

## MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **REPRESENTATIONAL COMMITTEE** held at the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2015** at **7.00pm**.

### **R/23**     **PRESENT**

Vice Chairman:     Councillor Draper

Councillors:         Gill, Jones and Sheward

Officers:             Gina Wilding, Town Clerk  
Stephanie Williams Admin Assistant

Also Attending:     Unitary Councillors Andy Boddington (Ludlow North)  
Councillor Tracey Huffer (Ludlow East) Councillor Richard  
Huffer (Clee) Councillor Viv Parry (Ludlow South)

### **R/24**     **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Chairman informed Councillors and members of the public of the fire exits, fire assembly point and asked that everyone sign the attendance log.

### **R/25**     **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ginger, Kemp, Lyle and Smithers

### **R/26**     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests  
None

Conflicts of interest  
None

Personal Interest:  
None

### **R/27**     **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)**

There was one member of the public present.

#### **15/01472/FUL Henley Hall Solar Farm**

Mr Middleton is a resident of Lower Ledwyche Ludlow.  
Mr Middleton focused on two main objections to the proposed Solar Farm

## 1. The impact on tourism in the area

This site can be seen from many areas of outstanding natural beauty, Clee Hill, The Shropshire Way and St. Laurences Church. Visitors using the park and ride will be greeted with the site of the solar farm which will blot the views of the beautiful surrounding landscape.

## 2. The impact on recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors

The area is widely used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders because of its close proximity to Ludlow and its outstanding natural beauty. Mr Middleton referred to the many comments objecting to the Solar Farm that have been submitted to Shropshire Council.

Mr Middleton concluded saying that there is no economic or community benefit from the Solar Farm which is proposed by a non British company there will be no local employment benefits and no benefit to the local economy. He asked Ludlow Town Council to object to this application.

## R/28 LUDLOW'S UNITARY COUNCILLORS QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Councillor Boddington (Ludlow North) stated that any large application is likely to present problems and raised the following points:

- At the Local Joint Committee meeting on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June at Knowbury Village Hall it was discovered that Shropshire council had not taken into account the amount of ponds that would be affected in the area and the protected species that may be harmed or deterred from using the habitat in the area particularly the 'Crested Newt'
- The grading of the soil in the area, the neighbouring fields are good agricultural land and soil which brings into question why this particular site is graded lower?
- The application should be considered with reference to Shropshire Council Core Strategies CS5, CS6 & CS17.
- The visual impact on the landscape is extremely important in terms of tourism and recreation.
- The comments from 'Historic England' refer to the National Policy and Planning Framework 2012, which has considerable weight in planning terms.

Councillor Richard Huffer (Clee Ward) reiterated concerns regarding the application and advised the committee that a further application had been made on an adjacent field for screening for another solar farm.

Councillor Parry (Ludlow South) also raised concerns regarding the application and supported comments that had been made by Mr Middleton and Councillors Boddington and Huffer. Councillor Parry added that that she had visited the site along with officers from Shropshire Council. She stated that although the panel

were non reflective the frames are made of a light reflective material an dht einpact of 22,00 would be significant; there will also be pollution caused by lorries which will be in operation seven days a week, the grading of the soil as mentioned by Councillor Boddington and that there are more suitable sites that would have a less detrimental visual impact on the landscape.

R/29

### 15/01472/FUL Henley Hall Solar Farm

Councillor Draper thanked the Unitary Councillors and Mr Middleton for their comments on the Henley Hall Solar Farm. Councillor Draper was of the opinion that the land would be of greater benefit to the community for recreational purposes and to the maintain the thriving wildlife in the area as damage to hedgerows, trees and ponds would take many years to re establish themselves.

Councillor Draper referred to the inherent inefficiencies of large scale remote solar farms with a quote from Tim Dobson CEO of Switch 2 Renewable, *"around two thirds of the energy created by the site at Red Lodge is lost when it's transported and that means it's not producing enough electricity to be useful to the National Grid"*.

Councillor Draper also referred to the statements from the National Policy and Planning Framework 2012, specifically *Para 115 & Para 128*:

Councillor Sheward raised his concerns about tonight's meeting and the committees ability and expertise to comment and object to this application. He also agreed with the comments made on the visual impact and the effects on recreation and tourism.

### **RESOLVED (3:0:1)**

**RS/TG**

To object to 15/01472/FUL Henley Hall Solar Farm for the following reasons:

Ludlow Town Council representations reflect serious concerns expressed by the residents and business owners of Ludlow.

Members object to the proposal because the location of the site is unsuitable and will have a detrimental effect on the countryside & wildlife, recreation, and the heritage assets that, as stated in Shropshire Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy, make Ludlow is a 'nationally important heritage asset' and 'Ludlow will provide a focus for development, whilst respecting its historic character.' 'The historic town centre is set largely on a ridge above the River Teme, with fine streets of historic buildings running down this central spine. Ludlow is an important tourist destination and has achieved international renown as a centre for quality local food and drink and Michelin starred restaurants.'

The proposed solar farm will have a significant detrimental impact in with regard to:

### **CS5 Countryside and Green Belt**, which states:

- New development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside and Green Belt.

Subject to the further controls over development that apply to the Green Belt, development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits.

- Agricultural/horticultural/forestry/mineral related development, although proposals for large scale new development will be required to demonstrate that there are no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts;

The proposed site will be visible from Whitcliffe Common, St Laurence's Church, The Shropshire Way (public footpath 0539/8/1), Squirrel Lane, Rocks Green, which will be detrimental for residents and tourism in Ludlow. The area surrounding Henley Hall is an important easy access route into the countryside for local residents and visitors to Ludlow and a large scale solar farm will detrimentally change the character of this area.

The rural location and the readily identified industry specific problems of significant loss of power through transportation through the national grid infrastructure undermine sustainability arguments and there are no identifiable local community benefits because the work and revenue will benefit only Kronos.

### **CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles**

Specifically in relation to this application, the proposal does not meet requirements to:

- Protect, restore, conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate;
- Contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities, including safeguarding residential and local amenity and the achievement of local standards for the provision and quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- Makes the most effective use of land and safeguards natural resources including high quality agricultural land, geology, minerals, air, soil and water;

### **CS 17 Environmental Networks**

Specifically in relation to this application, the proposal does not meet requirements to:

- Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors;
- Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets

- Does not have a significant adverse impact on Shropshire's environmental assets and does not create barriers or sever links between dependant sites;

With reference to the National Policy and Planning Framework 2012, the following paragraphs are particularly pertinent to the site and application and the town council supports the concerns raised by Historic England in their letter dated 4 June 2015 recommending that the application is refused or differed until such a time as the requirements of para 128 of the NPPF have been met.

For reference National Policy and Planning Framework 2012:

*Para 115: Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.*

*Para 128: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.*

Meeting closed at 7:30pm

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Chairman

Date

NB: No Closed Session minutes will be issued

