

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 96 – George Whitworth

Dear Dr Hawkins

I would like to draw your attention to the following in relation to the proposed windfarm development in Mid Wales

1. Powys County Council vote reflected the feelings of the county in their meeting at Welshpool market. Surely Welsh Government/Westminster must take note of our democratic system - not just call the planning applications 'in' - and then override all other opinions.
2. Wind farm energy is an inefficient way of producing power - seldom reaching full potential - averaging well below maximum theoretical output (as low as 20% according to many reliable reports).
3. Wind farms occupy vast areas of land - not brown site areas - but prime landscape visible to all for miles around. These upland areas are also vital in the control of flood management to those downstream ie Severn Valley etc. Those that live/work in flood plains are not even allowed to move earth from one field to another. These developments take large areas of water storage land out of use and will have a catastrophic effect on farms, business and homes in the flood plain. All the infrastructure put in place over the last decades will be irrelevant.
4. The economic mainstay of this area is tourism. Visitors will not come to Mid Wales if the natural beauty of the area disappears and the roads are congested with construction traffic.
5. In practice:
 - What provision has been made to decommission the structures and reinstate the landscape when wind farms are found to be uneconomic/ ineffective and energy production replaced by new methods? What provision has been made to remove the concrete foundations? The areas will become giant scrap heaps. What consideration/provision/mitigation has been made to compensate for the destruction of large areas of woodland for access roads?
 - What consideration/provision/mitigation has been made for offsetting the enormous carbon footprint of the thousands of tons of concrete necessary?
 - What consideration/provision has been made to ensure emergency services can operate while the infrastructure is being carried to site (including replacement blades etc for decades to come) and to compensate for the carbon emissions from the necessary transport?
 - What provision has been made to compensate those losing their jobs/livelihoods by the reduction in tourism? Any jobs created during the initial construction will soon disappear - maintenance will be carried out by a few specialists - probably from overseas!
 - What consideration has been given to Draper who quantified the risk to homes/schools/business from electric/magnetic fields - both in health and wellbeing terms?
 - What provision/mitigation has been considered to compensate those properties blighted by the developments both visually and healthwise?

If wind power was an efficient, environmentally friendly and economically viable form of energy, there would be some reason for forcing its construction on Mid Wales. Sadly this is not the case - companies will only be interested in developing and maintaining these sites whilst the population subsidise them. Mid Wales will be blighted for doubtful, ill considered political expediency. Please consider the alternatives : Severn Barrage (24 hours/365 days /year and over 20 times more capacity - $8\text{GW} = 24 \times 1.5\text{GW} \times 20\%$): tidal stream technology: new age Thorium nuclear plants: multiple solar panels for communities/houses etc.

Yours faithfully

George Whitworth