

Submission ID: [REDACTED]

The process for the hearings were not easy to follow. I was not sent an online link (Microsoft Teams) by the Planning Inspectorate and had to phone the helpline which I found it very difficult to get through on. I was admitted eventually into the meeting literally moments before I was called to speak. This does not seem a fair, transparent process. It has been made extremely difficult to represent my views and advocate for my [REDACTED] in this process.

My name is Melanie Barrow and I am a resident in [REDACTED]. My home will be situated a short distance from the proposed substation.

I am here to speak as an advocate for those with formal diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder who will live overlooking the substation. Many are educated at home and the auditory intrusion from construction and then low hum from the substation will entirely disrupt the ability to concentrate and access online education.

Shockingly, in the applicant's own response in section BEPSG-007 "Noise and Vibration" and EIA (APP-214) they explicitly acknowledge that neurodivergent people are significantly more uniquely sensitive to the specific effects of noise and vibration. Yet, they offer absolutely zero specific mitigation. Having identified a severe mental health and neurological impact, they simply walk away from their responsibility to remedy it.

This impact is dual phased. First, the violent, unpredictable construction noise will trigger distress and meltdowns. Secondly, the long-term operational hum will cause permanent sleep deprivation. Critically autistic people often struggle to regulate their body temperature. In the extreme heat we have just had having a window open at night was important, but if there is continuous noise this would cause an unmanageable sensory crisis. Keeping windows closed to mitigate noise will cause the property to dangerously overheat, directly impacting physical health and making our homes unliveable. If our homes become unsuitable we would of course do anything to help, but we fear with the surrounding energy infrastructure will make our homes unsellable.

Our family have not been included in the developer's Book of Reference as a Category 3 affected party. The applicant has made a flawed blanked assumption that a massive substation will not cause a physical nuisance. This omission is a total failure of diligent inquiry and for children with ASD there is a direct failure of care.

As a public body, the Planning Inspectorate is bound by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Autism meets the statutory definition of a disability. The legal principle in R (Bracking) v DWP dictates that decision-makers must exercise the Public Sector Equality Duty with rigour. If essential information on a disabled individual is missing, the decision-maker has a duty to acquire it. The applicant's environmental noise data relies entirely on neurotypical averages and fails to assess. Because of identified conditions and diagnosis of conditions such as sensory processing disorder, Autism, I ask the Examining Authority to ensure any DCO has full acoustic enclosure and a neurodivergent noise assessment is carried out specifically measuring the low-frequency tonal impact at our boundary against neurodivergent sensory limits by an independent audiologist.

The impact of this development will be catastrophic to young lives and education. To summarise the substation hum will not be a mere “amenity nuisance” but a direct threat to health, development and the ability to live in homes.