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Planning Department
South Shropshire District Council
Stone House, Corve Street
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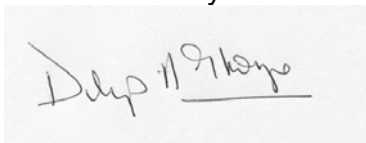
Dear Sirs

Re: Planning Number: 1/08/20502/f Bishop's Castle Biomass Power Project

I write in support of the Bishop's Castle Biomass Power Project. I have no connection financial or otherwise with the developers; my interest arises from employment in the electricity industry where as a regional manager of the Office of Electricity Regulation (now Ofgem) I was concerned in all aspects of electricity generation, distribution and supply both in the UK and overseas. I wholly support this project for the following reasons:

1. Diversity of Supply – Following privatisation of the industry the “dash for gas” resulted in a reliance on gas to fuel electricity generation plant. The UK gas fields are now running out and we will become reliant on gas from other countries, specifically Russia. The Government's answer is new nuclear plant; a realistic but not particularly good option given decommissioning costs. We need to diversify into other fuel sources. In Shropshire wood products are an excellent choice. Wood is used widely in this area for domestic heating; why not for electricity generation?
2. Efficiency – Unlike large power stations where all the heat is lost, combined heat and power plants make use of both power and heat, making it a very efficient process. However to make use of the heat the plant must be sited near to community buildings, businesses and housing. The Business Park in Bishop's Castle is therefore an ideal site for the plant. The proposed buildings on the site do not appear to me to be obtrusive.
3. Security of supply – Embedded Generation, that is power plants within the distribution system of a local network, strengthens that network. Distribution Network companies will, of course, never admit that but it is a known fact. Bishop's Castle is a growing community and people's expanding use of electrical equipment increases demand. At some point the local network would need to be upgraded. An embedded generator makes upgrading less necessary.
4. Power Losses – The further the distance a community is from the nearest power station, the bigger are the electricity losses. Power supply from a very local generator reduces losses on the system to almost nothing; thus more efficiency gains.
5. Renewables – I do not wish to get into the “renewables” argument. However it is interesting to note that our nearest power generation plant is at Ironbridge, a 970MWe coal-fired plant and the only power station in Shropshire. Friends of the Earth claim it is the 2nd worst polluter in the UK. Because of its emissions it is only allowed to run for 20,000 hours between 1 Jan 2008 and permanent closure at end of 2015 (about 55 hrs/week). Surely a local wood-fired plant is better than that?

Yours sincerely



Dilys A Thorpe