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**Please ask for:** Tom Nutt  
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03 November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**Development description: Proposed battery energy storage facility and substation with new access and associated fencing and landscaping**

**Location: Land On South West Side Of, Levedale Road, Levedale**

Decision: An Environmental Impact Assessment is NOT REQUIRED in this instance.

Justification:

Schedule 1 Test – The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the Regulations as it does not fall within any of the categories listed.

Schedule 2 Test – The proposed development falls within Schedule 2 Part 3 (a) of the Regulations as it constitutes an industrial installation for the production of electricity, where the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares. The applications site area extends to approximately 3.7ha and developed area 2.7ha.

Sensitive Area Test – Advice in the National Planning Practice Guidance: Environmental Impact Assessment and Schedule 3 of the Regulations states that in determining whether significant effects are likely, the location of a development is of crucial importance. The more environmentally sensitive the location, the lower will be the threshold at which significant effects will be likely.

The site as determined against paragraph 32 of the NPPG is considered to be located in an area of low sensitivity. The reason for this opinion is as follows:

- The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and outside a Source Protection Zone.
- The Site is not located within the proximity of any SSSIs, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, AONB or Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- The Site comprises predominantly agricultural land AGL class 3b.

Threshold and Criteria Test –

The proposed development includes battery storage units, inverters substation, perimeter fencing, CCTV cameras, and an access track.

Battery storage issues and their effects are well understood and are not considered complex. Environmental impacts are considered to be generally low intensity. Given the nature of the battery storage element of the scheme, such does not produce any thermal outputs, steam, hot water, air pollution or require fuel and is designed to only store electricity for redistribution.

In terms of landscape character, the site is agricultural land within open countryside. The Site is not located within a densely populated area there are limited residential dwellings within the area surrounding the Site.

In terms of landscape and visual impacts and any impact on the open countryside, such may be managed, through (i) the existing mature screening that exists around the Site and (ii) a comprehensive landscaping scheme to seek to assimilate the Proposed Development into the landscape.

Having regard to the advice in the NPPG it is considered that the proposed development, does not in this instance, require an Environmental Impact Assessment. This decision has been arrived at for the following reasons:

- Paragraph 24 of the NPPG advises that “local planning authorities should always have regard to the possible cumulative effects arising from any existing or approved development”. The pending solar application and approved application at Coppenhall are assessed within the accompanying EIA Analysis. Given the separation distance (including landscape character and screening), it is unlikely there will be cumulative visual impacts.
- There are a no heritage assets within the site. However, there are Listed buildings nearby, but the site is not within the setting of these assets.
- Although the Site is not designated as having archaeological importance and there is a low likelihood of finds here, there may be some interest in terms of archaeology. This can be addressed through conditions requiring a scheme of investigation and mitigation (if needed) agreed with the County archaeological Team.
- The site is not considered to be environmentally sensitive as it does not lie within an AONB, SSSI, National Park or World Heritage Site and albeit that the site is located within open countryside, the impact of the scheme upon the area can be fully considered as part of the planning application process.
- The site lies within Flood Zone 1 where the main flood risk issue would be surface water run-off. These impacts can be managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Detailed Drainage Strategy.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development does not meet the criteria to require an EIA in this instance.

Schedule 3 Test – Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development – The criteria through which Schedule 2 development should be considered, to judge whether the proposal is likely to have significant effects on the environment are; the characteristics of development; the location of development and the characteristics of the potential impact.

Characteristics of Development – Particular regard is advised to be had to:

- The size of the development

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- Cumulative impact with other development
- The use of natural resources
- The production of waste
- Pollution and nuisances, and
- The risk to human health

Location of Development – Particular regard is advised to be had to:

- Existing land use
- The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area
- The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas in wetland, coastal zones, mountain and forest areas, nature reserves, natural habitats, areas where environmental quality standards have already been exceeded, densely populated areas and landscape of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

Characteristic of Potential Impact

Further characteristics to be considered when determining the characteristics of the potential impact are as follows:

- The extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population)
- The transfrontier nature of the impact
- The magnitude and complexity of the impact
- The probability of the impact; and
- The duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.

Environmental Test – The Site comprises agricultural land. Based on the information submitted, beyond localised visual impact there are no particular environmental impact considerations in this case. Whilst it is considered that these impacts would not be significant, if considering this development in isolation, the Regulations require the cumulative effects of the development to be considered. Having regard to other energy production and storage schemes consented in the area however, it is concluded that any environmental impact is unlikely to be significant, and therefore a formal Environmental Statement is not required.

Conclusions:

1. The development is not listed in Schedule 1.
2. The development is listed in Schedule 2 Part 3 (a).
3. The development is not in a sensitive area.
4. The development would exceed the relevant threshold, given its site area, as set out in the Annex to the NPPG (4-057-20140306)
5. Given the scale, location and nature of the development, the effects on the environment are unlikely to be significant, when assessed against the criteria identified within Schedule 3.
6. An Environmental Impact Assessment is therefore not required in this instance.

Report Prepared by: Tom Nutt (Senior Planning Officer)

Yours sincerely



# South Staffordshire Council

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Senior Planning Officer

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