

Halt the march of the wind turbine blight

The current crop of protests against the erection of individual turbines on farms across Mid Devon may make readers think that this is a small and isolated issue. If, however, you look at the number of screening applications submitted to Mid Devon Council it is clear that the erection of wind-turbines could become a monumental problem.

A screening application is unlike a planning application in that it is not disclosed, but a request for information. What it indicates is an

intention on behalf of a developer to submit an application. If you add together the number of existing turbines, the current applications pending consideration and the two dozen or so for which screening opinions have been sought, that makes a total potential of more than fifty wind turbines in a swathe across Mid Devon, from the Blackdown Hills to the Winkleigh area.

Seen at an individual application level one turbine does not look so worrying, but if a developer made an application to build a wind-farm of more than fifty turbines I feel there would be uproar. It is worth noting that the controversial wind-farm at Fullabrook near Barnstaple consists of 22 turbines.

As the planning process stands there is a distinct risk that the beautiful Mid Devon countryside could become a de-facto wind-farm by default.

It is time for the Planning Departments to take a careful look at this and to come up with a strategic plan to halt the "march of the machines" and ensure we do not leave an ugly mess for future generations.

And if you are wondering if a turbine is coming to a field near you then the list looks like this: Blackborough; Bow; Chawleigh; Cheriton Fitzpaine; Coldridge; Lapford; Morchard Bishop; Morebath; Nymet Rowland; Oakford; Silverton; Stoodleigh; Templeton; Uffculme; Zeal Monachorum... and that's just in Mid Devon – and for some villages there are multiple applications.

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