

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 81 – Ms G Taylor

energy policy and planning in Wales

Dear Sir/Madam

It would appear to be of utmost importance that Energy Policy and Planning, especially of the infrastructure required within the Energy Sector, should be under the control of the Welsh Government so that decisions are made in the best interests of the Welsh people. At present it is a shambles with energy and infrastructure projects being decided by a variety of bodies such as County Councils, DECC and IPC (soon to be changed to MIPU) and too easily driven by an ideological agenda not in keeping with the wishes of those who will be affected and with decisions being made by those with no knowledge of the area

Within the Mid-Wales area it appears that the number of proposed windfarm developments far exceed the capacity set out in TAN8 and that if developments were kept within the the stated capacity there would be no need for the totally unacceptable plan for a 20 acre substation to be built at either Cefn Coch or Abermule or the massive network of cables and pylons proposed. Despite Carwyn Jones having made this point nothing seems to have changed as yesterday I received National Grid's newsletter which states that the proposals in the Mid-Wales connection project are still being taken forward but that it is taking a little longer to decide

which community – Cefn Coch or Abermule will be devastated by the sub-station.

I cannot understand how we can have a Planning System which basically, through the system of appeals by developers, results in the developer being granted permission to proceed against the wishes of local people, the local council, even the Welsh Government Planning Inspector as in the case of the Mynydd y Gwair Windfarm, Swansea. As has been said in this case “when does No mean No”. Cash strapped Councils have very little power to keep up the prolonged and costly fight to uphold the interests of their electorate against the large private companies determined to take advantage of the lucrative subsidies before the likes of Chris Hulne are forced to finally admit that windpower is a huge waste of money, is costing the private and business consumer a small fortune and because of the back-up requirements, needed from more traditional energy production, neither saves the planet by cutting CO2 emissions to any great degree or provides energy security.

TAN 8 needs a thorough review as many aspects of windfarm development do not seem to have been thoroughly considered such as the transportation of turbines that are of a vastly larger scale than those originally envisaged. The cumulative effect, on the environment and scenic amenity that these massive turbines with their immense concrete bases and attendant transmission infrastructure, will be devastating in terms of flooding, wildlife disruption and tourism.

To sum up – we desperately need Energy Policy and Planning for Energy and Infrastructure to be devolved to the Welsh Government if we want to stand any chance of protecting Wales from the blinkered policies of the Westminster Government.

Kind Regards

Ms G Taylor