

A Renewable Energy Policy for Tredegar Town Council

Background

It is now widely accepted that the burning of fossil fuels, which generates greenhouse gas emissions, is a major contributor to climate change. Unless such emissions are brought under control, there will likely be severe and unpredictable implications, both globally and locally.

In the European Commission's report 'Europe 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth' one of the headline targets is to 'reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels or by 30% if the conditions are right, increase the share of renewable energy in our final energy consumption to 20%, and achieve a 20% increase in energy efficiency'. The UK Government and the Welsh Government firmly believe that wind energy has a vital contribution to make in ensuring that the UK and Wales meet the 2020 target in generating energy from renewable resources, with onshore wind expected to deliver approximately 15% of the total. Wind energy has therefore an important role to play in contributing to reducing or adapting to the harmful impacts of climate change.

Wind energy can also bring social and economic benefits through job creation in the manufacturing, construction and maintenance industries. As well as support rural diversification providing an opportunity for farmers to sell or rent land to commercial wind energy companies or support community owned projects.

National Policy

In regard to development control and renewable and low carbon energy, Planning Policy Wales (PPW - Edition 4, 2011, 12.10.1) states:

"In determining applications for renewable and low carbon energy development and associated infrastructure local planning authorities should take into account:-

- * The contribution a proposal will play in meeting identified national, UK and European targets and potential for renewable energy, including the contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;

- *The wider environmental, social and economic benefits and opportunities from renewable and low carbon energy development;

- *The impact on the natural heritage, the coast and the historic environment;

- *The need to minimise impacts on local communities, to safeguard quality of life for existing and future generations;

*Ways to avoid, mitigate or compensate identified adverse impacts;

*The impacts of climate change on the location, design, build and operation of renewable and low carbon energy development. In doing so consider whether measures to adapt to climate change impacts give rise to additional impacts;

*Grid connection issues where renewable (electricity) energy developments are proposed; and

* the capacity of, and effects on, the transportation network relating to the construction and operation of the proposal."

Local Policy

The Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan (July 2006) considers renewable energy. A summary of the key UDP points states that in considering planning applications relating to renewable energy development schemes, the council will permit development proposals where:

* Access from construction traffic can be provided both without danger to highway safety or significant damage to the environment;

* There will be no significant adverse impact to areas of nature conservation, geological or archaeological interest;

* There will be no unacceptable impact on landscape quality or visual amenity;

* No significant harm will be caused to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers through noise emission, visual or other impact;

* No unacceptable electromagnetic, visual or other impact;

* No unacceptable electromagnetic disturbance will be caused to existing transmitting or receiving systems. Adequate measures will be taken to remedy or mitigate any such disturbance which may be caused;

* No unacceptable damage will be caused to the appearance of the area by transmission lines between the development and their point of connection to the national grid;

* There will be no unacceptable adverse impact on water resources;

* There will be no unacceptable adverse impact on protected species or nature conservation interests.

Tredegar Town Council Policy

Tredegar Town Council encourages the development of renewable energy sources and welcomes the challenging targets laid out under the 'Europe 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth', to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

TTC welcomes proposals of all renewable energy sources within its boundaries and shall consider each proposal. When considering proposals for the development of

renewable energy sources within TTC boundaries and neighbouring constituencies. TTC listens to the views and concerns of all constituents whilst reviewing all proposals and considers both the positive and negative impacts all proposed developments in line with both the National and Local Policy outlined above.

Although TTC do not have the legislative power to issue planning permission, TTC are statutory consultees on all planning matters from Bleanau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC). Each planning application is considered and discussed in detail by TTC before a decision is agreed and feedback then communicated to (BGCBC). The decision and feedback is then utilised to inform the full planning committee whilst the planning committee comes to a decision.