

## OBJ/606/002

### Evidence for the Public Enquiry Session 4 from Kerry Community Council

The council has already made its submission to the public enquiry about the proposed wind farms in SSA C and the Llandinam Power Line but now it wishes to express its views on the cumulative effects of these proposed developments.

Kerry Community Council is one of the largest in Powys and covers the villages of Kerry, Dolfor and Sarn, comprising of 1,635 electors in all three wards. Part of the community borders SSA C. It covers the upland areas to the south east of the Severn valley.

In order to represent our electors as fairly as possible the council carried out a survey of residents' views about wind farms and the power line. A questionnaire was distributed by post to all households and they were invited to return their views to a "Freepost" address. Up to 790 residents expressed their views. The responses were counted by members of the council in the presence of an independent scrutiniser.

The questionnaire asked three questions, as follows:

1. Do you support the applications to build 5 large wind farms in Mid-Wales?
2. Are you in favour of Scottish Power's plans to build a line of separate wooden pylons to connect the Llandinam Wind Farm with the Welshpool substation?
3. Are you concerned about the effect of windfarm construction traffic on the roads of Mid-Wales?

Furthermore a space was provided for residents to express their personal opinions.

The Public Enquiry has already been presented with the outcomes of the survey, but they are repeated here for convenience. The results of the survey were as follows:

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Do you support the applications to build 5 large wind farms in Mid-Wales?	15.6%	81.3%	3.0%
2. Are you in favour of Scottish Power's plans to build a line of separate wooden pylons to connect the Llandinam Wind Farm with the Welshpool substation?	14.4%	79.8%	4.8%
3. Are you concerned about the effect of windfarm construction	77.3%	21.2%	1.5%

traffic on the roads of Mid-Wales?			
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The council has already made its objections to the wind farms and Llandinam power line, but we are very concerned about the cumulative effects of the proposed developments and wish to make the following points.

The results of our survey show that nearly 80% of residents who responded oppose the construction of these five wind farms and the power line. Whilst we accept that the weight of numbers is not as important as the strength of the arguments we strongly believe that, as local people, we have a better understanding of the combined impact of these developments on our communities. It is simply not good enough for “experts” who know little and care less for the local area to dismiss the impact of these as, “not significant”. Large multinational companies pay lip service to their commitment to the local community, but in reality their concern is reaping the financial incentives and subsidies linked to wind power irrespective of their effects on the lives of local people. It is true that, in a legal sense, as a council, we have been consulted, but we have been left with the strong impression that the developers care little for our responses and do not intend to act on them. We are merely an obstacle to be overcome in the furtherance of their commercial aims.

Our concerns centre on:

**The negative effect of the development on the Mid Wales landscape and its consequent implications for tourism.**

We deplore the significant damage that would be caused to the quality of the intensely rural Mid-Wales landscape by the cumulative effect of these five wind farms. One of the attractions of our upland area is the long distance vistas from the many paths and tracks, not least the Kerry Ridgeway that criss-cross the area. The sight of several hundred tall turbines would be a very significant blight on what has been, up to now, an undisturbed landscape. The quality of the landscape is attested to by the Kerry Hills being contiguous with the Shropshire hills, that are formally recognised as an “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.” The higher land further west, visible from our area, has National Park status and indeed in the 1970s parts of Montgomeryshire were scheduled for inclusion in the failed “Cambrian Mountains National Park”. We make this point to stress the very high visual quality of the landscape that the cumulative effects of these wind farms would compromise.

Tourism plays a large part in the local economy, not only in the Kerry area, but throughout Mid Wales and we believe that the presence of a large number of huge metallic towers will discourage visitors.

**Long term disruption to the Mid Wales transport network during the construction phase.**

As people who use the local road network on a daily basis, as a part of our personal and business lives, we foresee very significant difficulties during the construction phase.

Most employment in the Mid Wales area is in the form of small businesses, including the tourist industry and they play a vital part in the local economy. Easy access to their markets can make the

difference between success and failure. We are very concerned about the impact of the traffic disruption on these already vulnerable enterprises. We emphasise that this will not be a short term inconvenience; the construction phase will last for years.

Since the construction of the Tesco superstore in Newtown the A483 tends to suffer from congestion at busy times. As a consequence a, "rat run" has developed whereby traffic leaves the A483 at Abermule and follows the B4368 to Glanmule. Here it follows the A489 westwards towards Kerry village. After passing through the village traffic takes a "C" class road towards Dolfor where it re-joins the A483. The council has already expressed its concern about speeding through the village and as a result police carry out regular speed checks in the area.

The council is very concerned that the general construction traffic will make congestion on the A483 through Newtown much worse, leading to increased use of the rat run. The use of these narrow, minor roads by excessive and often unsuitable traffic raises real safety concerns, especially excessive speed past our village school.

One developer applied for planning permission to improve the "C" class road mentioned above. This was to facilitate construction traffic. The council opposed this approach since improvement will only encourage further use of the road as a, "rat run". Furthermore it would involve the removal of several km of ancient hedgerow and cause considerable disruption during the construction phase. We are pleased to note that Powys County Council has refused this developer planning permission, although we now understand that the developer is appealing against this decision.

Furthermore we are concerned about the impact of the slow moving convoys carrying parts of the turbines. Based on information provided by Powys County Council's highways department we believe that the convoys will create frequent and very considerable congestion on the A483. This will further increase the use of the rat run, but it will also cause very considerable delays in gaining access to the A483. This is the main access to routes north, south and west from the council area. It is easy to envisage traffic in Newtown and Welshpool being completely grid-locked when these convoys pass through.

Traffic congestions also costs money. When delivery vehicles are caught in traffic jams not only is local business deprived of timely deliveries, there is also a cost implication. Furthermore internet shopping is important in this rural area and delivery schedules, times and costs are likely to suffer. This emerging industry with the potential to become the very back bone of our rural economy will be severely damaged.

Of particular concern is delay in the delivery of animal feed, milk collection and stock movements at local farms. This is caused, not only by congestion on the main highways, but also by the increased use of minor roads by vehicles seeking to avoid that congestion. As every driver knows it is not the initial cause of the delay which creates the greatest problem but the resulting extended delay while backed up traffic is cleared.

Traffic delay is not only an inconvenience and a threat to local business; it is also a serious health threat in this rural area. Mid Wales does not have a District General Hospital and so ambulances must travel to Aberystwyth, Wrexham, Telford or Shrewsbury hospitals, a journey of 45 to 75

minutes and any road delays are obviously a very serious threat. We apply a similar argument to the delay of other emergency service vehicles, especially Fire and Police.

We note that the emergency services struggle to struggle to meet government response times in our rural area and that further wind-farm related traffic congestion will pose further threats to our health and well being. The much vaunted “golden hour” simply does not exist for many of us. Furthermore the arterial routes used by these services are known to have higher than average accident rates.

Whilst the proposed Newtown by-pass will reduce some of the above issues its construction is not imminent and so our concerns stand. Furthermore the up- grading of the trunk road will do nothing to reduce the congestion on the minor roads in our area. Here our concerns centre not only on the delivery of very large turbine components but also on the very considerable amount of heavy traffic that will be needed to construct, for example, the concrete bases of the turbine towers. Local farmers and others business will suffer considerable delay in going about their daily business.

Kerry Community Council re-iterates its total objection to the construction of these wind farms. We believe that their cumulative effect on the quality of the Mid Wales landscape is a case of environmental vandalism and that the effects of their construction on the daily lives of local people, who will gain no benefit from the developments, is intolerable. We call upon the inspector to reject these unwanted proposals.