

Councillors fear solar farm plans could 'dominate' skyline in AONB

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PLANS to install a solar farm and battery storage in fields close to St Austell have attracted objections from local councillors concerned about the impact the development could have on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A planning application for the solar farm on land at Tregorrick Farm has been submitted to Cornwall Council by Mr M Hilditch.

It is due to go before the council's central sub-area planning committee on Tuesday and planning officers have recommended the plans should be approved.

However, local councillors have raised concerns that the solar farm could impact on a neighbouring Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The 6MW solar farm would generate enough power for 1,260 homes and there are plans to export some of the power to a nearby sewage treatment plant.

In addition, the applicant is in discussions with nearby St Austell Rugby Club and St Austell Community Hospital about supplying power there as well.

A report set to go to the committee states: "The provision of renewable energy, particularly at a time when the Government and Cornwall Council have declared a climate change emergency, weighs heavily in favour of the proposal.

"It is very important for the planning system to support the desired transi-

tion to a low-carbon future and the renewable energy output proposed by this application would help to address this target."

The report states that, while there is an AONB 200m from the development site, officers consider that the impact on the AONB would be "minor-moderate adverse".

However, local Cornwall councillor Michael Bunney objected to the plans and said he felt there would be more than moderate harm to the AONB.

James Mustoe, former Cornwall councillor for the area, also objected, saying he felt the proposed solar farm would "dominate" the skyline for people walking in the local area.

He also said the site was a greenfield and it would be better to use brownfield sites for such a development.

Pentewan Valley Parish Council has also objected, saying the site is on a slope and planning guidance suggests solar farms should be located on flat sites.

The parish council also said the development would be "industrial creep into a rural setting".

The Cornwall AONB unit said it did not need to provide comment on the application as it was outside the AONB.

A number of objections have also been submitted from members of the public, mainly about the impact on the AONB, landscape, environment and loss of agricultural land.

The central sub-area planning committee is due to discuss the application when it next meets on Tuesday.



» The Concrete Chaos competition took place at Concrete Waves skatepark in Newquay
Hamish Lawson

Skaterboarders excel at Concrete Chaos competition

A competition at which dozens of young people came together to battle it out at a Newquay skatepark has been hailed a huge success.

Concrete Chaos, at Concrete Waves skatepark, featured 60 competitors from all over the UK showing off their skills in the Californian Bowl and along the street course.

A spokesman said: "Skateboarding has become a hot topic recently in mainstream media and Britain's eyes are now drawn to the breathtaking sport.

"Now that a new generation of promising young skaters are making their professional debuts and catching the attention and the hearts of the public, the sport is building a strong sense of community spirit and left us wanting more.

"And that's exactly what was on offer at Newquay's Concrete Waves. It was a fantastic family day with a great atmosphere and everyone went home with a smile on their face."

Concrete Waves regular Lola Tambling won the women's competition, bagging £1,000 and a pile of prizes. Sam Pulley, from Wales, won the men's competition and Bournemouth's Richie Inskip was the masters winner.

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Report to the planning committee

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