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# Brechfa Forest Community Profile



The energy to lead

**August 2013**

**Prepared By**

**consultancy.coop**

Providing expertise to the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Sector  
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## About consultancy.coop

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consultancy.coop is a co-operative LLP of experienced third sector consultants based in Wales.

We offer a wide range of services to public bodies, social enterprises, co-operatives, charities and government including:

- Business Support and Advice
- Feasibility Studies
- Business and Strategic Planning
- Community Consultation
- Research and Evaluation
- Fundraising Support
- Organisational Consultancy

This study was carried out by consultancy.coop members, Jane Ryall and Brian Roberts.

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## Executive Summary

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### Background

The Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund will be provided by RWE npower renewables, the developer of the Brechfa Forest Wind Farms in Carmarthenshire.

Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm received planning consent on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Once fully operational it will deliver a Community Funding Package in the region of £560,000 per annum, index-linked and depending on final installed capacity. This funding will be made available annually for the life time of the wind farm (which is expected to be up to 25 years). Furthermore, if Brechfa Forest East Wind Farm also gains planning approval, further additional funding in the region of £240,000 per annum (again depending on final installed capacity) will also be made available. The Community Fund will aspire to encourage a sustainable local economy which maintains community life.

RWE npower renewables have taken a responsible approach to working with local communities and key stakeholders at an early stage to begin planning how this funding can best be applied. Unlike many of the funds currently available in Carmarthenshire from public sector sources, this private sector money is unusually flexible and long term. By starting this work early the intention is to maximise the potential benefit of these significant funds, to both the communities that will neighbour the development and the wider region.

### Aims of the Community Profile

This report has been prepared on behalf of RWE npower renewables by independent consultants consultancy.coop. The aim is to identify the most important needs, issues and opportunities facing the communities that neighbour the consented Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm and the proposed Brechfa Forest East Wind Farm sites. The profiling exercise considers how the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund could best be used to help benefit both the communities that neighbour the site and the wider region.

This report gives an overview of the most important social and economic issues facing the Brechfa Forest community. The information has been carefully sourced through desk based research and extensive community consultation and liaison with local individuals and organisations. The profile will also provide the framework to guide further work in defining the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund.

### Key Themes & Priorities

The community consultation and desk research identified critical challenges for Brechfa Forest, in particular, **an increasing aging population and poor access to services.**

One common priority for the Brechfa Forest region has been highlighted - **encouraging a sustainable local economy which maintains community life, where everyone can enjoy fair access to employment, housing and other services.**

*"We need a vibrant working community - without young people there won't be a community"*

Key themes raised include:

- enabling meaningful and better paid employment opportunities
- expanding the tourism industry to encourage people to stay in the area longer

- supporting the development/improvement of community facilities
- providing business support through grants and affordable loans
- supporting the development of community/social enterprise
- improving communications including mobile phone, broadband and transport provision
- encouraging the supply of affordable housing
- and supporting renewable energy schemes for local households and businesses

### **Fund Management**

Feedback on how the Community Fund should best be managed indicated a desire for a professional, constituted body with staff experienced in grant-giving. The majority view was that this should be delivered through an independent body, with representation from the local community and appropriate regional stakeholders. Furthermore the local community would like reassurance that community benefit fund conditions will be tied if future ownership of the wind farm changes.

### **Recommendations**

The Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund is large, relative to previous Funds available in Wales and the rest of the UK. A responsible approach should continue to be taken by the developer and the communities themselves to ensure the Fund has long-lasting benefits. Collaboration between the community, and the public and private sector are critical in enabling the Fund to deliver on its objectives. As such, it is proposed that the Fund is spent at two levels:

- specifically with local communities neighbouring the development
- and on a wider, regional basis to tackle issues that are pertinent to both the Brechfa Forest communities and the wider region

Furthermore, given the significant funding available through this scheme, consideration should be given to reserving a portion of the funds to establish a **permanent endowment** scheme for long term benefit.

It is anticipated that construction of the Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm will not happen for a number of years. During that time connections to the National Grid will be finalised. As such, it is imperative that an on-going relationship is maintained between the local communities involved and RWE npower renewables.

### **Embracing the opportunity**

Carmarthenshire and West Wales have received significant EU funding in recent years. This is likely to continue through the next round of funding from the EU, available from 2015 onwards. The Community Fund will be well placed to act as a **match funder** for future schemes, which would further increase available funding to the area.

The Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund is a large fund, available over a long period of up to 25 years, and is index linked to the rate of inflation. Local communities, the public and private sectors should acknowledge and embrace the opportunities this can provide to promote the local economy and sustain community life. Careful planning and regular reviews of the Fund will be required at all levels to ensure long term benefits.

## Background

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The Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund will be provided by RWE npower renewables, the developer of the Brechfa Forest Winds Farm in Carmarthenshire.

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Community benefit has been defined widely by wind farm developers, local authorities and communities as "a goodwill contribution voluntarily donated by a developer for the benefit of communities that neighbour the development".

A wind farm developer is not legally obliged to provide a community benefit fund, and it cannot be enforced by a local authority. However community benefit funds are increasing in number and scale as both communities and Government see them as a way of supporting those areas directly affected by wind farm development.

In June 2013, onshore wind farm developers and operators in Wales signed a Declaration, supported by Industry body RenewableUK Cymru and the Welsh Government, committing to work with Welsh communities that host wind farms to ensure they receive long-term positive benefits. RWE npower renewables was an initial signatory, see **Appendix 1** for a **copy of the declaration**.

## Brechfa Forest

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Brechfa Forest is located in North Carmarthenshire and to the south west of the Cambrian Mountains. See **map of area** in **Appendix 2**. The area covers 6,500 hectares and comprises a mix of ancient woodland and coniferous plantations. The forest is open access land managed by Natural Resources Wales (previously Forestry Commission Wales). Walkers, cyclists and horse riders can freely access the Forest, and over recent years the area has become a popular mountain-biking area, with the establishment of 3 world-class mountain bike trails.

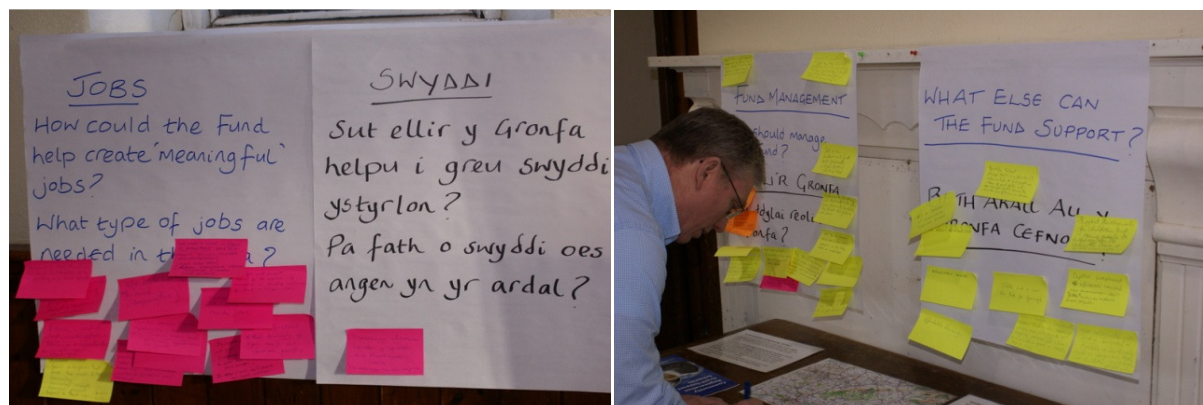
For the purposes of this study, we have considered the wider Brechfa Forest area under the 6 Wards of Abergwili, Cynwyl Elfed, Cynwyl Gaeo, Llanegwad, Llanfihangel ar Arth and Llanybydder. The total population of this area is 15,044 (Census 2011). These Wards were selected as they contain the most up-to-date and comprehensive data available for those communities neighbouring the Brechfa Forest wind farm developments.

## Methodology

Consultancy.coop team members, Jane Ryall and Brian Roberts used a range of techniques to collect data for this study:

- Desk research to identify key headline statistical evidence for the Brechfa Forest area and to understand the policy context
- Initial face-to-face interviews with a number of community representatives in the area, in order to understand the issues facing the community and to consider the best means of community engagement
- Formal meetings with statutory agencies, infrastructure organisations and representative bodies for the area
- Questionnaire surveys, both online and hard copy in English and Welsh. Paper copies were circulated widely through 9 local primary schools and 5 village shops
- 3 informal drop-in sessions in Llansawel, Pencader and Brechfa where the general public were encouraged to provide feedback and ideas for the Community Fund. All sessions were bi-lingual with a Welsh speaker present
- Letters and questionnaires were sent to all neighbouring Community Councils in the area offering attendance at Council meetings and a request for comments
- Opportunities to provide feedback were also published through the Carmarthen Journal, South Wales Argus, Farmers Union of Wales, Carmarthenshire Federation of Young Farmers, community newsletters and via the RWE npower renewables website

Over 150 individuals and 36 organisations were contacted as part of this study. A full **list of organisations approached** is provided in **Appendix 3**. 84 questionnaires were completed from a total of 900 distributed. 51 people attended the public drop in sessions.



Public drop in event, Brechfa

## Overview of wind farm community funds

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In order to understand the context of the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund, an audit was made of existing community funds. This report identifies at least 20 community funds linked to wind farms in Wales. **Appendix 4** contains a list of known funds in Wales in order of year established. Data has been retrieved on the details of these funds where possible, however some details are missing.

Welsh communities received over £620,000 from onshore wind farms, according to a report commissioned by RenewableUK Cymru (2011). Many of the community funds are index-linked and with more wind farms due to be constructed, this figure will increase significantly in the coming years. RenewableUK Cymru state:

- *Approximately four out of every five wind farms operating in Wales contribute to their local communities in a structured way;*
- *Many different entities benefit from wind farm contributions (a total of 34 were identified through 20 responses);*
- *Wind Farm Community Funds in Wales are mainly administered through localised trusts (or similar bodies), or Community Councils;*
- *The most common form of wind farm operator payment is through fixed amounts, calculated per MW installed; and*

According to RenewableUK Cymru (2011), since the first commercial wind farms were commissioned in Wales, "the issue of 'community benefits' has been treated on an ad hoc basis. There has been little systematic investigation of their number and scope, and of the uses to which these benefits are put. At the same time there has been rapid evolution in the scale and form of community benefits provided by wind farm developments".

Many other Wind Farm Community Fund schemes are also available in England and Scotland. These have similar characteristics, often managed by local area committees, with a broad set of criteria, and the fund value being index-linked.

From desk research carried out in Wales, it appears the size of community benefit funds in recent years linked to wind farms is rising, as the ££'s per megawatt is increased. Clearly this has implications, on how and where funds should be spent, and how they are managed. Generally, the majority of funds have concentrated in distinct community council areas. Larger funds are now beginning to be distributed on a regional basis.

RenewableUK Cymru recommend a formal register of community benefits be established in Wales, as already exists in Scotland. This will help wind farm developers and communities understand the nature and purpose of community benefits in other areas, in order to develop their own schemes for long term benefit.

## Policy context

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It is important to consider the future potential of the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund in the light of current policy. An outline is made below of relevant policies pertinent to the Brechfa Forest:

### 1. Wales Spatial Plan – Central Wales, 2004

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The Wales Spatial Plan main vision is to provide *‘high-quality living and working in smaller-scale settlements set within a superb environment, providing dynamic models of rural sustainable development, moving all sectors to higher value-added activities’*

Achieving this vision requires collaborative action, in which RWE npower renewables could potentially play an important role. Partners are working together to take forward the vision and agreed priorities for the area. These include:

- Building on important key centres and improving linkages to the hinterlands and rural communities in order to spread growth and development.
- Supporting the rural economic sectors such as agriculture, non-food and food production by creating higher value production opportunities
- Developing higher value sustainable tourism to respond to climate change.
- Building on higher education and introducing new economic opportunities to create better paid and higher skilled jobs, to increase home grown enterprise and also attract new enterprises.
- Improving accessibility and collaboration within Wales, and with England and Ireland.

### 2. Local Development Strategy for Rural Carmarthenshire, 2009

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The Local Development Strategy (LDS) for Rural Carmarthenshire "provides a framework for the sustainable regeneration of the rural economy, and for the implementation of recent EU and structural funds".

