

LHVT SUGGESTED RESIDENT LETTER IN RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION
23/1508/OUT

Dear Madam

I am a resident of Letchmore Heath and strongly object to planning application 23/1508/OUT for a Battery Energy Storage System for the following reasons:

1. This is Green Belt land and there is a presumption against inappropriate development which is deemed to be harmful unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. No very special circumstances exist so as to allow the development. This is not energy production nor is it a renewable energy project. It is storage for electricity from a mix of sources, including fossil fuels. It is energy neutral.
2. This location is unsuitable for the development. The purpose of a BESS is to support the production of renewable energy and they should be built next to a wind farm or solar plant. If needed to support the National Grid this type of installation should be sited on brownfield land near one of the very many other National Grid substations around the UK and away from communities.
3. No need has been demonstrated for the BESS to be built in this location which is open rural land with a few small villages, schools and Bhaktivedanta Manor, an important place of worship with national recognition.
4. The BESS would intrude on the wide open space and spoil the long views and aspect of Letchmore Heath and also spoil its setting as a Conservation Area.
5. The Hertsmere Local Plan requires that development should be located as unobtrusively as possible, This huge industrialised plant will be an eyesore.
6. The screening proposed won't mature until 15 years into the development – almost half of its anticipated life. Even at maturity screening will not hide the BESS which at some points will be 21 feet high with brick built substations. The development will be highly visible from a number of footpaths, Aldenham Road and Bhaktivedanta Manor.

7. Although the development is for a period of 40 years it will effectively be permanent to many people.

8. The unrelenting noise From the BESS will be intolerable. It is well established that new development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of noise pollution. A BESS emits constant noise at different frequencies from the air conditioning units, inverters and transformers on a 24/7 basis. There will be permanent tonal noise and buzzing. Environmental Health have admitted that “there will be tonal noise produced by the proposed installation, which even at a long distance would be audible and annoying whilst occurring 24/7” It is obvious that building a huge BESS here will mean that noise levels impact people’s daily lives adversely affecting sleep and health. The noise will travel far across the open Green Belt and large numbers of properties and schools will be affected, including the neighbouring Conservation Areas of Patchetts Green and Round Bush. Our tranquillity will be permanently shattered.

9. The developer’s Noise Impact Assessment suggesting a noise level of 5Db above ambient is completely unacceptable. A level of 10Db below ambient is the Council’s policy and must be adhered to.

10. There are many schools in the vicinity housing thousands of pupils, including boarders. It is well known that noise impacts learning.

11. Every BESS is prone to fire. These thermal runaway fires from lithium-ion batteries are highly dangerous. They cannot be put out with water-they can only be cooled with water and left to burn. This leads to highly contaminated water run off and toxic vapour clouds containing poisonous gasses which can spread over a very wide area. The vapour clouds can easily explode and it is usual for people in the area to be given stay at home orders, sometimes for days.

12. This BESS will one of the biggest in the world and the fire hazard is very significant because the more batteries there are the greater the risk will be.

13. There is no natural water supply near the site for firefighting and no certainty that any artificial supply would be enough particularly in the event of contagion which is common. The developer’s proposed lagoon will not hold enough water as fire services guidance says that the amount required is dependent on the size of the BESS.

14. I am very concerned that there will only be one roadway into the development which could hinder firefighters depending on wind direction. This is highly dangerous- the fire services guidance requires at least two roads.

15. There is a wildlife site immediately next to the site and the large wildlife site at Hilfield Park Reservoir, nationally significant for birdlife is nearby. The large herd at Bhaktivedanta Manor is just adjoining. All will be affected by increased noise levels and be at real risk in case of fire.

16. This land has been successfully farmed for years. At a time when food security is more important than ever the development will result in a loss of 30 acres of fully productive agricultural land.

17. The site lies next to Bhaktivedanta Manor which is a nationally recognised Hindu shrine and temple and a highly important place of pilgrimage. The noise from the development will destroy the spiritual experience of visitors to The Manor which is renowned for its quiet meditative atmosphere. Their nurse school, children's playground and cowshed are under 200m away.

18. The BESS will be much too near Elstree Aerodrome and building here will remove an important area currently available for emergency landings. This will be even more significant if the planned Solar Plant goes ahead.

19. The developer has said that if the BESS is built National Grid will build a second substation and so the combined effect of these proposals must be considered by the Council.

20. The accessway for the BESS off Hilfield Lane, right next to the Manor's road Dharam Marg, will be dangerous. They are just too near each other. During construction thousands will continue to visit the Manor whilst HGVs are accessing the site, particularly on festival days and Saturdays. If there is a fire there will not be enough manoeuvrability for evacuation from the Manor whilst emergency vehicles are trying to access the BESS.

This application is entirely unsuited to this location and has unacceptable levels of risk and I strongly urge the Council to reject it .

[NAME]