

BRAWD

BWLCH (AND PENIARTH) RESIDENTS AGAINST WINDFARM DEVELOPMENTS

The Mid-Wales (Powys) Conjoined Wind Farms Public Inquiry

Outline statement of principal submissions

1. Although BRAWD recognises that the burning of fossil fuels is a major contributor to climate change and that renewable alternatives for the generation of electricity need to be developed, it does not believe that wind power is the answer.
2. It is sporadic, unreliable and, to an extent, unpredictable. There are frequent periods when the wind does not blow and others when it is too strong to allow turbines to turn. Wind turbines are much more inefficient – only producing a small percentage of their rated output – and have a much shorter life than their makers claim. Other ways of generating electricity, including the burning of fossil fuels, have to be used to compensate for the inadequacy of wind power. Therefore wind cannot command a major role in the nation's electricity generation capacity.
3. The wind farms proposed for upland Mid-Wales, while their turbines may be more numerous and much higher than those elsewhere, cannot be immune from these major limitations. Indeed, recent research by the University of Edinburgh has concluded that 'larger wind farms have a systematically worse performance than smaller ones.'
4. The five wind farms which are the subject of this public inquiry together would comprise 165 turbines with a maximum height of 137m (roughly the height of the London Eye). **Building them would cause immense damage to the environment.** Many trees would be felled to make way for them (1,742 hectares in the Carnedd Wen wind farm alone – an area bigger than several inner London boroughs); ancient peat bog, which has locked-in carbon for centuries, would be removed and replaced by concrete; wildlife habitats would be destroyed; small-scale roads (with ancient hedgerows), suitable for local traffic, would be widened and straightened to allow for the transport of turbine components. **The process of transporting turbine components from ports of entry into the UK would cause widespread traffic disruption for many years,** including the potential for delays to emergency services, and financial loss to companies dependent for their existence on delivering goods and services by road. **Their combined effect on the landscape would be catastrophic, transforming remote and beautiful areas into**

industrial ones. The tourist trade, generated by the historic landscape, which currently allows caravan parks, holiday cottages, hotels and B&Bs to flourish would be badly affected as would local services – pubs, shops, cafes and garages. The failure of local services, and consequently reduced employment opportunities, would impoverish Mid-Wales, reduce house prices and make it a less attractive place to live. The local economy, already fragile, would be severely damaged.

5. These five wind farms, collectively, would do immense damage to Mid-Wales but it needs to be remembered that they would add to an existing array of wind farms and that proposals are being prepared for further such developments. For example, ScottishPower Renewables UK have recently published notice of their proposal to apply for a development consent order in respect of a wind farm, comprising 32 turbines of up to 145 metres to tip height, within Dyfnant Forest.
6. Leaving aside the impact of the wind farms themselves, the power lines used to connect them to the national grid will also have a negative impact on the environment of Mid-Wales and its resident population. National Grid plc is currently running a project – the Mid-Wales Connection Project – the purpose of which is to design and build a route to connect these wind farms to the national grid. As things stand, they propose to build a 20-acre substation at Cefn Coch, the focus for the electricity generated by four of the five wind farms which are the subject of this public inquiry, and a 400kv pylon line from there to Lower Frankton in Shropshire where a connection would be made to the existing grid.
7. Without the proposed wind farms, there would be no case for the National Grid plc's proposed substation and pylons. The two sets of proposals should not be considered in isolation.
8. National Grid plc has identified as its preferred route either (1) the Vynwy Valley or (2) near Pontrobert, up the Peniarth Valley and past Bwlch-y-Cibau. Either of these options would be extremely damaging. While BRAWD would oppose both options, we would like to draw attention, in particular, to the damage that would be caused by the second one. The pylon line would:
 - irremediably harm a beautiful, unspoiled landscape virtually unchanged in more than two hundred years;
 - affect the setting of a number of scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings and a conservation area;
 - destroy habitats and migration routes of protected wildlife species;
 - deter visitors from using published footpaths and public access areas;
 - challenge the economic viability of small farms in the area.

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