

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date:
26 January 2012

Meeting time:
09:00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



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Agenda

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2. Inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales – Evidence on transportation aspects (09:00 – 10:30) (Pages 1 – 9)
09:00 – 09:45

Cllr Estelle Blevais, Mayor, Welshpool Town Council
Robert Robinson, Town clerk, Welshpool Town Council
E&S(4)–04–12paper 1

09:45 – 10:30

Nick Oliver, Transportation Regional Director, AECOM

3. Inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales – Business, Enterprise, Technology & Science (BETS) Sector Panel (10:30 – 11:30)
(Pages 10 – 13)

Kevin McCullough, Chair of the Business, Enterprise, Technology & Science (BETS) Sector Panel
E&S(4)–04–12 paper 2

4. Inquiry into the Business Case for the Single Environmental Body (11:30 – 12:00) (Pages 14 – 19)

Chris Mills, Director, Environment Agency Wales
Kevin Ingram, Finance Manager, Environment Agency Wales

E&S(4)-04-12 paper 3

5. Papers to note (Pages 20 – 22)

Minutes of the meetings held on 12 January

E&S(4)-01-12 minutes

E&S(4)-02-12 minutes

5a. Inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales – further information from National Grid (Pages 23 – 24)

E&S(4)-04-12 paper 4

WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL



PRESENTATION

WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Thursday 26th January 2012 at 9am
Environment & Sustainability Committee

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1.00 Introduction

- 1.01 The Town Council wishes to thank the Welsh Assembly for the opportunity to present its case with regard to the transport issues related to the TAN 8 proposals (wind farms, pylons, hubs and transport).
- 1.02 This report gives the background to the Town Council's position with regard to the transport issues and also gives reasons with evidence as to why the issue is paramount to Montgomeryshire.
- 1.03 The Council is aware that much evidence has been taken by the Committee with regard to the Wind Farms, Pylons and Hubs already and the Council wishes to add its own objections to the principle of TAN8.
- 1.04 The Council was aware of the effects of TAN8 by early 2008 and indeed at a public meeting hosted by the Town Council their Town Clerk presented the effects of TAN8 to that meeting. This included pictures of the pylons, hub and transport, however very few took any notice including the principle authorities.
- 1.04 The Council is astounded that Ministers and Senior Officials were not aware of the effects of TAN8 when it was approved and that the officers did not present a full picture. *(How did the Welsh Assembly Ministers think the Power was going to get out of Mid Wales – Carrier Pigeon?)*
- 1.05 The theme of this presentation assumes that the Committee accepts the Councils objection to TAN8 in principle and seeks to demonstrate in particular the Transport issues.

2.00 TAN 8

- 2.01 The Town Council welcomes the opportunity to present its case on the Transport issues related to TAN8.
- 2.02 The Town Council wishes to point out that it is totally opposed to the introduction of TAN8, wind farms, pylons, electricity hubs and the transport effects with regard to Montgomeryshire and in particular Welshpool. The public have given a clear mandate for this position as set out on page 12.

3.00 Pictures

- 3.01 The roads in Montgomeryshire are not of the same standard as many parts of the Country or UK and indeed are in many cases little more than country lanes.

- 3.02 The pictures shown on page 6 to 8 are those taken on an approved route for the lorry transport to one of the wind farms which has received consent in 2010 for a wind farm at Tirgwint near Carno.
- 3.03 The planning officers at Powys County Council did say in a meeting open to the public that this route would not set a precedent, however other wind farm sites identified are only a short distance beyond this one which could well mean these roads are used for many more lorry traffic movements.
- 3.04 Pictures of the route from Ellesmere Port via Llanymynech and Pant are included as we understand that all large lorry transport will come this route though to Welshpool before dispersing.

4.00 Schedule of transport

- 4.01 It is recognised by the industry and experts that there is approx 1,000 vehicle movements per turbine constructed.
- 4.02 The figures attached on page 9 are based upon the following:
- a) 630 turbines (the current planning applications)
 - b) 1,000 vehicle movements per turbine
 - c) 9 extra large Lorries for each turbine
- 4.03 The traffic (if taken over 3 to 5 years) would give a larger number of convoys per week along the Welshpool bypass from the north causing unacceptable delays to traffic which in turn will attract national news and put people off coming on holiday. Tourism is a major part of the Mid Wales economy.
- 4.04 In the journal of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors it was noted in June 2009 in an article about Wind Farm development that in every case in the UK to date 'transport has been underestimated'.

5.00 Welshpool Town Survey

- 5.01 The Town Council has held public meetings on the proposals within TAN 8 and they were well attended. However the Council felt that a more extensive survey was needed to ensure such results of a survey were robust.
- 5.02 The leaflet used for the survey is shown on page 10/11.
- 5.03 The survey was conducted over a week leading up to a formal count of votes overseen by Ewan Macleod (ex diplomat) on 16th June 2011.
- 5.04 The survey forms were delivered to every home in Welshpool and collected the following day.

- 5.05 The results of the survey show the level of concern by residents and are set out in full on page 12.

