



Nant Mithil Energy Park, Powys.
PEDW DNS Application Ref: DNS CAS-01907-D7Q6Z1.

CPRW-RE-think Chapter 14 on

Tourism

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Evidence by CPRW-RE-think on:

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This chapter considers how the Proposal will affect the tourism economy of Mid Wales, an economy highly dependent on the unique unspoilt landscapes, countryside, tranquillity, biodiversity and dark skies of Mid Wales.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Tourism and recreation are central to the rural economy and cultural identity of Mid Wales. Visitors come specifically for the unspoiled upland landscapes, panoramic views, dark skies, flora and fauna and tranquility of the Mid Wales hills. They enjoy the recreational activities of walking, horse riding, bird watching, and photography in an area of scenic beauty and historic significance that is the Radnor Forest.
- 1.2. The economy of Mid Wales is highly dependent on tourism. Individual businesses that directly supply accommodation and attractions for visitors, as well as those in the wider local economy, shops, pubs, and restaurants rely heavily on the visitor economy to maintain their viability. Businesses are very concerned about the detrimental impact of the Nant Mithil Energy Park.
- 1.3. According to the latest tourism economic impact model (STEAM) report for Powys, tourism delivers approximately:
 - £1.12 billion annual economic impact/spend in Powys;
 - 11.75 million visitor days per year;
 - 4.80 million visitors annually (about 2.02m staying and 2.77m day visitors).
- 1.4. This supports around 12,054 FTE jobs for local people. In addition, across Mid Wales the *Regional Tourism Profile* reports (annual averages) approx. 1.9 million domestic GB overnight trips, around 99,000 international overnight visits, approximately 12.3 million tourism day visits, generating around £994 million annual visitor expenditure across Mid Wales. Tourist do not come to Mid Wales to view 220m turbines.
- 1.5. Mid Wales tourism is disproportionately vulnerable to landscape change because it is dominated by countryside, outdoor and tranquility-led demand. Where a DNS wind farm admits major/moderate-major effects on Open Access land and promoted long-distance routes, the risk is not hypothetical or merely perceptual: it strikes directly at the primary setting visitors come to consume, and therefore at the economic basis of the sector.

2. RADNOR FOREST AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION

- 2.1. Visitors to Mid Wales primarily come for the outstanding landscapes, peace and quiet, walking, horse riding and cycling. Bird watching and photography are popular recreations (app. 1).
- 2.2. Visitors enjoy driving the many routes with magnificent views. From Radnor Fforest "*Stunning views of Cadair Idris and Snowdonia...the Long Mynd...the Malvern Hills and...the Brecon Beacons*" (National Resources Wales NRW).

3. IMPACTS

3.1. The Applicant's Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary (ES) acknowledges significant adverse effects for recreational and tourism receptors including:

- Major effects for users of Open Access Land and PRoWs crossing the site;
- Significant effects on promoted routes including the Heart of Wales Line Trail and Elan Valley Way;
- Significant effects on sections of Glyndŵr's Way National Trail and Offa's Dyke Path;
- Significant effects on NCN Route 825 / Radnor Ring cycle corridor.

3.2. The development has unacceptable impacts on local tourist assets, perceptual or not, and does not meet the Powys Local Development Plan 7 (LDP) requirements.

3.3. Cycling tourism is particularly sensitive to construction traffic. Increased HGV movements and abnormal indivisible loads along the A44, A481, A483, A470 and B4567 create safety risks for cyclists and reduce the attractiveness of these routes. The ES does not assess how such risks may reduce visitor numbers or displace established cycling groups and events.

3.4. The Radnor Fforest is covered by a large number of Public Rights of Way. It is featured on the Long Distance Walkers Association website (LDWA). The Applicant's ES Non-Technical Summary acknowledges significant adverse effects for recreational and tourism receptors including major effects for users of Open Access Land and PRoWs crossing the site; and significant effects on sections of Glyndŵr's Way National Trail and Offa's Dyke Path.

3.5. The dark skies of Mid Wales are a significant attraction and an explicit Mid Wales tourism growth asset. The nine Dark Skies Discovery Sites and IDA International dark sky park on the Elan Valley Estate will be impacted by the proposed energy park. Dark skies are a notable tourism asset in Radnor Forest and surrounding uplands. The introduction of aviation lighting on fourteen turbines, combined with infrared lighting on all thirty, would introduce night-time illumination into a landscape prized for its natural darkness. Night sky quality is a recognised driver of tourism in this region, and the Environmental Statement (ES) confirms that this value would be eroded. The proposal has unacceptable adverse impacts.

