

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 71 – Diane and Richard Goodchild

Due to the nature of wind, turbines produce, at best, 30% of their installed capacity and it is necessary to have conventional generation capacity on permanent standby. This is using fuel but not generating, to cover for when the wind does not blow, blows too hard or their generating capacity is reduced in severe weather. What, therefore, is the point of despoiling acres of beautiful countryside, other than to make the renewable energy companies and land owners very rich from subsidies and compensation payments etc. paid for by the poorest in their electricity bills. It is for these reasons that we fundamentally disagree with any further development of wind farms in the UK and feel that TAN 8 should be urgently reviewed.

The effect on Mid Wales in particular of more wind farms and the associated cabling would be devastating;

- Filling vast tracts of land with hundreds of tons of very non-eco concrete to support both the turbines, the cranes to erect them and to build the road infrastructure to access these remote sites. This concrete will be there for ever, even after the turbines are decommissioned. As far as I know, no environmental study has been conducted on the implications of TAN 8. The potential for more flooding in the Severn and Meifod Valleys as the run off will inevitably increase.
- The felling of large numbers of trees to accommodate the turbines negating any impact they may have on reducing carbon emissions?
- The disruption throughout rural Wales from the thousands of lorry trips required to service the sites before, during and after construction. Also there is the potential for structural damage to roads and damage to buildings. These abnormal loads could cause delays and congestion affecting not only the ordinary motorist but business transport and most importantly the effective operation of the emergency services.
- Destruction of the rural landscape, through road widening and straightening, required to transport these huge turbines through small towns and villages to one of the most inaccessible parts of Wales.
- Destroying probably one of the last remaining dark places in the UK with the light pollution and its subsequent effect on wildlife.
- The effect on the tourist industry, deterring visitors to this part of the country, threatening the jobs of 6500 people. Visitors come to Mid Wales to enjoy some of the most beautiful wild places and to escape industrialisation.
- The impact of the turbines, substation and pylons on Mid Wales landscapes all along the cabling routes for those that live in the area, visually, economically and on health. These developments will have an impact on property values as while there is no proof that pylons are damaging to health the public perception is that they do. There is the added problem for those living near the turbines of noise and amplitude modulation which has the potential to cause health problems.

Should there be any further developments requiring an upgrade to the National Grid, it is vital that any power lines that may be constructed do not disfigure what is left of the Mid Wales countryside. Any cabling required must be put underground, regardless of the upfront costs, as the overall costs should decrease with time with lower maintenance requirements. The running of cables underground is particularly critical in the flat open areas of the Severn flood plain where there is nothing to mitigate the visual impact of the huge pylons that are being proposed. The beauty of Mid Wales should be preserved for future generations to enjoy and deserves better than the cheapest option.

Diane and Richard Goodchild