

From : Beardwood Natural Living Project CIC, Beardwood Farm, Ladypit Rd, Furness Vale, SK23 7QF.

Application Ref. HPK/2023/0193

Submission: OBJECTION

Beardwood Natural Living Project CIC is a none profit community organisation based at Beardwood Farm. It provides farm and rural activities for disadvantaged groups and individuals to promote physical and mental wellbeing. It promotes access to the countryside, and as such, regular use of the local footpaths around the farm to provide guided walks and to connect with nature. The main objection is due to the negative impacts on FPs 156, 106 and 158 which are close to the proposed battery site, and the effects this proposal will have on our activities and service users, particularly in regard to noise. The first two of these footpaths provide the main walking route from Beardwood Farm to the Torrs and New Mills. It would seriously incapacitate our activities if we could no longer utilise these footpaths due to the adverse effects of noise from the battery scheme.

Many of the service users have issues relating to neurodiversity, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD and learning disability or difficulties. Some of the service users have a heightened sensitivity to noise which can be overwhelming and a prelude to anger or behavioural issues. They are unable to filter out background noise that other people may be able to tolerate, despite potential adverse effects on their recreational amenity. According to a 2020 study, up to 70% of people with autism exhibit decreased sound tolerance, contributing to anxiety, challenging behaviour and reduced community participation (A Review of Decreased Sound Tolerance in Autism. Williams, He, Cascio, Woynavoski. 2020). It is becoming increasingly difficult for people with these conditions to find quiet environments that they can access and we rely on the peace of our local natural spaces to benefit our clients.

The Noise Assessment commissioned by Novus does not take into account the public enjoyment and amenity of these footpaths. The Noise Sensitive Receivers 1,2,3,& 4 (Figs. 5 & 6) are concentrated around residential receptors and so bypass the well utilised public footpaths. On Fig 5, Specific Sound Level Map (Daytime), Footpaths 156, 158 and 106 are seen to run straight through the yellow zone (35-40 dB) and in some places (FP158) very close to the amber zone (40-45 dB). Anyone walking along Marsh Lane to access these footpaths would have to pass through the pass red/maroon zone (50-65 dB). The noise pollution emanating from the site would be significant around these rights of way and the Marsh Lane access point. Potentially, an increase of between 5dB -25dB in places. It has to be remembered that the report only uses predicted levels and that operational levels may well exceed this. In Table 2, Impact Scale for Comparison of Future Noise Against Existing Noise it states a 3-4.9 dB change would have a noticeable change with moderate impact, a 5 -9.9 dB change, up to a doubling of loudness with substantial impact and a 10 dB or more change, more than a doubling of loudness and a major impact on the environment. In all, a very significant increase. In addition to the impact on the Greenbelt and public enjoyment of the area, the increase in noise would have a negative impact on wildlife abundance which rely on sound for communication, foraging and breeding and survival (Direct and Indirect effects of Noise Pollution alter Biological Communities in and near Noise Exposed Environments. Senzaki, Kadoya, Francis. 2020). This is all at odds with the new High Peak Tourism Strategy. The NPPF, para 185 states to a) 'avoid noise giving rise to significant impacts on health and quality of life' and b) 'Identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason'. In conclusion, Section 5.2.5 brings into question the impartiality of the report as in the 'Discussion on Context' it clearly promotes the acceptance of the proposed scheme by considering the purported wider benefits.

