

Bronhuddyn,  
Brooks,  
Berriew,  
Welshpool,  
Powys,  
SY21 8QN

Committee Clerk,  
Environment and Sustainability Committee,  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA  
21/09/11

Dear Sir,

I write with reference to the proposals to the massive wind farm developments proposed for Mid Wales.

Whilst understanding the need to review energy supply I feel that the current feedback process is totally flawed; the decision has already been taken through the TAN 8 policy and it is this that should be the subject of consultation and reviewed. Without this policy there would be no need for a hub or the related infrastructure of pylons. It is the TAN 8 policy, which should have been, and still should be, the subject of consultation.

It would appear from various publications that TAN 8 is incorrect on a number of grounds, but primarily the fact that wind power is unreliable as highlighted in studies by various countries with far greater experience in this field. There is a mismatch between supply and demand with regard to windfarms and therefore no alternative method of generating power will be replaced by this proposal so one has to question what it will actually achieve apart from 'ticking a box' somewhere.

I would therefore like to ask the following questions;

1. Why has TAN 8 not been reviewed as was part of the policy?
2. The construction of these massive wind farm developments will have significant implications in terms of the ground on which they are based. This in turn will have implications on the flood plain, which already suffers from regular flooding. Building access roads, crane pads, and concrete foundations, felling trees and draining peat bogs change the soil composition at the wind farm site. The result is faster run-off of water during heavy rainfall with the associated risk of flooding in the lowlands. What studies have been done to investigate the impact of this?
3. The road network in the area is basic in the extreme – what studies have been done to calculate the impact this will have on the local area and what action will be taken to alleviate further chaos caused by the movement of the necessary large loads?
4. At the presentations only certain parties involved in this project were present and available to answer questions, which made them meaningless. Could the consultation be done again with all parties present and prepared to answer any relevant questions, as this may allow people to make a considered response?
5. Wind turbines are promoted by both the UK government and Welsh Assembly as an effective strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and thereby counteract global warming trends. However recent studies show there is very little evidence that this is the case and indeed mounting evidence that wind generated power is not carbon friendly. No evidence I have seen confirms these claims. Is this publically available?
6. Mid Wales is a naturally beautiful landscape, a factor which seems to have come as a surprise to many actively involved in this proposed development. The planning recommendation for wind farm developments suggest that they should be of a scale and in keeping with the surrounding environment. How can such a development on

the scale that it basically makes Mid Wales into a large power station, be considered to be of a suitable scale?

7. This area of Mid Wales is heavily reliant on tourism. There are 2 key factors which need to be considered; firstly the number of visitors and secondly the spend per head by visitors as given the nature of some of the attractions i.e. pheasant shoots, this could be disproportionately high. The impact of this proposal could be massive on tourism in the area and have considerable detrimental repercussions. It would appear that from the presentations that this has not been taken into consideration. Can you confirm whether this has been considered and provide firm evidence as to how this impact will be alleviated?
8. Wind power is one of the most expensive forms of electricity; it appears to survive on direct and indirect subsidies. Can definite figures be provided as to what subsidies are being provided for the complete wind farm proposal associated with TAN 8?
9. It appears that the consultation process is engineered to divide and conquer the local community. Could you please confirm what payments have already been made to landowners with regard to this proposed development?

With regard to the specific question as to whether the Brooks valley where we live would be appropriate for power lines, I would like to register the following comments;

1. The area is part of a flood plain and the whole area drains the upland water through underground streams from aquifers and springs which flow from all sides of the valley. Several springs and wells are marked on both old and new maps. Many residents rely on this flow for their water supply. Disturbing this flow of water by constructing pylon foundations may jeopardise the water supply to homes and working farms. The effects of water run-off generated by construction work could lead to greater flooding and possible contamination of drinking water.
2. The road infrastructure is not suitable for the likely increase in traffic and the scale of that traffic. Widening the roads is not appropriate or physically possible in certain places.
3. The rural nature of the area means it is rich in wildlife, flora and fauna. The impact of this development would be catastrophic.
4. There are at least two tourist businesses in this community that may well be threatened by the destruction of the natural landscape, as their main promotion is the peace, tranquillity and pastoral innocence of the area.
5. During the winter this valley attracts many tourists staying in Berriew, Bettws or locally who wish to shoot game birds released into the Brooks area from the Vaynor and Bettws Hall Estates. It is likely such tourists would simply find alternative venues for their pursuits if this development were to go ahead.
6. The RAF use the valley for training helicopter pilots in low level (tree-top) flying and pylons will not be helpful to them. RAF Valley jets also practice low-level flight over this area.
7. In the case of an emergency (our nearest emergency hospital is Shrewsbury) the local air ambulance needs to use the valley to land in, as surrounding areas are too steep.
8. Finally, the scenic views of the Brooks Valley are stunning and it is immensely frustrating to hear that the proposed designation of the valley has been done by a 'desk top' study.

My proposal is as follows;

- TAN 8 should be reviewed as a matter of urgency. Part of this review should be a detailed consultation with all the necessary facts available.
- Alternative methods should be considered as on shore wind does not appear to be efficient or reliable. Instead of trying to provide more electricity to meet demand surely an alternative would be to reduce the demand on the grid. Instead of spending multi million pounds on these wind farm developments spend the money on installing solar panels on private, public and commercial properties in the area. This would surely lead to a reduction in consumption, have no impact on the natural environment and create jobs.

- As so many people travelled from Mid Wales to Cardiff to highlight the frustration with this proposal I suggest it would be appropriate for Carwyn Jones and other relevant A.M.'s to visit the area and actually talk to the people who will be directly affected by this proposal. Carwyn Jones is quoted as saying to delegates as he addressed the Renewable UK Cymru's fifth annual conference in Cardiff whilst speaking about renewable energy "as we enter this new period, we must ensure that the public understand both what is happening and why it is happening. Without this for example the planning process, whether for devices or grid connections at scale, will continue to be fraught". I suggest he should support his words with actions and come to Mid Wales and meet the people concerned as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully,



N M James