

Talking Wales, TAN8 and Renewables

Just before the British wind industry gathers in Cardiff to take part in the 27th annual conference, BWEA caught up with two Ministers of the Welsh Assembly. BWEA spoke to Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside, Carwyn Jones to find out the latest regarding TAN8 planning guidance for renewable energy, and Minister for Economic Development and Transport, Andrew Davies, who is responsible for wider energy policy in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government published their new national planning policy statement on renewable energy - TAN8 - in July 2005, which has a target of an additional 800 megawatts (MW) from onshore wind and 200 MW from offshore wind and other renewables by 2010. Do you think TAN8 by itself will be sufficient to meet the onshore wind target through the planning system, or might additional supporting policy or intervention be required?

CJ: It is anticipated that the current planning system will be sufficient to meet the 800 MW minimum onshore additional wind capacity set within TAN8, provided that local authorities endorse the policy outlined and approve acceptable projects within the defined areas. No additional supporting policy or intervention is currently planned, although the situation will be kept under regular review.

Will extra resources and guidance on the process and timescales be provided to Local Planning Authorities in refining the Strategic Areas, given that this is likely to involve considerable work.

CJ: No. Local planning authorities have discretion to undertake any work they consider necessary to prepare development plans and take decisions on planning applications; they do not need to do any additional work on refining SSAs.

An area of concern for the industry is that there are a significant number of wind farm proposals - more than 1.6 GW, over twice the onshore target - currently in the planning system which had been submitted prior to the adoption of TAN8 and now find themselves outwith the Strategic Areas. What advice will be given to LPA's on those projects?

CJ: TAN8 is a strategic document, defining those search areas deemed most suitable for major wind power proposals. Applications for schemes outside, but close to the SSA boundaries, may be approved at local discretion. Furthermore the MoD may elect to consider selected projects within the Tactical Training Area, which TAN8 specifically excluded in the light of information available at the time of publication.

Additionally, developments outside the Strategic Areas have been capped at 5 MW. This is likely to have an impact on smaller developments, which are often community based or locally led. Do you envisage that this cap may be reviewed if it appears that targets will be missed, or that such communities are missing out from the associated benefits of wind developments?

CJ: The 5 MW is an indicative scale for small community based developments within rural areas; it is not an absolute ceiling. It is not planned to review this figure until the next full review of TAN8. Schemes between 5 and 25 MW are likely to be more acceptable on urban/industrial brownfield sites.

What do you see as the role of other renewables such as wave and tidal energy and microgeneration in Wales and have you any plans to ensure their contributions are delivered?

AD: As stated in the Energy Route Map one of our priority actions is the development of various renewable energy technologies, not only onshore

and offshore wind. The use of biomass has great potential in Wales for space heating and electricity generation. We expect there to be rapid growth in this sector, especially given the plans for co-firing at Aberthaw and Uskmouth power stations.

Wales also provides exceptional opportunities for the development of marine energy systems. We are collaborating with DTI, Crown Estates and developers to take forward major demonstration project on the capture of wave and tidal energy.

Microgeneration also has good prospects in Wales as in other parts of the UK. The Welsh Assembly Government is keeping in close contact with DTI on the development of a UK Microgeneration Strategy and we shall be producing, by the end of the year, an action plan for facilitating the uptake of microgeneration technologies, for the production of heat and electricity, in Wales.

What do you feel the role of the Welsh Assembly is in promoting renewable energy, and particularly wind power, given that this technology will be providing a large share of meeting the 2010 renewables target?

AD: The Assembly Government wishes to improve the security of energy supplies. This involves, in part, ensuring diversity in the means of energy production, including increased use of renewables. Wind power is, currently, the most advanced technology for renewable energy generation and we wish to see it developed in ways that are compatible with other uses of the Welsh countryside and that also provide benefits to local communities. □

Andrew Davies, Minister for Economic Development and Transport Biography

Andrew Davies is a former Chair of Swansea West Labour Party and member of the Welsh Labour Executive Committee, and was a regional party official from 1984-1991. Born in 1952, Andrew Davies is a graduate of Swansea University and a trained counsellor and he has lectured extensively in adult, further and continuing education. He has also worked in the private, voluntary and public sectors, including working for the Ford Motor Company on the innovative EDAP programme. Before his election as an Assembly Member Andrew Davies was the Associate Director of a public affairs company.



Andrew Davies is responsible for the following areas in the Welsh Assembly:

- Innovation and enterprise
- Industrial policy and business support
- Inward investment, promotion of indigenous companies and regional development
- Transport
- Energy
- Tourism
- Strategic co-ordinating responsibility for ICT
- Structural Funds.

Carwyn Jones, Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside Biography



Carwyn Jones was born in 1967, he was educated at Brynteg Comprehensive School, Bridgend, University of Wales, Aberystwyth and Inns of Court School of Law, London. Prior to his election, he was a barrister in chambers in Cardiff specialising in Criminal, Family and Personal Injury Law and a professional tutor at Cardiff University Law School. He has been a Bridgend County Borough Councillor and was Chair of the County Borough Council Labour Group. He is also a member of Amnesty International, UNISON, the TGWU, AMICUS and the Fabian Society. He has been a Labour Party member since 1987 and played an active role in the 'Yes for Wales' campaign.

Carwyn Jones was appointed as a Deputy Secretary in March 2000 and replaced Christine Gwyther as Agriculture and Rural Development Secretary on the eve of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in July 2000.

In March 2002 the role of Business Minister was added to his Rural Affairs portfolio. Carwyn Jones was appointed Minister for Open Government in June 2002, and in May 2003 he was appointed Minister for the Environment, Planning and the Countryside. Carwyn Jones' interests include sport, reading and travel, and he is a fluent Welsh speaker.

Appointments:

- Minister for Environment Planning and the Countryside
- Member of the South East Wales Regional Committee