

Energy Infrastructure Planning Team
Department of Energy and Climate Change
Area C 4th Floor
3 Whitehall Place
London SW1A 2AW

Dear Secretary of State,

This letter pertains to the re-determination of the applications for both the Llanbrymair and Carnedd Wen wind farms.

It is very difficult to try and convey the depth of feeling the local community has regarding the local landscape, and why we wish it to remain as untouched by industrialisation as possible.

I imagine that for many that it would be hard to understand why I chose to live in such a rural environment without having any ties to farming. Why would I choose to run my business from an area that has patchy or non-existent mobile phone signal and an unreliable and slow internet connection?

Why would anyone chose to live somewhere when they know that they will have to give up so much that is considered part of normal life in other parts of the country? As well as never knowing when I will have a mobile signal (and the choice of only one provider, so no opportunity to threaten to change), no access to fast internet – apart from wirelessly in a community scheme that is actually usually slow and fails completely almost daily – I also know that an ambulance would take significantly longer to reach me – if they could even find the property, the same being true for the fire service. Our medical services as a whole are scattered, there is no hospital anywhere close. We have no natural gas access, no sewage pipe, the water and electricity supply is more likely to fail and takes longer than other areas to fix when it does. I know that there will never be any access to public transport unless I first walk several miles. I will never be able to order food in, I will have to travel a significant distance to do any shopping, our roads will always be maintained far less often. There is no local cinema or access to the arts, unless I make a lengthy journey. Fuel for the car is more expensive in rural areas. The list of things taken for granted by most of our country that we know we will never have is a very long one.

So why do I live here? I live here because it is rural. The views more than make up for what I lose. Every single day I look out on an unspoiled countryside and, for me, this is the most wonderful place I can imagine. I love it dearly. It fills my soul.

In this I am not alone. The depth of feeling which the vast majority of people local to this area have regarding preserving our landscape was more than adequately proven during the Public Inquiry held in Welshpool. The Inspector, Mr. Poulter remarked on this several times. He mentions many times that there is an overwhelming majority who do not wish to see these plans go ahead, yet this is all but ignored and little weight given to it in his report.

There can be no doubt that the vast majority of local people are opposed to these wind farms being built.

However, to many thousands of people, including myself, the wind farms are one a piece of the actual devastation that these industrialists seek to wreak on this landscape.

What was utterly horrifying during the Public Inquiry was the de-facto refusal of the Inspector to even consider that as a direct consequence of wind farms being approved, the Mid-Wales Grid Connection 400 kv pylon project would also go ahead. The Inspector gave only two days out of the entire year of Public Inquiry to this subject and all but ignored it afterwards. This was another spectacular failure of the Public Inquiry process. More than the wind farms themselves, it was the spectre of this grid connection that sparked the huge protests in this area. The blight to the entire proposed route is considerable.

The Mid-Wales Grid Connection project should be considered as part of the cumulative effect of the Llanbrymair and Carnedd Wen developments as well as others that have already been granted planning permission. The triggering of the Mid-Wales Grid Connection project is entirely dependent on planning permission for wind farms in this area being granted.

Since the people opposed to these plans do not have the resources to obtain any sort of significant legal representation, nor have the time to devote to what would be necessary should the Public Inquiry be re-opened, I do not wish to see it re-run. The developers have almost unlimited resources to legal representation, as well as researchers and all the other things necessary to put forward their case. It was obvious during the initial Public Inquiry the woeful imbalance between what local people who were untrained and had their livelihoods and other obligations to attend to were able to put forward, vs. the teams of experienced trained professionals hired by the developers.

However, should the Public Inquiry be re-opened, it would be another total failure of justice if the Mid-Wales Connection project were to be ignored again. It should have been a large part of the Public Inquiry in the first place.

With regard to the environmental information produced in support of the applications, I wonder if all of it is still even valid? Surely sufficient time has now passed that a great deal of it is now out of date. This would certainly impact on the adequacy of the information supplied.

As for other matters arising since 7th September 2015, there have been a great many things happen that point to the people of our great line feeling side-lined on matters which affect them. This feeling that we are not being listened to regarding matters which greatly affect us directly has manifested in the recent vote to leave the European Union (as an example). While the Localism Bill sought to directly address this in regard to planning – it is unclear as to whether the views of the vast

number of people who live in this area are even taken into consideration. It appears not – or there would never been any question of the industrialisation of the local area.

I am mindful that the Conservative Manifesto for Wales
(http://www.welshconservatives.com/files/welsh_manifesto_2015_0.pdf)
contains the following:

“Onshore windfarms often fail to win public support, however, and are unable by themselves to provide the firm capacity that a stable energy system requires. As a result, we will end any new public subsidy for them and change the law so that local people have the final say on all windfarm applications.”

In the case of these two Windfarms the local people have spoken. We have said “No”. If we have the final say then there is no more to be said.

