



# Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru Countryside Council for Wales

**CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: MORGAN PARRY • PRIF WEITHREDWR/CHIEF EXECUTIVE: ROGER THOMAS**

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12 Rhagfyr 2011

Annwyl Dafydd

## **YMCHWILIAD Y PWYLLGOR AMGYLCHEDD A CHYNALIADWYEDD: POLISI YNNI A CHYNLLUNIO YNG NGHYMRU**

Mae Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru yn hybu amgylchedd, tirweddau a dyfroedd morol Cymru fel ffynonellau o gyfoeth naturiol a diwylliannol, fel sail i weithgaredd economaidd a chymdeithasol ac fel lleoedd ar gyfer dysgu a hamddena. Ein hamcan yw gwneud yr amgylchedd yn rhan werthfawr o fywyd pawb sy'n byw yng Nghymru.

Diolch am roi cyfle i CCGC gyflwyno tystiolaeth ar lafar yn yr ymchwiliad hwn. Yn y sesiwn ddydd Mercher, 23 Tachwedd 2011, cytunom i ddarparu ychydig o wybodaeth ychwanegol yn dilyn rhai o'r pwyntiau a godwyd. Rydym hefyd eisiau defnyddio'r cyfle hwn i egluro ymhellach rai o'r pwyntiau o'n sesiwn dystiolaeth a thynnu'ch sylw at faterion sy'n codi o sesiynau eraill a ganfuwyd wrth i ni adolygu Senedd TV yn rheolaidd. Darperir y rhain yn y llythyr hwn a'r atodiadau y cyfeirir atynt.

Yr wybodaeth ychwanegol ac eglurhad:-

### **1. Ynni a thirwedd**

Atodir yma bapur Cyngor CCGC ar ynni a thirweddau gwarchoddedig [cyfeirnod CCW P 11 23 (c)] y gofynnwyd amdano yn ystod ein sesiwn dystiolaeth ar lafar.

### **2. Ymgynghoriadau ynni a dderbyniwyd gan CCGC**

Ynghlwm y mae manylion ychwanegol am nifer yr ymgynghoriadau sy'n gysylltiedig ag ynni a dderbyniwyd gan CCGC rhwng 1 Ebrill 2008 a 31 Mawrth 2011. Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn disgrifio'r tueddiadau yn swm yr ymgynghoriadau ynni a dderbyniwyd gan CCGC, cynrychiolaeth gyfrannol fesul sector ynni, y cynnyrch ynni (h.y. uwchben neu o dan 50MW), y dosbarthiad rhanbarthol a'n perfformiad o ran ymateb.



**Gofalu am natur Cymru - ar y tir ac yn y môr • Caring for our natural heritage - on land and in the sea**

### 3. **Pwerau CCGC i roddi awdurdodiadau, trwyddedau a chaniatâd**

Dymunwn oleuo pwynt a wnaed gan Mr Burley, Cyfarwyddwr, Arolygiaeth Cynllunio Cymru yn gynharach yn y sesiwn ddydd Mercher, 23 Tachwedd 2011, mewn perthynas â thrwyddedu amgylcheddol a thrwyddedau rhywogaethau. Mae gan Gyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru'r pŵer i roddi awdurdodiadau, trwyddedau a chaniatâd o dan nifer o ddeddfiadau sy'n gysylltiedig â chadwraeth natur yng Nghymru ond mae'r rhain yn bennaf at ddibenion cadwraeth neu wyddonol neu addysgol. Llywodraeth Cymru (LIC) sy'n rhoi trwyddedau yng nghyd-destun datblygiadau ac mae CCGC yn ymgynghorydd statudol i'r Llywodraeth yn y cyd-destun hwnnw. Yn ychwanegol, mae deddfwriaeth yn gosod gofyniad ar berchen-feddianwyr SoDdGA i roi rhybudd a chael caniatâd gan CCGC cyn ymgymryd â rhai gweithgareddau niweidiol. Mae'n rhaid i awdurdodau cymwys hefyd gysylltu â CCGC cyn gwneud gwaith oddi mewn i SoDdGA neu sy'n effeithio ar SoDdGA. Gellir galw ymgynghoriadau o'r fath (ac ymateb CCGC iddyn nhw) yn 'gydsyniadau', e.e. cydsyniad o dan Adran 28i Deddf Bywyd Gwyllt a Chefn Gwlad 1981 fel y'i diwygiwyd.

### 4. **Cwestiwn a ofynnwyd gan Llŷr Huws Gruffydd ar y panel sector ynni a'r amgylchedd**

Hoffwn egluro'r ymateb a roddwyd gennym i'r cwestiwn gan Llŷr Huws Gruffydd ar y panel sector ynni a'r amgylchedd (paragraffau [196] a [188] yn nhrawsgrifiad ein sesiwn dystiolaeth) gan fod dryswch yn sgîl cyfieithiad y cwestiwn yn y sesiwn lafar. Mae CCGC yn ymwybodol o'r panel sector ynni a'r amgylchedd a sefydlwyd ym Mawrth 2011, ond heb fod wedi cymryd rhan yn y grŵp hwn na'i gwmpas. Teimlwn y byddai o fudd cael bwrdd cyflenwi neu fforwm ynni adnewyddadwy o dan arweiniad Llywodraeth Cymru. Byddai'r aelodaeth yn cynnwys datblygwyr, CCGC, Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd, Awdurdodau Cynllunio Lleol ac eraill yn gweithio'n adeiladol i hwyluso lleoli ynni adnewyddadwy yn fwy effeithiol yng Nghymru.

