

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 258 – June Watts

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to show my objection to the development of more windfarms and National Grid proposals for pylons in MidWales Powys. I strongly oppose all proposals for the following reasons:

VISUAL IMPACT:

The ugly visual sight of these hideous pylons together with the lines, wind farms and hub creeping across our beautiful landscape is just not acceptable.

the use of landmap grading which does seriously undervalue our untouched landscape.

The area is dependant on the beauty of its visuals to bring in tourism and your proposals will seriously effect this fact.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC:

There are many businesses around this area relying on tourism. My husband, an artist who sells his works of the local scenery to clients and tourists who want paintings of this beautiful countryside would no longer have a business if proposals go ahead. Who would want a watercolour painting of a line of pylons ripping through this beautiful countryside. People would just stop coming and long standing clients would discontinue their interest.

There are many caravan sites who rely on the tourists and many Bed and breakfasts. These people visit to see not only the beautiful countryside but the famous sites such as castles and historical homes, they go walking amongst the wild uplands of Powys. They visit to see the wildlife which will also be effected by the destruction you propose of the habitat of wildlife.

Next door to us we have a very successful recording studio (foel studio). What effect will pylons and lines have on yet another business. People come from all over the world to record here, not only to record but to relax in the peaceful, beautiful countryside. Also we have an outward bounds activity center for mostly city children who love to experience the tranquility of the countryside, to be able to escape from the industrial rat race of the city. Your proposals would end this experience for these children and effect this business.

This is also a low flying tactical training area for the M O D and RAF Shawbury and any development would effect their ability to train.

POOR CONSULTATION:

My family have had to travel 12 miles to the nearest consultation events, this is being absolutely stupid as we have our own community centre 'Rhiwhiriaeth' just 2 miles away. We tried to arrange a meeting with the National Grid and SPEN but National Grid refused to attend so we had to have only SPEN at our consultation. Many people arrived at this meeting and were very disappointed with the National Grid and felt quite insulted. Considering this area has been targeted I feel this very inconsiderate.

Most people in mid Wales were expecting to have the consultation forms via post, not thinking that they would 'have to' go to a consultation event in order to get them. Many of our neighbours were totally unaware of the existence of any consultation forms!

In the feedback forms it is unacceptable that the public is not able to write an opinion. Instead it is a totally closed questionnaire and the National Grid and SPEN have devised their own answers for us to merely tick a box.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

The wildlife that lives in this natural habitat will be at serious risk from the impact of your proposals if they were to go ahead. I do not think that your staff had nearly enough information about the wildlife in the area to answer any of my concerns at your consultation event. Much of this wildlife is rare and protected. Especially in areas you are proposing to transform like Dyfnant Forest. Does this mean nothing to you?

Flora and Fauna can thrive in this unspoilt area of ancient grassland and you propose to industrialise this area, destroying natural habitat. You will effect peat bogs, wildflowers and nesting birds.

We have lakes scattered around our home with different species of bird flying over all the time. Pylons and turbines would be bang smack in the way of their flyte path! There are curlews, bats, pine martins, water vole, foxes and badgers, Owl, red kites, otters, great crested newt, and many other important species not to forget the fungi and wild flowers.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

Roads to potential hub sites are unsuitable for large abnormal loads. The cost of modifying these roads would be great. The impact on residents daily life would be unacceptable. There is also concern about the Air Ambulance which is crucial to the rural community . Because of the nature of the rugged landscape the Air Ambulance- which has already had to attend to many incidents in this valley- has difficulty finding suitable ground to land on. Once Pylons and windfarms are built this would become very difficult.

HEALTH ISSUES

It is not only childhood leukaemia that is at risk from the high voltage pylons/lines, but also adult cancers, heart disease, Alzheimers disease, depression, suicide and miscarriage, headaches and lethargy. The most recent evidence reported in your booklet 'Electric and magnetic fields' by ENA has a written piece by the National Radiological protection board, and states that there is a 'possibility' that 'intense and prolonged exposures to magnetic fields'- which would be the case of many children living in proximity of these pylons- 'can increase the risk of leukaemia in children'. The National grid are proposing to place a potential death sentence on myself and fellow children in this area. If your windfarms go ahead, then the pylons will be built. Not only National Grid but yours too! The cumulative effect of these pylons would be ridiculous and should not go ahead.

NO SIGNIFICANT GAIN

The target for windfarm capacity in the original Tan 8 is 800MW for all of Wales. In Wales in 2010 the load factor (efficiency) of the windfarm fleet was about 18%. Going by the figure of 23% this would mean the average output after a year will be only 184MW. This is less than 4% of the Welsh Assembly government's renewable energy target. What is the point?! We should be looking at other energy and encouraging 'saving' energy. 70% of the time the wind does not blow strongly enough and wind energy has to be backed up by conventional power (gas or coal fired).

At our recent meeting with a SPEN representative we were informed that there is NO NEED FOR 50 METER 400KV PYLONS. We are aware that there is a conflict between the National Grid implying that there is a need for 'two' lines but SPEN actually only need 'one' line for their capacity. This would mean that there is a serious case for undergrounding with only one cable. Why press for the need of pylons when there is NO NEED.

We will not allow these proposals to go ahead. It is ridiculous. We have learnt our lesson as a nation from episodes in Welsh history such as the flooding of our valleys for reservoirs. We do not want this fate for children like me. Mid Wales will fight against these proposals. Tan 8 was formulated by the Welsh Assembly government too long ago in 2005! These proposals are seriously flawed and must be stopped.

Ms June Watts