In the same document it states **“We will build new infrastructure in a way that limits, as far as possible, its impact on the environment.”**

I cannot see how building wind farms that will necessarily trigger a 400kv pylon line snaking for 80kms through the most beautiful valleys in Wales can be limiting the impact on the environment. It is vandalism.

During the Public Inquiry the Inspector attempted to divert attention from the necessity of a 400kv pylon line by asking the developers to come up with plans to use 132kv lines instead. Apparently he considers a double line of these to be preferable to a single 400kv line. The Alliance has shown that it is not even possible to do this (re evidence from Gary Swaine), but more than that – since there would be no need for a substation – the cost of these line would have to be borne by the developer. This would make the cost of the wind farms totally uneconomic to build, especially since they will not enjoy the hefty subsidies they used to. What is the point of ruling that someone can build something when it is clearly uneconomic to do so? The project is not even financially viable. RWE is currently in such a bad financial state that the only reason they would even contemplate building their wind farm would be to immediately sell it on. Surely there should be some restriction to this? Any promises made by RWE would be unlikely to be adhered to by a third party we do not even know. Also, both wind farms would have to apply for and get planning permission for the 132kv line.

There is no doubt that these wind farms cannot go ahead if there is no method to transport the electricity generated out. In the same vein, the Mid Wales connection is currently on hold pending the outcome of this decision.

National Grid closed their offices and posted the following on their website:
(<http://www2.nationalgrid.com/UK/In-your-area/Projects/Mid-Wales/>)

“The Mid Wales Connection is all about connecting proposed wind farms in Powys to the national electricity network in Shropshire. In September 2015 DECC (Department of Energy and Climate Change) announced the outcome of the inquiry into five proposed wind farms in Mid Wales – four of them would have used our proposed connection. DECC refused planning consent for all four and we understand that some of these are appealing the decision. There are also other wind farms looking to connect in Mid Wales. We are working with SP Manweb to take a look at all of the proposed wind generation in Mid Wales and the work that is needed to deliver the energy from

the wind farms to homes and businesses. While decisions and discussions are ongoing, we've suspended our work on the project. We realise people will want to know as soon as possible exactly what this means for the Mid Wales Connection project and we'll update local people as quickly as we can once we know the implications on our proposals. If it's established National Grid's connection is not needed, we would not progress with our plans."

There can be no clearer admission that the 400kv pylon line is inextricably linked to the decision of this Public Inquiry. The entire project is shelved if the wind farms are not allowed.

Building one of the longest grid connections ever in the UK is only going to add more money onto the bills of the consumer, making electricity even more of an unaffordable luxury for those who can afford it the least and making business struggle to be competitive.

There is immense blight to the tourism business and to local homeowners in this area and this has manifested itself ever since the possibility of these plans was announced. Until the possibility goes away, this will not be reduced. The evidence for this was given in the Public Inquiry.

The Inspector referred to the proposed pylon line as being for transmission and distribution, so would be of a benefit to the local people. He is utterly wrong in this respect.

There are ZERO plans that the Mid-Wales Connection would be used for distribution. The only plans are for transmission from the proposed hub to the distribution points in England. The distribution network already exists.

Also since 7th September 2015 we have seen the beginning of the construction of Tirgwynt Wind Farm , located near Carno in Powys.

All of the worst concerns regarding tree cutting, hedgerow removal and traffic disruption are already being felt, despite the developers protestations that none of these would occur. The construction is not even fully underway and is of a smaller size (The 12 turbines totalling 24.6 megawatts (MW) of installed capacity).

Already the roads to this wind farm are degrading, covers for drainage are being crushed and smashed etc. We will be having daily large convoys straight through the centre of Welshpool for months. During the trial run the tail back of traffic was huge – even though it was conducted on a day when most large traffic was off the roads due to harvesting.

This wind farm will be clearly visible from Aran Fawddwy (the highest British mountain south of Snowdon and is the principal summit of the predominant southwest-northeast ridge between Dolgellau and Bala, southern Snowdonia, a ridge that continues westwards as Cadair Idris.)

I am mindful that determining the harm to the landscape and views is subjective. It is often emotive. However, the vast majority of those who live locally consider the unspoiled landscape to be beautiful and would be spoiled by industrial wind turbines. Surely these are the people whose opinion matters. These are the people who view these landscapes the most, as well as those who come from all over the Midlands and further simply to look upon these unspoiled views.

In summary, I do not think these plans should be allowed. It would have a massive detrimental effect

on the lives many thousands of local people, not to mention those who visit our countryside and support our primary source of income, tourism. The vast majority of local people do not wish these wind farms to go ahead, even fewer wish to see the Mid-Wales Connection go ahead. To allow these wind farms would be a travesty. We hope and trust the decision that was previously made will remain in place.

Yours Sincerely,

