

22/06/2026
Our ref. SMD/2026/0231

By e-mail: craigwormaldvicky@icloud.com

Mr Craig Wormald
Slate House Farm
Morridge Top
ST10 2HB

Dear Mr Wormald

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

EIA Scoping Request for Enercon E-82 3MW 119m Wind Turbine at Slate House Farm Slate House Farm Morridge Top Road Onecote Staffordshire ST13 7SF

1. Further to our previous correspondence, thank you for submitting your formal EIA Scoping request to the Council as Local Planning Authority which you have done by reference to Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017). The regulations require submission of:
 - (i) a plan sufficient to identify the land;
 - (ii) a brief description of the nature and purpose of the development, including its location and technical capacity;
 - (iii) an explanation of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment; and
 - (iv) such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make;
2. You have supplied an elevations drawing 'Enercon E-82 E4'; a location plan and a statement dated 10th May 2026 headed EIA Scoping Request – Proposed Replacement Wind Turbine (Enercon E82).

Background

3. You previously submitted an EIA screening request to which the Council responded (15th April 2025) under reference SMD/2025/0148 concluding that, in any subsequent planning application, the proposal should be treated as requiring an accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA positive). You referred this decision to the Secretary of State for a 'determination' for which the outcome was received dated 27th June 2025. This concluded by directing that the proposal is 'EIA development' within the meaning of the 2017 Regulations and states that:

"Any application for planning permission for this development must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Under regulation 2 of the 2017 Regulations, an Environmental Statement must contain, for the purpose of assessing the likely impact

on the environment, the information specified in that regulation. I recommend that you refer to the Regulations before and during the preparation of the Statement.”

4. In an accompanying written statement headed: *‘Full statement of reasons as required by 5(5)(a) of the 2017 EIA Regulations including conclusions on likeliness of significant environmental effects’* the Secretary of State concludes that having “...had regard to the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts” [as set out in the written statement] EIA is required and should be suitably scoped around the single issue of landscape and visual impacts.

5. Accordingly the Council now responds (below) to your request for a scoping opinion. Several consultations were made (as listed on the Council's website) prior to compiling this Opinion and responses were received from: The Environment Agency (EA); Natural England (NE); the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and SMDC Environmental Health. These can be viewed on the Council's website pages for this Scoping application at: <http://publicaccess.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=183369>.

Environment Agency consultation response

6. The EA notes that the key environmental factors identified that have been ‘scoped-in’ are **landscape and visual impact** and **cumulative landscape and visual effects**. They note that other matters, such as those listed below, “*appear to have been scoped out*” but recommend these environmental topics be addressed to “*a relevant degree*” within the Environmental Statement and/or any evidence base in support of the forthcoming planning application:

- Protection of Controlled Waters
- Fluvial Flood Risk
- Water Framework Directive
- Biodiversity

7. For the Council's part, noting the EA's advice, it is suggested that your application should in particular consider the effects of any excavation involved to create the footings, with particular regard given to any impacts on drainage courses and any potential pollution to water courses that might result from general run-off. The EA recommends that a water features survey be undertaken to identify and then avoid/ mitigate any impacts upon any local water features.

8. Whilst the matters raised by the EA are relevant to the overall planning application and should be addressed, they are not, in the Council's view, required to be covered within the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Natural England consultation response

9. It is advised that the views of Natural England should be taken fully into account in the course of your compiling of the planning application. For the purposes of the EIA submission Natural England provides relevant specific comments under the heading of Landscape and a series of sub-headings - Nationally Designated Landscapes; Landscape and Visual Impacts, and Heritage Landscapes. Again you are recommended to review the NE comments in full on the Council's website pages for this Scoping application.

Peak District National Park

10. No detailed response has been received but they have suggested at least 2 viewpoints within the National Park from where potential visual impacts should be considered. No supporting information is provided as to the specific choice of suggested viewpoints but the Council would concur that the Mixon landscape, together with its network of public rights of way, is an area which should be considered.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC)

11. The Council recognises that it is important to note that for the purposes of the EIA it is the *"single issue of landscape and visual impacts"* which is expected to be considered in accordance with the Secretary of State's direction.

12. Relevant guidance for landscape assessment can be found here:
www.gov.uk/guidance/landscape-and-seascape-character-assessments

13. In order to assess Landscape Character the above published guidance includes the following under the heading of *How to carry out an LCA*:

- i) Define the purpose and scope of your LCA, eg the area it will cover, its scale, level of detail and resources available to carry out the work.
- ii) Conduct a desk study – collect, review and analyse data and documentation and speak to stakeholders involved with the landscape.
- iii) Conduct a field survey – test, refine and add to the outputs from the desk study, capturing aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities of the landscape.
- iv) Classify, map and describe the landscape's character areas, types and characteristics including geological, other physical and socio-cultural influences.

14. It advises that the character assessment should include consideration of: topographic features; flora and fauna; land use; sights, sounds, touch and smells; and cultural associations, history and memories. It says the completed LCA will be a document detailing the character of the landscape and an annotated map showing the character areas or types. You can also include photos, diagrams and survey results.

15. In order to fulfil the reasonable expectations of an EIA the Council would expect a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to be submitted.

