

Energy Infrastructure Planning Team  
DECC  
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LONDON SW1A 2AW

28<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Dear Sirs,

**Electricity Act 1989 & Town & Country Planning Act 1990  
Re-Determination of Applications to Construct Wind Turbine Generation  
Stations in Powys, Mid-Wales (Llanbrynmair and Carnedd Wen)**

I am responding to the Departmental e-mail dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016 inviting responses relating to the re-determination of the above two planning applications.

**Personal Information**

My wife and I live adjacent to the A458(T) at the northern end of the two proposed developments. The main northern turbine cluster of the Carnedd Wen project would be close to and directly visible from my property and is my primary concern. The Llanbrynmair project will impact significantly in its own right as will the cumulative effect of the two together. I was a registered objector to both projects presenting verbal and written evidence to the Planning Inquiry.

**Re-opening the Inquiry**

I do not believe that the Inquiry need be re-opened. The Inspector seemed punctilious in providing encouragement and opportunity for objectors to present material evidence and argument to the Inquiry including direct questioning of the applicants' counsel, agents and witnesses. It is the weight put on the evidence by the Inspector with which I find fault. I joked with him towards the end of the Inquiry that I planned to return as a dormouse or great crested newt because they received greater protection in the planning process than the local human inhabitants.

**New Evidence**

Since the Inquiry closed we have had a number of severe weather events. One of these this last winter caused flooding in the Banwy valley worse than anything local residents could remember. **Both windfarm sites** partially drain into this valley. Faster run-off is a major concern. Any development project which involves interference with the absorption and temporary retention of surface water on the surrounding uplands (e.g. by removing trees and/or replacing peat by concrete, hardstanding and additional trackways) needs to be rejected. On a broader scale,

most of both sites ultimately feed the River Severn which has been at the heart of dramatic flooding downstream in England.

### **Carnedd Wen - Landscape and Visual**

The location of the main northern turbine cluster together with the sheer size (height & swept blade area) of the turbines is at the heart of the problem. It is obviously the rotating blades of a wind-turbine which cause the most visual impact, and this is heightened by the number of turbines in view and their asynchronous rotation. 32 in number(R19-R50) , each 137m. to blade tip, they form a huge, intrusive, alien industrial complex in an open moorland environment for which no mitigation is possible.

This cluster would be immediately adjacent to the Snowdonia National Park affecting views from the main southern peaks (Cadair Idris and the Aran ridge). It would also block the only view of the distant Cadair Idris summit for locals and visitors using the A458(T)westbound when entering the Upper Banwy Valley near Llanerfyl.

The A458(T) is the last east-west main road from the West Midlands to the Welsh Coast to be free of commercial wind-farms.

At the Inquiry, discussion of landscape issues and the visual impact of the proposals was conducted by the applicants in fairly abstract terms, yet there were already two temporary 80m. anemometer masts in place at the west(near turbine R50) and east(near turbine R30) of the proposed northern cluster, both in full view of Foel village and the trunk road. The western one is still in place after 5 years and towers above the valley. "Zones of theoretical visibility" and the like are not needed to help people imagine what the development would look like : it is unpleasantly easy to scale up the masts to turbine height—an extra 10m. to reach hub height, then half as high again from there to reach blade tip !! Views of 20-30 turbines will be common along the A458(T) corridor from the valley floor.

The southern "tail" of the development badly affects a section of the Glyndwr's Way national trail which brings important tourism and leisure activity business to our area.

### **Carnedd Wen Five – Landscape and Visual**

Removal of these five turbines would be a welcome but only partial mitigation to the visual impact on selected properties, some located close to those sites and some further away with aspects which make them a specific issue. In my view, however, faced with the height and number of remaining turbines, coupled with the specific topography of the plateau edges, the casual observer would not feel that the underlying adverse effect had been mitigated. The turbines are too tall to be contained by the plateau.

### **Llanbrynmair – Landscape and Visual**

The Llanbrynmair turbines are slightly smaller than Carnedd Wen but will loom over the highly rated Nant yr Eira valley landscape and will also impact on a section of

Glyndwr's Way national trail. They will create a wind-farm horizon in their own right, particularly for westbound travellers (locals and visitors), and will bring large turbines much closer to the Snowdonia National Park.

### **Carnedd Wen & Llanbrynmair combined – Landscape and Visual**

The two wind-farms are immediately adjacent and could be taken for a single development. In the north the separation distance is well under 500m. They will certainly look like one development in views from all directions, so each will increase the overall adverse effect of the other, whether in views from the Snowdonia National Park or from the east and north.

### **Electricity Grid Connection – The Hidden Extra**

Although legally not material to these planning applications, neither of these developments, if consented, would be able to generate a single kW of electricity because there is no transmission infrastructure available to connect them to the National Grid. The local area network is already at saturation (including output from earlier, smaller wind-farm developments further south in Powys). There is no local demand for improved capacity. **Therefore, if these projects were to be approved, there would inevitably be a further major planning project to build suitable infrastructure along a 30mile corridor from the wind-farms into mid-Shropshire solely to connect these two to the existing Grid.** This will involve and impact on a whole range of communities, businesses and individuals who are not directly affected by the wind-farm proposals themselves in addition to cumulative effect on the local Welsh communities who are directly affected. It is fundamentally unsound and against all common sense to determine proposals for power stations without taking account of the grid connection implications. The power utilities have made it clear that they favour intrusive high voltage transmission infrastructure to minimize voltage loss over the long distance to the existing Grid.

### **Conclusion**

I hope you will find your way finally to reject these power-generation projects in such unsuitable rural sites and give us some respite from the years of uncertainty and planning blight to which these projects have contributed.

Yours faithfully,

