

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

Commercial Manager  
richard.hadwin@r-e-p.com  
07968 583153

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enclosures: Appendix – Standard opposition letter