

Dear Sirs

I am writing in response to the letter from the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development to the Petitions Committee. contained in your e.mail, and dated the 6th. October.

First I would like to thank the Minister for his interest, and the comments made. I would totally agree with his comment, that 'impacts will vary according to local circumstances', however this variation is not predictable, so consideration by LPA or IPC will be guesswork, and by the time the wind turbines are installed the only recourse affected citizens have is to Environmental Health at County Council level. As is evidenced by Blaengwaun, or Alltwallis wind farm. Two years has passed and the issue is still unresolved, nor likely to be, hence the support the Petition received.

This Petition was raised by people concerned about the health impact of the noise created by industrial machinery. TAN 8 is irrelevant to this issue, because the specific positioning of the turbines are not laid down, only a search area where a developer may seek to obtain LPA or IPC approval. Indeed, in practise, the developer only pays heed to the SSA and largely ignores TAN 8's engineering recommendations, as was the case with Blaengwaun/ Alltwallis, and obviously elsewhere, as the First Minister felt the need to ask developers to respect TAN 8 levels in his statement of the 1st June this year. The First Minister has also pointed out that the IPC is not bound by TAN 8 in any respect, so this problem may not be confined to the SSA's. TAN 8 also passes the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) directly to the developer. These facts mean that TAN 8, because it has no retrospective powers, is of little use in solving this issue, unless it is amended to require a 2 Km exclusion zone.

In para 4, Mr. Griffiths does not specifically detail the English research he rely's on, if it is Hayes McKenzie, this was dealt with in my evidence to the Petitions Committee, I would agree that the media is often emotive, but they are reporting the experiences of people who suffer sleep deprivation, (even that much is admitted in Hayes McKenzie), it does make the victims emotional and depressed, whether it is Guantanamo Bay or Carmarthenshire.

In para 3 Mr. Griffiths refers to further legislation, I am unaware of any Welsh Assembly Government Legislation on this matter, and as it is a Health Matter and Health is fully devolved, the reason for the petition was to try and suggest effective legislation that would couple World Health Organisation standards, with fair treatment of wind farm developers.

The points I would like Mr. Griffiths to address are:

1) Wind Turbines can easily be turned off, they often are for Commercial reasons, in May last year Alltwallis Wind Farm was turned off over many days, and has been turned off on many occasions since. There are other instances of this, both in Scotland and England recorded in Hansard. The petitioners have never asked for a complete wind farm to be turned off, as the National Grid does on these occasions, only at night and only the turbines that impinge on the health of rural citizens.

2) The National Grid, or other monitoring organisations can produce data which shows the electricity produced at night intermittently by onshore wind turbines is of little use, as it has to be covered by conventional production. There are no recorded instances of the lack of wind energy causing supply to be at risk, so operating turbines unnecessarily is not only retrograde to health, it also is counterproductive to efficiency, which is the most important part of green energy. Energy not produced at night when it isn't needed saves turbine operating hours, to be used when it is needed. Maintenance periods, and mechanical life of

the turbine are extended when they are closed down in periods when they are not needed. The proposal would be cost beneficial to developers

3) This legislation would have zero cost to implement. The savings in Environmental Health budgets will be significant. The existing situation in Carmarthen is not suitable for the problem. The hours which require monitoring are mainly between 22.00 Hrs and 06.00 Hours, Carmarthen Environmental Health do not operate outside office hours. If all the SSA's require Environmental Health operatives on call to monitor and prosecute breaches in an ongoing situation, the cost of implementation will fall on the local Welsh rate payer. If compensation through the grid is adopted the very negligible cost will be shared by electricity consumers throughout the UK, which is only just as the electricity produced in the SSA's is all destined for areas away from the local rural grid.

4) Alternatively, if our Environment and Sustainable Development Ministry were to adopt the Scottish model, rather than the English there would be no need for this measure. DECC have written to me on several occasions claiming that wind farms are widely accepted in Scotland, even in the affected rural areas.

Yours faithfully
James Shepherd Foster