local community. Meanwhile the site will cause devaluation to local residents properties due to the immediate health and safety concerns, risks and the devastation on the visual impact of the area.

¿ Prior to the current ownership the land in the proposed application was used to raise cattle. It is still used for hay which is mowed and taken off the land each year by the current owner. This land is both Green Belt and proven good quality farming ground.

¿ Government policy states that the accumulative effect needs to be considered on the local area when considering planning for such sites. There are already numerous applications in place within the immediate area with two sites that have already been passed in 2022 which went under the local radar. If further sites are passed this will turn the area into an industrial area therefore going against both local and Government policy. Once this use of this land is changed it will not be able to revert back to Green Belt and it will be lost for ever.

The application represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

My reasons for objection are drawn from the NPPF and from Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Adopted 2020. As follows, the application does not sit well with 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.

Other Rural Areas Strategy Policy SS10

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.

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.

I believe the application should therefore be refused.

Regards,

Anthony Smith

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