

STATEMENT
BY
THE NORTH WALES ASSOCIATION OF
TOWN AND LARGER COMMUNITY COUNCILS

1. Introduction

The Association represents 34 Town and Community Councils in Mid and North Wales. The subject of this inquiry has been discussed the membership who put forward this statement to support the form of submission as required.

2. Public Inquiry

This statement is made as required in the form submitted seeking to be able to take an active part in the public inquiry into the sites listed below.

3. The subject of the Inquiry

The following are the details of the sites and infrastructure the subject of the inquiry:

ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 (SECTIONS 36, 37, 62(3) & SCHEDULE 8):
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (SECTION 90):
APPLICATION BY VATTENFALL DATED 30 NOVEMBER 2007 FOR
CONSENT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 59.5MW WIND TURBINE
GENERATING STATION IN POWYS, MID-WALES (“LLANBADARN
FYNYDD”)

APPLICATION BY FFERM WYNT LLAITHDDU CYF DATED 7 MAY 2008
FOR CONSENT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 66.7MW WIND
TURBINE GENERATING STATION IN POWYS, MID-WALES (“LLAITHDDU”)

APPLICATION BY CELTPOWER LIMITED DATED 9 MAY 2008 FOR
CONSENT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 126MW WIND TURBINE
GENERATING STATION IN POWYS, MID-WALES (“LLANDINAM”)

APPLICATION BY RES UK & IRELAND LIMITED DATED 27 MARCH 2009
FOR CONSENT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 100 MW WIND
TURBINE GENERATING STATION IN POWYS, MID-WALES
(“LLANBRYNMAIR”)

APPLICATION BY RWE NPOWER RENEWABLES LIMITED DATED 11
DECEMBER 2008 FOR CONSENT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A
130-250MW WIND TURBINE GENERATING STATION IN POWYS, MID-
WALES (“CARNEDD WEN”)

APPLICATION BY SP MANWEB PLC DATED 2 DECEMBER 2009 FOR
CONSENT TO INSTALL AND KEEP INSTALLED A 132kV OVERHEAD
ELECTRIC LINE CONNECTION FROM THE PROPOSED LLANDINAM
WIND FARM TO WELSHPOOL SUBSTATION

4. Policy of the Association

The formal Association policy on TAN8 which was considered at its annual conference in March 2011 is:

TAN 8 APPROVALS

The Association is horrified that TAN8 was approved by the Welsh Assembly when it is clear (from public announcements by Ministers of the Welsh Assembly Government) that Ministers and Assembly Members did not understand the implications of what was approved. This appalling situation is not acceptable and a complete review of TAN8 (and how it affects Mid and North Wales) is not only needed but essential for the Welsh Assembly to regain credibility with regard to this matter.

VIABILITY

The Government has produced its own viability figures and the most expensive method of creating electricity is off shore wind farms as against other methods.

The only reason wind farms are moving forward is due to the extensive subsidies available. The latest reports for Government have also shown that the wind farm proposals for the UK will only benefit the overall aims by less than 0.01%. Measured against the environmental and business damage caused overall – it just does not work.

It is also recognised by many organisations and governmental departments that there are alternatives and that the economic viability of Wind Turbines is at best suspect and generally uneconomic. (not only in money but in environmental terms).

PUBLIC OBJECTION

The Public feeling on the subject of Wind Farms, Transport, Hubs and Pylon Lines (TAN8) has been demonstrated by many public meetings, demonstrations (Cardiff in particular), surveys by Llansantffraid, Meifod, Llafchain, Llandrino, Llandisilio, Ardleen and the larger community of Welshpool (Welshpool Town Council completed a door to door survey with 41% responding and 80% against the TAN8 proposals) together with County Council and Community Council resolutions. A copy can be made available of any of these surveys.

DISRUPTION TO TRAFFIC

The traffic disruption caused for a number of years on the Mid Wales roads will be unacceptable and will deter visitors to the town. This transport is connected not only with wind farms but the associated infrastructure as well. For each wind turbine (on shore) there are 1,000 vehicle movements. The traffic figures for Mid Wales alone are enormous. (see attached traffic figures which were generally accepted by the Welsh Assembly Environment and Sustainability Committee).

EFFECT ON TOURISM

The effect on tourism by TAN8 is immense. The traffic congestion that will be caused is just one element, there is also the damage to the best asset in Mid and North Wales – its countryside. The damage caused to the tourist industry by a 400kv pylon lines together with 20 acre hub is not acceptable. There is a place for wind turbines but it appears they are being proposed without any thought for the effects they have on the lives of people living nearby against the limited benefits they bring.

EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The environmental impact on wildlife, hedgerows and other countryside aspects is unacceptable.

The damage to hedgerows (road alterations, fauna and flora) is not outweighed by the benefits of wind farms. The overall effect on the peat bogs is immeasurable, a major concern as after it is disturbed and dried up it produces more carbon than the wind farms save.

AFFECT ON STREET SCENE

The effect on the street scene with roads built through roundabouts, removal of street furniture and the damage that will be caused to the villages and towns on the transport routes is at an acceptable level and will not only affect those living on the routes but those who visit as well.

EFFECT ON OLDER PROPERTY

The effect of transport weights and the amount of lorry transport (causing vibrations on a regular basis) could well affect the older properties in the main streets that the transport passes through. If the lorry movements are to pass close to properties the company should pay for schedules of condition of properties on route so that when the works are completed any damage can be substantiated and paid for in full by the wind farm companies.

ROAD CAPABILITY

The roads through Mid and North Wales are inadequate for such large lorry transportation with curves, parking and widths being just three of the issues.

In addition there are health and safety issues with clearance of vehicles in narrow parts of the main streets with regard to pedestrians on pavements, crossing roads etc. This also affects the mobility scooters and pushchairs particularly.

RETAIL AND SMALL BUSINESS SECTORS

The effect of the transportation through villages and town centres (such as Llanymynech and Welshpool) will have on trade and small business users is unacceptable with loss of trade a real issue.

The effects can also be felt when in a recession the town is trying to let its empty shops and potential tenants are concerned about the effect on any business they may wish to start in the town. The overall effect of a pylon line (which is an off spin of the wind farms) could well deter visitors if it were built in the Severn Valley or the Meifod Valley.

RESIDENTIAL SALES

There is clear evidence that due to the scheme of the hub and pylon line any property in the areas of the Meifod Valley or Cefn Coch is blighted. Evidence has been gained from local estate agents who say that nothing is selling in these areas due the proposals – this is unacceptable at any level.

EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVISION DURING LORRY CONVOYS

There is concern about how the emergency services would be able to respond in times when the convoys are operating giving extended response times.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Potential damage to the infrastructure caused by excessive weight of the Lorries. For example drainage, sewers, underground electric cables, gas pipes and water pipes. This in our view is a matter which needs serious consideration before any plan can be considered. Often damage is caused and afterwards it is said 'that was not supposed to happen'. Too late then!

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The community benefit schemes should be administered by elected representatives locally and not by appointed persons with no accountability to the electorate. The Town and Community Councils would be the logical vehicle. This view is taken as the money raised is public money. However, any money can not be enough to pay for the loss of amenity and the damaging effects of these schemes.

LASTING LEGACY

Each wind turbine has extensive piled foundations using concrete and steel, each pile being underground to the same depth as the height of the turbine it supports. When the turbines are eventually no longer required these piles remain. This changes the water table and has potential to have lasting effects on the environment (flooding for example). The lasting legacy is not acceptable. Indeed, any wind farms turbines granted consent should be required by section 106 agreement to ensure that when their life comes to an end all structures will be removed including concrete bases.

5. Support from Assembly Members to review TAN8

It is clear to the Association that Ministers either did not understand the implications of the infrastructure caused by the wind farms or they did understand but now are backing off.

The Association asked AM's in Mid and North Wales their views on TAN8 and if it should be reviewed in the light of the above, the replies are attached.

6. Public opinion

The Association is aware of the many surveys carried out by Local Councils and confirms its support to those Councils affected. It is clear that there is much public objection, more than is normally found against schemes.

There is a real concern that the effects of the pylon line, hub and transport (particularly the latter) will have a real damaging effect on the communities.

7. Objections to TAN 8 and the Renewable Energy Policy Wales

The objections to the schemes relate to the following:

- a) TAN8 is out of date and needs substantial revision
- b) It is clear that Assembly Members were not made aware of the effects of the infrastructure.
- c) The items outlined the statement above form our objection.

No doubt you will let me know if you wish the Association to make a further submission in more detail for the inquiry in June.

Cllr Joan Butterfield

Chair of the

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils

Triangle House

Union Street

Welshpool

SY21 7PG

Tel 01938 553142

Email wtcouncil@btinternet.com

Web site www.northwalesassociation.org

Appendix

Traffic figures