6.0 Reasons for objections

- 6.01 The Council wishes to put forward the reasons for its concerns with regard to the transport issues related to TAN8 as follows:

EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT (Road layout changes)

The environmental impact on wildlife, hedgerows and other countryside aspects affected where road junctions, widening and lay-bys are constructed or altered. This includes the large lay-bys which are planned to give resting places for these large convoys.

DISRUPTION TO TRAFFIC

The traffic disruption caused for a number of years on the Mid Wales roads will be unacceptable and will deter visitors to the area. This transport is connected not only with wind farms but the associated infrastructure as well. A copy of current estimated traffic figures is set out in this report. The roads are not built for this size of traffic movements (see pictures). It is not only the larger lorry movements but the associated traffic as well. This is set out clearly in the chart with this presentation.

EFFECT ON TOURISM

The affect of traffic movements on the local economy, in particular tourism, is unacceptable as lack of traffic is a major attraction to holiday makers.

RETAIL AND SMALL BUSINESS SECTORS

The effect of the transportation through town and village centres will have an adverse affect on trade and small business users. This is unacceptable with loss of trade a real issue in a rural community.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Potential damage to the infrastructure caused by excessive weight of the lorries. For example drainage, sewers, underground electric cables, gas pipes and water pipes. Alongside this is the unknown affects on properties (structure) along the routes of such large convoys. This in our view is a matter which needs serious consideration before any plan can be considered.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION CREATION

The traffic congestion is created by a number of factors which are:

The fact that whole stretches of busy roads have to be closed while the lorry convoys pass through.

The time it takes for lorry convoys to travel the routes when not on dual carriageways.

The time taken for a lorry convoy (from the trial run) to pass through Welshpool from the Main Line Station to the WLLR Station (approx 1 mile) is 24 minutes. On the test one lorry took 12 minutes to travel this distance.

There are long stretches of busy A (Trunk) roads which have no turnings or lay-by positions which will mean that traffic build up in the summer will be immense. For example from Welshpool to Castle Caereinion is 4 miles (if the road is closed and the lorry convoy takes 15 minutes to complete the section it will need to be closed for some 30 minutes) and in the summer this will be horrendous.

TRAFFIC GENERATION

The major concern of the Town Council is not only the affects of the Wind Farms, Pylons and Hub (to which the Council also objects) but the following:

- a) The volume and amount of traffic generated by TAN8
- b) The large number of lorry convoys over several years
- c) The sheer scale of the traffic levels compared with existing traffic levels in Montgomeryshire
- d) The effect of causing queues which will appear on 'National News' and therefore possibly affect the area as regards tourism.
- e) The effect on the main shopping street which is on a route already approved for such traffic.
- f) There is no overall traffic plan, that the Council has seen, reflecting the whole of the effects of TAN 8 and without this there can be no real assessment made.
- g) The rural roads in Montgomeryshire and the Shropshire borders are not of a standard which can sustain such traffic generation, including the larger lorry convoys.
- h) The consultation process with the Town and Community Councils has been disjointed and they have not been properly involved in the process.
- i) The North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils supports the stance taken by Welshpool Town Council.
- j) The Local Forum of Town and Community Council also supports the stance taken by Welshpool Town Council.

**WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL
ESTIMATED TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS**

ITEM	If constructed over OVER 3 YEARS	If constructed over OVER 4 YEARS	If constructed over OVER 5 YEARS
WIND TURBINES	630	630	630
VEHCICLE MOVEMENTS	630,000	630,000	630,000
ABNORMAL LOADS	6,300	6,300	6,300
CONVOYS OF LARGE LORRIES	3	3	3
LARGE LORRY CONVOY TOTAL	2,100	1,575	1,260
LARGE LORRY CONVOY PER YEAR	700	394	251
CONVOYS ON BYPASS OSWESTRY TO WELSHPOOL STATION PER WEEK	14	8	5
LARGE CONVOYS PER WEEK VIA WELSHPOOL	4	2	1
LARGE CONVOYS PER WEEK VIA NEWTOWN	8	5	3
LARGE CONOVOYS PER WEEK VIA OTHER AREAS	2	1	1
EXTRA GENERAL TRAFFIC PER WEEK IN AREA	4,038	3,038	2,423

DATED: 10.01.2012

**WIND FARMS, SUB STATIONS,
TRANSPORT AND PYLONS**

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

So that your Community Council has a full view of what the residents of their area would like them to do with regard to the wind farms, transport, sub stations and power lines could you please complete the following. If there is more than one adult in the household you may put the number of votes cast in each box so that each person has a vote.

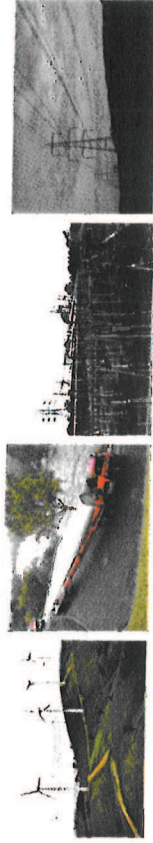
ADDRESS..... NO OF ADULTS.....

