

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
Date: 24 June 2025 22:15:25

Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0250

Site Address: Land off Leek Road Werrington Staffordshire ST9 0DQ Stoke-On-Trent

Comments by: Wendy L Johnson

From:

Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments: In relation to this application I wish to comment as follows:

From the documentation provided by the applicant, this is an application to develop green belt/agriculture land extending to 8 hectares, providing a substation and 222 batteries as well as other ancillary equipment. The energy storage providing around 300 MW.

A. The nearest battery installation planned appears to be around 200 m from a live fuel station. This is not without an incredible risk of explosion and fire. This would not be contained just to 8 hectares of battery energy storage, this would be a considerable major incident in Cellarhead, affecting residents farmland and major roads. There is a high school 430 m away.

Aim 1 in the Adopted local plan states 'to help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work'

B. Noise pollution is played down in the application, stating the main A520 and Shirley's Transport are responsible for the current noise pollution. The installation of this not insignificant substation and BESS will add to that noise but not just during busy daylight hours but the 'hum' 24hours a day. This is not taking account of the construction time where the equipment for the substation as well as 222 battery container units need to be delivered.

C. The construction of this development will disrupt the flow of the main A520/A52 junction.

D. The intention is to have 222 battery containers 3.5 metres high and a substation 7.5 metres high.

Aim 4 of the adopted local plan states 'improve the environment. The landscape and historic environment of the District is highly valued by both residents and visitors. The landscape is characterised by attractive countryside comprising of farmland, extensive woodland areas natural grassland and moors interspersed by distinctive settlements.

Pride in local communities is high. I couldn't agree more with this statement.

The installation of this development would significantly detract from our visual view of greenbelt.

Together with all of the other agreed or proposed BESS and solar farms will detract from people wanting to live or visit. There is nothing attractive about being surrounded by this.

Protecting and Enhancing the distinctive quality of the environment the adopted local plan says.

The Vision of the local plan is that the central theme would be to see the Staffordshire Moorlands become an exceptional place to live and work. Far from it I'm afraid if these installations go ahead. Further to this, it states the rural areas will have viable attractive villages and smaller settlements which will continue to foster APPROPRIATE, SENSITIVE GROWTH and vitality to support rural living and working. This is neither appropriate or sensitive.

'In the countryside, the richness of the Districts landscape, heritage and its biodiversity will continue to be valued, maintained and protected in a way which sensitively accommodates the needs of farmers, rural businesses, visitors and residents. The only people this accommodates is the applicant and company who stand to make millions selling electricity back to the national grid.

This would be a loss of green belt and farmland. Of course, as the applicant states, the quality of the land is yet to be firmly established.

E. The adopted local plan acknowledges the significant challenges Staffordshire Moorlands has from external influences and pressures from global, national and regional levels. It goes on to say this will drive the changes that are going to be necessary to bring about SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT in the social, economic and environmental conditions of the District. This application does not provide sustainable improvement. This is not green energy whatsoever. There is high carbon usage of battery production. The equipment is mainly from China, the cost to the environment is not mitigated by just a storage facility that has inherent safety risks. This does not provide jobs although the applicant assumes this could be the case during construction, a throw away comment to satisfy that point.

F The impact on nature is significant. Even down to the substrate used below the battery containers (300 mm) and the crushed stone on the access road. This is not ecological friendly whatsoever. This development will displace our wildlife which should be protected. The applicant just refers to bat conservation, again, a passing observation by them to satisfy planning committees.

G. Contamination of soil and water. It is widely known now of thermal runaway. This is an uncontrolled self heating process that occurs when heat generation exceeds heat dissipation, often leading to catastrophic consequences. The contamination from these installations should not be ignored. Ultimately it is our water and food chain that will suffer and there is still research to be done on how this will affect the human population. The application refers to a natural spring on the eastern side and there is the possibility of ground water emergence. So in other words this will wash the toxins into our natural water sources.

Companies claim that their equipment is a lot safer these days. How on earth can we rely on the safety of these Chinese batteries when we cannot inspect the safety of the manufacturing. In addition, we rely on the 'owners' to maintain the installation. And yet, we are still hearing of BESS fires, a 750 megawatt plant in Moss Landing, California in January this year. To put it in context, this BESS is estimated to provide 2% of energy to California. California has 49 million population and is 42,397,000 hectares. Staffordshire Moorlands has a population of 95,800 (according to 2021 census) and is 57,624 hectares. During this fire it was reported that 1200 residents had to be evacuated. It is also reported that a fire suppression system in one of the facilities battery racks had failed.

H. The adopted local plan talks about Spatial objectives. This does not meet those objectives, it is neither minimal on its impact nor an efficient use of resources. It cant even claim its providing low cost housing, jobs to assist the economy or even a cycle route for residents.

I. In previous BESS applications, the applicants rely on the already established Cellarhead substation and being near to that to feed back into the national grid. Even though this is the intention of this development, there still needs to be another substation on this development. The fear would be in my case that this would then open up even more applications to connect to this installation.

J. The applicant anticipates the BESS to continue for 40 to 50 years. Which is it?

K. The decommissioning after the end of life of the BESS is covered by the applicant which I have read many times in these applications. So there are reports of these companies winding up or going into liquidation and leaving responsibilities of the costly process of decommissioning. What assurance do SMDC get that they aren't going to be left with these environmental nightmares once the profits have been made?

I have referred to the 'applicant' , please also use this as the applicants representative.

I have referred to the adopted local plan, this has been read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework which I will refer to if this application proceeds further.

The government have stated they are targeting 23 to 27 gigawatts in England of energy storage. Wetley Rocks and the surrounding area have already had more than their fair share of these developments unfortunately passed, I have not seen how this target is broken down into areas. It would be helpful if this is disclosed to the public instead of global companies targeting rural areas with substations.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Johnson

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