

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 242 – Romy Shovelton

Dear E&S Committee members

Thank you for undertaking this enquiry. I understand that you need responses by today.

For ease of reading I will make my points in bullet form:

- yes, we need an 'energy mix' in Wales - including moving to renewable forms of energy *when and where* these make *environmental, economic and health sense*.
- unfortunately, as you will know, large-scale on-shore wind 'farms' do none of these - creating damage to all three aspects of sustainability
 - - *environmentally*: the deep, extensive and permanent damage caused by the construction, movement and operation of the pylons and turbines is acute - including chemical pollution by the thousands of tons of concrete poured into ancient peat bog, the resulting flood risks, the killing of birds etc
 - - *economically*: we in the beauty of mid Wales have **one industry = tourism**. This £650 m industry, employing 6500 people, is all we have. Our extraordinary landscapes (valleys, hills, rivers and streams) are the reason people come to visit here. No-one is going to want to spend time here when the landscape is devastated by 606 foot turbines and pylons marching across the land - not to mention the health hazards.
 - It is also absolutely clear that none of this would be going ahead but for the extraordinary subsidy system in place. A few landowners may become vastly rich.....
 - The rest of our beautiful Montgomeryshire, with its powerful heritage and tourism livelihood will be decimated.
 - Those who already live in our land will increasingly be forced to see the devastation of their livelihood, their desire to bring up children in a safe environment, and their desire to live in a landscape that brings untold benefits in general health.
 - Likewise ALL of us will be saddled with ever more extraordinary rises in our electricity bills (whether living in Wales or in other regions of the UK that this electricity is supposedly to feed)
 - I personally would not mind paying a *bit* more, to care for the environment, if in fact on-shore wind *did* protect the environment. It doesn't.
 - What is hardly ever factored into the economic calculations around large-scale on shore wind 'farms' is the loss of amenity and **wider health value of our current landscape**. There are deep and long lasting benefits of living in a landscape that nourishes us as 'whole' people (mind, body, spirit etc). Not only is it clearly healthier to live in the clean air that we breath here, with the lack of industrial noise etc.... but there is a definite health benefit (mentally, physically and emotionally) from living in this kind of rolling green landscape with our streams, valley, hills and mountains. This *can* be studied and

quantified, as well as being anecdotally powerful. Counting such benefits in the current landscape is another aspect of new economics that is needed - along with looking at new measures beyond GDP etc, as a way of measuring the wellbeing and economic health of our country. This has been known as important in economics for decades.

- - **health:** there is a general point and a personal point here:
 - in **general**, it is absolutely clear that there is a significant health risk from pylons - just one study = Draper report 2005, showing an increase in childhood leukaemia by 69% within 200 meters of power lines.
 - the 'noise' from turbines has also been extensively studied in Europe, UK and US - low frequency noise, amplitude modulation + recent House of Lords recommendation on distance from turbines.
 - The last study that is ever referred to by WAG, was ETSU R1997 14 years ago! - when the turbines were considerably smaller. No study has been done here of the effect of the current turbines.
 - - my **personal experience:** since I moved to my home, 12 vast turbines have been placed on the hill immediately above my cottage (2008). I could perhaps get used to *some* of the visual impact, though to return to the beauty of the soft landscape that has been like this for thousands and thousands of years and see it killed for ever by the monsters on the hill, has been SO hard to take. If the further wind 'farms' go ahead as developers intend, I will literally be surrounded by turbines to the west and north of me, with pylons marching across the valley to the east. This will be intolerable.
 - In addition, the effect of the 'noise' of the turbines makes me feel physically sick, makes it impossible to sleep at night (even when the windows are closed), and makes being outside extremely unpleasant. This is not every single day, as it depends on the volume and direction of wind. And.... the effect on my life, health & potential livelihood is significant & disastrous.
 - I have invested every penny I inherited from my parents + all my savings in creating a beautiful environment here, for people to come to stay.
 - No-one will want to come when we are imprisoned by turbines and pylons.
 - The economy I intended to create for the local community will be gone.
 - My home will be worthless. I knew that I would be unlikely to get back everything I invested here. That didn't matter when I intended to stay here until I die (with my ashes scattered in the stream when I die - as stated in my will.) Now.... my property will loose up to 70% of its value and it will be *impossible* for me to move or do anything. I, along with others of my neighbours in surrounding villages will have our lives & futures devastated, and we will have no choice over our futures. We will be stuck.

- We need to properly research the potential for smaller scale *local* use of wind energy to serve our Welsh communities in a way that **is environmentally and economically sound**.
- I support all efforts to establish a viable 'mixed energy' policy in Wales. Right now, the technology & plans we have for large-scale on-shore wind do not work.
- **WAG and devolution of powers for energy policy.** I gather (and am utterly horrified to hear) that it seems that yet again (yesterday), Westminster has completely undemocratically refused to allow Wales to govern our own energy policies - despite the fact that Scotland and N. Ireland do. I trust that **Glyn Davis and Russell George** will continue their fight on behalf of mid Wales and **get through to their Tory colleagues** to change this policy - or lack of it? Meanwhile, **Carwen Jones**, who seems to have woken up to the coming devastation, needs to **continue the fight**. This fight is *essential* - specifically for those larger wind 'farms' over 50 k. If these fights fail, it will for sure show in the ballot box next time. We will back you, our ministers et al, all the way to Westminster as/when we need to. The largest ever demonstration outside the Senedd will be dwarfed by that at Westminster if this is needed.
 - If Welsh planning policy is ignored or ridden rough shod over by the tanks of Westminster ministers, we will fight back. This is undemocratic. We will not keep quiet.
- **Tan 8 *must* be reviewed.** There has been no environmental study of the implications of Tan 8. It was brought in, in a hurry as everyone knows, and the proper checks and balances have never been put in place or normal policy guidelines adhered to. We are also in a completely different situation as to the one that pertained at the time Tan 8 came into being eg. now turbines, and pylons (never mentioned at the time of Tan 8) are double the height of anything ever imagined at the start.

Thank you once again for your work in the E&S Committee.

I look forward to seeing how this develops, and to hearing that Tan 8 *will* be reviewed, and the fight vs Westminster *will* continue - alongside finding a workable 'mixed energy' policy for Wales.

Romy Shovelton