### 5. **Treulio Anaerobig**

Fe ymrwymon ni i ddarparu gwybodaeth ychwanegol am hyd a lled ein rhan ym mhwyllgor cynllunio Llywodraeth Cymru ar Dreulio Anaerobig. Gallaf gadarnhau fod CCGC wedi cymryd rhan yn y grŵp hwn a gyfarfu tua bob dau fis am tua 18 mis, ac am y tro diwethaf ym mis Rhagfyr 2010. Cynrychiolwyd CCGC ar y grŵp hwn gan Karen Maddock-Jones, Uwch Ymgynghorydd Cynllunio. Llwyddodd y grŵp hwn i ddwyn ynghyd nifer o'r cyrff allweddol oedd yn galluogi rhannu a deall y materion angenrheidiol ar gyfer ystyried a rhoi caniatâd i'r datblygiadau hyn i'r cyrff allweddol dan sylw. Defnyddiwyd fformat gorchwyl a gorffen i geisio cyflawni rhai targedau penodol yn cynnwys drafftio canllawiau i ymgeiswyr. Roedd adnabod a rhannu materion cyffredin fel hyn yn ddefnyddiol i Is-adran Gwastraff LIC i gael dealltwriaeth o'r problemau amrywiol sydd ynghlwm wrth gyflawni prosiectau a model y gellid ei ddefnyddio i sectorau eraill. Fodd bynnag, roedd y tasgau a neilltuwyd i'r grŵp mewn fformat gorchwyl a gorffen yn cynnwys drafftio canllawiau penodol, yn rhy heriol i'w cyflwyno heb gefnogaeth ychwanegol.

### 6. **Tystiolaeth a roddwyd gan eraill**

Mae CCGC yn defnyddio'r gwasanaeth a ddarperir gan *Senedd TV* i ddilyn a chraffu ar sesiynau pwyllgor fel mater o drefn. Rhoddodd West Coast Energy (WCE) dystiolaeth lafar ddydd Iau, 1 Rhagfyr, fel rhan o'r Ymchwiliad Ynni a Chynllunio a chyfeiriwyd at ran CCGC yn fferm wynt arfaethedig Tir Gwynt. Fel dilyniant i'r sesiwn hon, hoffem

dynnu'ch sylw at y llythyr amgaeedig gan WCE yn mynegi eu diolch i ni, ac yn arbennig am ein cyngor i Gyngor Sir Powys (Steve Packer, Prif Swyddog Cynllunio Cyngor Sir Powys). Derbyniwyd hwn gan ein swyddog achos Carol Fielding (Arweinydd Tîm Sir Drefaldwyn) wedi i WCE gael caniatâd i fferm wynt Tir Gwynt.

Gobeithio y bydd yr wybodaeth ychwanegol hon o gymorth i chi. Os hoffech drafod unrhyw rai o'r pwyntiau a godwyd gennym, cysylltwch â Keith Davies ([k.davies@ccw.gov.uk](mailto:k.davies@ccw.gov.uk)) yn y lle cyntaf.

Yn gywir

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Morgan Parry'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail.

**Morgan Parry**  
**Cadeirydd**

Amg

**ENERGY & PLANNING INQUIRY - ENERGY CASEWORK REPORT**

Contact: Gareth McIlquham, Planning Casework Officer, CCW South & East Region.

**PURPOSE**

1. This report provides an overview of energy consultations received by CCW. The results presented are:
  - a. energy casework between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011;
  - b. energy casework in 2010 / 2011.

**INTRODUCTION**

2. In 2008 / 2009 CCW received 302 energy consultations, 267 in 2009 / 2010 and 485 in 2010 / 2011 (latter figure updated since oral evidence session).
3. CCW work closely with regulators and developers on major energy cases to ensure the best environmental outcome for a development. Consequently, CCW rarely object to energy developments and have done so in only 1% of cases in 2010 / 2011.
4. In many cases we received several consultations per application. In particular, we were consulted at each stage of an environmental impact assessment or assessment under the 'Habitats' Regulations. Therefore, the energy consultations for each financial year relate to somewhat fewer applications; however, several responses may be required for each consultation.
5. CCW is a statutory consultee for regulatory authorities considering consents for development that may affect SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar sites, protected species or landscape protected areas (e.g. AONB and National Park).
6. The deadline for consultations is normally 21 days from the date of the letter, but some authorities set a 14 day deadline. Deadlines for other consultations range from a few days to a month or more. We still received many consultations in hard copy, taking up to 4 days to reach us; however, the Planning Portal and e-mail consultations are beginning to speed up the process.
7. The information behind this brief comes from CCW's casework database. Energy Consultations are recorded under the following 'Primary Proposal Types':
  - Non-Renewable Power Station;
  - Offshore Oil & Gas;
  - Energy – Other;
  - Powerline / Grid Infrastructure;
  - Renewable – Biomass;
  - Renewable – Hydro Electric;
  - Renewable – Marine;
  - Renewable – Other;
  - Renewable – Solar Farm;
  - Wind Turbine – Offshore;
  - Wind Turbine – Onshore Windfarm >1.5MW;
  - Wind Turbine – Small-Scale Onshore <1.5MW.

## RESULTS

### Energy Casework 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

#### 8. Quarterly Summary - Figure 1, Table 1

Until Q1 of 2010 / 2011 energy consultations were generally constant at around 70 consultations per quarter. In 2010 / 2011 a dramatic rise in energy consultations occurred equating to an 82% increase on 2009 / 2010 (Table 2). This follows a 12% drop in energy consultations in 2009 / 2010 from 2008 / 2009.

#### 9. Annual Change in Energy Sector - Figure 2, Table 3

The rise in 2010 / 2011 energy consultations is attributed to the rapid growth of the renewables sector; particularly smaller schemes: hydropower, solar, other renewables and small-scale wind. Grid Connection consultations have declined over the period in line with Onshore Windfarms; many of these are still ongoing cases.

#### 10. Energy Consultations >50MW – Tables 6 & 7

13% of energy consultations in 2008 / 2009 were for projects >50MW, 8% in 2009 / 2010 and 9% in 2010 / 2011. These were recorded for Non-Renewable Power Stations, Powerline / Grid Infrastructure, Renewable – Biomass and Wind Turbine – Onshore Windfarm >1.5MW.

