

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 163 – Dr S Hart

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Dear, Dafydd Elis-Thomas,

Thank you for affording the affected members of the local community the opportunity to be part of the discussion process. I, like many, have a number of views relating to the topics that can be broadly placed into the following groupings:- Personal, Community, Wales and UK.

Regarding the Personal issues, irrespective of the usefulness of the generation system, my major concern is the reduction of my family's standard of life and loss of my properties worth due to the placement of pylons. I have kept up to date on the statistical and medical papers regarding the health risks associated with pylons. With or without the strong medical link to cancer at present, we will worry about our children's health. I am sure the link will be found soon.

Regarding the Community issues, again irrespective of the usefulness of the generation system, the introduction of a large scale hub and lower voltage connections will adversely affect my community and reduce the attractiveness of the local environment (Powys) for both a place to live and a place to work. The latter is already affecting my employers business and tourism. Having lived in the local for over ten years I have witnessed our problematic road system at first hand and would not wish to permit any more lorries, especially wide loads, to damage it and to constrict the throughput of goods and tourists which again affects the community and businesses.

Regarding Wales the issue of generation and connection is important. As an engineer who has kept a watchful eye on our environmental credentials for many years, I have looked at many options regarding power generation so that as a country we can "do our bit" to reduce the affect we have on the environment. On shore wind, unfortunately, does not rank highly when you consider the full implications for construction, transmission and guarantee of service. In all cases there are better and more cost effective solutions. It is true that if we wish to make the best use of our renewable fuels we face having to decrease the geographical coupling between generation and utilisation, however, that is no excuse for damaging Wales's reputation in order to provide a sub-optimum solution. Locally, a larger reduction in "Green House Gas" would be provided through transport initiatives and helping industry and homeowners to reduce energy usage. This is not of course restricted to electrical energy. The transportation and production of the concrete required for the wind turbine bases will in fact increase harmful gas production during the construction phase. This gas will be exhausted locally which from a short term health prospective is actually very bad.

Regarding the UK this is a matter for policy and subsidies. From a local perspective it seems grossly wrong to subdivide the generation planning permissions by peak capacity and to permit the decisions regarding the larger farms to be taken outside of Wales. This subdivision has simply lead to one governmental instrument fighting with the other to the detriment of the people both are supposed to serve. I have my doubt as to whether the WG can bring about a change of direction from the Westminster Parliament on this issue which leaves devolution of responsibility as the only useful option. When you decide to opt for a particular technology you always find the need for subsidies to seed the market before bulk production can lower the costs. However, I do object to paying extra on my electricity bill for a scheme that will devalue my home and harm my family. If wind is to provide part of our ongoing strategy then offshore generation and transmission is in fact the only sensible system. This is already well understood.

In much of this, as with many topics with both a local and national importance, there will be conflicting views due to conflicting priorities. I only hope that the voices of those of us that will have to suffer locally will be heard and given appropriate weight. On some occasions it does seem as if we are

fighting against groups that have already played this discussion through for other locations and have the resources and expertise to beat back most opposition

Yours sincerely,

Dr S Hart