



# Cyngof Tref Y Trallwng Welshpool Town Council

Y Porth i Cymru | The Gateway to Wales

Cyfeiriad | Address:



National Development Framework 2020-2040

Consultation response from Welshpool Town Council

31st October 2019

We respond to the above consultation in particular we note the limited aspiration for our part of Mid Wales, indeed only Llandrindod Wells and Aberystwyth are featured for investment

1. We note that the following are key challenges and opportunities:
  - a. Changing population
  - b. A living, thriving Welsh language
  - c. Natural resources
  - d. A living landscape
  - e. Industrial legacy
2. We note WBFGA provides a basis for the Draft NDF but there seems to be little substance to the aspiration as far as Mid Wales is concerned.
  - Transport links and services are acknowledged to be poor
  - Internet and WiFi is acknowledged to be poor
  - Sparsity of rural population is noted.
  -
3. The Town Council has particular concerns regarding:

#### **The changing population and a living thriving Welsh language.**

- a. Over 33% of the population of Welshpool have no access to a vehicle and slightly less have some form of disability.
- b. Welshpool has a Welsh Language Primary School but no secondary facility, requiring the Welsh Language pupils to travel out of the area, also reducing the catchment opportunity of our High School.

With the considerable emphasis on growth in other areas it is very disappointing that aspiration as far as the well-being and future of the rural Mid Wales population is concerned is so limited.

#### **Natural Resources and a living landscape.**





In terms of natural resources, the Draft NDF focuses on the wind and solar resource of Mid Wales, with little acknowledgement of the wider ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, water storage and provision, food, recreation, health and well-being, and education.

- a. The Mid Wales landscapes that have not already undergone development provide considerable carbon storage not only in peat but its dark soils and woodlands. This is identified and further sequestration is a significant part of the strategic planning of the environmental and agricultural sector.
- b. Welshpool benefits from throughput visitors, day visitors and the thriving caravan and mobile home parks in the vicinity. These people all spend money in the town, contributing significantly to the resilience of local businesses.
- c. The only route From England to the Welsh Coast where windfarms are not visible is the A458 and A470 north to Dolgellau.
- d. The Draft NDP refers to connectivity through the road and rail network but omits mention of the requirement for powerlines, cabling etc as part of any energy generation scheme in Mid Wales.
- e. Mid Wales' roads have, in almost every case, had to undergo considerable realignment, in some cases new routes have been constructed for windfarm parts to reach the sites. Such future developments are very likely to also require similar works, putting considerable strain on communities.
- f. Cabling from any / all generation locations would be required to a main station, and powerlines from that hub would then be required to take the power to England.
- g. Welshpool is promoted as the Gateway to Wales and the Town Council continuously strives to enhance and promote the town and locality for the benefit of residents, businesses and Wales as a whole. Evidence shows that our tourism sector is based upon the landscape and countryside of the surrounding area, the level of change proposed in the Draft NDP will have significant negative impacts upon the businesses and residents of Welshpool and the surrounding area through changing and limiting its economic foundation.
- h. There is no evidence that the reduction in Welshpool's income from tourism would be replaced or increased by that potentially offered in wind and solar industries.

**Welshpool Town Council declared a climate emergency in February and in line with the Environmental Action Plan it is working hard to mitigate against climate change, reduce its impact on the environment, protect nature and take action towards its recovery, increasing the resilience of our ecosystem.**

**The Council sees the Draft NDP's reliance upon wind and solar development as retrograde and 'industrialisation'. There are great opportunities for enhancing nature, landscape, the lives of our communities, infrastructure and buildings in which we live; yet this draft document ties hands, restrains aspiration and yet states that significant and to many, unacceptable change to our greatest assets is the way forward for the forthcoming two decades.**

