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Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1268
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00568/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

25 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 9th March 2022 regarding a petition seeking a review of the process for preparing the Pre-Assessed Areas for Wind Energy in Future Wales.

I note the issues the petitioner has raised and do appreciate given its scale and complexity, that there can be a perception that the planning system is a difficult process to engage with. For these reasons we have ensured that the process of preparing Future Wales, in line with the Well-being and Future Generations Act ways of working, provides extensive opportunities for the public and stakeholders to be involved in its preparation.

The petition is seeking a change so that the process of preparing Future Wales ensures:-

'...all those potentially affected are informed at the outset of initial discussions, and are provided with free professional planning and legal advice and supported to be able to influence decisions.'

I do not agree that this change is appropriate for the following reasons:-

1. The Welsh Government provides the core funding for [Planning Aid Wales](#). Part of their role is to provide free information, advice and support on the planning process. There is therefore already in place a mechanism for people who require advice on the planning system to receive free impartial advice.
2. A crucial point in relation to the Pre-Assessed Areas is that Future Wales accepts the principle of landscape change in these areas and provides a presumption in favour of wind energy development. It does not, however, provide consent for schemes to proceed and was developed in the context that any Development of National Significance (DNS) proposal in the Pre-Assessed Areas will be subject to extensive and rigorous public examination. [Future Wales policy 18](#) sets out the criteria against

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

which proposals must be considered. There are important opportunities for Local Planning Authorities (LPA), the public and other stakeholders to become involved in the DNS determination process when individual applications are made to Welsh Ministers, which includes a Local Impact Report where the LPA would set out its view on any proposal. It is not the case therefore that sites within the Pre-Assessed Areas can be automatically developed and there are further opportunities for people to participate in the process of determining whether schemes should go ahead.

3. Future Wales was developed with extensive [engagement](#) and [consultation](#). I am fully satisfied that the breadth and range of activities undertaken reflected the scope and role of Future Wales, and that appropriate opportunities were provided for people to be aware of and participate in the process.
4. A key feature of the Future Wales process was a [60-day Senedd scrutiny period](#). All Members of the Senedd were made aware of the progress of Future Wales and were given the opportunity to scrutinise the plan. In addition to the 60 day period, the Senedd [considered the emerging Future Wales](#) at all key stages.
5. Future Wales is prepared at the national scale. It considers issues such as energy from a national perspective and provides a framework for future decisions. It covers a broad range of policy areas including housing, flooding, biodiversity, town centres, telecoms, transport and rural issues. I do not believe it would be possible to prepare such a national plan on the basis sought by the petition. I do not believe it would be possible to identify all potentially affected parties and even if this could be done, it would be entirely unrealistic to require the Welsh Government to provide everyone with free professional planning and legal advice. We do however very much recognise the importance of supporting people to participate, and fund the work of the aforementioned Planning Aid Wales.
6. LPAs were consulted and given the opportunity to be involved in every stage of the preparation of Future Wales across a [5 year process](#). LPAs will have reviewed, considered and commented on Future Wales at all key stages and helped ensure it was fully informed by local issues where appropriate. I believe this is one of the best and most effective way of engaging on local issues across a range of policy areas on a national scaled plan.

I trust this response is helpful and will be happy to provide any further information that will assist you.

Yours sincerely,



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