TOPIC	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
WIND FARMS	Do you support the proposal to construct a large number of wind turbines in the uplands of Montgomeryshire?		
SUB STATION	Are you concerned about the construction of a large sub station to service wind farms?		
PYLON LINES	Are you concerned by the construction of pylon lines?		
TRANSPORT	Are you worried about the large lorry convoys (related to construction of the above) coming through Montgomeryshire?		
PUBLIC INQUIRY	Would you support the holding of a public inquiry into the whole subject even though it will cost a lot of public money?		

WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL

**WIND FARMS, SUB STATIONS,
TRANSPORT AND PYLONS**

**IMPORTANT
THIS SURVEY AFFECTS YOU**



**PLEASE READ THIS AND THEN VOTE
BY LEAVING YOUR**

**QUESTION SHEET OUT UNDER A STONE
ON THE DOORSTEP**

FOR COLLECTION TOMORROW MORNING

INTRODUCTION

What was being said 3 years ago has become a reality. The wind farms bring transport, sub stations and pylons. The issue for the Local Councils is how to assess what it is supposed to do to represent its electorate. From public meetings and town polls held on the subject over the past few years there has been approx 2000 people involved. This is a small percentage of the total population and electorate. The High School youngsters also hold differing views from many. This information is to give a background of what is proposed to enable you to respond to our survey.

INFORMATION TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR SURVEY FORM

WIND FARMS

There are something upward of 450 wind turbines proposed for Mid Wales, they are bigger than the current ones. They will need to be transported to site by road and will need a sub station and power lines to take the electricity generated to the National Grid. We all want electricity; the debate is how we provide it as fossil fuels are running out.

We all know that they are not economic but the issue is not a financial one but a renewable energy one.

SUB STATION

The lines will be on wooden poles or small metal pylons to take the power from the turbines to the sub station. The sub station is large and even if screened with trees etc will be seen. The sub station is the size of approx 20 football pitches all put together, it is big. The transformers (5-7 of them) will come by road and weigh some 150 tons. The current proposed locations being considered for a sub station are Abermule and Cefn Coch – close to communities.

PYLON LINES

From the sub station there needs to be a giant pylon line (400kva) and these are much bigger than the current ones seen along the Severn Valley via Welshpool.

The current pylon lines being considered are from the sub station locations (Abermule or Cefn Coch) via either Forden/Welshpool direction or via the Meifod Valley. The lines need to get to either north of Oswestry or Baschurch near Shrewsbury.

The pylons will also need to be brought to site by road.

TRANSPORTATION

The transport to bring a wind turbine to Mid Wales will comprise some 9 enormous lorries and around 990 other lorry/van/car movements. This will mean convoys of 3 abnormal loads of 1 or 2 convoys a week for a few years. Most are planned to go via the bypass to Welshpool and then onto Newtown and beyond but some go via Welshpool's main streets and out to the west.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND DISPLAYS

There are many displays and public meetings taking place around Montgomeryshire run by all sorts of organisations including Community and Town Councils. If you have attended one you will be up to date with what has been said.

PUBLIC INQUIRY

The TAN 8 area review took place late in July through to early September last year. Some planning applications which will be decided by Powys County Council, if they refuse them, the Welsh Assembly could 'call the application in' and decide it themselves. The Minister at the Welsh Assembly could call a public inquiry over the whole issue of TAN 8.

However, it is government policy to support TAN 8 and a public inquiry is expensive.

TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

A number of the North East Montgomeryshire Local Councils are together seeking your views so that the community councils can be aware of what you wish them to do in your interests on this very important subject.

WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL

WIND FARM, TRANSPORT, ELECTRICITY HUB AND PYLON SURVEY RESULTS

17TH JUNE 2011

Updated 24.06.2011

	HIGH SCHOOL	OVERALL
NUMBER OF ADULT RESIDENTS/SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	372	5579
NUMBER OF SURVEY FORMS RECEIVED	372	1762
NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY	372	2491
PERCENTAGE RETURN ELECTORS TO RETURNS	100	45
		PERCENT

NUMERICAL RESULTS

NO	ITEM	WELSHPOOL RESULTS		
		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	SUPPORT WIND FARMS	319	1735	58
2	CONCERNED ABOUT HUB	1806	268	23
3	CONCERNED ABOUT PYLONS	1800	283	22
4	CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSPORT	1753	305	45
5	SUPPORT A PUBLIC INQUIRY	1537	353	204

HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	155	168	46
2	159	145	33
3	231	111	20
4	210	130	21
5	173	106	83

OVERALL RESULTS

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	474	1903	104
2	1965	413	56
3	2031	394	42
4	1963	435	66
5	1710	459	287

PERCENTAGE RESULTS

NO	ITEM	WELSHPOOL RESULTS		
		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	SUPPORT WIND FARMS	15.05	81.88	2.74
2	CONCERNED ABOUT HUB	85.23	12.65	1.09
3	CONCERNED ABOUT PYLONS	84.95	13.36	1.04
4	CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSPORT	82.73	14.39	2.12
5	SUPPORT A PUBLIC INQUIRY	72.53	16.66	9.63

HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	41.67	45.16	12.37
2	42.74	38.98	8.87
3	62.10	29.84	5.38
4	56.45	34.95	5.65
5	46.51	28.49	22.31

OVERALL RESULTS

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	19.03	76.40	4.18
2	78.88	16.58	2.25
3	81.53	15.82	1.69
4	78.80	17.46	2.65
5	68.65	18.43	11.52

ADULTS WARD BY WARD - 2010

POWYS WEB SITE	TOTAL	CHILDREN	ADULTS
GUNGROG	2597	449	2148
CASTLE	1563	311	1252
LLANERCHYDDOL	2109	302	1807
TOTALS	6269	1062	5207

This survey has been verified by Ewan Macleod (retired diplomat).....

Agenda Item 3

Environment and Sustainability Committee

E&S(4)-04-12 paper 2

Inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales – Response from the Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science Energy & Environment Sector Team

The Energy and Environment Sector, defined within 'Economic Renewal: a New Direction' as being one of six key sectors of importance to Wales, experienced the highest growth of any sector in Wales between 2005–2008. Apart from its importance to the economy in terms of creating jobs and contributing to GDP, the sector also plays a vital enabling role to other industrial sectors, and is being given increasing importance at a national and European level through concerns regarding climate change, energy supply and energy security.

Our Sector approach is built around the premise that placing Wales at the forefront of the transition to a low carbon low waste economy will present Welsh companies with the opportunity to gain competitive advantage and benefit from growing indigenous and international markets. To this end the Energy and Environment Sector team, under the direction of its private sector panel, is constructing a programme of actions to exploit the economic opportunities associated with the following sectors:

- New enterprise (this includes smart grid, micro-generation and electrification of transport);
- Renewable energy;
- Environmental goods and services;
- Energy Intensive Users;
- Large generation and decarbonisation.

The Energy & Environment Sector Panel has identified 'Money, Grid and Consent' as the three primary enablers for attracting and developing energy projects in Wales – therefore planning and associated regulatory frameworks are absolutely key.

To put the sector into perspective, Gwynt y Mor is one of the largest off shore wind farms under construction in the world with an installed capacity of 576 megawatts. It is a £2 billion investment that will bring £20 million directly to the local communities of the North Wales coast over the lifetime of the project in addition to £2.2million of local contracts during construction, plus sustainable employment during operation. Wylfa nuclear new build would be a bigger investment for the UK than the 2012 Olympics.

The reason that Wales is able to attract such notable renewable energy projects is that we have abundant natural resources giving the country the potential to develop a reputation for excellence in low carbon energy. However, the Panel has clearly articulated that the present system, and particularly the way that it is administered, projects the view that Wales is a difficult place to do business resulting in the country losing out on the location of major energy investments and demonstrator projects to other regions, and in particular Scotland.

The Panel's primary concern is to create a simplified and streamlined process of regulation and consents that delivers a speedy response, be that 'yes' or 'no'. In order to attract investment into Wales which creates long term, sustainable employment and wealth generation, administration of this system must deliver consistent decisions, accountability of decision makers, be based on a long term and stable policy to provide a level of certainty for business and help mitigate risk for investors. The form that this takes, ie, whether power resides in Wales or at UK level, is of secondary importance. This attitude also extends to the question of establishing a single environmental body. But in both cases the Panel strongly advises that industry advice and consultation should be central, and that there should be business representation on the Single Environmental Body project board.

The Panel believes there is a vital need for senior and high level coordination and collaboration on large infrastructure in support of the sector. It recommends the establishment of a high level enabling group between WG and industry to deal with infrastructure and regulation issues, and has discussed the possible need for a Welsh Renewables Advisory Board, citing the success of the SRF in Scotland.

The approach that is being taken to progress 'Energy Island' has been praised by the Sector Panel because it seeks to bring together the policy issues, the consent issues, and the local issues in order to try to address them holistically and jointly with local planning authorities and central authorities, looking at the whole lifecycle of the project.

The designation of Enterprise Zones, and in particular sector specific EZ, has been identified by Panel as potentially providing a boost for priority sectors, particularly if associated with streamlined planning processes and financial interventions. Such an initiative, if it is fleshed out with tangible benefits to business, would send out a positive message that Wales is 'open for business', and could attract additional funding such as through involvement in Technology Strategy Board's Technology Innovation Centres.

Specific recommendations:

TARGETS

- Recommend to the WG that targets contained in Planning Policy Wales are adopted as firm binding targets that will form material considerations when determining planning applications for renewable energy projects.
- Capacity targets for onshore wind both within and outside the SSA's should be confirmed.
- The targets should be amended to reflect the fact that the Severn Barrage is aspirational and will not contribute towards these targets within the plan period.
- The WG should increase the targets for renewable energy for 2022 and adopt a target for 2030
- The WG should appoint an individual at Ministerial level who is responsible for delivering the binding targets. The individual should report on progress made towards achieving the binding targets on an annual basis and where there is a shortfall recommend measures to bridge the shortfall.

