

**WELSH GOVERNMENT**  
**Examination Hearing Statement**

**Merthyr Tydfil**  
**Local Development Plan Examination**

Hearing Session 8 – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Renewable Energy, Minerals, Monitoring and Other  
Matters

## **Matters & Issues**

### **8.1. Renewable energy and district heating (policies EcW8 and EcW9)**

#### **Policy EcW8: Renewable Energy**

##### **a. Are the designated renewable energy Local Search Areas founded on robust evidence which accords with national practice guidance?**

The Renewable Energy Assessment (REA) undertaken by the Council provides no explanation regarding our Deposit and Focussed Change representations, which sought clarification on why a shorter 2km accessible grid connection has been applied instead of the standard 10km used by Welsh Government and other LPAs in Wales. This assumption will be for the Authority to justify and explain.

##### **b. Policy EcW8 seeks to protect the setting of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Is that consistent with Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (PPW) paragraph 5.9.17?**

Yes. The requirement in Policy EcW8 to protect the setting of the Brecon Beacons National Park is consistent with paragraph 5.9.17 of PPW.

##### **c. Paragraph 6.8.72 of the Plan refers to residential amenity, noise and odour. Should these considerations be expressed within policy EcW8 or are they adequately covered elsewhere?**

This is a matter for the Authority

##### **d. Should paragraph 6.8.86 state that the energy strategy should include consideration of viability, as is indicated in policy EnW9?**

This is a matter for the Authority

### **8.2. Minerals (policies EcW10, EcW11, EcW12 and EcW13)**

##### **a. Does the Plan provide an effective framework for managing the County Borough's mineral reserves, consistent with national policy and forecast needs?**

The authority's strategy in relation to coal is not consistent with national policy contained in Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Edition 10). The latest edition of PPW identifies coal as an energy mineral and is removed from the mineral section. Coal, as a form of energy generation has been placed at the bottom of the planning energy hierarchy as it is the least preferred source of fuel for power generation. PPW states proposals for coal extraction should not be permitted, except in wholly exceptional circumstances (paragraph 5.10.14).

The Welsh Government objects to the identification of areas where future coal extraction will be unacceptable (Paragraph 6.8.88, criterion c). This is no longer required by national policy, and is now contrary to PPW (Edition 10) which states “Planning authorities should not need to indicate areas where coal operations would not be acceptable” (paragraph 5.10.17). Can the authority confirm whether or not they have identified areas where coal will not be acceptable, as there does not appear to be any reference to these areas on the proposals map.

**b. Do the safeguarding of the primary coal resource and assessment criteria in policy EcW13 ‘Minerals Safeguarding’ accord with paragraph 5.10.17 of PPW?**

National policy states: “The safeguarding of primary coal resources is not required. However, planning authorities, with the exception of National Parks, may wish to safeguard primary coal resources depending on their individual circumstances” (PPW, paragraph 5.10.17). It is therefore a matter for the LPA to explain why they have safeguarded primary coal.

Should this be the case, then they would need to include appropriate policies, including those relating to pre-extraction. This is a matter for the LPA to justify.

**c. Is it sufficiently clear how policy EcW11 ‘Minerals Development’ and its reasoned justification at paragraphs 6.8.104-106 would operate alongside national policy set out at paragraphs 5.10.14-15 of PPW?**

Policy EcW11 ‘Minerals Development’, with specific regard to coal, is not sufficiently clear on how it would address potential issues arising from the existing operational activity in the LPA area.

**8.3. Monitoring framework**

**a. Will the monitoring framework enable the Council to track the implementation of the Plan’s strategy and policies on an annual basis and, if necessary, trigger a plan revision?**

This is a matter for the Authority. The LDP Manual (Edition 3) identifies a number of indicators that should be included in the Council’s monitoring framework that focus on the delivery of key policies and sites in the plan.

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