

NATIONAL GRID MID WALES CONNECTION CONSULTATION
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETING 17TH MAY 2011

Chaired by Cllr Arthur Walpole

Also in attendance: Ian Kilby, Head of Development Management, Shropshire Council

Ian Kilby gave an overview of the consent process, advising that Shropshire Council is only a consultee. The planning application will be considered by the Infrastructure Planning Committee (IPC) who decides major infrastructure projects including wind farms over 50 MW and overhead lines.

Shropshire Council will be making comments in response to the consultation before the new 20th June deadline. Ian Kilby will be preparing a report for Shropshire Council cabinet to consider on 15th June. Ian Kilby did not recall any consultation on TAN8 which would have been prior to the creation of the unitary authority.

Public questions/comments and any actions agreed.

1. If Shropshire Council was not consulted on TAN8 and now National Grid want to connect wind farms via Shropshire, can TAN8 be challenged? The environment study, if done, didn't consider the impact to Shropshire.

Action: Clarification will be obtained on the requirements of a local impact report and whether it has been produced. Shropshire Council will use its website to answer specific questions.

2. The alternative to pylons is undergrounding the cables. Owen Paterson said at a recent meeting that Cllr Keith Barrow had agreed to look at underground costings.

- What is Shropshire Council's estimate of the cost of undergrounding and how does that relate to the cost of an overhead route with pylons?
- How much is this relative to the overall cost of the whole TAN8 wind farm project in Mid Wales?
- How much is that in terms of the average increase in electricity bills?

Action: Cllr Arthur Walpole to speak with Cllr Keith Barrow.

3. What is the composition of the IPC committee? Who makes the final decision re planning?

Action: Shropshire Council to get an answer

4. How does the cost of undergrounding compare to the subsidies to the wind farms.

5. How will the community be compensated? What community benefit will Shropshire Council ask for?

Response: Too early for Shropshire Council to answer at this stage. A section 106 agreement can be asked for.

6. There should be small wind farms, not large scale. Deputy Prime Minister's wife is on board of wind farms.

7. This has been imposed on Shropshire by Welsh Assembly. Can TAN8 be reversed, what can national government do? Impact to Shropshire not considered. How can Shropshire influence what happens in Wales?

8. How much influence does Shropshire Council have on putting cables underground?

Response: Route corridor is decided by IPC and the substation by Powys. Shropshire Council's response to be considered by cabinet in June.

9. If there is a route more suitable for underground, should that be the chosen route?

10. The TAN8 was agreed at request of Westminster. Welsh Assembly agreed to pass.

11. Jonathon Wilkinson (Montgomeryshire against Pylons (MAP)) – Consultation forms are designed to be divisive. Communities must be united and not to dump on neighbours. Need to slow down consultation. Some communities have not had feedback forms or been consulted. MAP plan to legally challenge TAN8. If individuals do not feel that they have been properly consulted they should write to IPC. County Councillors should be quizzed. Meeting encouraged to join MAP and invited to Welsh Assembly protest on 24th May and sign petition. Shropshire has been unfairly treated. There are poor records of undergrounding – only in exception circumstances. Must have compensation for wind farms. None of this is necessary and will increase energy bills.

12. Is there any appeal process to IPC process?

Action: Ian Kilby to clarify.

13. The substation location is the key to pylon route. Will Shropshire be consulted?

Response: Ian Kilby advised that Shropshire Council will be consulted by Powys County Council in respect of the substation planning application as neighbouring authority, but individuals will not.

14. Steve Elliott (South Shropshire protest group) – supporting MAP. Must say no to all the routes. Does not want to tell National Grid where to put the pylons.

15. What planning authority decides on wind farms?

Response: Above 50 MW – IPC.

16. Didn't realise that substation was to be approved by Powys County Council. Should Powys County Councillors be lobbied?

17. National policy has been enforced on us. Need to question MP whether carbon emissions are being achieved which is the purpose of the policy. Not happy with response from Owen Paterson, wanted him to talk to Chris Huhne. Wind farms do not offset carbon emissions of pylon installation. This part of the policy should be reviewed.

18. The answer to which route you prefer should be a good underground route not an overhead route. If it is uncompetitive it may not go ahead. Contact points should be put in Telescope and on village notice boards.

19. Peter Bryant from National Grid has said that "no pylons" is not an option. Therefore the only option is to say no to all routes.

20. Statutory obligation to do as cheaply as possible so underground is not possible.

21. Petition available to sign in committee room and contact details available. No is not an option on consultation form. A letter instead will be accepted by National Grid. Write a small concise letter with a question which invokes a response. National Grid must answer questions.

22. At Meverley meeting all residents turned up and unanimously agreed to send in all forms together stating that the whole village cannot complete in a covering letter.

23. Carbon footprint of wind farms is massive. They are very unreliable and inefficient. They are not instead of conventional energy generation. Public is being largely misled. Why should we accept? Need to write to MPs.

24. Have RAF Shawbury been consulted?

25. On a breezy day not all the propellers were moving at the off shore wind farm at Llandudno. Solar power has a life of 35 years. Wind turbines need constant repair. Do not think that this is a green concept. The carbon footprint of the pylons and wind turbines will take 36 years to repay.

26. Concerns for flood plains. Debris is caught in the pylons. The tons of concrete under the pylons increase the runoff and therefore increase the flood risk.

27. Has anyone contacted Jodrell Bank re radio telescope? No response had been received on effect of pylons.

28. There will be transport issues which will cause enormous problems. Will wind farms pay for damage? Will they pay for new bypasses?

Response: Shropshire Council Highways has been approached re routes to be used.

29. If Shropshire Council appreciates the local knowledge why have the public not been asked?

30. There is a flooding problem in the area which occurs on a regular basis. Has the Environment Agency responded to the consultation?

Response: Cllr Arthur Walpole to follow up.

31. No legal distance to separate pylons from homes. We need to know about health risks.

32. The Environment Agency contact did not think that a cumulative effect survey had been done. Needs clarification on whether computer modelling has been done so those affected can know.

Response: Cllr Arthur Walpole to follow up.

33. The miles of tracks will also have impact on flooding.

34. How will the health issues impact in the area?

35. Underground cabling is more of a health risk than pylons.

36. Has an assessment of the cost to the local community, e.g. increased journey times, caused by transporting the turbines been done?

37. Parish Councils should have one large meeting to show a strong response from all Parishes and areas.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm