



Redditch Borough Council Reference: 25/00888/FUL
Application for Planning Permission for a
Battery Energy Storage System at the Wheaton Hill Farm, Astwood Bank,
near Redditch, Worcestershire.

Further Consultation Response
by Feckenham Parish Council
July 2026.

Prepared by Dr Chris Ford, MRTPI

Application for Planning Permission under the
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, as amended.

Further Consultation Response on behalf of **Feckenham Parish Council**, the local Council, in relation to an application for planning permission for the proposed ‘installation of battery energy storage system including access tracks and services roads, underground cable route, on-site substation, other ancillary electrical infrastructure... “ and other ancillary works, on ‘land at Wheaton Hill Farm, Astwood Lane, Astwood Bank, Worcestershire’, under Redditch Borough Council reference number 25/00888/FUL.

Prepared by Christopher D Ford BA, MBA, MSc, PhD, MRTPI.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 This submission provides a *Further Consultation Response* to the Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, for the *“installation of battery energy storage system including access tracks and services roads, underground cable route, on-site substation, other ancillary electrical infrastructure, security fencing and CCTV, on-site car parking, drainage and water supply feature, temporary construction compound, new landscaping and biodiversity enhancement”*, (Proposal) on ‘land at Wheaton Hill Farm, Astwood Lane, Astwood Bank, Worcestershire’ (Site), under Redditch Borough Council reference number 25/00888/FUL (Application). The Application is made by Boom Developments Ltd (Applicant). The Site, mostly consists of circa 16.8 hectares of agricultural land located at Wheaton Hall Farm situated approximately 2km east of Feckenham. The Site lies within the Redditch Borough Council area.
- 1.02 This Further Consultation Response is submitted on behalf on **Feckenham Parish Council** (FPC or the Parish Council). The submission has been prepared by Dr Christopher Ford, a Chartered Town Planner specialising in the spatial aspects of energy systems and energy policy.
- 1.03 In October 2025 FPC provided an initial Consultation Response on the Proposal. In May 2026 the Borough Council’s published a report to the Planning Committee with a recommendation to grant permission subject to various conditions. However, the report was not taken to the Planning Committee and at this point (July 2026) consideration of the Proposal remains live. On 11 June 2026 the Applicant lodged a request to change their Application, by seeking to alter proposed Condition 1. The Officers’ Report proposed Condition 1 would have set an expiry of any consent to *“three years beginning with the date of the grant of planning permission”*. The Applicant seeks to amend the *“usual term of 3 years”* ... *“to request that 9-year period be specified by Condition 1”* (Applicant 11/6/26).
- 1.04 This Further Consultation Response, on behalf of FPC, discusses the merit and the consequences of the proposal extension of the expiry of the planning permission, from the usual 3 years to 9 years. It recommends that the Proposal should be refused planning permission due to there being no need for it.
- 1.05 This Further Consultation Response commences by reviewing the Applicant’s claimed reasons for extending the expiry date. Given there importance, the Response then considers recent changes to the Government’s arrangement for the regulation of access grid connection for BESS developments. The response closes by providing conclusions.

2 THE APPLICANT'S REASONS TO THE EXTENDED EXPIRY DATE

- 2.01 The Applicant's request says they are requesting this extended consent expiry period *"due to the variability in connection timeframes which may be encountered"*.
- 2.02 However, the Applicant does not explain what they mean by this and what the circumstances relating to the 'variability in connection timeframe' are. They also do not explain why this extended expiry was not included in their initial Application.
- 2.03 Industry information shows that, when making their Application in August 2025, the Applicant knew that the earliest grid connection date available for their Proposal was 31 October 2033.
- 2.04 There remains an unanswered question as to why, when they knew the Proposal could not get a grid connection until late 2033, the Applicant did not seek an extended consent expiry date which met this situation.
- 2.05 To understand these circumstances, it is necessary to review the developments of energy market regulation which have occurred in the last year. This is set out below.
- 2.06 In their extension request letter, of 11/6/26, the Applicant claims the extension of the expiry period from three to nine years *"would not represent a material change to the development proposal"*. This is also incorrect. Any extended consent period would blight the Site from other productive use. Any nine-year expiry period would also blight the surrounding area due to the prospect of a large-scale industrial development in the countryside. The Proposal would also set a precedent.
- 2.07 The Applicant also claims that the 'need for the development' has been established. This is incorrect. This has not been agreed by the Borough Council. As the analysis herein shows there is no national or local need for the Proposal. The Applicant also claims the Proposal would support the aims of the Clean Power 2030. Again, this is incorrect. As the analysis here shows, the Clean Power objective in respect to BESS developments are already met.

