

WELSH GOVERNMENT

Examination Hearing Statement

**Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local
Development Plan**

Hearing Session 8: Renewable Energy

15th September 2016

(Session 8): Questions

1. Do policies ADN1 & 2 provide appropriate safeguards to protect the areas' landscape?

This is for the local authority to answer.

2. Does the plan provide an appropriate framework for realising the area's potential for renewable energy production (policy PS7)?

Policy PS7 states that:

"The Councils will seek to ensure that the plan area wherever feasible and viable realises its potential as a leading area for initiatives based on renewables or low carbon energy technologies .."

The policy then goes on to list a variety of different potential energy sources. However, it is unclear as to how the detailed policies would facilitate and bring forward such schemes, particularly in areas outside of settlement boundaries.

a. Is there justification for adopting the same approach in policy ADN1 to local landscape designations (SLA) as to national designations?

No. PPW (paragraph 5.3.11) refers to non-statutory designations, including SLAs. There is no reference to 'the setting' of SLAs within PPW. The paragraph concludes: "Such designations should not unduly restrict acceptable development." It is therefore questionable why local landscape designations such as SLAs are treated the same as International and National designations, including the setting of them (Policy ADN1, criteria 2 & 3).

PPW (paragraphs 12.8.7 – 12.8.9) refer to the Welsh Government's commitment to using the planning system to optimise renewable and low carbon energy generation. Recognition is also given to protecting designated areas (paragraph 12.8.10) although this does not refer to local designations such as SLAs.

b. Is the restrictive approach in policy ADN2 to development outside development boundaries appropriate?

The Welsh Government made representations to the Focused Changes (NF33) regarding why the outcome of the solar assessment is not included in the plan.

New proposed Policy ADN1A (Appendix C – Changes to Renewable Energy Technology Section within the Deposit Plan, July 2016) is welcomed regarding the identification of 36 ‘areas of opportunity’ - Solar PV Farms. This approach to maximise opportunities for solar energy reflects the Welsh Government’s letter to Chief Planning Officers (10 December 2015) which states, in regards of LPAs:

“has taken the results of the Renewable Energy Assessment and formulated local policies (including allocations or areas of search) for a local-authority scale (5MW – 25MW) renewable energy schemes or other low carbon technology”

The authority has undertaken an assessment and followed the results through into a policy approach. The criteria supporting the policy need to ensure that the overall generation level of energy from the areas of opportunity can be delivered.

However, there may be other forms of renewable energy generation, such as small scale hydro or biomass that may take advantage of natural resources or farming/commercial activities that could be captured. It is unclear why Policy ADN2 should not facilitate such an approach outside of settlement boundaries. Particularly, as these types of generation would come forward in more rural locations. Having a set of criteria to consider potential schemes would be sensible, rather than what appears to be a more restrictive policy approach. The Chief Planning Officers (10 December 2015) referred to a wide range of renewable technologies, as does PPW (paragraph 12.9.2):

“... undertaking an assessment of the potential of all renewable energy resources and renewable and low carbon energy opportunities within their area and include appropriate policies in development plans.”

The local authority should clarify why other small scale technologies would be inappropriate outside settlement boundaries and if not, what criteria could be used to ensure the protection of specific designations whilst facilitating renewable energy opportunities.

3. Will policy CYFF4 be effective in influencing carbon management of new development?

The policy wording and effectiveness is a matter for the Local Authority to answer. However, an observation of Policy PCYFF4 would appear on the surface to be very positive and encouraging, although when considered in detail it may not have the 'teeth' to ensure it can be effective. It does not prescribe, or seek, rather appears to highlight different types of technologies and other options, albeit on a more permissive approach. It may be worth considering if the wording could be tightened to ensure delivery.

4. Does the Plan provide clear and appropriate mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the Renewable Energy policies?

This is for the local authority to answer. The Welsh Government is willing to assist the authority in refining the monitoring indicators, if this is considered prudent.