

DPD

From: Debbie Holland
Sent: 29 March 2016 13:27
To: DPD
Subject: [CAUTION] Mid Devon District Council Draft Supplementary Planning Document Consultation (15 February 2016 – 29 March 2016)
Attachments: CCCLHPG Response_Solar Consult_March 2016.docx; ATT00001.htm
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FAO: Forward Planning, Mid Devon District Council.

Subject: Mid Devon District Council Draft Supplementary Planning Document Consultation (15 February 2016 – 29 March 2016)

Dear Sir / Madam,

Attached, please find a response to the Mid Devon District Council Draft Supplementary Planning Document Consultation (15 February 2016 – 29 March 2016).

Can you please confirm receipt of the attached response. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Holland on behalf of

Cheldon, Chawleigh & Chulmleigh Landscape & Heritage Protection Group (CCCLHPG)

Mid Devon District Council Draft Supplementary Planning Document Consultation
(15 February 2016 – 29 March 2016)

Please find our comments below:

Special care should be considered where an application is proposed in a 'moderate' landscape area that is within 2km, of a highly sensitive landscape. This can be further exasperated by the surrounding topography and the perceived impacts of the residents in the affected community. The corresponding highly sensitive landscape nature could be compromised easily by such an approval.

Undulating landscapes can appear flat from a different viewpoint and grounds for decisions should be based on the worst views and their impacts, not the acceptable views.

Where a solar development of any size is within the proximity of 2km of any non-financially advantaged resident, then any permissions should seek their agreement for the said venture. Without their permission, doubt as to its acceptance should be given reasonable weight. Greater weight therefore should be afforded to the residential amenity of any residents rather than the applicant's development.

No solar development within 3km of any affected residential community should be considered unless it is a community based project and the affected community do not object to it. This would simply be established by those numbers of people locally writing in either supporting or objecting to it.

Our landscape is our greatest asset, so applications need to be considered with little or no adverse impacts affecting the character of that landscape.

The LPA to ensure that thorough pre consultation occurs, so that affected Parishes and parisioners are fully aware of applications proposed. This includes adjoining parishes adjoining the Mid Devon borders. The process should include all residents within the ZTV, especially those that have objected to renewable energy schemes in the preceding 10 years or those existing on the LPA's database, whichever is the greater.

We are not aware of any other South West Councils consulting on solar and we don't want an open door policy where developers target Mid Devon as a consequence of this draft SPD. Please ensure that there are adequate constraints with the policy so that only limited development can occur.

To first consider the utilization of roof space i.e. on an applicant's farm buildings, as with the extensive roof solar panels at Worthy Dairy Farm that host the Glastonbury Festival.

This could mean:

- I. No valuable field loss to grazing and crops.
- II. Maintain the beauty of the Mid Devon Landscape which has '*high environmental value*' and is prized '*agricultural land*'.
- III. The effect on landscape of '*glint and glare*' would be isolated to the manmade farm buildings instead of despoiling the beauty of natural green fields.
- IV. The solar panels would be protected as they would be part of the farm complex and up high, so '*security measures such as lights and fencing*' would not urbanise and despoil the green fields and to protect the pristine dark skies of 'Mid Devon'.
- V. Protect the '*intrinsic beauty*' and character of the landscape and heritage which brings valued income from tourism to Mid Devon businesses and residents, creating a vibrant and varied economy.

There are far reaching unspoilt panoramic views across Mid Devon, so consider only small '*well-screened*' arrays placed along low lying fields, beside hedgerows, directly beside farm buildings, or near main roads, to mitigate visual impacts.

Any landscape sensitivity maps should include an example of hectare size, by means of a filled in block in the map identifying key' section, that is in scale to the map to show how big an area of land is ie 1 hectare, 10 hectare 5 acre looks like in relation to the Mid Devon area.

Consider that insufficient grid connection and capacity does not lead to more pylons being built, which would further despoil the landscape.

Please consider incorporating the sentiment of the Written Statement to Parliament 25 March 2015, by the Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP, DCLG, into any proposed policy:

"We are encouraged by the impact the guidance is having but do appreciate the continuing concerns, not least those raised in this House, about the unjustified use of high quality agricultural land. In light of these concerns we want it to be clear that any proposal for a solar farm involving the best and most versatile agricultural land would need to be justified by the most compelling evidence."

We hope that Mid Devon will consider the points raised.

D. Holland on behalf of Cheldon, Chawleigh & Chulmleigh Landscape & Heritage Protection Group (CCCLHPG)