

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
Date: 12 December 2024 01:50:41

Application Reference No. : SMD/2024/0055

Site Address: LAND SOUTH OF CELLARHEAD SUBSTATION AND WEST OF Rownall Road Wetley
Rocks Staffordshire

Comments by: Pippa Blessington

From:

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Submission: Objection

Comments: This is the green belt where 'Renewable energy schemes are of an appropriate scale, type and location' (SMDC Local Plan) or so the plan says and the same green belt where others cannot get a modest extension in their back garden because of the Greenbelt restrictions. This is yet another application in this same small area and this one is [properly massive. In what way is this application 'of an appropriate scale, type and location' ??? What are your definitions for these criteria where this scheme can possibly meet them? Are protected landscapes actually protected at all or is it all just sophistry? How many applications for these BESS sites does SMDC intend to welcome onto the green belt? Does it actually have any idea, plan or analysis of this? It strikes me the area is now being targeted way beyond what might be reasonably expected, or indeed might be considered reasonable. Yes land is probably cheaper due to the presumption against developing green belt and yes connection to the grid is probably cheap too, but the biggest pull factor of all will be that SMDC is seen as sympathetic after previous decisions and recommendations and one scheme attracts another which attracts another like a magnet - so exactly how many is enough? Surely it can't just go on and on adding ever more? What about the cumulative impact? What analysis has been done about that? Would the whole green belt be better redesignated as a renewable energy zone? There may be big profits for the developers of these sites but they too seem to have taken a contemptuous view of the local communities with miserable attempts at landscaping and in some cases truly shocking locations adjacent to long standing residents who have paid their council tax for many decades to help provide local services, including a planning service which should be balancing private profit with its costs and impacts to the local community. Many of these applications of course originate from far away with no connection to the area at all, although some more shockingly do have, so must know the harm being done. I'm not sure which is worse. I have solar panels on a discreet part of my roof and I know that over winter when energy demand is highest they produce almost nothing, meaning any energy they produce has in reality to be backed up with a more reliable source of winter power, let alone warrant so many large BESS units in this location. Much more efficient is offshore wind which doesn't stop at night and produces more over winter. Technically much better to store energy nearer to those more reliable sources. Yes we need sustainable energy, but good schemes in the right places. Schemes that do not carry support will simply give green energy schemes a bad name and make it more difficult to get good schemes accepted in the right places. Just being cheap is not good enough, schemes need to be good quality in the widest sense. Planning has a serious job to do here. There are not really individual applications to be judged separately, they are a rash of applications, feeding each other and will be a permanent defacement to our landscape and resulting in a mega landscape scale change within a highly valued protected landscape. These systems are not without their risks and these risks are multiplied by the concentration here. I rather doubt our emergency services would cope well with one battery fire without additional investment and it only takes one storm and one fallen tree to block the access to mean our firefighters have to resort to hugely long hose runs which are neither quick nor flexible as our fire tenders do not go 'off road'. Heaven help us if more than one unit has an issue at the same time. Such a concentration would also make a tempting target for any with ill intent towards our key infrastructure as we are sadly witnessing elsewhere in these turbulent and unpredictable times. These concentrations of units without very good cause make me think they are both very unwise and highly unstrategic. However the most obvious cost is to the landscape, the environment and the community. Perhaps at very least we could hear about how planning gain makes some small amends for these negative factors and where is the full and proper biodiversity assessment to provide the 10% biodiversity gain such schemes should be offering as an absolute minimum.

Please reject this application. Our Green belt, environment and communities deserve so much better.

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