

## Wind farms – Mynydd Carn y Cefn and Mynydd Llanhilleth

Both proposed wind farms are ‘Developments of National Significance’ and will be automatically ‘called-in’ by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales. Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council will be a statutory consultee for both developments.

The planning inspector can consider only issues that are relevant to planning. For example:

- The impact of a proposal on a landscape, local roads/traffic, a protected species, or air quality;
- The economic benefits of a proposal;
- The consistency of a proposal with the Local Development Plan.

The Inspector cannot take account of things that the courts have previously found are not matters of the public interest (e.g., impacts on the quality of the view).

Usually, the only issues that the planning inspector will consider seriously in regards to a Development of National Significance are:

- a. Archaeological, architectural or historic interest;
- b. Safe access;
- c. Adverse impact on local amenity by reason of noise, pollution or reflected light;
- d. Electromagnetic disturbance;
- e. Local community benefits from the facility;
- f. Decommissioning plans.

The Welsh Government supports large scale on-shore wind and solar energy development in a number of identified Priority Areas for Solar and Wind Energy. The Welsh Government has already pre-assessed a number of areas of Wales as being suitable. There is a presumption in favour of development ‘for these schemes and an associated acceptance of landscape change’

Mynydd Carn y Cefn is fully in a pre-assessed area. Mynydd Llanhilleth is partially in a pre-assessed area.

The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan stated that “Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will encourage major development proposals to incorporate schemes which generate energy from renewable and low/zero carbon technologies. These technologies should be permitted provided that will not have any unacceptable adverse impact on nature conservation and the character and appearance of the landscape.” However, the Local Development Plan has not been renewed since it ran out in 2021.

The Blaenau Gwent Renewable Energy Assessment described both Mynydd Carn y Cefn and Mynydd Llanhilleth as “area for unconstrained wind resource.” However, Blaenau Gwent has not published a new Renewable Energy Assessment for a decade.

### **My Tree, Our Forest**

The 'My Tree, Our Forest' initiative is run by Coed Cadw, the Woodland Trust in Wales, and funded by the Welsh Government. They are offering trees to individual households in Wales, free of charge.

The scheme will continue until March 2023, with trees available on a first-come first served basis.

The 'My Tree, Our Forest' initiative includes provision for the planting of tens of thousands of trees that it is not possible to plant in domestic gardens at fourteen National Forest sites previously-identified by the Welsh Government.