PRIMACY IN DECISION MAKING

- There should be a presumption in favour of community based schemes (schemes with at least 5% community ownership) with an installed capacity up to 25 MW outside TAN 8 SSA's.
- The Economic benefit accruing from all energy developments should be given more weight as a material consideration in the planning process.
- PV development on roof space above commercial properties should be given deemed consent
- Local planning authorities should produce positive policies in their Local Development Plans which have a presumption in favour of low carbon development that makes a contribution towards Welsh Government targets. Where LDPs have already been produced, the local planning authorities should produce Interim Planning Guidance to demonstrate the role that will be taken to ensure that national targets are met.

PROCESS

- Statutory and non-statutory consultees should be required to provide comprehensive, consistent and timely responses to consultations on planning applications for energy projects (2 months). This includes CCW, The Environment Agency, the relevant Highways Authority and all Highway Agencies.
- In order to bridge the gap between WG planning and energy policy and the policies of local planning authorities, it is proposed that regional planning be used to help aid delivery of low carbon development. The revision to the Wales Spatial Plan could be a useful starting point for this exercise.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- The WG should establish a firm policy in relation to the Electrical Grid infrastructure required for the development of low carbon technologies, including offshore wind, onshore wind in mid and north Wales TAN 8 areas and Wylfa B. This policy should be derived within a 12 month period and include consultations with key stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Channel the views of business in respect of Welsh and UK policy development including the proposed merger of CCW, EAW and FCW and discussions regarding the further devolution of power for consents >50MW.
- Facilitate availability of better information about the regulatory process and push for better public understanding (and quality of debate) of the issues.

The E&E Sector Panel Chair, Kevin McCullough would like to take the opportunity to present oral evidence to the E&S Committee.

Agenda Item 4

Environment and Sustainability Committee

E&S(4)-04-12 paper 3

Inquiry into the Business Case for the Single Environment Body – Evidence from Environment Agency Wales

1. Our position

Since its creation in 1996, the Environment Agency has operated successfully as an independent body across England and Wales. Following devolution in 1999, we have been committed to delivering the Welsh Government's environmental priorities and have been successful in helping to protect and improve the environment of Wales. This is demonstrated by:

- Water quality improving over the long term. In 2011, 87 of 88 designated beaches across Wales complied with the mandatory Bathing Water standards. In 2010, 98.3% of rivers achieved Good or Fair under the General Quality Assessment (chemical scheme);
- The successful management of over 1,800 miles of flood defences across Wales and as a result of flood defence schemes completed between April 2005 and 2011, over 4,500 extra properties benefiting from reduced flood risk;
- Improved air quality through our regulation of industrial emissions. For example, sulphur dioxide emissions across Wales reduced by 88% between 1990 and 2010.

However, in recent years, we have seen growing differences in what is being asked from the Environment Agency in England and Wales and policy differences are increasing. For example, in England there is increasing emphasis on removing regulation to minimise the burden on business and industry. In Wales, there is greater focus on working with the public, private and third sectors to achieve improved environmental outcomes. We need to change to reflect these diverging approaches. A single environment body for Wales will ensure there is a total focus on Welsh priorities and we would expect the new body to deliver:

- Improved outcomes for the environment, people and economy of Wales, by having a single body undertaking an integrated approach to resolving problems and identifying solutions with multiple benefits;
- Greater efficiency through reducing corporate overheads and generating savings from joint management of estate, procurement and equipment. This will release money for reinvestment in front line services.

We believe that the business case for the single environment body demonstrates that these benefits will outweigh the costs. We recognise that a conservative approach has been taken to the assessment of costs and benefits and the business case has been subject to external scrutiny, which confirms it is in line with Treasury guidelines. Furthermore, separation of EA Wales from its parent body would release an extra £20 million for investment in Wales ensuring that the new body in Wales has the right capabilities and services for managing the environment in Wales.

We support the principles of the Natural Environment Framework (NEF) and the new single environment body will be one of the principal organisations responsible for delivering it. Although there has been good progress on NEF, we are promoting the need for more work to translate the theoretical concepts into practical approaches. For this reason, we welcome the proposed pilots. Applying the NEF concepts to specific local problems will help us all understand the new ways of working.

2.Vision and role for the new body

Our vision for the new body is based on a belief that sustainable development must be the cornerstone of everything it does. The creation of a new environmental organisation in Wales represents a unique opportunity to deliver more for the people and economy of Wales as well as the environment. As such it must be more than simply bringing together the three existing organisations. The new organisation must have a clear vision of its role and remit and this vision must be easily understood by all sections of the community. At the moment, we don't believe that many people have a clear understanding of what improvements the single body could deliver.

The NEF promotes a new approach to the management of our environment to ensure that ecosystems are protected and managed as a whole. This ensures that the full range of benefits or ecosystem services can be realised and thereby contribute to economic and social prosperity. The new body must secure environmental improvements that bring benefits for the local communities and economy as well. Taking this wider perspective will deliver "win-win-win" for the environment, people and economy of Wales.