The greatest proportion of >50MW consultations are recorded for Non-Renewable Power Stations and Onshore Windfarms; 43% and 24% respectively in 2010 / 2011.

Caveat – The Casework Recording System is not designed to split consultations by power output. The split has been derived using consultations attributed to the Electricity Act s.36 consents or the Infrastructure Planning Commission; this may not determine all consultations for projects >50MW. Both s.36 and IPC consultations relate to applications over 50MW, below this threshold consultations are recorded under the Town & Country Planning Act.

### Energy Casework 2010 / 2011

#### 11. Regional Casework Volume - Figure 3 (& 4), Table 4

44% of energy consultations in 2010 / 2011 were received in South & East Region, 33% in North Region and 23% in West Region. Small-Scale Onshore Wind attributed the most consultations in North Region and West Region (26% for each) whilst Onshore Windfarms provided 25% of South & East Region energy casework.

The bulk of some energy sectors are region specific. North Region responded to 100% of all Offshore Oil & Gas and Offshore Wind consultations and nearly two-thirds (63%) of Marine – Renewable consultations. South & East Region: 81% of Non-Renewable Power Stations, 62% of Energy Other and 59% of Renewable – Biomass. West Region's highest contributions are from Solar and Renewable – Marine at 59% and 38% respectively.

#### 12. CCW Involvement by Energy Sector - Figure 4, Table 4

Almost half (43%) of all energy consultations received in 2010 / 2011 related to onshore wind developments – 22% Small-Scale Wind and 21% Onshore Windfarms. Grid Connection accounts for 10% of 2010 / 2011 energy consultations with the remaining categories each representing less than 10% of 2010 / 2011 energy consultations.

### 13. **Response Performance** - Figure 5 / Table 5

We are obliged to report on and increase our response performance through a Welsh Government target set out in the 2009 / 2010 remit letter.

In 2010 / 2011 we increased our response performance despite receiving more energy consultations. We met deadlines for 70% of energy consultations and responded to 85% within 7 days of the deadline. The 8% reduction in energy consultations over 7 days late is particularly encouraging.

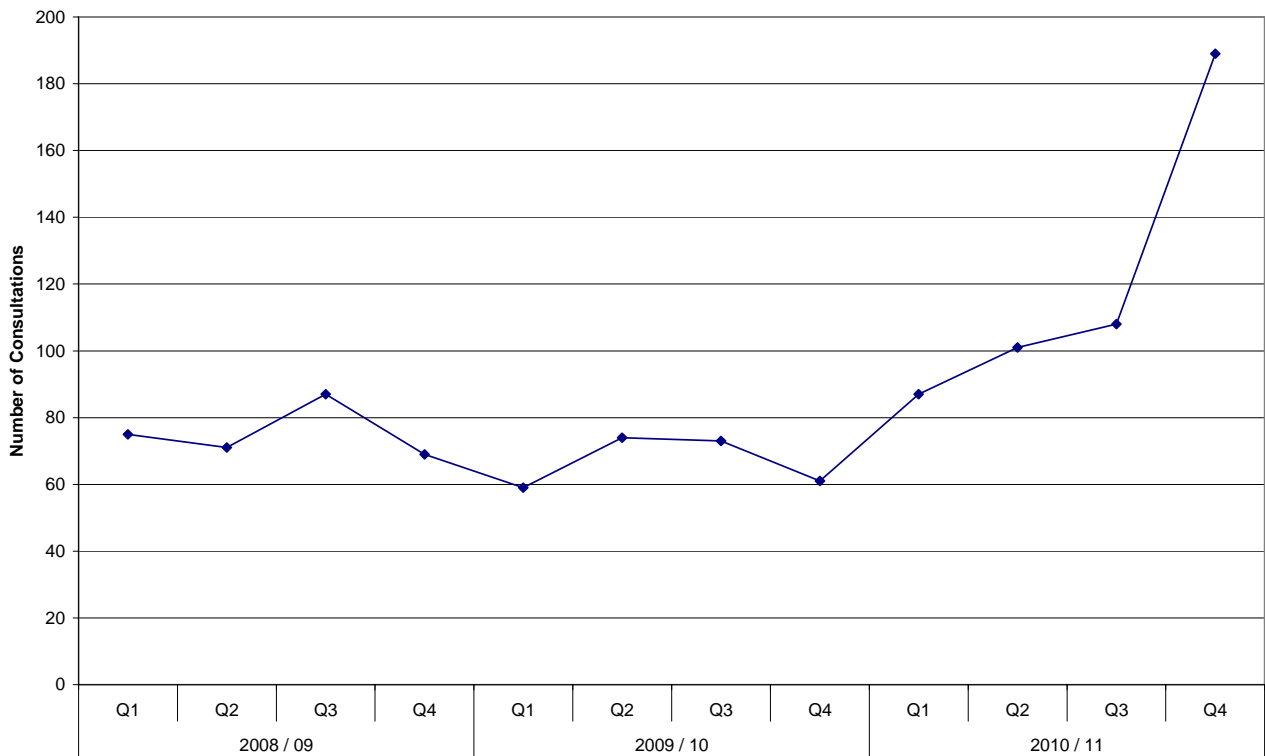
The response performance reflects minimum achievements due to the way in which the data is recorded; it is likely our performance exceeds these figures.

