

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 161 – David Jones

Good Afternoon,

It is now six years since TAN 8 was produced and it is time to look closely at how it is working and what might be the result if it continues without revision or modification. One of the big changes since the birth of TAN 8 has been the change of policy by the UK government regarding nuclear power. We are now in a position where it looks as if a great deal of electricity will be generated by nuclear. This brings into doubt the necessity to generate electricity by wind power. It would be ironic, if by the time huge changes have been made to the landscape of Mid-Wales, a new nuclear station was about to come on stream in Anglesey. That station would be able to tap into the existing transmission infrastructure.

As a country we now have a great deal of environmental and sustainability legislation in place which was not there when TAN 8 was brought in. It is essential that any developments should be made to comply with the legislation in place when permission is granted, Wales is not a third world country and we deserve up to date environmental protection as much as any other country in Europe. The uplands of Mid-Wales are the habitat of many vulnerable species of flora and fauna and also have an important role in the holding back of rainfall before it reaches the river. The more the uplands are industrialised the less natural habitat will remain.

It was shown during the foot and mouth epidemic nearly ten years ago how vulnerable the rural economy was to a reduction in the number of tourists visiting the Welsh countryside. If the uplands are industrialised and the valleys covered in transmission lines Mid-Wales will lose much of its' attraction as a feast for the eyes and lungs of visitors.

It should be the task of the planning process to allow development in the area that enhances the area, not changes it for ever. It is not a good use of the planning process to be able to concentrate the "grott" in a few areas. Planning should exist to stop the "grott"

It is becoming clear that electricity produced by wind power is always going to be expensive and will need to be subsidised by the public purse. Perversely the more expensive power that is produced by windpower the higher the base price will be to the consumer and the more people that will be driven into fuel poverty.

In conclusion I believe existing energy and planning policies have been over taken by events and need to be reviewed. But that review needs to take into account the views of everyone and be fair to all. We in Wales need the same high standards of the environment as everyone else.

Regards

David Jones