

Transposed from Email – Pembrokeshire County Council

Good afternoon Jeff,

I enjoyed the workshop yesterday. I'm not sure how this exactly fits with the request for responses made however I would like it if the following points could be taken into consideration as part of the discussion of this topic. All of the points stem from opinions of local people who attended a Community Energy event held at Pembrokeshire County Council in March. The points mainly relate to barriers and potential ways to overcome barriers in terms of getting community energy schemes off the ground (only one aspect of what you are looking at I know but an important developing area).

Grid access/cost to access/feeling that developers of renewables schemes are paying to improve the grid.

- Grid Capacity (urgent talks with Western Power-DNO)
- Ability to have local grids/offline networks
- Tackle Western Power regards costs of upgrades, blocking by companies pre-booking capacity, lack of investment in upgrades and policy to make generator pay for upgrades. Instead:
 - Community use takes precedence for existing capacity
 - Fossil fuels pay for capacity improvements - dirty pays for clean
 - Investigate upgrade costs, monopolies commissioner to do this
 - Research costs and feasibility of replacing western power grid or taking over chunks of grid, return to regional grids which preceded national grid
- Can we move away from using the monopoly grid supplier? Communities want the right to supply. Currently this is legislated against. You can only supply two people before you need a £multi-million supply licence. This stifles locally owned grid development. See below:

License to supply energy – license required to supply energy to two or more people. Licence cost is prohibitive.

- Remove legal obstacles to community energy generation / sharing / distribution by allowing community energy supplier licences
- Adjust licensing so houses can supply each other with power without burden of getting supply licence, same issue for using waste

Planning/Statutory bodies

- Over sensitivity by Statutory orgs e.g. NRW (don't see/support the bigger picture i.e. mitigating Climate Change)
- Planning restrictions (communities report planners 'moving goal posts')
- Resistance from NIMBYS (often in vocal minority, not indigenous) / Community apathy

- Amend planning law / policy / guidance to allow for mandatory low / nil carbon building (currently scheduled for 2018 for public sector and 2020 for all), energy efficiency, etc as condition of planning consents for commercial, domestic and public buildings.
- A local community event felt that the new WG Planning Bill lacks sufficient specific support for renewables and local grids. "It will give planners places to hide", (i.e. avoid supporting renewables). "There is no 'teeth' in the Bill to get renewable energy projects up and running".

Up front capital, FIT, RHI & state aid

- Get rid of state aid conflict with FIT/RHI. Currently UK Govt deems FIT/RHI is state aid. This stifles schemes that need up front funding from EU energy projects or WG Ynni'r Fro. There is evidence that in Germany and France the Governments do not consider FIT state aid and thus they can get up front funding for projects and claim FIT.
- FIT should be revamped to prioritise community renewables and disincentivise big business private applications.

Subsidies for fossil fuel

- Politicians cease propping up energy generation cartels and fossil fuel industries – subsidising north sea exploration etc.
- Amend UK Infrastructure Bill to remove obligation to maximise return on North Sea oil (which undermines the positive renewables provisions in the Bill).

Kind regards,

Steve.

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