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Gillian Clark

From: mike sharon newman [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 January 2014 12:34
To: PlanningPolicy
Subject: URGENT because of 24th January 2014 deadline. Response to North Dorset draft plan.

Dear Mr Warrick **Response to North Dorset Draft Plan.....deadline 24th January 2014**

I contacted your department this morning and was advised to forward my response to you. I sincerely apologise for the lateness of this submission and any possible inconvenience caused. I was away prior Christmas and only became aware late January of this situation and the opportunity to respond, then had IT technical difficulties ,so hope you will bear with me.

I obtained from the Department for Communities & Local Government what I understand to be the new Government guidance entitled "Planning practice guidance for renewable and low carbon energy dated July 2013 " this was in response to concerns I expressed to my local MP about the threat to Dorset's special environment from the escalation of Industrial sized Turbine Windfarm planning applications.

I then endeavoured to obtain and read the Draft Local Plan, but due to the IT difficulties mentioned, only managed to obtain and read part of this document ,so am commenting without being full informed for which I also apologise.

I did contribute some feedback on several topics / paragraph's of the draft plan to Mike Hopper, Parish Councillor of Milborne St Andrew's for his submission, which I understand has already been sent to your department.

My comments now are as follows:

I would like to see consideration given to the inclusion in any final North Dorset Plan of the following wording, extracted from the National Guidance document at paragraph 15
Proposals in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Beauty, and in areas close to them where there could be an adverse impact on the protected area, will need careful consideration. It is imperative that the phrase close to AONB is included because local experience in past & earlier applications across North & West Dorset (where impact affects both Districts,) is that Energy Companies who selecting **low wind sites** for windfarm proposals,then propose siting of Turbines to be on high ridges for economic viability ,which in turn means the adverse Visual Impact extends out into AONBs.)
AONB Dorset and West Wilshire & Cranborne Chase both publicly expressed written concerns regarding Impact on AONBs, in a recent Dorset Windfarm application which borders and affects North & West Dorset jointly ,as I am sure you will be aware.

I have picked out from the same paragraph 15:

"the need for renewable or low carbon energy does not automatically override environmental protections."

" cumulative impacts require particular attention" This is of particular relevance to North Dorset given the corridor affect if several current proposals go through. I feel the whole content of this paragraph requires consideration for some form of inclusion in a local plan, given Landscape, AONB proximity and Heritage aspects in this area if damaged could impact on Tourism a major source of revenue in Dorset as a whole. Also see paragraphs' 39 and 40.

Historically, statements have been made to the effect that targets must be met etc. This new guidance at paragraph 6 states ".....whilst local authorities should design their policies to maximise renewable & low carbon energy development, there is no quota which the local plan has to deliver." This is in my opinion, an opportunity for sensible planning decisions to be made with more emphasis on local consideration of area suitability / impacts, & localism with regard to each future Planning Application.

This is dependent on local plans being adequately constructed. Local Councils / Councillors are best placed to protect local environment when released from imposed conditions/ targets from Central Government as seems to be now happening..

Final concern: Should several proposals for large scale Turbines be approved then proximity of grid connection mentioned nationally at paragraph 12, seems to me a factor for consideration in arriving at decisions as if Pylons are required this would be an additional Visual Impact on our Landscape.

North Dorset is a mix of Urban and Rural diverse interests and conflict of interests could occur but can be overcome in my opinion with Local Plans being devised to cover all interests and so allow for future debate.

Windfarms which I have concentrated on here, should not be sited on "inappropriate" sites, (a decision for Councillors), but rural Dorset benefits us all, whether we are urban or rural dwellers.

Thank you for giving this your consideration.

Sharon Newman

