

## **Open Meeting of Community Councils to discuss Teifi / Tywi link**

**Including: Pylon, Wind Farm(s) and Sub-station Proposals**

**27/05/25 - Minutes of meeting**

### **Attendees:**

#### **Llanfair Clydogau and Cellan Community Council**

Dave Bartholomew (meeting chair), Roger Daniel,

#### **Llanfihangel ar Arth Community Council**

Angela James

#### **Llanllawddog Community Council**

Andrew Rees

#### **LLanyfaelog Community Council**

Nicola Jones

#### **Lampeter Town Council**

Gary Thorogood

### **Apologies**

Simon Aldridge (Llanfair Clydogau and Cellan Community Council)

Harvard Hughes (Llanllawddog Community Council)

Nia Bowen (Llanllawddog Community Council)

Eleri Thomas (Lampeter Town Council)

### **Agenda.**

1. Green Gen response to consultation feedback
2. Undergrounding cabling – recent report to government from the NESO
3. UK Regional Energy Strategic Plan(s)
4. Engagement with constituency MP's and MS's

#### **Green Gen response to consultation feedback:**

No response(s) to the feedback given by councils to the second consultation have been received from Green GEN.

It was also noted that some councils had received no response to their feedback from the first consultation other than an acknowledgment of receipt. It was agreed that each council would check to see if they had received at least such an acknowledgement of receipt for the feedback given for the second round. It was also agreed that this would remain a standing agenda item so that any Green Gen feedback could be shared when/if received.

**Underground cabling – recent report to government from the NESO**

Members of Llanfair Clydogau and Cellan community council have contacted Jason at ATP Cable Ploughing to discuss initiating a study (feasibility/costs) into cable ploughing a part of the route through Cellan and possibly extrapolating the findings to the entire route. It is hoped that if such a study is completed then Green GEN may be persuaded to present more detailed costings and arguments for the choice of pylons over cable ploughing. Some discussions were left open and councilors are trying to set-up a second meeting to take this forward and in particular discuss costs and establish who may pay for such a study.

Subsequent to this meeting the following article appeared in the Sunday Telegraph: <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-sunday-telegraph/20241013/281479281865340> suggesting that building pylons with overhead lines maybe more expensive than laying cables underground. The basis of this article and the cost comparison is a report produced by ESO into the East Anglia Network which suggests that if delivery of the network (in East Anglia) can be delayed by 4 years until 2034 then undergrounding cabling options become more attractive (undergrounding options are not deliverable by 2030). A copy of this report is attached with these minutes.

In contrast. Green GEN have issued an e-mail asserting that undergrounding cables on the Towy Usk line, by open-cut trench and cable plough methods, would be between 4.5 and 5.5 times more expensive than installing an overhead line on L7 pylons. They cite two independent reports by Cable Constructing International and Turner and Townsend. However, neither of these reports are provided, nor is there any direct use of/reference to data or quotations from the reports.

These reports suggest that the cost considerations remain unresolved and there was a short discussion around possible other reasons for Green GEN's obvious preference for overhead pylon lines. Two suggestions were raised; that some realization of an 'asset value' for Green GEN might make the company and the line itself more attractive to potential buyers in the future and that building pylons may involve less payments to landowners than undergrounding the cables.

It was agreed that a greater understanding of relative costs of the options would be beneficial to councils.

**UK Regional Energy Strategic Plan(S)**

Information was shared regarding a new initiative to develop Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESPs) which are being established to 'help to ensure that local

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areas get the energy infrastructure to meet local net zero and growth ambitions'. A framework for the RESP policy has been developed by Ofgem (<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/decision/regional-energy-strategic-plan-policy-framework-decision>) and the RESP's will be delivered by the National Energy System Operator (NESO) working with regional local stakeholders (<https://www.neso.energy/news/discuss-future-energy-your-local-area>). Wales is one of the projects 11 regions and nations. Events have already been held (8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 there was an online meeting of the RESP forum – Wales).

This is newly acquired information and it has not been studied in detail. Dave Bartholomew will investigate this initiative, what it means for Wales, and in particular for the infrastructure development proposals for the Teifi and Towy valley's and, if we feel that there should be representation from our area on the Welsh forum, how we might go about getting involved. However, it was requested that councils also consider the information and the relevance of this initiative, and take the opportunity to advise if they feel it is of interest.

### **Engagement with constituency MP's and MS's**

The question was raised of whether this group should invite Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion MP's and/or MS's to address/attend a meeting and to discuss the wider issues presented by considering the proposals for the Teifi valley as a whole valley development from Windfarm to Substation.

Consideration of county boundaries and the 'relevance' of this forum was discussed (only two councils of the 14 invited are in Ceredigion) and therefore who, in particular, might be invited. However, it was noted that the line does straddle two counties with major infrastructure (windfarm and substation) supporting it located in both so a 'cross-boundary' discussion maybe relevant.

The small number of community councils represented at these meetings (average six out of 14 invited) was also discussed as a potential barrier to extending engagement to include MP's and MS's. It was felt that more councils in attendance would add weight and justification to a wider discussion with elected representatives. It was suggested that we engage with the clerks of the community councils invited, to highlight these meetings, their significance and to better gauge the interest of the councils (some still may not even be aware of the proposals and their impact).

It was also suggested that perhaps the attendance of local MP's/MS's, or of legal advisors currently advising landowners recently taken to court by Green GEN and other affected landowners (several meetings have already been held and legal

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representation from two separate firms has been present) may be of interest and encourage others to attend. It was agreed that any invite to attend would need to be accompanied by a clearly defined objective and agenda to maximise the opportunity and should be completed before any Purdah period prior to next year's elections.

Dave will consider how best to engage with the clerks regarding council attendance. Roger/Dave will make contact with Mary Smith (legal advisor acting on behalf of landowners) to discuss as a possible future presentation to this meeting.

### **General Discussion and AOB**

Llandyfaelog Substation: The National Grid originally identified 13 potential sites for this substation. After narrowing this down to three sites, they now say that this is the only remaining site under consideration. It was suggested that other options such as locating the substation on the old Port Talbot site and connecting off shore wind may be considered 'in addition to' and not as 'an alternative to' the Llandyfaelog substation.

An environmental impact assessment (pre-screening) has been posted to Carmarthenshire County Council this week. It was noted that there will be a visual impact (the site proposed is 51 Hectares or 126 acres).

Llandyfaelog community council are discussing how best to respond. There are concerns over some of the wording and some local considerations which appear not to be addressed but the council are undecided if it is best to respond in detail to such an early consultation document.

Concerns such as; the disruption which will be cause during the build phase, how long it will take for the screening to become established as vegetation and trees in particular will take time to mature, and the effects of light pollution, 'ancillary buildings', drainage and sewage facilities (most properties in the area are on private sewage systems). Also there has been no mention of battery storage facilities which are not part of this planning application.

The risk of seeming to object prior to a full planning proposal (which could be taken as a bias of pre-determining the outcome) and the extent to which a council may, question or challenge during the consultation process without being or seeming to be prejudiced/biased was discussed.

**Next Meeting** 7.30pm on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June.