

Battery Energy Storage System, Catherine-de-Barnes



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Contributing to national energy security

CLIENT

Masdar Arlington Energy

LPA

Solihull Metropolitan
Borough Council

STATUS

Allowed at appeal

SERVICES

Planning, Design, Heritage,
Townscape and Landscape,
Economics, EIA, Sustainability
and ESG

Our role

- In autumn 2023, on behalf of Masdar Arlington Energy, we submitted a full planning application to Solihull MBC for a 98MW battery energy storage system (BESS) with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Our Planning team led the submission, supported by specialist inputs across Design, Heritage, Townscape and Landscape, Economics, EIA, Sustainability and ESG.
- The development would store electricity during low demand and release it during peak times, helping balance the network and maximise renewable energy use. Currently, renewable generators may be asked to curtail output due to limited network capacity.
- Due to local political pressures and technical constraints, SMBC refused the application in May 2024, citing: 1) inappropriate Green Belt development; 2) harm to rural character and landscape; 3) highways delays and safety during construction; and 4) impact on BMV agricultural land.
- In November 2024, our Planning team submitted an appeal via written representations. The Planning Statement of Case presented a strong case for approval, citing Very Special Circumstances (VSC) including the need for BESS, economic decarbonisation, lack of alternative non-Green Belt sites, and the temporary, reversible nature of the 40-year proposal. This was supported by technical SoCs on Highways and Landscape, and assessments of relevant decisions and alternative sites by our GIS team.

Results

- The appeal was allowed and planning permission was granted on 30 July 2025. On balance, the Inspector attributed significant weight to various benefits arising from the proposed development, including: 1) its contribution to meeting a national and regional need for BESS and facilitating greater levels of renewable energy generation; 2) addressing national and local climate emergency objectives; 3) the restrictive site selection requirements for BESS and the absence of any suitable alternative sites, outside the Green Belt; and 4) significant contributions to Biodiversity Net Gain. Limited positive weight was also attributed to the socio-economic benefits of the proposed development.
- Specifically, the proposed energy storage of 98MW on a 2-hour system will be able to provide electricity to approximately 466,666 homes in the region for 1 hour on a full charge, from the secured connection date of December 2027. The proposals also represent a £20 million investment into the local renewable energy industry and will deliver a total Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 34%. A series of scheme amendments were also proposed and accepted by the Inspector.

Turley