



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2025

by Jonathan Bore MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/W/25/3365672

Land at Dadglow Farm, Bishop's Itchington, Southam, CV47 2RH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Root Power (South) Limited against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02516/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the installation and operation of a 20MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), including access and associated infrastructure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the countryside and landscape.

Reasons

3. The scheme would occupy part of a pleasant grassy hillside above the tree-lined River Itchen, to the east of Bishop's Itchington. The site and its surroundings have a rural character and are clearly part of the countryside despite the proximity of the village, which has undergone some expansion, and despite the presence of a nearby railway line. Hambridge Road is a small, quiet lane used by walkers and cyclists. The Bishop's Itchington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2031 identifies a protected rural view from Hambridge Road across the site. There is also a public right of way below the site along the River Itchen.
4. The site is part of an attractive landscape characterised by open fields, hedges and scattered mature trees. In the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines it falls within the Lias Village Farmlands, a varied small scale hedged landscape with varied undulating topography, a well-defined geometric pattern of small to medium sized fields and many hedgerow and roadside trees. The site is very clearly a component part of this wider landscape character. It contributes strongly to the quality of the landscape and people's enjoyment of the countryside and in my assessment is very sensitive to inappropriate development of the kind proposed in the appeal scheme.
5. The development would be an unwelcome intrusion into this scene. It would consist of 5 battery clusters, and the maximum height of the equipment would be 5 metres. The scheme would necessitate the levelling of part of the natural slope, the provision of security fencing, and the creation of an access from Hambridge Road to the north of the site. Policy CS3 of the Stratford on Avon Core Strategy supports

renewable and low carbon energy technologies, but it states that proposals will be determined with regard to the Council's Renewable Energy Landscape Sensitivity Study, which assesses the site as having a high sensitivity to commercial development. Although the scheme would not have the level of activity associated with, say, an industrial scheme, it would have the character of commercial development.

6. The proposed planting belt around the development would mature over time, but the installation would still exist within the block of planting as a significant built feature out of place in this location, and the planting block itself would appear as an artificial insertion into the landscape. A time limit of 40 years on the permission would not compensate for the harm that would be caused by the scheme.
7. It is recognised that the development would make use of a local grid connection and would assist with grid stability, assisting in managing the fluctuations associated with renewable energy generation. The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is embodied in national policy, and battery energy storage systems can provide a useful contribution towards this goal. In this context a number of battery energy storage systems have been allowed on appeal elsewhere. However, those proposals are different from the appeal scheme in their nature and in their impacts; each proposal must be considered on its own merits.
8. In this case the benefits of the scheme would be significantly outweighed by the harm. The proposed structures and works would be inappropriate given the contribution of the site to the rural landscape character, and to people's experience of the countryside. The scheme would conflict with Core Strategy Policies CS.5 and CS10 and Policy BINDP5 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, which seek to protect the landscape and the character of the countryside.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Jonathan Bore

INSPECTOR