

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/B3438/W/25/3362821

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference APP/B3438/W/25/3362821

Appeal By NEWFIELDS BESS LIMITED

Site Address
Land at Newfields Farm
Rownall Road
Wetley Roads
ST9 0BS

SENDER DETAILS

Name MR IAN PODMORE

Address
Rownall Ridge Rownall Road
Wetley Rocks
STOKE-ON-TRENT
ST9 0BT

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- ☐ Appellant
- ☐ Agent
- ☒ Interested Party / Person
- ☐ Land Owner
- ☐ Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- ☐ Final Comments
- ☐ Proof of Evidence
- ☐ Statement
- ☐ Statement of Common Ground
- ☒ Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- ☐ Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

Newfields BESS Appeal SMD/2024/0556 - Hearing Consultee Letter (no date) - App ref SMD/2024/0019. - APP/APP/B3438/W/25/3362821

So far, the Councillors forming this Planning Committee LPA are severely and corporately responsible for the approval already of 4 major BESS Storage installations at Rownall all, surrounding this National Grid transformer station and all in exceedingly close proximity. Cumulatively, these 4 neighbouring BESS sites amount to 600 'shipping container sized' bulk battery containers, all inside our highly rural scenic moorlands Green Belt.

The 4 approved major BESS sites have all been incrementally approved without reference to any overall cumulative residential impact appraisal or, Health and Safety risk assessment. Presently, there also remains another 3 major pending major sized BESS applications submitted and verified including this appeal APP/APP/B3438/W/25/3362821 which, if similarly and singularly approved without cumulative consideration, will take the current total of 600 bulk battery containers to 1,100 making this a monumental installation parts of which, are only some 40 metres from long embedded residential properties.

Such a massive development comprising of 7 neighbouring major sized BESS installations is not only an enormous intrusion into previously protected rural lifestyles of the seriously impacted closest residents, but it also delivers high levels of continuous noise and a serious ongoing risk of life. The huge loss of residential amenity for those living the closest, represents overwhelming personal and hardship arising from plummeting home values and, in some cases, properties becoming uninsurable and unsaleable.

In this particular appeal, APP/APP/B3438/W/25/3362821, the previous application was refused on two grounds

1. Noncompliance with 2023 Fire and Rescue criteria.
2. The dangerously close Newfields Farmhouse which the applicant previously declared unsafe for future human occupation.

In an attempt to win support for this appeal, the applicants gave a presentation to Cheddleton Parish Council on Tuesday 25th of March 2025 outlining the modifications made to the plan in an attempt to overcome these shortcomings which are listed below:

1. A looped driveway has been added to the southern site entrance. It claimed the SFRS have examined the revised layout, without comment.
2. The applicant claims the repositioned earth bund now protects the Newfields farmhouse from noise. Residents continuing objections.

1. The access entrance approach is still only via a single track and does not meet the 2023 Fire & Rescue criteria requiring two entirely separate uncompromised emergency access routes. The new driveway loop access still does not overcome the risk of a complete blockage, in event that the southern most eastern bank of battery containers should catch fire. The SFRS have declined to comment!

2. The repositioning of the earth bund does not extend sufficiently far enough east to protect the Newfields Farmhouse which remains fully exposed to the bulk battery containers less than 100 metres to the north and highly vulnerable to continuous noise, explosion, high intensity fires, the toxic consequences and unacceptable risk to life.

The highly compromised location

The positioning of this proposed BESS is not only exceedingly close to the Rownall Transformer Station, it is the closest of all 4 so far approved neighbouring BESS sites. Infact, this BESS is located right inside the 'bite' of the internal corner of the transformer station immediately next to its perimeter fence on the BESS's northern and eastern sides. This represents a serious and unnecessary high risk should this bulk battery storage site ever catch fire as a result of explosion as is increasingly the international experience.

The applicants claim this site conforms to 'Grey Belt' whereas this LPA's senior Planning Officer categorically stated in the most recent approved sustainable energy application that this highly rural area of Green Belt does not meet, nor never would, the definition of Grey Belt!

Sincerely Ian Podmore ST9 OBT on behalf of the 'Save our Green Belt' campaign