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From: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Application Reference No. : SMD/2026/0326 Site Address: Padwick Farm Bradshaw Lane Ipstones Staffordshire ST13 7NN Leek Comments by: Christine Agar

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Submission: Neither

Comments: I am writing as someone who lives locally and knows this area well. I have looked at the proposed scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment and I do not feel it goes far enough for a development of this size in a rural location. A wind farm of this scale would not just be a technical planning matter; it would affect the people who live here, use the roads, enjoy the countryside and depend on the character of the surrounding landscape.

1. Issues That Should Not Be Left Out

I am concerned that several important matters are being suggested for exclusion from the assessment, even though they are the very things local residents are likely to notice and be affected by. These include:

- traffic, access and transport movements;
- socio-economic consequences for the surrounding area;
- population and human health considerations;
- climate and air quality, including the potential release of radon gas, which is known to be prevalent in this area;
- major accidents and disaster risk; and
- effects on material assets.

These are not distant or theoretical concerns. They are practical issues for people living close to the site and travelling through the area. Before anything is ruled out, there should be clear evidence that it really is not significant.

2. The Wider Impact on the Area

The assessment should also look properly at the overall effect of the proposal, not just each issue in isolation. For local people, the concern is how everything would add up in day-to-day life. In particular, the Environmental Statement should cover:

- the cumulative landscape and visual consequences of the scheme;
- the combined effects of noise, shadow flicker and changes to residential amenity;

-possible knock-on effects for tourism, recreation and the local economy; and

the interaction between different environmental topics.

If these matters are only looked at separately, the real effect on local residents, walkers, drivers, visitors and the wider community could easily be underestimated.

3. Alternatives, Risks and Mitigation

There should also be a clearer explanation of what alternatives have been looked at and how risks will be managed. Local residents need to understand not only what is being proposed, but why this location and layout have been chosen and what steps would be taken to reduce harm. The assessment should explain:

-which reasonable alternatives have been considered and why they have been discounted or preferred;

-how sources of impact, pathways and receptors will be identified and assessed; and

-how the mitigation hierarchy will be applied, beginning with avoidance before moving to reduction, remediation, compensation or enhancement.

These points should be made clear at this stage, so that residents are not left trying to interpret them later from a finished Environmental Statement.

4. Listening to Local People

Proper consultation is very important here. People living in and around the area will know the roads, the weather conditions, the landscape, the wildlife and the way the area is actually used. The applicant should explain how it will speak with:

- nearby residents and local communities;

- parish councils;

- local amenity and interest groups; and

- relevant non-statutory consultees.

At the moment, I do not think the material shows clearly enough how local knowledge will be gathered or taken into account. That should be addressed before the assessment is finalised.

5. Monitoring If the Development Goes Ahead

If the development were ever approved, there would also need to be proper monitoring afterwards. Local residents should know what checks would be made and what would happen if problems arise. This is particularly important for:

-operational noise;

-shadow flicker;

-ecological effects; and

-landscape effects and aviation lighting impacts.

It should not be left to residents to raise concerns after the event without a clear process for checking and dealing with any impacts.

In my view, the proposed scope is too narrow for a development that could have a real and lasting impact on this area. Important matters such as traffic, health, local amenity, cumulative effects, consultation and monitoring should not be left out or dealt with too lightly.

I ask the Council to require a fuller Environmental Impact Assessment so that the concerns of local residents and the character of the surrounding countryside are properly considered before any decisions are made.

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