## **DISCUSSION**

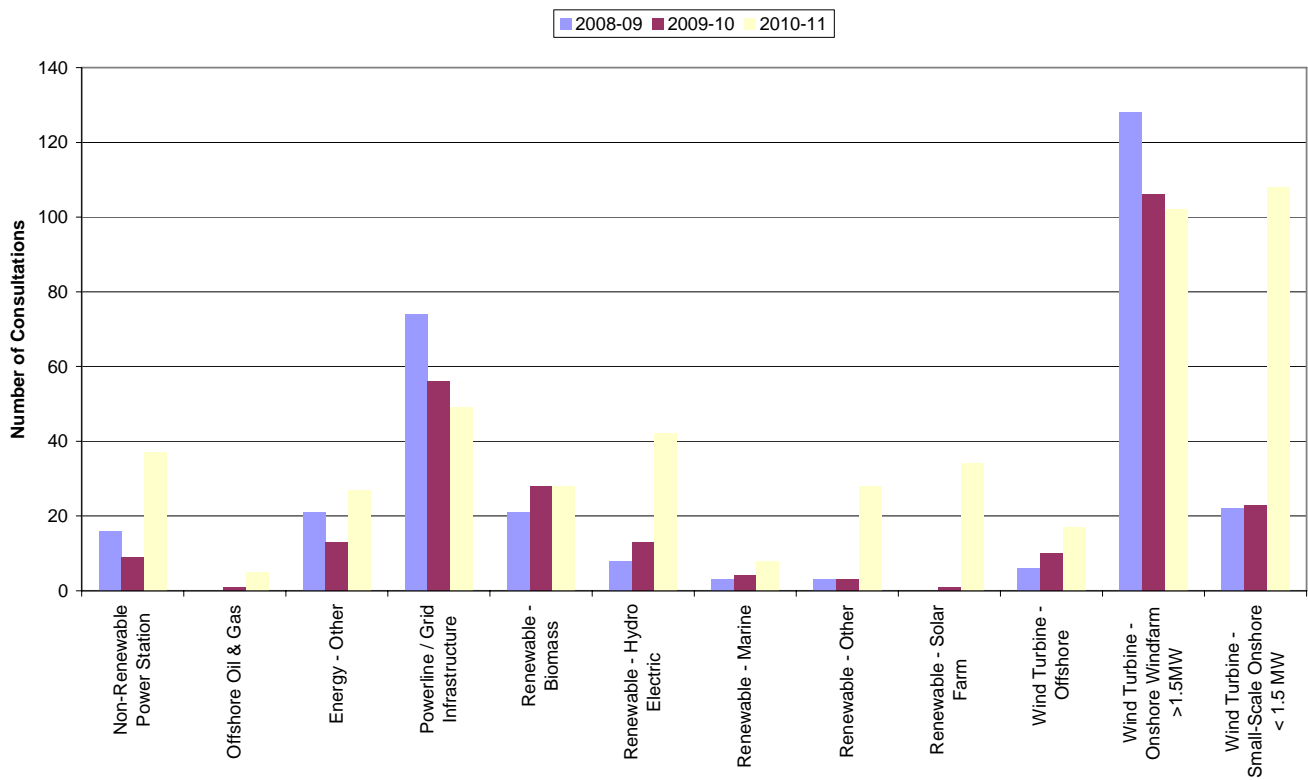
14. The volume of CCW's energy casework rose by 82% in 2010 / 2011 to 485 consultations in the financial year.
15. This growth is generally attributed to the smaller renewables sector: hydropower, solar and small-scale wind.
16. 76% of energy projects >50MW were attributed to Onshore Windfarms, 16% to Non-Renewable Power Stations. These equate to 24% (n=79) and 27% (n=17) of >50MW consultations for these sectors respectively.
17. Onshore wind is the biggest contributor to energy casework, 43% of energy casework in 2010 / 2011 was for onshore wind developments (small and large scale) and contributed the biggest proportion of energy casework across each region.
18. We continue to improve on our response performance, which summarises for energy consultations as 84% within 7 days of deadlines. We achieved a significant improvement despite handling more consultations with fewer staff.
19. Many consultations sent to us do not include enough information to support adequate assessment. We often have to contact applicants and planning officers informally to get the necessary information before we can respond. This can delay our response to more benign developments that lack detail about elements that may affect natural heritage interests, depending on design.
20. The revision of our Operational Procedure Notice for Casework will help further improve clarity and efficiency in our responses.
21. MoUs that we have with some sectors, such as that signed with RenewablesUK, will also help streamline the handling of assessments and advice.

## ANNEX 1: FIGURES

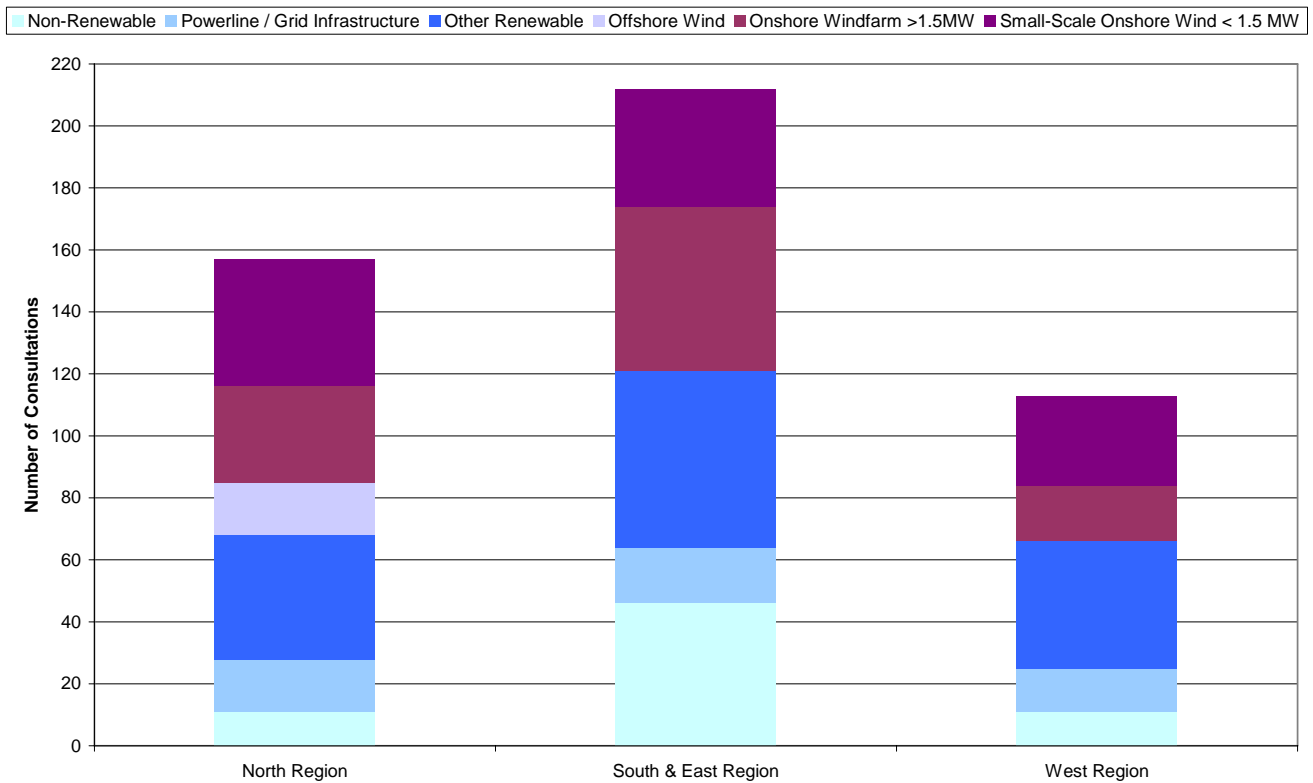
**Figure 1 - Quarterly Summary: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**



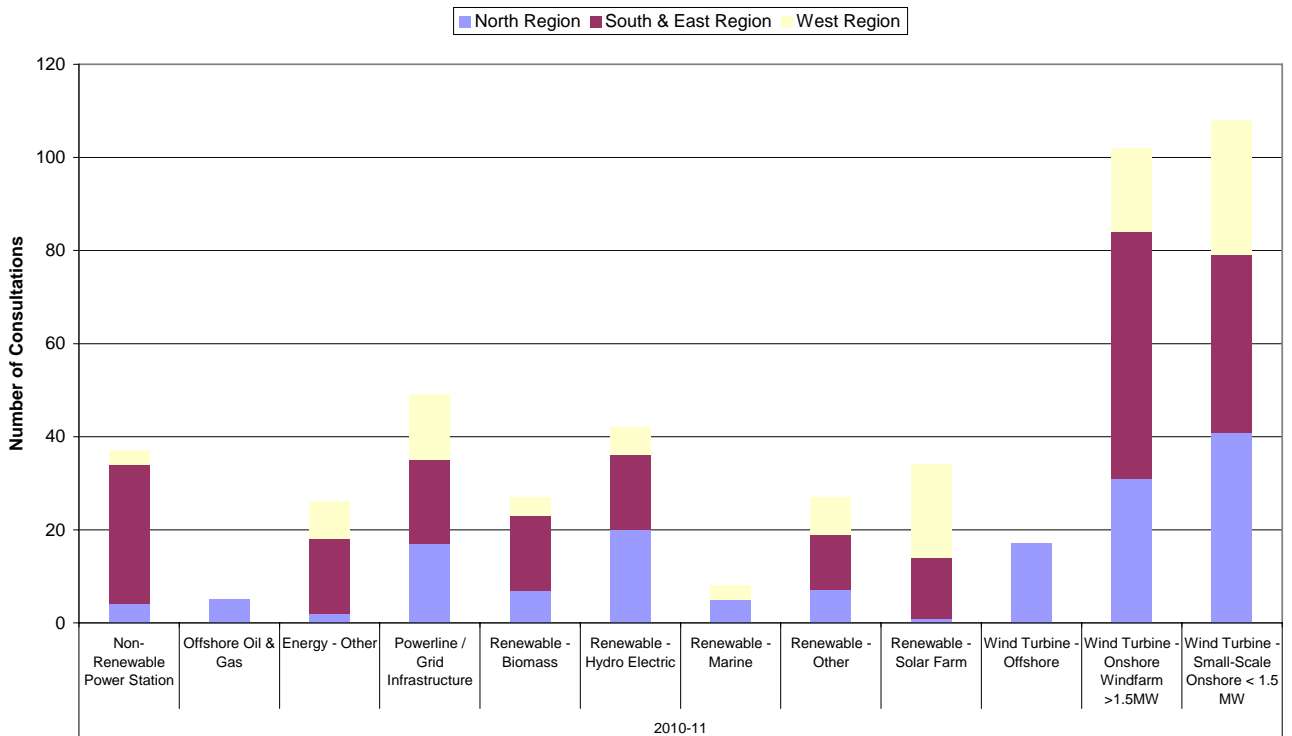
**Figure 2 - Annual Change in Energy Sector: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**



**Figure 3 - Regional Casework Volume: 2010 / 2011**

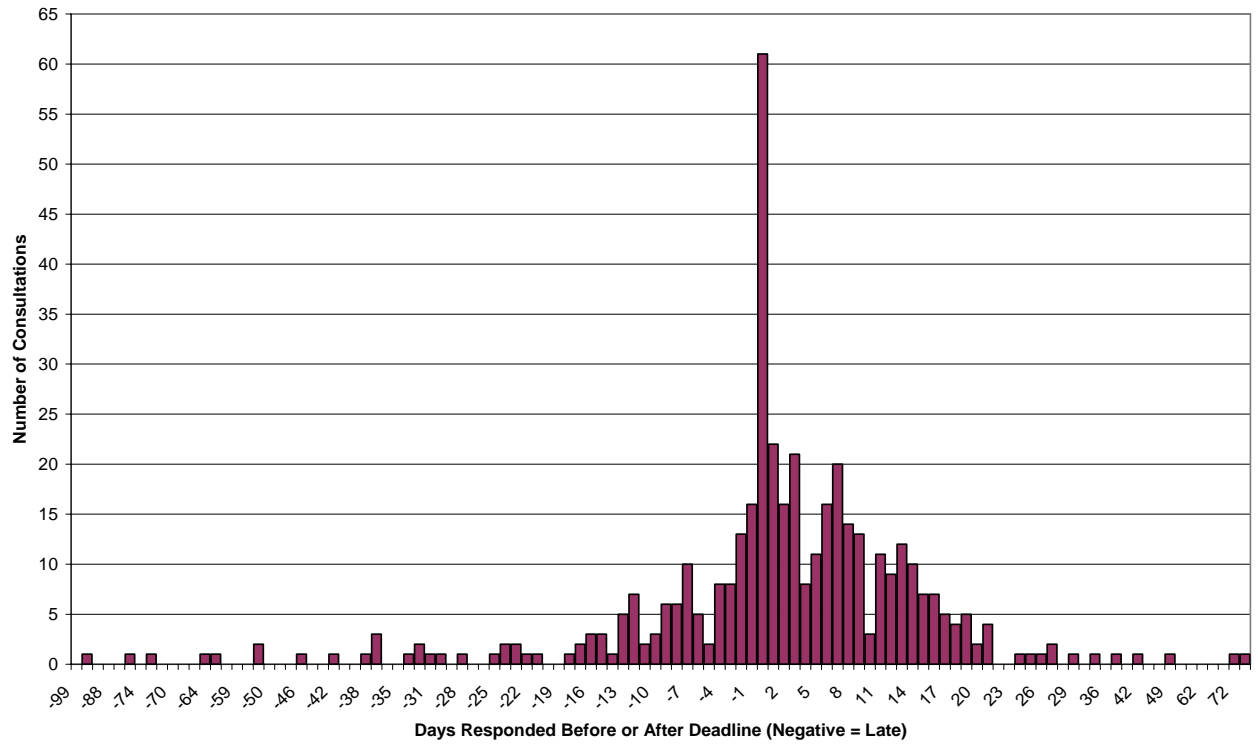


**Figure 4 - Regional Involvement by Energy Sector: 2010 / 2011**





**Figure 5 - Trend in Time between CCW's Response and the Deadline; Energy Consultations Only: 2010 / 2011**



## ANNEX 2: TABLES

**Table 1 – Quarterly Summary: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

2008 / 09				2009 / 10				2010 / 11			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
75	71	87	69	59	74	73	61	87	101	108	189
1156	1368	1302	1272	1101	1164	1204	1145	1292	1563	1459	1393

**Table 2 - Number of Energy Consultations per Financial Year: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

	2008 / 2009	2009 / 2010	2010 / 2011
Number of Energy Consultations	302	267	485
Increase on Previous Year	-	- 12 %	82 %

**Table 3 - Annual Change in Energy Sector: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

Primary Proposal Type	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Grand Total
Non-Renewable Power Station	16	9	37	62
Offshore Oil & Gas	0	1	5	6
Energy - Other	21	13	27	61
Powerline / Grid Infrastructure	74	56	49	179
Renewable - Biomass	21	28	28	77
Renewable - Hydro Electric	8	13	42	63
Renewable - Marine	3	4	8	15
Renewable - Other	3	3	28	34
Renewable - Solar Farm	0	1	34	35
Wind Turbine - Offshore	6	10	17	33
Wind Turbine - Onshore Windfarm >1.5MW	128	106	102	336
Wind Turbine - Small-Scale Onshore < 1.5 MW	22	23	108	153
Grand Total	302	267	485	1054

**Table 4 - Generic Regional Casework Volume & Regional Involvement by Energy Sector: 2010 / 2011**

Primary Proposal Type	North Region	South & East Region	West Region	Grand Total
Non-Renewable Power Station	4	30	3	37
Offshore Oil & Gas	5	0	0	5
Energy - Other	2	16	8	26
Powerline / Grid Infrastructure	17	18	14	49
Renewable - Biomass	7	16	4	27
Renewable - Hydro Electric	20	16	6	42
Renewable - Marine	5	0	3	8
Renewable - Other	7	12	8	27
Renewable - Solar Farm	1	13	20	34
Wind Turbine - Offshore	17	0	0	17
Wind Turbine - Onshore Windfarm >1.5MW	31	53	18	102
Wind Turbine - Small-Scale Onshore < 1.5 MW	41	38	29	108
Grand Total	157	212	113	482

**Table 5 - Trend in Time between CCW's Response and the Deadline; Energy Consultations Only: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

	2008 / 2009	2009 / 2010	2010 / 2011
Number of Energy Consultations	302	267	485
Before the Deadline	60 %	67 %	70 %
Late, But Within 7 Days of the Deadline	14 %	10 %	15 %
After 7 Days Late	26 %	23 %	15 %

**Table 6 – Consultations for Projects over 50MW, derived by Electricity Act s.36 consents or Infrastructure Planning Commission related consultations.**

	2008 / 2009		2009 / 2010		2010 / 2011		TOTAL
	s.36	IPC	s.36	IPC	s.36	IPC	
Non-Renewable Power Station	1	0	0	0	0	16	17
Powerline / Grid Infrastructure	2	0	3	0	1	0	6
Renewable – Biomass	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Wind Turbine - Onshore Windfarm >1.5MW	37	0	18	0	23	1	79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>104</b>
	40		22		42		

**Table 7 – Proportional Representation of Energy Sectors with >50MW Projects.**

	2008 / 2009		2009 / 2010		2010 / 2011	
	<50MW	>50MW	<50MW	>50MW	<50MW	>50MW
Non-Renewable Power Station	94%	6%	100%	0%	57%	43%
Powerline / Grid Infrastructure	97%	3%	95%	5%	98%	2%
Renewable – Biomass	100%	0%	96%	4%	96%	4%
Wind Turbine - Onshore Windfarm >1.5MW	71%	29%	83%	17%	76%	24%

IN CONFIDENCE

## DEPLOYMENT OF ENERGY PROJECTS ADJACENT TO PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

### Recommendation

Council is asked to offer a steer on the issues set out in section 7 below and consider the proposed way forward as set out in section 8.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Addressing climate change, ensuring security of energy supply and economic regeneration are central to the policy agenda of Government in Wales and Westminster as expressed in the Welsh Assembly Government Energy Policy Statement 'A Low Carbon Revolution' (March 2010) and DECC National Policy Statements (2011). Government also has a range of duties, obligations and priorities in relation to conserving and enhancing the natural heritage and natural resources of Wales within the overall context of sustainable development as the central organising principle of public service delivery.

In Wales the First Minister has overall responsibility for energy policy, reflecting its importance politically.

### 2. NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The land use planning system is central to the implementation of sustainable development and sets the framework for the development and use of land in the public interest.

The National Planning Policy Framework in Wales comprises Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Notes and procedural guidance such as circulars and is an important delivery mechanism for WG policy including climate change, renewable energy and economic renewal whilst ensuring Wales meets European and International environmental obligations.

A fundamental principle of the planning system is that the majority of decisions which impact on local communities are taken by the 25 Local Planning Authorities in Wales in the context of adopted local development plans which interpret national policy and express it locally. An exception is the consenting regime for energy projects over 50 MW on land and 100 MW at sea, which remains non-devolved.

### 3. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

The planning policy framework in Wales is set out in:

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and related Technical Advice Notes provide the mechanisms to provide guidance on national planning policy, which should be taken into account in the preparation of local development plans. They are material to decisions on individual planning applications and are to be taken into account by Welsh Ministers and the Planning Inspectorate in the determination of called-in applications and appeals.
- Technical Advice Note 8: Planning for Renewable Energy which seeks to restrict the proliferation of large scale wind farms across the whole of Wales and focus on seven Strategic Search Areas.
- Edition 4 of PPW was published in February 2011 to reflect “A Low Carbon Revolution: Wales’s Energy Policy Statement” and to help facilitate the energy aspirations outlined in WG’s Energy Policy Statement. The document also sets out factual and legislative updates to TAN 8 to reflect the energy policy statement. The main substantive change amends the targets in paragraph 1.4 of TAN 8 (2005) to optimise the use of Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) to reflect the energy aspirations of WG as set out in “A Low Carbon Revolution Wales”. This raised the target from 1.1GW by 2010 to 2GW by 2015. John Griffiths subsequently wrote to Local Planning Authorities in July 2011 to provide clarity on the issue of maximum installation capacities within the SSA’s.
- National Policy in relation to National Parks is set out in `Policy Statement for the National Parks and National Park Authorities in Wales` (WAG 2007). There is no equivalent statement for AONBs.

#### 4. CCW’S ROLE

CCW has numerous roles as an advisor to Government on energy policy and planning as far as that relates to the natural heritage of Wales and as a statutory advisor to licensing authorities responsible for the development of energy in Wales.

In the context of energy generation, CCW’s role is to provide independent, evidence based advice to the Welsh and UK Governments, Local Planning Authorities, the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC), developers and others on the potential impact of strategic policy, plans and programmes and individual developments on the natural heritage of Wales. We are a statutory consultee under a number of Acts and Regulations in relation to casework and are a consultation body and relevant authority in relation to the SEA and HRA processes. Advice is provided at both a project and plan/programme (strategic) level under these arrangements.

CCW aims to provide clear, evidence based and consistent advice to the Welsh Government, UK Government, developers and others, including the IPC, in fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to energy developments. This advice focuses on the **impact** of a particular development in interests of acknowledged importance relating to the natural heritage of Wales. Our aim is to ensure the decision making process is informed by the best available evidence and advice.

In common with other developments, on and offshore wind energy projects can have impacts upon the biodiversity, geodiversity, the character of landscape and seascape, historic features, soils, water resources, access and recreation and other components of the terrestrial and marine environment. These effects arise not only as a result of the wind turbines themselves, but also through their ancillary infrastructure

requirements, such as grid connections, access roads, sub-stations and concrete foundations.

## 5. CCW'S POSITION

In 2008, CCW issued 'Energy and Natural Heritage'. This position statement acknowledged that climate change represents the most serious long term threat to the natural environment and that there is an urgent need to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and that there is a need to move to a low carbon economy to address climate change. This shift will require significantly more efficient use of energy and a substantial investment in low carbon, renewable energy for electricity generation, heat and transport. The position statement sets out the need for a strategically planned approach, seeking to lower overall environmental impacts of energy generation, through:

- demand management measures;
- energy efficiency;
- expanding renewable energy by getting the right technology in the right place; and
- lowering pollution from fossil fuel generation.

CCW also sets set out its support for initiatives which expand generation from lower carbon sources to reduce the long term risk to the natural environment from climate change while minimising unnecessary impacts on natural heritage. To accommodate this imperative, CCW recognises that it will often be necessary to reconcile the need to accept some local impacts on our natural heritage in the short term in order to secure a lowering of emissions from energy generation, whilst ensuring that the legal requirements to protect the environment are upheld.

## 6. STRATEGIC/OVERARCHING ENERGY WORK

CCW has seen a significant increase in its strategic energy related work reflecting the priority given by Government to the deployment of energy.

### Number of Consultations received each Financial Year

Financial Year	2007/08(5 months)	2008 / 2009	2009 / 2010	2010 / 2011	2011 – 23 May 2011
No. Energy consultations	91	302	267	475	57

The growth and diversification of energy development has the potential to represent a significant pressure on natural heritage and our support for renewable energy creates challenges to CCW at both strategic and operational levels, especially given the often contested nature of the debate. Work has commenced on a strategic stocktake of our engagement with energy to ensure that sufficient resource is available for energy related work and that efficient use is made of existing resources. This will involve –

- Heading off issues early by engaging at a strategic level.
- Seeking external funds for energy work to relieve pressure elsewhere.

