

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 220 – Stephen Morgan

Dear Sirs,

I am writing with regard to your inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales and particularly the 2 petitions regarding TAN8 and the Mid Wales project. I think these should be a key part of your inquiry.

TAN 8 has a number of serious flaws. The large areas of landscape zoned for turbines as SSA's (Strategic Search Areas), were set no upper limit on number or size of turbines for construction. The proposal for exporting this potential electricity from the area was a single wooden pole line that looped around all the SSA's, collecting the energy and running it across Shropshire on a single wooden pole line to the National Grid (no hub or 400kV mentioned!) There was limited engagement with National Grid with possible reinforcement of the grid given one paragraph. The TAN 8 policy gave traffic issues one paragraph. No study was done on how the wind turbines would reach the proposed sites on minor country roads. No consideration was given to the socio-economic impact these plans would have on Wales. No mention of EMF risks for those living near the power lines or hub. No consideration to the environmental impact this would have on the landscape. It failed to consider the cumulative impact of a 400kV, wind farms and 132kV lines. Turbines in 2003 were 110m high, and are now 140m+. TAN 8 has 'tied the hands' of the planning system in that it has been set up to encourage the sacrificing of large areas of landscape with no cumulative considerations. Advances in technology since 2003 have left us open to facing huge number (600) of massively taller turbines which need a hub and 400kV. Figures show last year wind energy in Wales produced just 19% of its stated capacity because of reducing wind pattern. Will this permanent destruction be justified? I think there should be a judicial review of the TAN 8 policy.

TAN 8 states that not all land within the strategic search areas may be economic or environmentally suitable. I am concerned about the massive environmental impact of these farms could cause increased flooding in areas already prone to worse and worse flooding. Every single bit of concrete used to support these massive turbines will displace water which will cause increased flooding downstream affecting not only Mid Wales but Shrewsbury and towns along the whole of the river Severn. The cost of the increased need for flood defences has not been taken into consideration. This issue should be assessed and reviewed.

The wind farms and industrialisation of a large area of mid Wales will destroy valuable bat, buzzard, curlew and red kite populations. I do not think that appropriate Environmental Impact Assessments have been adequately carried out. The pylons are going to destroy or affect distinctive natural and historical landscapes including Roman hill forts and archaeological sites. Every single Broad Route corridor in the National Grids proposal goes past sites of special scientific interest, scheduled ancient monuments and special areas of conservation and I would argue that all

routes are through areas of outstanding natural beauty although only one route is deemed as such.

I would like to know if an assessment on the costs to local tourism and trade has been carried out as tourism is a major employer in this area. I have spoken to people who say they won't stay in mid wales if the proposals to industrialise Montgomeryshire go ahead. It is already becoming more and more difficult to live in this area as services are cited far away and as public transport is limited and does not reflect peoples complex travel patterns. People have to travel by car and petrol costs are huge.

I would like to see a cost benefit analysis of tax payer expenditure on turbines versus the benefits of these turbines as I understand that these turbines are less than 20% efficient. Taxpayers will be paying twice for their electricity, directly from the company and through the tax system. Everyone understands the importance of renewable energy but if individual homes were given more help to generate their own electricity and conserve energy then the energy savings can match the electricity of the turbines. It is particularly offensive that yet once again, Wales is expected to be industrialised and destroyed in order to provide resources, this time electricity, mainly for England. At least the Victorians buried their water pipes from Lake Vyrnwy to Liverpool underground.

I am also concerned about the Health benefits of these power lines especially as children's cancer services are being moved even further away from this area which means that people have to travel many miles (25+ miles) for cancer care. Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust were happy to ignore the risks to the people of Mid Wales and move services further away in order to best suit themselves. I assume with the support of both the Welsh Assembly government and the UK government. The National Grid exhibition stated that although the epidemiological evidence suggests a link that there is no overall consensus that these pylons are a risk and misrepresented the Draper research (2005) in their literature. This is from a highly positivist paradigm and reflects the biased view of government that the need for electricity for all triumphs over the rights of the individual, however, under the Human Rights Act everyone has the right of life and respect for their property. Compulsory purchase will be used to site the pylons and the threat of illness disregards the rights of the people affected by these proposals.

I think the Welsh Assembly Government have underestimated the strength of feeling in the community about these proposals. No one wants these Wind Farms, or Hubs or Pylons and we will fight to keep them away from our beautiful area.

Yours Sincerely,

Stephen Morgan
