

Mid Wales Regional Committee MID 03-01(p.2)

Date: Friday 13 July 2001
Time: 10.30am to 1.00pm
Venue: Community Hall, Llanidloes

Policy Overview Paper

The National Assembly's guiding principle on renewable energy is to stimulate development that conserves natural resources and respects the environment. It is committed to ensuring that economic growth is environmentally and socially acceptable, and also to ensuring that the Welsh energy sector is encouraged to make use of clean energy technology. This strategy, which forms part of a wider energy strategy, will aim to make Wales a showcase for clean energy technology and to stimulate the use of renewable energy wherever it is economically attractive and environmentally acceptable.

The Assembly is committed to the development of renewable energy. The challenge facing Wales is how to do this in the context of social, economic and environmental issues.

Renewable energy by definition does not deplete natural resources. Wales' geography, climate and natural resources provide particularly significant opportunities for developing and implementing renewable energy technology. There is great interest within the industry that the Assembly will look to build on and seek to develop a significant supply industry in new renewable technologies. However, the Assembly needs to proceed prudently, gathering and utilising the best information we can along the way. If it were to get this wrong, this will not only be a great disservice to the citizens of Wales but also to the citizens of the world with their ever increasing energy requirements and environmental problems.

The main mature renewable energy technologies are onshore wind energy, offshore wind energy, hydropower, biomass, active solar heating, photovoltaics, tidal power, wave power and energy from waste technologies. In the short to medium term onshore wind energy, biomass, hydropower, PV and active solar heating offer the best opportunities for implementation and industry development.

The Assembly commissioned, as part of the UK 'regions' reviews, a study into the potential for renewable energy in Wales. This study was also driven by the Assembly's desire to examine this potential. The report, which was undertaken by Sustainable Energy Limited, has now been completed and the draft sent for peer review. We are awaiting the resulting comments before

progressing further on this issue. It is the Assembly's intention to hold a workshop on the completion of the peer review with a view to reaching conclusions on how best to take renewables forward in Wales.

It is also worth noting that the Assembly's Economic Development Committee has decided to carry out a review of energy in Wales, which will include consideration of renewable energy. The review will start shortly and will explore the long-term scenarios for (non-transport) energy production and use in Wales and make recommendations to the Assembly Cabinet on a strategic framework for achieving the optimum sustainable use and generation of energy in Wales from 2010 onwards.