

Press Release

Wiltshire Council backs calls for a more even distribution of Solar Farms

Sherston, May 22 2024

Campaigners demanding a rethink of the government's policy on solar farms were delighted that Wiltshire Council overwhelmingly supported a motion calling for the more even distribution of large-scale solar farms across Britain.

The motion, brought yesterday by Conservative Councillors Phil Alford and Nick Botterill, argued that the concentration of solar farms in Wiltshire represented a "significant cumulative impact" that risked industrialising the county's countryside.

Councillors attending the full council meeting in County Hall, Trowbridge, heard statements from several members of the public. These included Sir Michael Pitt, who spoke on behalf of the group opposing the proposed 2000 acre, 500MW Lime Down Solar plant in North Wiltshire.

"We believe the Lime Down Solar Farm development is the most damaging assault on the county's landscape in more than a lifetime," said Sir Michael, who served as Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate between 2011 and 2014. "To call it a farm is an aberration. It is a vast industrial complex with battery storage, transformers and ugly solar cells some 4.5 metres high."

"Stop Lime Down supports solar energy," Sir Michael added. "But solar energy development should minimise environmental impact and be located in the right places, including rooftops and brownfield sites. Where additional solar farms are needed they should be limited in size and very carefully located."

Councillors overwhelmingly supported this view. 76 voted in favour of the motion, with six abstaining and only two opposing.

Around 30 supporters of the movement opposing the Lime Down proposal gathered outside County Hall and attended the full meeting inside the council chamber. “We warmly welcome the councillors’ rejection of the government’s ill-advised policy on large-scale solar projects,” said Alex Frost, chairman of Stop Lime Down. “But while we are pleased to have won a significant battle today, we fully recognise that there is a long way to go in this war.”

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