

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 110 – Jane Stewart

Dear Committee Members,

I urge you to respond to the thousands of concerned signatories to petitions on these subjects and to institute a fundamental review of

TAN8 and of the major traffic issues which will result from the building of huge windfarms, pylons and at least one hub in Mid Wales.

Since TAN8 was first issued, much more has been learned about the ineffectiveness of windpower as an energy source: its unreliability, high cost and relatively low production levels are now clearly acknowledged by an increasing number of authorities in this field.

This alone, I believe, warrants a fresh examination of the subject, as does the fact that TAN8 has encouraged, probably unintentionally, plans for the expansion and repowering of existing windfarms outside the SSAs and for large-scale infrastructure development. The vast scale of all these plans will have a devastating effect on the economy and environment of Mid Wales which was barely considered when TAN8 was first issued. Tourism is a vital part of the economy of the area, and of Wales as a whole, and there is no doubt that it will be severely damaged by the creation of an industrial landscape of turbines and pylons - with much consequent unemployment at a time of already severe job shortages. Surely it would be wiser to build on the beauty of Mid Wales and to develop it so that it can make a greater contribution to the economy of Wales, rather than to destroy it and thereby create both human misery and a drain on public resources?

The environmental damage, too, will be immense, both in the destruction of wildlife habitat and in the vastly increased danger of flooding in the valleys because of the removal of peat on the uplands to create concrete bases for turbines and pylons. Again, dealing with the after-effects of flooding will be very expensive both at government and personal level.

Very little consideration seems to have been given to the huge transport problems which will be created by this vast building programme.

The existing roads and bridges in the area are too small and weak to accommodate the number and size of the loads needed to complete these proposals, hence much expensive rebuilding will be required. The disruption to the life of local residents over 5-7 years will be immense, as acknowledged by Powys County Council in their statement

'3,300 abnormal loads Monday to Friday taking approximately 5 years' (Powys Wind Farms Access Routes Study Report, September 2008).

The resultant daily traffic jams will surely spell the death knell of towns such as Newtown (already struggling to overcome current traffic jams which cause motorists to avoid the area if possible).

The vast amount of CO2 emissions resulting from this building programme seriously undermines the very superficial claims to green credentials put forward on behalf of windpower. Nuclear or some other conventional power supply will always be required as a backup to wind farms. Please take this opportunity to review TAN8.

Yours faithfully,
Jane Stewart