We believe that there are six key challenges for the new organisation:

- Sustainable land use management;
- Strategic leadership to resolve complex environmental problems;
- Facilitation of economic growth and development;
- Green investment and green jobs;
- Improving regulation;

- Climate change.

2.1 Sustainable land use management

Securing the sustainable and integrated management of land and water is perhaps the most critical environmental challenge for Wales. As well as making economic sense, the use and management of land has a major impact on biodiversity as well as being a significant contributor to diffuse pollution of Welsh rivers and streams. Currently all three organisations have key responsibilities for the management of land, providing advice and guidance to land managers as well as regulating some activities. We believe that there is an opportunity to streamline these services, working with the third sector, to provide a more integrated and effective service. This will help meet the requirements defined in the Water Framework, Habitats and Birds, Bathing Waters and Shellfish Waters Directives. There will also be benefits for flood risk management and carbon retention.

2.2. Strategic leadership to resolve complex environmental problems

Our experience of dealing with complex environmental issues in places such as Burry Inlet and Neath-Port Talbot has shown us how difficult and time consuming it can be developing integrated, cost-effective solutions to such problems. Current legislation drives organisations to focus on their specific roles and responsibilities. There is no incentive for any one organisation to take a strategic leadership role to co-ordinate all those involved, to seek a common understanding of the problems and agree action. Creation of the single environment body is an opportunity to address this shortfall by including in its remit the responsibility to co-ordinate action by bringing together the public, private and third sectors to resolve complex environmental problems. This will ensure everyone is working together in the most effective way, to resolve specific environmental problems and deliver wider benefits for the economy and local community.

Currently no single organisation in Wales considers long term environmental planning for all aspects of the environment in Wales. We believe that the new body has a role to play in providing robust evidence of current environmental pressures and predicting future pressures in Wales and the range of possible interventions to manage these. Provision of this robust evidence, assessing the environmental consequences of decisions and emerging environmental issues, will enable the Welsh Government and local authorities to take better decisions.

2.3 Facilitation of economic growth and development

Economic development and changes in the way people live will put greater pressure on ecosystems. We welcome the Welsh Government's proposal in the economic renewal programme, A New Direction 2010, for a statutory infrastructure plan for Wales. We believe there is a need

to put much greater emphasis on getting the most appropriate developments in the right place, not only for the environment but also for the economy and people. This will ensure that new developments are resilient to future challenges such as climate change, changing demographics and resource scarcity. It will also make it easier for business and industry, by reducing cost and time for environmental permitting through guiding developments to locations where the environment is less sensitive. The new environment body will have a major role to play in providing environmental information, data and evidence so that the natural capacity of the environment is understood and informs the development of the infrastructure plan. We believe that the new organisation must establish strong links with local authorities, through provision of better evidence, to inform their decision making. This will help local authorities and the new body deliver positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.

2.4 Green investment and green jobs

The quality of the Welsh environment already plays an important role in supporting a vibrant Welsh tourism industry. In 2007, the 'Wildlife Economy Wales' study estimated that wildlife related activity in Wales contributed in the order of £1,936 millions annually and supported over 30,000 jobs. The new environment body must build on this and facilitate job creation, not only in tourism and forestry, but also emerging green industries such as renewable energy. The potential of these new industries is demonstrated in a study by Leeds University which shows that investment in relatively simple energy saving initiatives in the Leeds city region would create 1000 jobs per year.

2.5 Improving regulation

There are significant opportunities to streamline environmental permitting. Creation of one organisation will immediately simplify the process for customers, establishing a one stop shop for all permits, advice and guidance on environmental issues. This could reduce costs for customers as well as speeding up the permit determination process.

For high risk and complex activities, there is an opportunity working with Welsh Government, WLGA and others to streamline the environmental permitting and planning consenting processes by considering both consents separately but at the same time. This will deliver benefits to business and industry, through the provision of consistent, timely advice and guidance reducing the regulatory burden. This change will also enable local communities to be better informed about the potential impact of specific developments on their community and environment.

2.6 Climate change

Adapting to the inevitable consequences of climate change through the next century will require imaginative and innovative ways of planning and management. The scale of the challenge is very significant. In 2009/10, for example, Environment Agency Wales and Welsh local authorities invested £44m in constructing and maintaining flood defences. Taking the mid-range climate projections from the most recent UK climate change projections, by 2035 this annual figure will treble to maintain the same level of protection. Conversely, by the 2050s, naturalised summer river flows are projected to fall by 20% – 60% across Wales and the challenge will be to deal successfully with more frequent droughts.

Environment Agency Wales is already considering climate change by advising on spatial planning, flood risk management and maintaining security of public water supply. The new organisation will need to build on this work, as well as that developed by CCW and FCW, to enhance the resilience of habitats and species to a changing climate and water cycle. The new organisation will also need to contribute to the Welsh Government commitment to making a 3% annual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2011-12 onwards; indeed it should be an exemplar for the public sector. Its regulatory activities will need to ensure that the carbon reduction targets for the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the CRC Energy Efficiency Levy are met without jeopardising economic output.