- Prioritisation of effort on significant energy related work where there are greatest potential for impacts.
- Ensuring that strategic links with policy makers and planners are maintained.
- Learning from experience in Wales and elsewhere and communicating widely.

A key aspect will be to review CCW's position on energy - CCW's Energy & Natural Heritage Position Statement. This identifies the need to accept local impacts in order to accommodate the need for renewable energy to combat the effects of climate change. However, an acceptable level of impact has not yet been defined and this is difficult to operationalise given the strict level of protection of natural heritage features and the need to address issues on a case by case basis. We will review the position statement to clarify what 'local impacts' we may be willing to accept. This is particularly relevant in relation to development within SSA's adjacent to statutory protected landscapes.

## **7. DEVELOPMENT IN SSAs ADJACENT TO NATIONAL PARKS AND AONBs**

Planning Policy Wales sets the context for sustainable land use planning policy taking full account of economic, social and environmental issues including conserving and improving natural heritage and energy within an overall sustainable development context.

It confirms national policy towards National Parks and AONBs, namely that they must be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate development and that the duty to have regard to National Park and AONB purposes applies to activities affecting these areas, whether those activities lie within or outside the designated areas.

TAN 8 provides technical guidance to inform deployment of renewable energy within the overall context of government objectives for the environment.

TAN 8, and the work on which it is based, considered cumulative landscape and visual impacts at an all-Wales level to help identify seven Strategic Search Areas to resist the proliferation of large scale wind farms in other parts of Wales. The strategy adopted is a means of concentrating the impact of wind turbines in a relatively small proportion of the country in areas that are, on balance, technically, practically and environmentally, better able to accommodate such impacts than other parts of Wales.

TAN 8 (Annex D, section 8.4) states that:

- **Within (and immediately adjacent) to the SSAs, the implicit objective is to accept landscape change i.e. a significant change in landscape character from wind turbine development.**
- **There is an implicit objective in TAN 8 to maintain the integrity and quality of the landscape within the National Parks/AONBs of Wales i.e. no change in landscape character from wind turbine development.**



- **In the rest of Wales outside the SSAs, the implicit objective is to maintain the landscape character i.e. no significant change in landscape character from wind turbine development.**

The National Park Policy Statement further states that, in line with the Welsh Assembly Government's policy on major developments within the Welsh National Parks, there should be no **significant change** in landscape character as a result of wind turbine development within National Parks (or the AONBs). **This is subtly different to the wording in TAN 8 and implies that a degree of change would be acceptable.**

This conflict between national policy objectives and the divergence of interpretation between TAN 8 and the National Park Policy Statement is problematic when advising on the potential impact of specific proposals.

A steer on this issue is requested from Council at this stage to help inform our revision of the Energy Position Statement, our submission to the NAW Sustainability Committee Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales, our input into the Revision of the National Park Policy Statement and to inform staff engaged with casework.

## **8. TOWARDS A WAY FORWARD**

CCW believes that strategic spatial planning for renewable energy – based on rigorous evidence and assessment – is necessary to reduce both the environmental and consenting risks associated with energy development.

CCW assisted the Welsh Government in developing its strategic approach to the development of renewable energy as described in Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8, Planning for Renewable Energy. Our aim was then, and remains, to ensure that energy developments are located and constructed in a way that safeguards nationally acknowledged natural heritage designations. These designations are held in high regard by the Welsh Government and CCW has a statutory duty on its behalf to advise on how they can be safeguarded and promoted.

TAN 8 continues to provide a strategic spatial process and framework to help identify positive solutions, the right type of development in the most appropriate locations, thereby helping achieve Government renewable energy targets whilst minimising impacts on the environment. We believe that the decisions to date under the current TAN 8 policy framework have led to consistent decisions, upholding the intention to concentrate development strategically in SSAs and discouraging schemes outside SSAs.

The alternative, a criteria led approach, would result in inappropriate proposals in inappropriate locations with potential greater adverse impact on interests of acknowledged landscape and wildlife interests and introduce further delay to the process of deployment of renewable energy in Wales.

**CCW should continue to support the principles behind a strategic and spatial planning approach for the deployment of renewable energy as expressed in TAN 8.**

However we also need to acknowledge that development in SSAs adjacent to protected landscapes may continue to impact on the character of these areas. The range of impact will be variable and will depend on topography and intervisibility, landscape character and the scale of proposed development. We will continue to work proactively with developers to provide advice on how to avoid significant change in landscape character as a result of wind turbine development adjacent to National Parks and AONBs.

We will also work with WG to provide guidance on this issue to inform the current review of the National Park Policy Statement the outcome of which is likely to result in a joint policy statement on National Parks and AONBs.

## **9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Deployment of low carbon energy will continue to be a priority for the UK and Welsh Government. Providing policy and casework advice on deploying the right development in the right place will remain a strategic priority for CCW (and any future Single Environmental Body) but will prove challenging with respect to capacity given the volume and complexity of projects and plans.

## **10. COMPLIANCE**

CCW is the statutory advisor to UK and Welsh Government on natural heritage in Wales and a statutory consultee under a number of Acts and Regulations to the IPC and Local Planning Authorities.

## **11. WELSH LANGUAGE**

No issues have been identified.

## **12. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

Deployment of the right development in the right location can help avoid impact on biodiversity and landscape whilst also contributing to deployment of low carbon energy with potential positive implications for reducing carbon emissions.

## **13. RISK ASSESSMENT**

Failure to advise on policy and casework may have potentially significant adverse impact on natural heritage and also reputational risks to CCW with respect to being a perceived barrier to the deployment of low carbon energy.

**Dr David Parker**  
**Director Evidence and Advice**

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**This paper has been prepared by Keith Davies, Head Strategic Planning Group**

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