#### Its vision:

*‘An area of high opportunity, combining a vibrant economy, inclusiveness and a superb quality of life set in a high quality natural environment. Centre of business excellence, competing in growth high value added markets and committed to continuous innovation, technologically advanced with a healthy, high skilled and entrepreneurial workforce. At the forefront of new ideas and new ways of working, while continuing to build on its exceptional strengths of environment, community and culture, to create an inclusive, diverse and dynamic economy. Sustained through a strong sense of local pride and ownership, and a partnership culture of collaborative working’.*



## **Rural issues – the challenges facing Carmarthenshire as identified by the LDS**

### **Economy**

- Downturn in the economy has had a significant impact. Between the period April 2007-09 in Carmarthenshire, house building completions are down 42%; house starts are down 51%; live unfilled vacancies at Job Centres down 74%.
- Over reliance on lower added value sectors such as agriculture which are particularly vulnerable to external factors.
- Traditional family farms are no longer able to support father/mother and son/daughter businesses as income levels remain generally low.
- Key drivers of prosperity such as high productivity, retention of talented, qualified young people, high economic activity still lag behind the UK
- Underlying trend for gap in GVA per capita in relation to the UK to widen
- Predominance of small and medium sized businesses with nearly 95% employing fewer than 25 people
- Tourism remains largely seasonal, experiencing difficulties in recruitment
- Relatively low share of employment in sectors with promising growth prospects e.g. food/drink; creative; environmental goods; biotechnology; electronics

### **Employment**

- 13.5% of residents commute out of the County contributing to GVA elsewhere
- Higher proportions employed in low value added services such as agriculture
- 27.8% of people aged 16-74 living in rural areas are economically inactive which is on a par with the percentage for Carmarthenshire as a whole at 30.6%. (Source: 2001 Census).

### **Demography**

- Older age profile resulting from an in migration of the older generation to all parts of the County
- Out migration of talented and skilled young people is a key issue for rural areas which exhibit a lower proportion of 20-39 year olds (22.2% compared with County level of 23.2% (Source: 2001 Census).
- Impact of economic re-structuring and population change on Welsh speaking communities

### **Transport**

- Still limited penetration of public transport provision in parts of rural Carmarthenshire and frequency of service
- Increases in fuel costs threaten business viability and threaten inclusion particularly in rural areas
- Public transport reliant on public subsidy in parts of rural Carmarthenshire

### **Infrastructure/ICT**

- Limited high speed ICT connectivity in parts of rural Carmarthenshire
- High broadband infrastructure costs hindering economic and social development particularly in the more remote rural areas
- Decline of market towns as service centres is having a detrimental effect on surrounding rural areas
- Shortage of industrial and office accommodation of all sizes in rural areas
- Lack of available development land due to a lack of drainage infrastructure and flood risk
- Lack of social/leisure facilities which is a critical factor in retaining and attracting talented and qualified young people

### **Inclusion/access to services/equality**

- Isolation difficulties and poor access to services to contend with
- All rural wards, except Carmarthen town and Llandeilo highlighted as deprived in relation to access to services
- Widespread but hidden rural disadvantage
- Closure of village shops and post offices impacting on the quality of life of local residents in parts
- Increasing concentration of many services such as banks in larger urban areas
- Extra costs associated with delivering services in rural areas act as a constraint
- Limited or no access to childcare facilities
- Benefit take up rates indicate that people in rural areas are less likely to claim their entitlements
- Older people unable to access already limited services available – contributes to increased isolation
- Needs of hard to reach groups e.g. ex-offenders – more difficult to engage within rural areas
- Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour act as barriers to maximising potential use of facilities and opportunities
- Pockets of deprivation identified within the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation with some rural wards identified within the 30% most deprived in Wales

### **Skills**

- 25.1% of rural Carmarthenshire are without qualifications compared with 27.6% in Carmarthenshire (Source: 2001 Census)
- There is a higher percentage of people in rural areas with higher qualifications NVQ level 4 or above than nationally (18.2%) and at a Carmarthenshire level (18.1%).
- 17% of 16-24 year olds in rural areas have no qualifications compared with the County level of 19%.
- Futureskills Wales and feedback from employers indicates a need for generic skills: understanding customer needs; communication; ability to learn/follow instructions; problem solving; interpersonal skills, IT skills.
- Need for improved perceptions of vocational skills and increased requirements for IT, management; leadership skills
- Triple constraint on up-skilling - time; distance; and costs.

