

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 201 - Llanfechain Community Council

22nd September 2011

Dear Sirs

Energy Policy and Planning in Wales - Inquiry Response from Llanfechain Community Council

Llanfechain Community Council write in response to the Welsh Assembly Government Environment and Sustainability Committee Consultation into 'The Review of Energy Policy and Planning in Wales'. Llanfechain Community Council wish to register their concerns in regard to the current interpretation and implementation of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8 by The Welsh Assembly Government and the potentially damaging effect that the (often mute/implied) physical infrastructural directions will have on the rural communities of Mid-Wales, particularly in respect to the onshore wind generation of electricity. Whilst the broad aspirations and targets of TAN 8 are supported by The Community Council, the current development proposals for the extensive adoption of upland windfarms with their requisite connections to The National Grid are believed to be ill-conceived and insensitive to the character of the region and its population.

Llanfechain Community Council commend this current review process and express their willingness to also make future contributions in any way that it can.

With reference to the specific questions raised within the Terms of Reference -

1. The Implications for Wales - The implications for Wales are at best unsatisfactory but for the communities directly impacted by major infrastructural projects the realities could be devastating in varied social and economic ways. The potential for limited if any consultation at a local level is concerning during the planning/development phases of a project as is the potential for contradiction or conflict with the political priorities of The Welsh Assembly Government through its constituents and elected members. Subjectively there will be a lack of empathy or understanding at a National level to the impact of these schemes on the Welsh population. Due to the composition of the present Coalition Government by comparison with that of The Senedd, this will remain the case for the foreseeable future. There has certainly not been any acknowledgement/reference made that the communities most directly affected from the imposition of these infrastructural projects will be compensated in any way. Crudely the natural resources of Wales will be exploited once more by the Nation with the benefits of this investment being most realised in the distant manufacturing and wealthier economic centres.

2. Affect on Welsh Assembly Aspirations - An unbalanced and ill-conceived approach to the adoption of renewable energy technologies for the sake of political gain and not the long-term sustainability of Wales is of concern to Llanfechain Community Council. It recognises that the aspirations and delivery of policy could be compromised by larger National schemes and that the confidence of the Welsh electorate in the Welsh Assembly Government could be compromised. Clarity is required and a coordinated response to energy policy that is better understood by the electorate both at the Assembly level and that of Westminster is more likely to receive support by the majority.

3. Implication on Welsh Assembly Targets - The general principles would be better supported, though the consultations should be completed prior to a formal issue.

4. The immediate impact is not significant though the long-term 12 month performance of the finished floor levels has not been received.

5. Impact on the Local Communities - need to agree a strategy but the impact of TAN 8 will be considerable.

Philip Williams
Chairman