3.6. Turbines on Great Rhos, Shepherd's Tump, Graig Hill, Fron Goch and Crinfynydd would dominate the skyline from multiple angles, **undermining** the sense of remoteness and natural immersion.

3.7. Water Break its Neck—one of the most visited natural attractions in the region—lies within close proximity to turbine clusters. The waterfall's setting, defined by steep

cwms, shaded woodland and natural tranquility, would be disrupted by the visibility of turbines along adjacent upland slopes.

- 3.8. The Radnor Forest is an area noted for horse riding. The British Horse Society's (BHS) Radnor Forest Ride covers 78 miles. The Radnor Forest website states "*Riders will be pleased to learn that the Radnor Forest is a hub, where several well-marked bridleways converge, taking the rider from any direction to the high points from where they can enjoy not only panoramic views but also tranquility. Several trekking companies use these routes.*" Significant effects, including safety issues, on riders and horses will be caused by the noise and passing shadows and dominance of turbines.
- 3.9. Businesses in the region have expressed their fears and concerns about the future viability, if large scale industrial size wind farms are built in Mid Wales (app. 2). These concerns are inhibiting plans for expansion and growth amongst existing businesses and deterring others from entering the sector. In our opinion the Nant Mithil application, figures being quoted for job creation for local people do not stand up to scrutiny.
- 3.10. The construction and abnormal-load logistics described by the Applicant will take place on principal tourism corridors and within landscapes that form the core of the Mid Wales visitor offer. Despite this, tourism has not been scoped into the Environmental Impact Assessment as a separate topic within the Socio-Economic chapter, nor has the Applicant provided a tourism-specific impact assessment proportionate to the scale and sensitivity of the receiving environment. This is unsatisfactory.

4. POLICY/PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- 4.1. The Welsh Government's *Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020-2025* states Wales's core offer as - Outstanding Natural Landscapes and accessible, **protected** natural landscapes. The Nant Mithil Energy Park will have a significant negative on this.
- 4.2. The *Mid Wales Regional Tourism Study and Action Plan (Growing Mid Wales)* frames the regional offer as landscape-led, built around outdoor recreation, tranquility and dark skies. The Nant Mithil Energy Park will be in direct opposition to this policy, destroying the very landscapes that the policy wishes to protect.
- 4.3. *Planning Policy Wales (P.5) Tourism 5.5.2* states: "*In some places however there may be the need to limit new development to avoid damage to the environment or the amenity of residents and visitors*".
- 4.4. *Planning Policy Wales (PPW12)* requires development to protect landscape character, amenity and tranquility; assess cumulative/in-combination impacts robustly; and

support sustainable tourism by safeguarding the assets visitors come for. The **ES** does not do this.

- 4.5. *Future Wales 2040, Policy 17 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance:* “*All proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment.*”; “*Proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities.*” Neither requirement is demonstrated in the Nant Mithil application.
- 4.6. *Future Wales 2040, Policy 18 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance:* “*Outside of the PreAssessed Areas for wind developments and everywhere for all other technologies, the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape.*” Only about one quarter of the Nant Mithil proposed site, and six of the 30 proposed turbines are within a Pre-Assessed area. The Nant Mithil wind farm will have unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape as an amenity for tourism.

5. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- 5.1. The ES concludes cumulative effects would be “*no greater than the sum of individual effects.*” In the context of multiple very large wind proposals and associated grid reinforcement in Mid Powys, this is not credible.
- 5.2. PPW12 requires a robust appraisal of cumulative tipping-point harm to landscape character, sequential views along promoted routes, and overall destination identity. Nant Mithil materially contributes to a trajectory of upland industrialisation that threatens the tourism economy.
- 5.3. The cumulative tourism impacts are entirely un-assessed, despite multiple large-scale energy and grid projects proposed across mid Wales. Combined visual, noise, transport and access pressures could significantly reduce regional tourism resilience.
- 5.4. The EIA therefore fails to properly assess direct, indirect and cumulative effects on tourism businesses, visitor behaviour, destination reputation, and the enjoyment and marketability of the area as a place for quiet recreation and nature-based tourism.

6. CONCLUSIONS — THE NANT MITHIL PLANNING APPLICATION:

- 6.1. Does not meet the requirements of national and local strategies or policies.
- 6.2. Does not take into account the cumulative effect on tourism which are entirely un-assessed, despite multiple large-scale energy and grid projects proposed across mid

Wales. Combined visual, noise, transport and access pressures could significantly reduce regional tourism resilience. Cumulative impacts must be assessed.

- 6.3. Does not provide a tourism specific impact assessment proportionate to the scale and sensitivity of the receiving environment. There is no evidence to assert that there will be no detrimental effect on tourism. Turbines of this size have not been built yet in Wales or in the rest of the UK and no tourism impact survey has been carried out. Equal weight must be given to the assertions of the objectors, visitors and businesses who believe that Nant Mithil will detrimentally affect tourism. Tourism must be scoped into EIA
- 6.4. Quotes figures for job creation for local people that do not stand up to scrutiny.
- 6.5. Does not assess risk correctly for features, landscape and culture which are vital to the visitor experience and does not recognise that the harm created by the energy park carry substantial national and regional economic weight.

MP
CPRW/RE-think
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APPENDIX 1: VISITORS RESPONSE

“As a regular visitor to Mid Wales, I wish to express my objection to the proposed Nant Mithil wind farm. One of the main reasons I return to this area is its unspoilt natural beauty: the open views, peaceful walking routes, wildlife, and dark skies. The proposed development of 30 turbines—most over 200m high—together with extensive road construction, concrete works, and tree felling would fundamentally alter the character of the landscape that visitors like me come to experience. If Mid Wales were to become surrounded by multiple large industrial wind farms, it would significantly reduce the appeal of the area for tourism. My concerns include the visual dominance of turbines, loss of tranquility, disturbance to wildlife, increased construction traffic, and the erosion of the sense of remoteness that makes this region unique. These are precisely the qualities that draw visitors and support the local economy. For these reasons, the likelihood of my returning would be greatly reduced if developments such as Nant Mithil were approved. I hope the planning authority will recognise the importance of protecting this valued landscape for both residents and the visitors whose spending helps sustain the community.” C.K

“We regularly holiday in Mid Wales and have done so for many years. The main reasons for choosing the destination are the peace and tranquility, fabulous walking trails, amazing landscapes and forests and diversity of wildlife.

The noise these structures create, the ugly scarring of the environment, and the displacement of wildlife, will unfortunately ensure that we (amongst many others) will have to seek out other areas to holiday hence depriving these communities of a much needed tourism stream, which they rely on so heavily. “ S&N. F

“Although we live in the industrial Midlands, we are country folk at heart. We particularly enjoy coming to Wales to see natural unspoilt countryside and wildlife. We would hate to have this destroyed by huge unsightly turbines and associated infrastructure.”

R&P. M

“The Radnorshire area has been a major source of pleasure, interest, & activity for us, friends & relatives over many years. Specifically, the Radnor Forest, & surrounding environment of Llandrindod, Knighton, Crossgates, Water break its Neck & Forest Inn and Old & New Radnor are havens of enjoyable peace and a variety of activities. The creation of a major infrastructure project such as Nant Mithil, in those areas will, inevitably, generate substantial impact on tourism & many established rural settlements. Of negative value & significance will be disruption to the economy & ambience of the area beyond just large vertical sites littering upland hills.” B&J. S

“I am truly sorry to hear the proposal for wind farms in your area. I am sure it would have a detrimental effect on tourism, I know I would not wish to visit an area where large turbines had been installed. The visual impact on a presently quiet and beautiful landscape would be horrendous and I know from those at Knowstone in mid Devon that they are extremely noisy.” J. B

APPENDIX 2: LOCAL BUSINESS RESPONSE

"I strongly believe that the proposed Nant Mithil Energy Park will have a detrimental effect on the number of tourists who visit my caravan park as well as to the local area. The proposed Nant Mithil Energy Park stands at the gateway to Wales on the A44 for many tourists from England entering Wales via this route- this is the first thing they will see. The tranquil panoramic views much loved by tourists will be destroyed by industrial scale construction in the building phase as well as the final proposed outcome of the turbines. Customers have so much choice when it comes to holiday destinations and I am sure they would rather holiday in an area with rolling hills not scarred by wind turbines & pylons."

Presteigne Holiday Park.

"For us we rely on summer trade to get us through the winter. And a large portion of that summer trade is from people staying in all the various lodges and holiday rentals in the area. Most are here to walk and enjoy the tranquil scenery. We have spoken to many over the last couple of years about the turbines to see how they would feel about the area if they go up. I had one person say they quite liked the look of them. But the rest were pretty passionately against. A few mentioned their love of the dark skies and were worried they would be lost. A few asked about how noisy they would be. It is extremely hard to put a figure on the level of business loss we will see - although I would expect it to be significant. Tourism around here is almost entirely because of the beauty of the area." Fforest Inn

"Since we opened in April of 2017, visitors from both the UK and overseas have been coming to Little Hill Lodges to enjoy the peace, quiet and beautiful views that we offer. The proposed wind turbines in the Radnor Forest are so massive that they will be easily seen by our guests spoiling the beautiful, tranquil views. We understand that renewables are necessary, but the vast size of these turbines will totally dominate the surrounding area. Our website promotes fabulous natural scenery, dog walking and awesome scenic mountain biking, together with peace and quiet - indeed Mid-Wales is becoming more and more popular as a holiday destination for these exact reasons. However, all of these benefits will be negatively impacted should the proposed wind turbines, reaching 220 metres, be allowed." Little Hill Lodges.

"I have concerns that the visual blight will deter tourists, harming local businesses and the economy that relies so heavily on tourism and the area's natural unspoilt beauty. 70% of our guests come to the area to walk for the peace and to see beautiful birds and wildlife . They do not come to see huge, unsightly pylons and substations that are needed to connect the farm, these will further damage the landscape and require extensive construction. I think the plan fails to adequately assess the combined effect on the wider landscape, environment, and communities. There needs to be a proper study where guests to the area are asked if they would continue to come if the project goes ahead . I have done this on a small scale where I asked the 20 couples that visited our tourism business during April, May and June 2025 if they would choose to do their bird watching around Nant Mithel if the project went ahead and 14 couples said they would not be visiting that area if the project went ahead. Why it's being built so far from grid connection points, necessitating massive pylon routes across the countryside, and if we are to host this blight where are the local benefits?"

Acorn Court B & B

“Our property operates as a rural holiday retreat, and its main appeal is the unspoilt natural environment, peace and scenic views. The proposed wind turbines, standing at an enormous height of 220 metres, would be completely out of character with the surrounding landscape and would cause significant and irreversible harm to the rural setting. At 220 metres tall, these turbines would dominate the skyline for miles around. Their scale is completely inappropriate for a countryside location and would destroy the natural beauty that currently exists. The visual impact alone would be overwhelming and would fundamentally change the character of the area. Furthermore, the development would have a serious negative impact on our holiday business. Guests choose our accommodation specifically for peace, quiet, and uninterrupted countryside views. The constant presence, movement, and noise of turbines would deter visitors, leading to substantial financial loss and threatening the future of our business. We also have concerns regarding:

- **Noise pollution** - The issue of noise is deeply concerning. Wind turbines generate not only audible noise but also low-frequency noise and amplitude modulation, which can travel long distances across open countryside, especially at night when background noise is low. For a holiday business that relies on peace, silence, and rest, this alone would be devastating. Guests do not book rural accommodation to listen to the constant mechanical noise of turbines.
- **Shadow flicker**, particularly at sunrise and sunset. This strobing light effect can be extremely unpleasant for visitors and is entirely incompatible with the peaceful use of our property.
- **Impact on wildlife** - large wind turbines are known to cause direct mortality to birds through blade strikes, particularly to birds of prey, and low-flying species. They also cause habitat destruction and displacement, forcing wildlife to abandon breeding, feeding, and nesting areas.
- **Loss of property value** - Our holiday let exists solely because of the remote, peaceful, and natural setting. If these turbines are approved, the very reason guests visit will be destroyed. The unavoidable result would be loss of bookings, financial hardship and long-term damage to our reputation.” Highgate Farm.

“Our holiday cabins are situated adjacent to the proposed site and are the closest habitation to turbines on the entire site. They are offered for short stays in a tranquil beautiful, dark sky area with views reaching the Brecon Beacons. They are also advertised as somewhere to bring a horse for the night on long distance rides. These cabins face the greatest threat from noise, vibration, shadow flicker and infrasound anywhere on the farm. We had to suspend the permitted development of the originally planned 6 cabins when we learnt of the full implications of Bute Energy's plans for Radnor Forest. It is totally unacceptable to us that no background noise readings were taken from the camping field, despite the fact that I have a letter from the sound engineer stating that the cabins would be the worst affected part of the farm by turbine noise.” Radnor Farm Cabins.