3 UPDATED ENERGY POLICY AND MARKET REGULATION

- 3.01 Since FPC's Consultation Response last year there have been important developments in energy market reform. As previously stated, there is a substantial excess of BESS schemes seeking to connect to the electricity grid, both nationally and in the local region. Therefore, the Government has revised the way prospective new generators connect to the electricity grid, particularly to deal with BESS developments.

- 3.02 Against the specified national requirement ¹ for BESS capacity by 2035 of 29GW, there is currently a pipeline of 131.5GW of capacity. In other words, the required national capacity for BESS is more than four and half time oversubscribed.
- 3.03 The local regional requirement for BESS capacity by 2035, specified by Government for 2035, is 2.6GW. Currently there is a regional BESS pipeline of 20.5GW of capacity. Therefore, in the region where the proposal is located, the pipeline of BESS proposal is nearly eight time greater than is need for 2035. Of this pipeline, there is already 9.6GW of BESS capacity which is either already operating, is under construction or is already consented. Thus, in this region planning permission has already been awarded to more than three and half time the needed BESS capacity.
- 3.04 It is self-evident from this data that there is a huge excess of BESS proposal across the country and in this region. Like the Proposal, the vast bulk of these are not needed.

CONNECTION REFORM

- 3.05 Since the FPC Consultation Response the Government has completed reforms to the regulation of the electricity market. In particular, on how potential new generators, such as the Applicant, connect to the electricity grid. This is known as Connections Reform. This has considerable importance to developers' rights to connect to the grid. It is therefore of direct relevance to this Proposal.
- 3.06 Government analysis has consistently shown that there is a hiatus with new generators connecting to the electricity grid, particularly with BESS. What was a develop-led energy development approach has created substantial unnecessary costs to consumers because generators' choices does not produce a spatially efficient energy system.
- 3.07 Due to Connection Reform, prospective new generators' right to connect to the electricity grid has now changed. This changes came into force in 2025.
- 3.08 As part of Connection Reform, a new 'Gate' and Milestone processes has been adopted.
- 3.09 The 'Gate' process applied under Connection Reform means that all existing applications to connect to the grid become a 'Gate 1 offer'. That means the application is merely recorded and there is no assurance that a grid connection will be made available. Only a 'Gate 2 offer', however, is a firm offer to connect the generator to the grid. Where developers so choose, they can apply to NESO for a 'Gate 2 offer'.

¹ Set out in the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.

- 3.10 'Gate 2 offers' are only issued where the project is 'needed' to meet the CP30 regional technology permitted capacity. For example, the 2.6GW for 2035 for BESS in this region.
- 3.11 In relation to this Proposal, it is noted that the Applicant does not make clear the grid connection status of their Proposal. However, industry information shows that the Proposal only has a confirmed Gate 1 offer.
- 3.12 Therefore, this Proposal is not needed.
- 3.13 As a result, the proposal will not be given a connection to the electricity grid. As the data set out above shows, the local region already has a huge over supply of BESS proposals. There are already more than enough other BESS projects in the region which have already been given consent, to deliver the Government's required BESS capacity.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.01 The Applicant has failed to be transparent as to why they are now seeking an extended expiry period for their Planning Application. They failed to request this in their initial Application despite knowing then that the usual 3-year period would be insufficient for the previously offered grid connection date of late 2033.
- 4.02 However, since the Planning application was lodged the Government has reformed regulations in respect to connections to the electricity grid. The Applicant now knows that their Proposal is not required.
- 4.03 There is a huge excess of BESS proposed project across the region. Along with the Proposal, the huge majority of these are not need to deliver the Government's specified capacity of BESS. The proposal will therefore not be given a connection to the electricity grid. The Proposal therefore can serve no purpose and provides no planning benefit.
- 4.04 In conclusion, the Feckenham Parish Council responds to the Further Consultation by calling on the Borough Council to refuse planning permission for this Application (25/00888/FUL), by Boom Developments Ltd, for 'battery energy storage system' with access and associated infrastructure at Wheaton Hill Farm, near Feckenham, Worcestershire.

CDF
for FPC
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