

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 176 – Mike Blood

Dear Sir/Madam

I feel that it is important that the committee consider the following aspects of Welsh and UK planning policy.

Firstly, the UK government at Westminster has already announced that it will not devolve any more energy powers to WAG. This therefore makes the statements of the First Minister and the Environment Minister on TAN 8 and targets obsolete. This means that the UK government can pass any wind farm scheme over 50MW in any area with out regard to the statement or aspirations of the First Minister. Therefore TAN 8 as envisaged now by the First Minister is unworkable. This means that we here in Mid Wales are faced with our county being industrialised with hundreds of wind turbines and miles of pylons.

If all the schemes, as planned go ahead this will mean huge engineering works across Mid Wales and other TAN 8 areas of Wales for years to come. This will involve new road building and widening including miles of new roads across moor land. Millions of tons of concrete will be dumped into the moor land for foundations for the wind turbines. There has been no analysis of carbon loss because of this and many of the sites for Mid Wales wind farms are on peat or acid grassland. If Wales wishes to save carbon then this is guaranteed to have the opposite effect. There is now much evidence that wind turbines do not save any carbon due to their building techniques and risible output which was 19% of capacity in 2010. Wind, as I am sure you know, has to be backed up by either coal or more often gas and this has a carbon cost. These fossil fuel power plants have to be kept running even when there is wind to be ready to produce power when the wind drops. This is a seriously inefficient way of producing electricity and in any sane world wind would have been dropped years ago. However, our politicians seem to believe we can keep the power on via dogma alone.

Have the committee considered the carbon cost of 5 new pylon routes across Mid Wales? Have any carbon costings been done for these routes? The answer is no.

Have the committee considered the carbon costs of all the thousands and thousands of trees that WAG is planning to fell in our (yes the peoples) forests? Plants and trees store carbon via photosynthesis and felling trees will release it all back into the atmosphere. Here in Powys WAG plan to fell forests at Dyfnant, Rhyd Ddu and private forests at Carnedd Wen are also targeted. There are also TAN 8 areas at Clocaenog and Brechfa. Who has done the carbon costings on all this felling? The answer is no body.

Have the committee considered the conclusions of the transport plan for Mid Wales that said that over 3300 giant lorries were needed just for the wind turbine components and over 100,000 other lorry movements over 10 years to supply all the other components (stone, concrete, cranes etc). What carbon costings have been put on this? Have the committee considered (as the report makes clear) that this will lead to grid lock in Mid Wales destroying the local economy and tourist industry in the process? This report hasn't even factored in the plans for the grid reinforcement that will require thousands more lorry movements on tight mountain roads that will finish off the local economy for good.

As to the impact of WAG policy on Powys and more particularly Montgomeryshire. Let me explain my situation which I feel shows the lunacy of WAG policy. We are already blighted by Carno wind farm which is 2km away and very noisy especially at night. We face a new consented wind farm "Tirgwynt" being built 2.5 KM the other way so are now guaranteed continual noise. To top this there are plans for a wind farm 1.5Km to the north of us and one 2km to the south. We also face two pylon lines running either side of our property. We will be totally surrounded by industrial development in what was a rural area. Our lives will be ruined by continual noise and years of building work. Every view from our property will then look onto a wind farm-we will in fact be living in one giant wind farm which is what Montgomeryshire will become.

This will destroy the tourist industry which Powys relies upon and ruin people's lives for a generation at the same time. Already our property is worthless as we could never sell it.

This is why TAN 8 needs to be scrapped and a new way sought. The first Minister has already indicated in his evidence to you that TAN 8 is now defunct. The committee should have some backbone and actually stand up for the people and not the vested interests of the greedy money makers who will destroy our county and heritage for a trifling amount of unreliable electricity that doesn't save any carbon.

Yours faithfully

Mike Blood