

Maerdy Windpower Project Report on Public Consultation on Preliminary Proposals

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Disclaimer

The information contained herein has been prepared to assist the recipient in making an evaluation of the Maerdy windfarm project (the "Project") and does not purport to contain all of the information than an interested party may desire.

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1 Introduction

Preliminary proposals have been made for a windfarm near Maerdy. Between 1st December 2005 and 29th January 2006 an extensive public consultation was conducted with the aim of providing information to the public and receiving comments back to improve the design of the windfarm. This report summarises the consultation work and responses and includes as appendices all of the responses received.

2 Public Consultation

The consultation was based around a website : www.maerdywindfarm.co.uk. A website was used as the most practical way to communicate the significant amount of information about the project to a large number of people. The website contained background information about why the project was being proposed, the common issues of concern with windfarms (noise, wildlife, etc.), and over 250 visualisations of the project from around the area. The website was produced in Welsh and English.

The website was supported by paper copies of the consultation. Paper copies were advertised as available on request in leaflets delivered door to door. Paper copies were also printable from the website to pass on to those without computer access. The Library service were approached to hold paper copies in local libraries, but were unable to assist.

Four public meetings were also held; covering the different valleys communities:

Area	Meeting Location	Date
Rhondda Farw	Cwmparc Community Association	Thursday 12 th January
Rhondda Fach	Maerdy Community Centre	Friday 13 th January
Cynon Valley	Llwydcoed Community Hall	Sunday 15 th January & Tuesday 24 th January

The Llwydcoed meeting was repeated because of a newspaper printing error.

The consultation closing date was extended to properly allow time for review and reply. The original closing date was too early.

3 Consultation Publicity

Councillors, AM's, MP's and Council officials were invited to preview the consultation in November 2005. The Consultation website was then notified to the public through: i) Door to door leaflets; ii) Newspaper notices; iii) Local Press articles.

Over ten thousand door to door leaflets were issued to local homes. The leaflet was bilingual. A copy of the leaflet is included in Appendix A.

The leaflets were delivered separately from any other mail to prevent them being lost amongst other mail. The leaflets were delivered to all the major communities that were within the zone of visual influence of the windfarm. A plan of the leaflet distribution area is included in Appendix B. Adjoining parts of villages outside the visual zone were also included to ensure each discrete community were all notified and neighbours did not find out second hand about the proposals. In addition Ferndale, largely outside the zone of visual influence was leafleted because of expected interest with the Ferndale windfarm proposal.

The objective of the leafleting was to ensure that the vast majority of local residents likely to have an interest in the project were informed first hand about the consultation.

In addition to the leafleting, newspaper notices were placed in each of the Rhondda Leader and the Cynon Valley Leader newspapers on two occasions: one at the beginning of December and one at the beginning of January. These newspapers cover the area surrounding the project and have a distribution of over 24,000. Copies of the newspaper notices are included in Appendix C.

A notice was also placed in the national paper; The Western Mail. The public meetings were advertised through the newspaper notices in the above papers.

Two large newspaper articles were run in January (19th and 26th) on the project proposals in the Rhondda Leader newspaper.

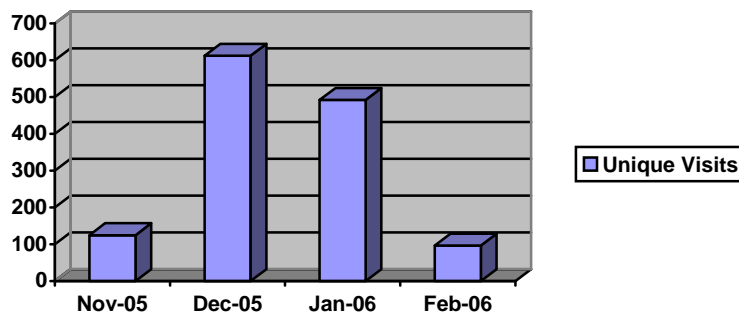
4 Consultation Participation

Paper Copies Request

Following the leaflet distribution two people requested a paper copy of the Consultation documents.

Website Review

1,331 unique visits to the website have been made to date. Please see graph below.



Unique visits is an industry measure of separate visits to a website and is an indicator of the number of visitors.

Public Meeting Attendance

Please find below the attendance numbers for the public meetings held. Please note that Councillors and AM's are included in the total.

Meeting Location	Date	Attendance
Cwmparc Community Association	Thursday 12 th January	8
Maerdy Community Centre	Friday 13 th January	21
Llwydcoed Community Hall	Sunday 15 th January & Tuesday 24 th January	15 14

5 Consultation Responses

The consultation website and paper copies included email and postal addresses for responses to be sent to. Comment cards and pens were also made available at public meetings for people who wished to leave comments there rather than write or email later. The table below details the number of responses. Please note two of the letters and one email are from politicians.

Letters received	4
Emails received	19
Cards left at public meetings	4

All letters and emails were responded to promptly. Information was provided where possible to try to address any issues raised. Three respondents were also subsequently met. For two residents individual photomontages of the project proposals have been offered from their homes.

Appendix E contains all the responses and replies to those responses. Respondeees were advised that their comments would be made available for review.

Although not part of the public consultation, the Rhondda Leader has been monitored for articles letters, etc. Since the first article on the proposal, in the following four editions one letter has been published.

6 Conclusions

Because analysis of the number and nature of the responses is highly subjective all responses and replies have been included first hand in this report for the reader to make their own assessment. Please see Appendix E.

The following summary points are suggested for consideration:

The amount of consultation participation and the number of consultation responses may be an indicator of public attitude towards the project proposals after proper allowance is made for publicity and public awareness.

The nature of responses to the consultation is mixed: both positive and negative; with no majority in favour or against the proposals. Opinions received also cover a wide spectrum from strong enthusiasm to complete objection.

Specific comments were requested on the project layout; including the size and number of turbines and any turbine locations that were a specific issue. A number of people responded on the turbines size with a small majority preferring the fewer number of larger turbines. No comments were made about specific turbine locations.

Specific comments were also requested on the application of community benefit funds (to individuals, community groups, etc.). Comments were varied with no clear opinion.

Apart from a gauge of public opinion the consultation was very helpful in identifying specific issues of concern, including some unanticipated ones. Our replies to respondents have tried to address these concerns for individuals, but future consultation work and the environmental statement will also address the raised issues for the wider benefit.

All responses are attached and interpretations and conclusions by readers of this report are appreciated and invited.

7 Further Consultation Work

A closing date of 29th January was placed on the preliminary proposals consultation to allow comments to be incorporated into a final project design, which is now taking place.

The final project design and environmental statement are now being prepared for consideration by the planning authority. When these are finalised it is intended that a further round of public information and consultation will be conducted. The proposals, environmental statement and supporting information (including visualisations of the final design) will be made available both on the website and through public exhibition.

It is hoped this will encourage and assist the local population with raising any comments they wish to make to the planning authority; and it will also provide information on the public attitude to the final proposals. A similar report will be prepared for the planning authority and interested parties once again will be invited to attend public events.

Any recommendations on improvements to the consultation process are appreciated and invited.

Appendix A – Door to Door Consultation Notice Leaflet

Public Consultation

Renewable Energy Partnerships

Proposals for a windfarm of between 8 and 12 wind turbines have been developed for some land adjacent to Maerdy coal tip. A public consultation on the proposals is being conducted.

The Welsh Assembly Government have issued policy to target the development of windfarms in a few strategic areas in Wales. One of the areas covers the Rhondda with an objective for approximately 100+ wind turbines.

The Maerdy site is being proposed for a potential windfarm following an extensive consultation. Organisations such as the CCW, CADW, RSPB, MOD, BBC and the Environment Agency were consulted on many different sites across South Wales. The site at Maerdy emerged as one of the best potential sites.

Detailed environmental assessments are now being undertaken. In parallel with these a public consultation is being held.

The full public consultation is available online at:

www.maerdywindfarm.co.uk

Copies can be printed from the website and summary copies are also available on written request to the address below.

The public consultation website aims to provide information on the preliminary proposals and also to receive comments to improve the design of the windfarm.

The consultation includes information on why the site is being proposed, the issues that may be of concern (noise, visibility etc.) and maximising the benefits from the project.

The website also includes visualisations from over 250 different viewpoints around the area. Opinion is invited on the layout of the windfarm including turbine sizes and locations. Comments will feed into the design of the project.

Please review the proposals and submit your comments. All comments are sincerely appreciated, will improve the project and will be held for review by the planning authority.

Information on how to reply is included on the consultation documents. The closing date for replies is 30th December 2005.

Following the public consultation, if the environmental studies are positive, it is anticipated that a final project would be presented to the planning authority in the Spring of 2006.



View of 8 turbine layout from Luest-wen reservoir

Renewable Energy Partnerships Ltd, Overmoor, Neston, Corsham, SN13 9TZ

www.maerdywindfarm.co.uk

Ymgynghoriad Cyhoeddus

Renewable Energy Partnerships

Mae cynigion ar gyfer fferm wynt gyda rhwng 8 a 12 tyrbîn wedi cael eu datblygu ar gyfer tir cyfagos i dip glo'r Maerdy. Mae ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus yn cael ei gynnal ar y cynigion.

Mae Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru wedi cyhoeddi polisi i dargedu datblygu ffermydd gwynt mewn rhai ardaloedd strategol yng Nghymru. Mae un o'r ardaloedd yn cynnwys y Rhondda gyda nod o ryw 100+ o dyrbînau gwynt.

Mae safle'r Maerdy'n cael ei gynnig fel fferm wynt potensial yn dilyn ymgynghori helaeth. Ymgynghorwyd â mudiadau megis y Cyngor Cefn Gwlad, CADW, RSPB, y Weinyddiaeth Amddiffyn, y BBC ac Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd ar nifer o safleoedd gwahanol ar draws De Cymru. Y safle ym Maerdy oedd un o'r safleoedd potensial gorau yn dilyn yr ymgynghoriad.

Mae asesiadau amgylcheddol manwl yn cael eu cynnal ar hyn o bryd. Ochr yn ochr â hyn mae ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus yn cael ei gynnal.

Mae'r ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus llawn ar gael ar-lein:

www.maerdywindfarm.co.uk

Gellir argraffu copiâu o'r wefan ac mae crynodeb ar gael ar gais ysgrifenedig i'r cyfeiriad isod.

Nod gwefan yr ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus yw darparu gwybodaeth ar y cynigion cychwynnol yn ogystal â derbyn sylwadau i wella dyluniad y fferm wynt.

Mae'r ymgynghoriad yn cynnwys gwybodaeth ar pam y mae'r safle'n cael ei gynnig, y materion all fod yn achos pryder (swm, gweledded ayyb) a gwneud y gorau o fanteision y prosiect.

Mae'r wefan hefyd yn cynnwys delweddau o dros 250 o leoliadau gwahanol o gwmpas yr ardal. Gwahoddir barn ar gynllun y fferm wynt, yn cynnwys maint y tyrbînau a'u lleoliad. Bydd sylwadau'n cael eu bwydo i mewn i ddyluniad y prosiect.

A fydddech cystal ag adolygu'r cynigion ac anfon eich sylwadau. Gwerthfawrogir pob sylw yn ddiffuant, a bydd y sylwadau'n gwella'r prosiect ac yn cael eu cadw i'w hadolygu gan yr awdurdod cynllunio.

Mae gwybodaeth ar sut i ymateb wedi'i chynnwys ar y dogfennau ymgynghori. Y dyddiad cau ar gyfer atebion yw 30 Rhagfyr 2005.

Yn dilyn yr ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus, os yw'r astudiaethau amgylcheddol yn gadarnhaol, rhagwelir y bydd y prosiect terfynol yn cael ei gyflwyno i'r awdurdod cynllunio yn ystod y Gwanwyn 2006.