3. Potential risks and mitigation

We recognise that there are risks that need careful management in the period running up to, and after, the establishment of the new organisation. Nevertheless, we are confident these can be mitigated.

3.1 Insufficient resources to deliver effectively for the environment:

- We recognise that there could be a drop in performance in the period before and after a reorganisation. Our priority is to ensure we maintain business activities that are critical for the protection of the environment, people or for the economy, for example flood warning, incident management, front line regulation and issuing permits to operate. We recognise this is a challenge, particularly as more staff are diverted to work on the Welsh Government's SEB and NEF programmes. We believe we can manage this by prioritising our resources onto the critical activities. However, we also need the Welsh Government to streamline the input required to the SEB and NEF programmes to only focus on critical activities. We will carefully monitor the delivery of our critical activities, through customer feedback to ensure there is no slippage in standards of service. Where necessary we will put in place additional resources to ensure standards are met. Finally, where appropriate we will secure additional support from our parent body.

- Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales currently receive a range of services from their parent bodies. The SEB will need to clarify all of its future service requirements and identify the best arrangements for securing these in the future. This is critical to ensuring that the SEB is operational on day 1.

3.2 Unintended consequences across the border

- We recognise that different regulatory regimes could result between England and Wales as policies and priorities continue to diverge between the two Governments. There is a risk that this could result in anticompetitive conditions for business as a result of adding regulatory burden. There could also be uncertainty for those living and working in the border area. We believe this can be mitigated by establishing strong working relationships with the environment bodies of the devolved administrations and the Environment Agency in England to ensure all regulatory and policy differences are scrutinised, the impacts understood and mitigated for.
- In the cross border catchments and estuaries between Wales and England, clear legal agreements will need to be in place to ensure the continued successful management of the environment. The strong working relationship that currently exists with the Environment Agency in England will need to be maintained.

3.3 Transparency of decision making

- In some situations, for example when permitting an activity and assessing its environmental impact, the new body will be required to carry out both regulatory and advisory roles. The new body will need to put in place appropriate levels of governance and transparency in its decision making to address concerns about the potential conflict these two roles present. This is not a new challenge. When the Environment Agency was formed, similar concerns were raised about water quality and fisheries impacts when permitting industrial installations. This was mitigated by having consultation arrangements with key functions within the business and externally, and making decision documents and appropriate assessments publicly available. Also the continued involvement of the public in the decision making process also ensures that we address local concerns in our regulatory role. There will be a continuing role for the Welsh Government in the scrutiny of the new body with regard to regulatory decisions and processes for legal challenge.

18 January 2011

Agenda Item 5

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

Meeting date: **Thursday, 12 January 2012**

Meeting time: **09:15 – 11:45**

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Wales



This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:

http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en_700000_12_01_2012&t=0&l=en

Concise Minutes:

Assembly Members:

**Mick Antoniw
Rebecca Evans
Russell George
Vaughan Gething
Llyr Huws Gruffydd
Julie James
William Powell
David Rees
Antoinette Sandbach**

Witnesses:

**John Day, Lead Petitioner, P-04-024 Say No to TAN 8 – Windfarms and high voltage power lines spoiling our community
Huw Morgan, Montgomeryshire Against Pylons
John Morgan, Cambrian Mountains Society
Peter Ogden, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
Neville Thomas QC, Shropshire and Mid Wales Alliance**

Committee Staff:

**Alun Davidson (Clerk)
Naomi Stocks (Clerk)
Catherine Hunt (Deputy Clerk)
Graham Winter (Researcher)
Nia Seaton (Researcher)**

1. Election of Temporary Chair under Standing Order 17.22

1.1 The Committee elected Vaughan Gething as temporary Chair for this meeting and the afternoon meeting.

2. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2.1 Apologies were received from Dafydd Elis-Thomas. There were no substitutions.

3. Inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales – Evidence session on TAN 8

3.1 The witnesses responded to questions from members of the Committee on energy policy and planning in Wales.

4. Papers to note

4.1 The Committee noted the minutes of the meetings held on 1 December 2011, the letters from the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes and the additional written information on the inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales.

5. Motion under Standing Order 17.42(vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for items 5 & 6

5.1 The Committee agreed the motion to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for items 5 & 6.

6. Inquiry into proposed reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy – Draft report of the Common Agricultural Policy Task and Finish Group

6.1 The Committee agreed the draft letters from the Common Agricultural Policy Task and Finish Group to the Welsh Government and the European Parliament and Committee of the Regions Rapporteur.

7. Inquiry into the Business Case for the Single Environmental Body – Agreement of terms of reference and appointment of expert advisers

7.1 The Committee agreed the terms of reference for its inquiry into the Business Case for the Single Environmental Body.

7.2 The Committee agreed to appoint Professor Terry Marsden and Professor Robert Lee as expert advisers to assist it with the inquiry. In doing so, Antoinette Sandbach expressed her preference that the Committee should be able to choose from a wider range of candidates.

TRANSCRIPT

View the [meeting transcript](#).

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

Meeting date: **Thursday, 12 January 2012**

Meeting time: **13:00 – 15:05**

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Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:

http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en_400004_12_01_2012&t=0&l=en

Concise Minutes:

Assembly Members:

**Mick Antoniw
Rebecca Evans
Russell George
Vaughan Gething (Chair)
Llyr Huws Gruffydd
Julie James
William Powell
David Rees
Antoinette Sandbach**

Witnesses:

**Jonathan Cawley, West Coast Energy
Morag Ellis QC
Simon Power, Arup
Mike Webb, RSPB Cymru**

Committee Staff:

**Alun Davidson (Clerk)
Catherine Hunt (Deputy Clerk)**

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies were received from Dafydd Elis-Thomas. There were no substitutions.

2. Inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales – Round table discussion on TAN 8

2.1 The witnesses responded to questions from members of the Committee on energy policy and planning in Wales.

TRANSCRIPT

View the [meeting transcript](#).

**South Wales Electricity Transmission Network
Briefing Note for National Assembly Wales Environment and Sustainability
Committee Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning – January 2012**

Existing Electricity Transmission Network

1. The South Wales electricity transmission system is currently connected to the rest of the UK by three main transmission line routes - the Pembroke/Rassau to Walham 400kV double circuit, the Cilfynydd/Imperial Park to Melksham 400kV double circuit and the Whitson to Iron Acton 275kV double circuit. Each of those contains potentially limiting factors in the Ross Cables, Severn Cables and the 275kV high crossing of the River Severn respectively.

Existing Generation & Demand in South Wales

2. Currently (2011/12), there is just under 5GW of contracted generation connected within the South Wales region. This comprises generation at Pembroke (1.3GW), Severn Power (0.85GW), Aberthaw (1.6GW), Barry (0.25GW), Baglan Bay (0.55GW) and Uskmouth (0.36GW).
3. Approximately 2GW of the ~5GW generated is consumed within South Wales meeting current demand. As such around 3GW is currently exported out of South Wales into England via the three transmission routes referred to above.

Contracted & Anticipated Connections & Demand in South Wales

4. In future years, whilst the demand in South Wales is forecast to be fairly consistent, the total amount of generation which may be connected, based on the contracted¹ position, could move closer to 7GW by 2020/21. The potential increase comprises Pembroke (0.7GW), Rhigos (0.3GW), Port Talbot (0.3GW) and Abernedd (0.47GW). If all this generation were to proceed and existing generation remains connected, an export transfer requirement across the South Wales system boundary could be approaching 5GW. This can be accommodated with current planned cable replacement reinforcements at the Severn Crossing.

Further Network Proposals

5. Furthermore, there are plans to construct a new 2GW HVDC link between Wylfa in North Wales and Pembroke in South Wales, via an undersea cable off the west coast of Wales. The main drivers for the Wylfa-Pembroke 2GW HVDC link are:
 - a. The development of new wind generation in the Irish Sea Round 3 Zone.
 - b. The commissioning of a new nuclear power station at Wylfa.
 - c. The requirement for increased boundary capability across the network.
6. An integrated offshore transmission network is currently under consideration and this offers significant benefits in reducing the need for onshore system reinforcements. Under an integrated network solution a HVDC subsea cable

¹ The contracted background consists of generation projects which have signed agreements between the generators and National Grid. The background includes all of the generation for which National Grid is obliged to progress works to connect until such a time as the contracted position for an individual customer changes, either by modifying the date or by terminating the agreement altogether.

connection could connect Pembroke in South Wales to an offshore platform in the Irish Sea wind farm development with conventional AC cable connections from the offshore platform to Wylfa in North Wales.

Network Power Carrying Capabilities

7. System analysis studies have been conducted for the South Wales region taking account of the contracted background and the need to plan and operate the network to meet certain Security and Quality and Supply Standards under different fault condition scenarios.
8. For winter peak demand scenarios, the existing network, with planned cable replacement reinforcements at the Severn Crossing can, as noted above, accommodate ~5GW transfers. In a scenario where demand levels in the South Wales region are reduced to 50% of their winter peak values (.i.e. typical summer demand values) the boundary export transfer requirements are increased to around 6GW. Under these conditions, some limitations may be experienced but these can be managed operationally. The development of the planned 2GW Wylfa-Pembroke HVDC link should improve operational flexibility by providing the ability to control the power flow on the link to achieve best operational practice in parallel with the AC network. For example, power flows on the link could be reduced to zero, or under certain conditions, reversed, effectively increasing South Wales boundary capability.
9. It should be noted that the contracted background assumptions upon which this analysis is based may be subject to future change and the chance acknowledged that more or less generation (.i.e. through new openings or delayed closures) could be seen in South Wales going forward. Furthermore, there are some uncertainties currently associated with the specific controls required on a 2GW HVDC link being technically feasible at the necessary time.

4 January 2012