

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-428
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/07364/12

William Powell AM
Chair Petition's committee
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13 November 2012

I am responding to your letter dated 22 October regarding converting street lighting on trunk roads to use alternative energy sources and issuing guidelines to Local Authorities requesting they convert local streetlights to alternative energy.

Reducing carbon and energy consumption is a key driver when designing roadside equipment. Alternative energy sources have been considered for a number of elements of roadside equipment such as lighting, illuminated signs and CCTV etc.

Installing and maintaining equipment such as solar panels and wind generators would incur significant capital investment and ongoing revenue liability with little perceived overall benefit in comparison to cost. A particular challenge for lighting would be storage of energy from the proposed wind/solar panels which would require batteries, fuel cells etc. The costs and complexity for the number of lighting units the Welsh Government own would result in this being a significant engineering undertaking.

The Welsh Government are aiming to look at a centralised method of gathering renewable energy that would feed into the energy grid rather than a high number of small roadside installations. I must stress however that this is in the very early stages of investigation.

As an alternative, the Welsh Government are actively looking at reducing the energy that the equipment uses as this is more effective than changing the source. For example, Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting units are being installed in areas where major maintenance is required. Where replacement equipment is required, an energy consumption review will be completed for the whole life of an installation.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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Also, in line with design standards, best practice and the principles of the draft Welsh Government road lighting strategy, the need and extent of lighting is being challenged prior to any major maintenance interventions.

At present we are not developing any guidance documents for dissemination for Local Authority use, however officials from my Transport Department hold regular meetings with the County Surveyors organisations where information is shared, with regard to new technology and their potential for use in these areas.

While I realise this may not be the answer the committee was hoping for, as you can see we are actually addressing the issue of green energy for our road network and sharing this information with our counterparts in the local authorities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a wavy line.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM

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