### **Environment**

- Lack of adequate utilities and flooding hindering new developments in some areas
- Pressures to identify alternative waste disposal methods
- Impact of climate change on coastal and rural communities
- Accelerated loss of biodiversity

### **Housing**

- Significant gaps between income levels and house prices with a lack of affordable housing
- Hidden levels of homelessness particularly amongst young people

### **Health and Wellbeing**

- Lack of substance misuse services
- Limited or no access to childcare facilities
- Pockets where access to doctors surgeries fall outside a 5 mile radius

## **SWOT Analysis for Rural Carmarthenshire (also, from Local Development Strategy, 2009)**

### **STRENGTHS**

- Outstanding environmental quality
- High educational attainment
- Relatively high skilled workforce
- Developed training sector
- A strong cultural and Welsh language speaking tradition
- Strong clusters of economic activity in tourism & leisure, land-based industries, food & drink, media/cultural industries, construction, public sector

### **WEAKNESSES**

- Low rate of new business formation
- Relatively low incomes and average earning
- High economic inactivity rates
- Older and ageing population
- High dependence on low value-added sectors e.g. agriculture and public services
- High cost of telecommunications infrastructure
- Widespread but hidden rural disadvantage
- Limited penetration of public transport provision
- Access to childcare facilities

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Capitalise on county's environmental attraction to 'new economy' entrepreneurs in high technology,
- Creative and knowledge industries.
- Build on the rural, green, sport and cultural tourism advantages of Carmarthenshire
- Benefit from trend towards 'clean and green' energies
- Utilise the county's older population base to develop innovative new markets in healthcare and leisure
- Collaborative working
- Capitalise on people resource – residents who have the skills and initiative to become involved in regeneration
- Older and ageing population with experience and skills for volunteering and mentoring

### **THREATS**

- Global economic downturn
- Depth of current recession on rural areas
- Globalisation, liberalisation and EU enlargement will limit Carmarthenshire's ability to compete on cost.
- Implications of the Common Agricultural Policy reform
- Increased in-migration and a generally ageing population could put increased pressure on public services.
- Continued out-migration of young people, and declining availability of local services could accelerate and exacerbate problems of economic decline and social exclusion in rural areas.
- Threat of closure and or centralisation of key services e.g. village shops, post offices, GP surgeries.

- Short term funding
- Impact of economic re-structuring and population change on Welsh language communities
- Fuel poverty
- Rising energy costs resulting in increased external leakages from the local economy

### **Key Priorities**

The aim of the Rural Development Strategy for Carmarthenshire is "*to create an area of high opportunity, combining a vibrant economy, inclusiveness and a superb quality of life*". To help achieve the overall vision for rural Carmarthenshire, the following key priorities have been identified

- To increase the number and quality of jobs available to people in rural areas
- To assist people into jobs and reduce economic inactivity
- To increase the productivity and profitability of businesses in rural areas
- To retain and attract young people
- To develop sustainable, self-reliant, communities

Clearly there is a significant opportunity here for the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund to work with local partners to complement these priorities, and fulfil its own aim of "encouraging a sustainable community which maintains community life".

### **3. Woodlands for Wales, 2009 - Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy for Woodlands & Trees**

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Woodlands for Wales sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for woodlands and trees for the next 50 years and how people living in Wales can benefit from them.

The vision is that "Wales will be known for its high-quality woodlands that enhance the landscape, are appropriate to local conditions and have a diverse mixture of species and habitats. They will provide real social and community benefits, support thriving woodland-based industries and contribute to a better quality environment..... Woodlands for Wales is framed around Welsh woodlands and trees as the foundation from which to deliver across four other themes which are: responding to climate change, a competitive and integrated forest sector, woodlands for people and environmental quality", (Woodlands For Wales, 2009).

The Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund has the potential to also deliver against the objectives set out in the Woodlands for Wales policy.

### **4. Cambrian Mountains Initiative**

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The Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI) was launched in June 2008 as a broad partnership to "deliver Integrated (Sustainable) Rural Development for the landscape area of the Cambrian Mountains and its necklace of surrounding communities". The Initiative is inspired by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales who, as its President, wishes to sustain traditional upland farms, rural communities and the environment.

The CMI seeks "to enable local businesses and communities to become economically self-sustaining in ways that support a high quality environment. It also seeks to improve ecosystem management for the benefit of ecosystem services and in ways that gain revenue for land managers".

In the future, the CMI could be central to the delivery of the proposals being developed for the Rural Development Plan 2014 – 2021. The CMI has learnt many lessons on how to enable rural sustainable development within the defined geographical area of the Cambrian Mountains. The CMI has an established partnership with the communities and private sector businesses of the Cambrian Mountains, and with the key organisations operating within the area. It focuses on delivery and offers great potential for collaborative working across administrative boundaries within the region.

