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Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JD/05718/07

Mick Bates AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
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22 October 2007

Deo Mick,

Thank you for your letter of 11 October 2007 on behalf of the Sustainability Committee, arising from your consideration of petition PO61 on the Coal MTAN.

I am pleased to inform you that I received the draft final research reports this week and that the executive summaries for these will be placed on the Welsh Assembly Government website shortly. The detailed work on the distribution of coal resources and the significance of buffer zones conducted by the British Geological Survey, will be provided to Minerals Planning Authorities as soon as possible.

The findings of the reports will inform the final MTAN. While I am keen to conclude this work, should the reports provide information which warrant changes to the draft MTAN, it may be necessary to undertake a further round of consultations. This would, of course, allow the Sustainability Committee to input its views.

I note your concern about the time since the close of the consultation and can assure you that my officials have been actively pursuing the issues in the meantime, through the research programme. I acknowledge that further consultation would extend the period. However, I believe this to be a necessary part of the process and integral to our commitment to public involvement. Once my officials have considered the research reports, I expect to be in a position to indicate whether we will need to consult on any issues next month. Should we need to do so, a consultation paper would then follow in December.

The status of the draft MTAN was set out in the accompanying consultation letter, which explains that it is a material consideration, indicative of the direction of

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Assembly policy and should be given the appropriate weight in plan preparation and decision making. This is the current position.

Yours,



Jane Davidson AM
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing