

Huw Roberts
Development Control Officer
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
Sardis House,
Sardis Road,
Pontypridd,
CF37 1DU

15 January 2007

Dear Mr Roberts

Public Attitude towards the Maerdy Windfarm Proposals

REP have conducted a significant amount of public engagement work on the Maerdy Windfarm. We believe there is now a body of evidence regarding the attitude of the general public toward the proposals and this is summarised below.

Preplanning Consultation – Winter 2005/6

Over 10,000 leaflets were issued door to door publicising the consultation website and availability of reports on the proposals. The consultation website contained over 250 visualisations of the project. 4 public meetings were held publicised by adverts in the local and national press. Comments on the proposals were invited through the website, meetings, leaflets and proposal reports.

Attendance at the four public meetings ranged between 8 and 21 people. Only 2 people requested paper copies of the proposal report. Of over 1,300 visits to the website, only 19 people sent in comment emails. 4 letters were received and 4 comments cards left at meetings. Of this small total of 27 written comments received they were equally split in favour and against. The consultation is reported on fully in *Report on Public Consultation on Preliminary Proposals* (Appendix A of the Environmental Statement).

Post Planning Exhibitions and Information – Autumn / Winter 2006

14,000 leaflets were distributed through the Rhondda Leader. The Rhondda Leader, Cynon Valley Leader and Pontypridd Observer also carried large adverts (total circulation 37,000). Both leaflets and adverts advertised the project website that had been updated with the final proposals, the three public exhibitions planned and the availability of paper copies to be sent out to interested parties.

Attendance at the public exhibitions ranged between just 6 people and 25 people. No one at all requested a paper hard copy report. Approximately 1,200 people examined the project website, although how many of these were the public it is difficult to tell. A full report is available in *Supplementary Report on Post Planning Public Engagement Work - Jan 2007*

Consultation on the Community Benefit Programme

In November 2006, REP wrote to 235 local community groups to invite opinions on the Community Benefit Programme (CBP). Only 4 replies were received. Please see *Report on Consultation on Community Benefit Programme – Jan 2007*

Letters from Public Sent to RCT Council

From our review of the RCT planning file at 11 January 2006, 15 weeks after the planning application and following the major publicity regarding the project there were just 6 independent and original letters sent in by members of the public.

As you know a standard letter has been received and on our review of the file there were 83 copies of this sent in, from 76 addresses. The person who organised the standard letter, Mr Richard Clarke, claims to have issued over 1,250 letters to households. On this basis, 6% of households receiving the letter have therefore sent it in.

Furthermore, please could we point out that the information supporting the standard letter is extremely inflammatory, and likely to incite opposition – a copy is included as an Appendix to this letter.

Letters sent to Local Newspapers

Windfarms in general, including the Maerdy Windfarm and other proposals, have been the subject of debate in the letters pages of all local newspapers in recent months. The opinions expressed are helpful for exposing issues and concerns; and we have tried to address peoples concerns in replies to the papers.

The views expressed tend to be those at the extremes of the spectrum with very strong opinions. The numbers of correspondents are very few; indeed it is common to see the same correspondents cropping up repeatedly in issues. While we believe the opinions expressed should be respected and addressed, there is much evidence that the views expressed by the small number of people who write in do not reflect those of the overwhelming majority.

Conclusions

Despite significant publicity regarding the proposals over a long period few people have requested information regarding the proposals and very few expressed any views. It is not possible to determine whether this is because of support for the proposals, lack of concern or indifference.

The opposition that has been expressed has only been from a small number of people, reflecting a very small minority of the local population.

We remain committed to addressing any concerns or queries we receive and sharing information received with the Council. We would welcome any comments to direct future public engagement work.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Richard Hadwin

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reference: RCT, Roberts, Public Opinion, 150107
enclosures: Appendix – Standard opposition letter

PROPOSED WIND FARM TO DEVASTATE TREORCHY LANDSCAPE

Did you know that the proposed Maerdy Wind Farm development will in fact be highly visible in the top half of the Rhondda Fawr?

