

# Councils must promote low carbon energy

DESPITE all the attention devoted to the international conference on climate change in Paris, many of us who have long been campaigning for the most rapid possible transition to a low-carbon economy remain sceptical that Wales and the UK will meet their renewable energy targets.

Within Wales, there is continued failure to adequately exploit the cheapest renewable electricity source, onshore wind, identified by a 2012 Arup report as accounting for 69% of the total potential capacity for renewable electricity in Gwynedd. Indeed, over the past few years planning policy has moved in the opposite direction, an example being the very restrictive wind energy policy set out in the Draft Joint Local Development Plan.

A Freedom of Information request made to Anglesey Council earlier this year revealed the extent to which attempts to develop low-carbon wind energy have been thwarted by limited

ambition and the lobbying of groups sceptical or in denial about the importance of climate change, such as Anglesey Against Wind Turbines.

Whereas in 2010 57% of wind turbine/farm applications were approved, this figure fell to 22% in 2012, and in 2013 and 2014 not a single application was approved.

Turning to a different example of poor practice, Gwynedd Pension Fund still has more than £15 million invested directly in fossil fuel companies like BP through workers' pension funds, with a further projected £66.6 million in indirect fossil fuel investments.

The switch to low-carbon energy must be regarded as an obligation, not an option.

Local councils need to do everything within their power to stem reliance on fossil fuels and to promote low-carbon electricity generation.

**Rick Mills**  
Secretary

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