

Clarification welcomed

The chairman of a Stone protest group has welcomed Staffordshire County Council's comments last week to clarify its position on wind farms.

With around a dozen applications being considered by district planning authorities, the county council's Cabinet has taken the unusual step of stating its policy on wind turbines.

County Councillor Mike Maryon, Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment, said: "We have become aware that some of the companies submitting planning applications to create wind farms have been citing the previous county council's policies in support of their application.

"Whilst the county council accepts the contribution that renewable energy plays in tackling climate change, we feel passionately about our beautiful county.

"We are concerned about the impact on the countryside of wind turbines, and are looking closely at the place this technology has in our strategy to reduce the county's carbon emissions. This review is due for completion in May 2010."

Paul Shaw, chairman of STOP (Stone & Trent Valley Oppose Severn Trent Water) said he welcomed the county council's statement. But he added: "It is the borough council who decide the planning applications and whilst they will take into account the county's views, they do not have to agree with them when considering any planning applications, but it all helps."

STOP are fighting Severn Trent's plans to put up three wind turbines, which would be nearly as tall as Blackpool Tower, on low-lying land in a nature area near Stone.