16. The Council considers that among the key issues for the LVIA to consider are that the proposed turbine would be close to the Peak District National Park boundary. This is a nationally protected area in legislation (the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949) and an area with significant historical and cultural associations. The development would have wide visibility from within the National Park and from adjacent surroundings. Morridge itself is a defining landscape feature of the Staffordshire Moorlands District and of the National Park. Its westerly facing flank slope is striking and prominent at a landscape scale and as such marks a highly distinctive aspect of the setting of the National Park. The ridge is also in effect a continuation in landscape terms of the high ground immediately to the north west including the rock outcrops known as The Roaches, a favourite and famous visitor location in the Peak District.

17. Inclusion of the topics you have put forward at section 5 of your submission for the scoping request are broadly appropriate and are reproduced here with some additions in italics which the Council considers should be factored in.

- Effects on landscape character [and quality]
- Impacts arising from the scale and height of the turbine, *its movement and the effects of differing conditions of natural light*
- *whether the turbine would need to be mounted with warning lighting – implications for values attached to 'darker skies'*
- Visual effects likely to be experienced from key receptors, including:
 - Road users
 - PROWs and access land
 - Users within the Peak District National Park
 - *residential occupiers in the locality*
 - Effects associated with the elevated ridge-top location
- Assessment of visibility across the wider landscape
- *the assessment will need to derive an appropriately reasoned likely range of impact*

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects taking into consideration

- Existing wind turbines (*and other tall structures*) in the locality
- Potential nearby proposals (including at the neighbouring Garstones Farm)

18. A key requirement will be to reach an appropriate conclusion on the geographic range of potential influence. The Council's view is that this is likely to come somewhere within a radius of between 5km to 10km from the turbine position. Significant impacts may be found at the greater distance of up to perhaps 10km for certain specific locations of high importance and prominence such as certain ridge tops and hill tops which are defining features of the Staffordshire Moorlands landscape character. At a closer range of up to say 5km significant impacts are likely to occur more generally.

19. From within the zone of influence (once it is defined) the Council would expect key landscape locations to be reviewed and the impacts considered. In part this is likely to be an exercise of concluding there is no overriding impact but, where impacts are found likely, the assessment should then go into further detail. Significant views can be expected for example in the approach along Bottom Lane north from its junction with Bradshaw Lane; from Ipstones Edge road/footpaths westwards from Swineholes Wood; from Morridge Top road and from sections of the B5053 Onecote to Warslow road, Butterton Moor and Parsons Lane, where there is an area of open access land. These are referenced as indicative examples. It will be for the LVIA to reach a comprehensive position. To define the outer limits of the potential influence you should consider key locations such as Hen Cloud, The Roaches, Gun Hill (north west above Meerbrook) and Top Road, Lask Edge. As a minimum a series of perhaps 10 to 15 indicative locations should be presented in the final LVIA report.

20. You are recommended to refer to the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (2008) which can be found here:

https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/media/947/Landscape-and-Settlement-Character-Assessment-LSCA-2008---Main-Report/pdf/hnLandscape_and_Settlement_Character_Assessment.pdf?m=1482503691390. Your site is within the 'Gritstone Highland Fringe' Landscape Character Type (LCT).

21. You are recommended to refer to an appropriate reference source for rights of way and access land such as the County Council's maps which can be found here:

https://map.staffordshire.gov.uk/publicmap/en-GB/PublicMap/CountrysideAccess?_gl=1*1qo8x0m*_ga*MTYxMjA5NjQyMy4xNzU4NTM1OTEw*_ga_L5SP43WS7L*czE3NjI1MTE4NjUkbzE0MiRnMSR0MTc2MjUxMTg3MyRqNTIkbDAkaDA.#/frontPage. Alternatively you may choose to use the DEFRA MAGIC map or up-to-date OS maps showing *Access Land* in addition to public rights of way.

22. For inclusion in the cumulative considerations the existing turbines at Red Earth Farm Rudyard; Kniveden Farm, Leek and at Lane Ends Farm, Bradnop are obvious examples.

23. Finally, it is recommended that you refer to the Council's Wind Turbine Landscape Sensitivity Study which assesses the capacity of the landscape to accommodate wind turbines. Due to its height dimensions, the proposed wind turbine equates to Category E in the study (111m-140m) [the highest category considered] and the Gritstone Highland Fringe landscape character type (LCT 06) of this location is deemed highly sensitive to wind turbines of this scale. The document can be viewed here:

https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/media/1219/Wind-Turbine-Landscape-Sensitivity-Study-Jan-2015/pdf/ca6195_Staffordshire_Moorland_LSA_20150130_V4_0_LR.pdf?m=1480440282133.

24. As you have recognised in your accompanying statement there are additional matters which, whilst not deemed to warrant EIA, will be important planning considerations. The noise implications are one such example and the Council's Environmental Health Officer has provided specific guidance in a consultation response to this scoping request.

25. It is hoped that you will find the above helpful and should you require further clarification please contact the case officer, Mr Swithenbank. Please note that the contents are not intended necessarily to be exhaustive but to provide a guiding opinion. It is not binding on the Council and does not represent a determination under the Planning Acts.

Yours sincerely,

22/06/2026

X 

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Signed by: Jane Curley