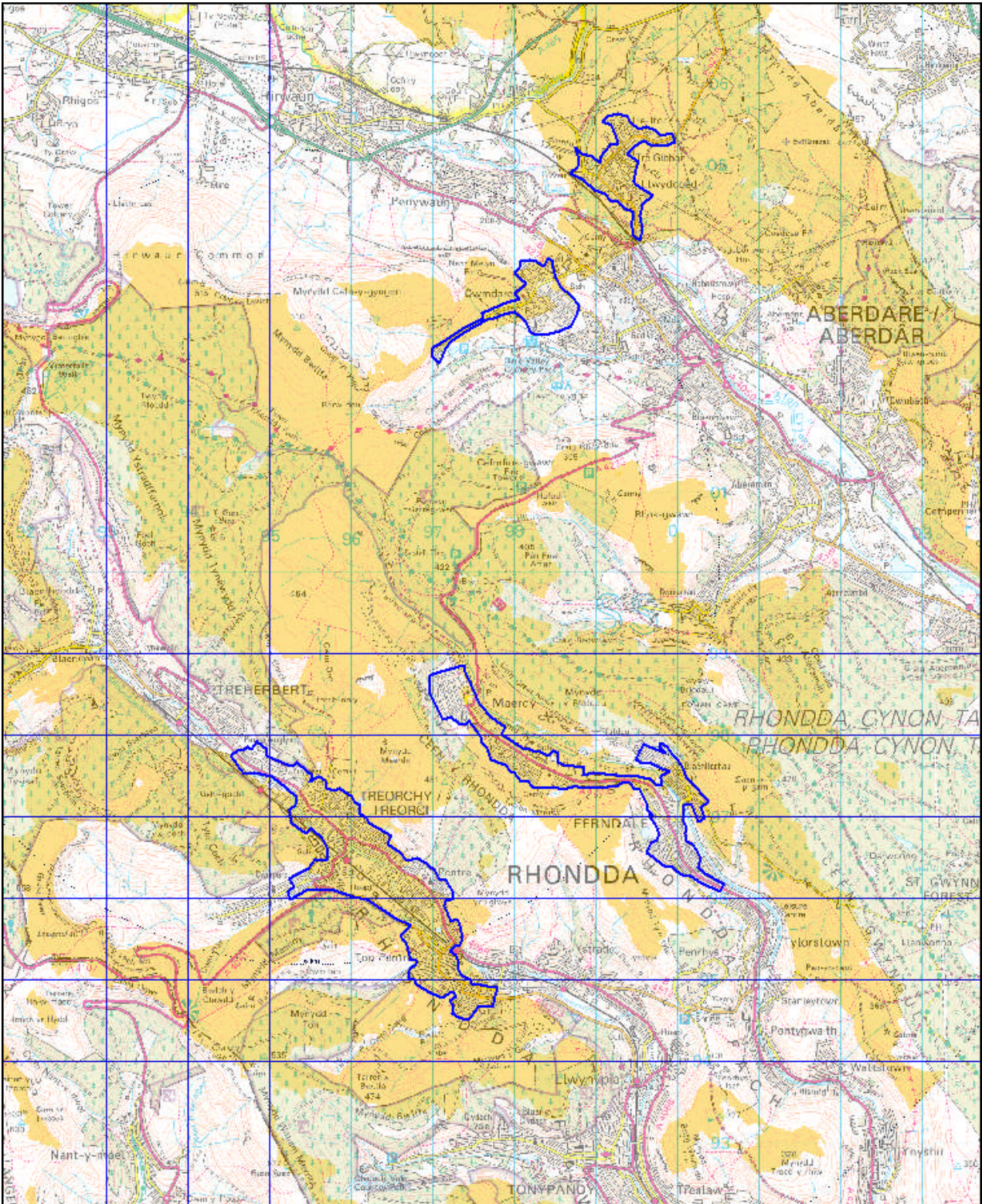


View of 12 turbine layout from A4233, Maerdy

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www.maerdywindfarm.co.uk

Appendix B – Leaflet Distribution Area



Appendix C – Newspaper Notices

Public Consultation - Maerdy Windfarm

Preliminary proposals for a windfarm of between 8 and 12 wind turbines have been developed for some land adjacent to Maerdy coal tip.

The Maerdy site is being proposed for a potential windfarm following an extensive consultation. Organisations such as the CCW, CADW, RSPB, MOD, BBC and the Environment Agency were consulted on many different sites across South Wales. The site at Maerdy emerged as one of the best potential sites.

A public consultation on the proposals is being conducted and is available online at:

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The public consultation website aims to provide information on the proposals and also to receive comments to

improve the design of the windfarm.

The website also includes visualisations from over 250 different viewpoints around the area. Opinion is invited on the layout of the windfarm including turbine sizes and locations. Comments will feed into the design of the project.

Please review the proposals and submit your comments. All comments are sincerely appreciated, will improve the project and will be held for review by the planning authority.

How to reply is included on the website. The closing date for replies is now extended to 6th January 2006.

Following the public consultation, if the environmental studies are positive, it is anticipated that a final project would be presented to the planning authority in the Spring of 2006.

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Public Meeting - Maerdy Windfarm

Preliminary proposals for a windfarm of between 8 and 12 wind turbines have been developed for some land adjacent to Maerdy coal tip.

A public consultation is being held from 01/12/05 to 22/01/06 the full consultation is available on line at

www.maerdywindfarm.co.uk

Public meetings have been arranged to present the proposals, answer questions and receive comments. Please come along.

Area	Meeting Location	Date
Rhondda Farw	Cwmparc Community Association Parc Hall, Parc Road, Cwmparc, Treorchy, CF426LD	Thursday 12 th January 7.00pm-9.30pm
Rhondda Fach	Maerdy Community Centre Park Road, Maerdy, CF43 4DD	Friday 13 th January 7.00pm-9.30pm
Cynon Valley	Llwydcoed Community Hall Llwydcoed, Aberdare, CF440UT	Sunday 15 th January 2:30pm-5:30pm

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Public Meeting - Maerdy Windfarm

Preliminary proposals for a windfarm of between 8 and 12 wind turbines have been developed for some land adjacent to Maerdy coal tip.

A public consultation is being held from 01/12/05 to 29/01/06. The full consultation is available on line at

www.maerdywindfarm.co.uk

An additional public meeting has been arranged to present the proposals, answer questions and receive comments. Please come along.

Area	Meeting Location	Date
Cynon Valley	Llwydcoed Community Hall Llwydcoed, Aberdare, CF440UT	Tuesday 24 th January 7:00pm-9:30pm

Renewable Energy Partnerships Ltd, Overmoor, Neston, Corsham, SN13 9TZ