
Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 140 - Cyngor Cymuned CARNO Community Council

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21st September 2011

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas
Chairman, Environment & Sustainability Committee
c/o The Committee Clerk
Environment & Sustainability Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Lord Elis-Thomas

Environment & Sustainability Committee Inquiry into Energy Policy & Planning in Wales.

In my capacity as Chairman of Carno Community Council, I am writing on behalf of the Council to advise you of the contribution we wish to make to the above inquiry.

Carno, in Mid Wales, is identified in TAN8 as being a principal area for the development of windfarms. In-fact, the community is in a unique position in as much as it has hosted a major windfarm prior to TAN8 with Carno 1 being constructed in 1996 by RWE, which at the time was the largest windfarm in Europe. It was through the work the Council undertook in association with the landowners and RWE that the concept of 'Community Trust Funds' arose. We believe Carno was the first of such funds and the procedures used in Carno have been quoted as examples of good practise in various reports (including TAN8) and has been used as the model by other communities when creating their own trusts.

Since, the construction of Carno 1 we have seen the commissioning of Carno 2 in 2009 and are aware that there are 3 more proposals for windfarms that will directly affect our community.

(Tirwynt for which planning permission has been granted and 2 others which are going through consultation phases)

The windfarms in Carno have played an important part in sustaining the social and economic fabric of the local community. It is generally recognised that it is virtually impossible to sustain a livelihood through farming alone. In Carno it is very difficult for identify a farm where a member(s) of the family do not have a second source of income which is vital in sustaining the viability of the farm. The windfarms have allowed landowners to diversify and the income generated has allowed sons and daughters to remain in farming. I would like to draw the Committees attention to how more local people are becoming directly involved in windfarm developments through the formation of syndicates to manage windfarm projects. The Council sees these as advantageous as the projects are not a scale as proposed by the energy companies and consequently have minimal impact on the infrastructure of the area.

I must also mention the benefits of the Trust Fund to Carno. Without this income (especially in the current climate) many of the village organisations would have folded. The Trust has been able to help those going on to further education and assist the creation of new organisations such as a First Responders Group and After School Club. It is appreciated that 'Trust Funds' are an emotive subject but everyone needs to acknowledge the benefit they bring.

The Council would also like to make you aware of its position to the National Grid proposals and I have included the response made to the National Grid. The Council's Minutes show that:-

'In considering the issues raised by the Mid Wales Connection Project, Councillors were mindful of the unique conditions affecting Carno in relation to the wind energy industry and the proposals to upgrade the National Grid network in Mid Wales. While recognising that the need to upgrade the National Grid is a consequence of the windfarm developments in Mid Wales, the Council was reminded by the Clerk that it was only being asked to comment on the Connection Project and not on windfarm developments. Based on the experience of the past 12 years, the Council felt that the community was generally not adverse to windfarms developments per se.

Carno has been and remains at the fore-front of wind farm developments. The Community has a higher an average percentage of the population directly involved in realizing a livelihood from wind energy developments. The income from the wind farms in Carno has and will remain an important factor in sustaining the predominantly agricultural nature of the community and additionally, through the Community Trust Fund, help maintain the fabric of the Community.

Historically, the Council has supported the windfarm developments proposed for Carno especially where they are being undertaken by local people. However, the Council is mindful of the concerns within the community about the proposed configuration to provide the connection required to the National Grid. In simplistic terms, it was felt that the National Grid proposal is a design issue albeit a very important one. If the visual impact of the proposal (particularly the pylons) could be negated then perhaps the opposition might be diminished.

At the end of their discussion Councillors adopted the following motion in relation to the Mid Wales Connection Project:-

'Because of the unique circumstances appertaining to Carno, as touched upon in the above record of their discussion, the Community Council felt that it should maintain a neutral position on the proposals put forward in the Mid Wales Connection Project and offer no formal comment'

If your Committee feels it would be beneficial to consult further with the Council on any of the points that have been made we would be delighted to host a meeting.

Thank you for allowing the Council to contribute to your inquiry.

Yours sincerely

T.H.Thomas

T.H. Thomas
Chairman, Cyngor Cymuned Carno Community Council