

Grahame French  
Shropshire Council  
The Gateway  
The Auction Yard  
CRAVEN ARMS  
SY7 9BW

Your Ref: 14/02873/FUL  
Our Ref: ph\_120814\_14\_02873 Whitton solar

12 August 2014

Dear Grahame

**14/02873/FUL Erection of ground mounted solar farm along with associated infrastructure, landscaping and ancillary structures on agricultural land, Whitton Solar Farm, Caynham, Shropshire**

**The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership objects to this application.**

Though the site lies outside the AONB, its closest point is around 500m from the AONB boundary. We do not believe that the absence of significant impact on the AONB claimed in the application's supporting documents has been adequately demonstrated. Aside from this however, the development would have a substantial direct impact on a valuable narrow swathe of countryside between the AONB and Ludlow, which is valuable to the setting of both. The Shropshire Hills and Ludlow are of great importance to tourism in the county, and through our involvement in sustainable tourism in the area, we believe this development could have a detrimental effect.

The following policies support the position that this application should be refused:

Shropshire Core Strategy Policy CS17: Environmental Networks states:

*Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire's environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development:*

- *Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors. Further guidance will be provided in SPDs concerning the natural and built environment;*
- *Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge.*

Shropshire Council SAMDev Policy MD12: The Natural Environment states:

*In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the conservation, enhancement and restoration of Shropshire's natural assets will be achieved by:*

1. *Ensuring that the social or economic benefits of development can be demonstrated to clearly outweigh the harm to natural assets where proposals are likely to have an unavoidable significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:*
  - i. *the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB;*
  - ii. *locally designated biodiversity and geological sites;*

- iii. priority species;*
- iv. priority habitats*
- v. important woodlands, trees and hedges;*
- vi. ecological networks*
- vii. geological assets;*
- viii. visual amenity;*
- ix. **landscape character and local distinctiveness.** (emphasis added)*

Yours sincerely

Phil Holden  
AONB Partnership Manager