

Let me say from the beginning that I am not against wind energy. Of course I believe that renewable energy has its place in planning for the future. And I also happen to believe that we are in possession of a much more constant, reliable resource to produce electricity than wind. But that matter is not being discussed today.

This is the Departures Committee and the importance we give to our planning policies is the basis of our decision. Today we are talking about a development on an exceptionally large scale and what is troubling me is that planning policies are being distorted and bent. We are going against the Carmarthen District Local Plan, which states clearly that any new development should attempt to reduce the visual impact and it should blend in with the surrounding area. It further states that one way of doing this is to avoid development on the horizon. And here we are today considering locating ten huge wind turbines, over 350 feet high, knowing full well that the people of Gwyddgrug, New Inn and parts of Pencader would have to suffer these on the horizon for the next quarter of a century.

And the detrimental effect of these turbines will spread much further, they will be seen from Llanllwni Mountain, some two miles away, and even from the Teifi Valley. We know full well that these two areas are Special Landscape Areas, areas which any reasonable person should protect and treasure. And that was the mindset behind Policy CC7 of the Carmarthen District Local Plan in 1999. The Dyfed Structure Plan and the Unitary Development Plan, referring to wind farm development, all confirm the same principle, that you should at all times avoid detrimentally affecting Special Landscape Areas. The reality of the situation is that if this application is allowed today, the proposed site would affect the St. David's Walk, which is so popular with walkers and naturalists. It's an overwhelming responsibility. Protecting our natural heritage. Are we truly ready to forsake our responsibility and throw it to the four winds? I cannot believe that any one of us could be so naive as to believe that imposing planning conditions and management agreements can overcome the visual and detrimental impact of these huge turbines.

If we agree to bend the policies formulated by our own Planning Department then we are opening the doors to more departures. Let's be men enough to stick to our policies. And by doing that we will keep rural Wales rural, rather than letting her be exploited commercially. We would also be ensuring that this part of Carmarthenshire remains a tourist attraction and even more importantly, we will be respecting the aspirations of the residents we are here to represent.