

North Devon

"My heart mourns for what is coming to North Devon. We are sleep-walking into one of the world's biggest environmental disasters."

With reference to your front page last week entitled: "Communities' Windfall". Public faith in the planning process is, I believe, being seriously undermined and I believe the Government should stamp out the process of goodwill payments altogether. They can so easily be seen as simply "buying" planning permission.

Normally, in the main (apart from wind turbine proposals) community benefits which may arise in new developments are addressed through the Section 106 process. Legal enforceability of such 106 agreements is encouraged by Government policy.

This ensures that a reasonable share of development profits goes to the public good - such as affordable housing etc.

However, goodwill payments are entirely unsatisfactory when compared to Section 106 agreements in all respects. In many cases goodwill payments are offered to whoever the local developer feels like offering them to (often the nearest parish council and local residents closest to the proposed development) - rather than openly considered and channelled through the established consultation processes of the planning system run by local authorities.

The payments offered to date also often have no means of being legally enforced. Attempts by the power companies to focus on particular parish councils and other groups, is, in my opinion, unfair and potentially very divisive.

I am certainly no mathematician, but regarding the income to the developers from Fullabrook: 22MW installed capacity x 8,760 hours in a year x 30 per cent (the industry standard capacity factor) gives a total of 173,448 MWh per annum. Multiply this by £60 which is the current average price of wholesale electricity and you get £10,406,880.

Multiply the same figure by £50 which is the average value of a ROC at the moment and you get £8,672,400. Add the two figures together and you get the income per annum at today's prices which is 19 million pounds! So; in ONE YEAR these turbines will earn 19-MILLION POUNDS and the community goodwill payment in ONE YEAR is approx £128,000! Makes the community fund look rather small, doesn't it?

The facts are that we are all being misled by Green Party propaganda.

Even if we turned Britain into one giant wind factory (and lived in mud huts) we would still not meet unachievable carbon targets.

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Joanne Bell, Yelland.

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