

Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group – 11 March 2025

Public Questions and Answers

<p>Paul Elstone</p>	<p>Question 1:</p> <p>A year ago, I asked questions about Anaerobic Digester (AD) and Solar Farms including questions about numbers and land usage. When I asked my questions the answers, I received very clearly indicated that Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) had no clear idea of not only land usage but also of power generation capacity and number of installations.</p> <p>That MDDC were placing reliance on data from various sources but there were no definitive results. Having looked in detail at the data sources used by MDDC the data is seriously incomplete. I am being polite. I am more than happy to validate that statement.</p> <p>Will this Committee revisit the requirement to have a complete data set showing land usage and power generation capacity for each AD and Solar Farm in Mid Devon?</p> <p>Information that is readily available and simple to collate, this if you know where and are prepared to look. It is not time consuming to do so.</p> <p>Response provided by the Director of Place & Economy:-</p> <p>At the request of the Scrutiny Committee, a report was presented to its October 2024 meeting “regarding Solar Panel Farms and Anaerobic Digesters looking at the quantity of sites and how much land was devoted to renewable energies.”</p> <p>For the purposes of the report, statistics published by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) on renewable energy installed in Mid Devon were used. This data provides a single source of information for a variety of renewable energy installations within the District. This data is accredited, official government data.</p>
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Discussions were had around various matters related to the report/topic, including around changes to government policy and around some of the challenges encountered in enabling and accommodating renewable energy installations within the District. Discussions also touched on the potential to draw together information from other data sources and the issues associated with this in terms of capacity to undertake this work (there is no 'need' to do so and no available resource) and a lack of expertise to produce accurate and robust information.

No specific requests or recommendations were made by the Scrutiny committee on the back of the report and it was formally noted by the committee. Minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#)

It is therefore not considered necessary to specifically compile further information at this time and outside of other processes, such as the development of the new Local Plan, when existing accredited data sources already exist, when current officer capacity is constrained, other work pressures are high and technical expertise to enable or support this work does not exist.