We all want a cleaner, healthier environment but are wind farms the answer? Do the developers really have the Rhondda's interests at heart? Or is profit their main motivation?

The 8 proposed wind turbines are 125m (412½ feet) tall. Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square is only 165 feet. These monstrous wind turbines could become Rhondda's 21st century equivalent to last century's slag heaps. Do we want our hills to be spoilt yet again?

Don't be hood-winked into thinking this is an environmental issue, there are potentially big profits at stake for the developers. They will return to their wind farm free homes in the south of England to rake in the money while we deal with the devastation to our landscape.

Please stop this happening. Oppose the planning application and help keep our valley and hills beautiful.

(A letter has been prepared for you to send to the planning officer – please put your name and address to this and send it to the local council)

Objection to wind farm planning application Reference: 06/1865 – Maerdy Wind Farm
Development

address

To the Planning Officer
Development Control
Sardis House
Sardis Road
Pontypridd
CF37 1DU

Dear Sir,

I am writing to object to the wind farm on the following grounds:

- 1) The wind farm development does not appear in the Local Plan as adopted by Rhondda Cynon Taf. The local plan also states that the development of wind turbines will only be allowed where, "the development will not result in unacceptable intrusion upon the intrinsic landscape quality of the area". The landscape around Treorchy, Cwmparc and Maerdy will be significantly intruded on by the proposed wind farm development.
- 2) The connection to the distribution network does not form part of the planning application although it is noted that this may be either over head or underground cabling. If the planning application is approved, then restrictions should be placed on the developer to ensure that the local Distribution Network Operator (~~Western Power Distribution~~) make
- 3) The proposal states that at the end of the life the cabling will be left in-situ to minimise the environment effect. This implies that there will be an environmental effect in establishing the wind farm cabling. To minimise the impact on the visual aspects permission to connect to the local distribution network should be sought on the basis of underground cabling only.
- 4) The £600,000 community fund proposed as part of the development is insufficient when compared with the huge potential profits that will be made from the wind farm. If the community fund is established on the basis of an annual amount, then security should be provided to mitigate the effects of the wind farm developer being unable to meet its financial commitments.
- 5) The Cem-y-Rhondda ridge between the Rhondda Fach and Fawr, that includes the wind farm site, is of district nature conservation value and should be protected.
- 6) Restriction of Access to forestry roads during construction.
- 7) The development will change the use from agricultural land to a brown field site. At the end of the wind farm life, restrictions should be imposed to ensure that the site is not then sold off for housing development as it will have been a brown field site.
- 8) The Planning Application makes reference to the birds that were observed in the area of the wind farm site. It is possible that collisions will occur between birds and the wind turbines.
- 9) There are significant numbers of bats in the area around and to the North of the Cemetery. Whilst these were not spotted during the environmental survey it does not mean they do not exist. There is potential for the local bat population to be disturbed by both the building work and the wind farms when operational.

Yours faithfully,

(FULL NAME)

Say 'NO'

to the

TREORCHY

Wind

Farm

Renewable Energy Partnerships Ltd (REP) is currently proposing to build a wind farm on the hills above TREORCHY.

REP are calling it the "MAERDY" wind farm, perhaps in the hope that people in Treorchy will not object. The impact on our picturesque landscape will be here for many years to come.

REP is selling this wind farm on its environmental benefits. Ask yourself "who will benefit if the wind farm is built?" Why isn't this a non-profit making business if it is the environment that REP are concerned with? There is a small amount of money being proposed by REP in the form of a community fund. How many millions of pounds does the owner of the company expect to make from this development?

Our beautiful valleys have already been scarred by the Coal Industry. Our financial viability is being affected by the closure of Burberry's factory. Please don't let another company exploit our valley.

Please write to the council objecting to the planning application entitled Maerdy Wind Farm.

**Please don't let the valley be plundered for profit,
again.**