## Community context

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For the purposes of this study, the following areas of the Brechfa Forest are considered as closely neighboring the sites:

**Community Councils** - Llansawel, Llanfihangel ar Arth, Llanybydder, Llanllwni, Llanfynydd, Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn, Llanpumsaint, Llanegwad and Llanllawddog.

These nine Community Council areas lie in the following 6 Wards:

**Wards** - Abergwili, Cynwyl Elfed, Cynwyl Gaeo, Llanegwad, Llanfihangel ar Arth and Llanybydder.

**A Map of the Wards** can be found in **Appendix 2**.

This report has concentrated on providing meaningful data for these areas in order to provide a snapshot of current issues. Up-to-date census information on population, socio economic, housing and employment statistics has been compiled from the 2011 Census and from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. A full listing of data for each Ward is available from Carmarthenshire County Council. These wards have been used to enable the collection of up to date statistical data and this does not imply the proposed area of benefit for the funds which will be decided after much further consideration and consultation.

### Population

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Abergwili	Population	2,315	1.9% increase since 2001 census
Cynwyl Elfed	Population	3,018	10% increase since 2001 census
Cynwyl Gaeo	Population	1,613	3.8% increase since 2001 census
Llanegwad	Population	2,440	0.66% increase since 2001 census
Llanfihangel Ar Arth	Population	2,851	4.6% increase since the 2001 census
Llanybydder	Population	2,807	10.4% increase since 2001 census

**Total Ward Population = 15,044**

The above data indicates Wards with greatest population growth as Cynwyl Elfed and Llanybydder. In contrast, the population of Llanegwad has seen very little growth.

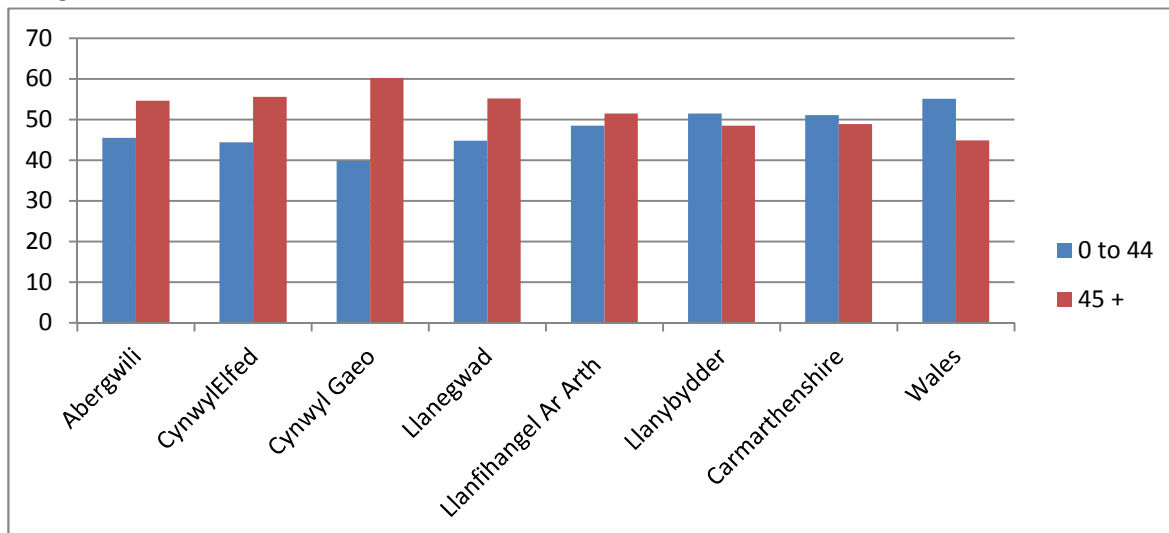
### Population by Age Group

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Ward	Age 0 to 44	%	Age 45 and over	%
Abergwili	1,052	45.5	1,263	54.5
Cynwyl Elfed	1,373	44.4	1,645	55.6
Cynwyl Gaeo	643	39.8	970	60.2
Llanegwad	1,090	44.8	1,350	55.2
Llanfihangel Ar Arth	1,383	48.5	1,468	51.5
Llanybydder	1,446	51.5	1,361	48.5
<b>Carmarthenshire</b>	<b>93,915</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>89,862</b>	<b>48.9</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>1,686,794</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>1,376,662</b>	<b>44.9</b>

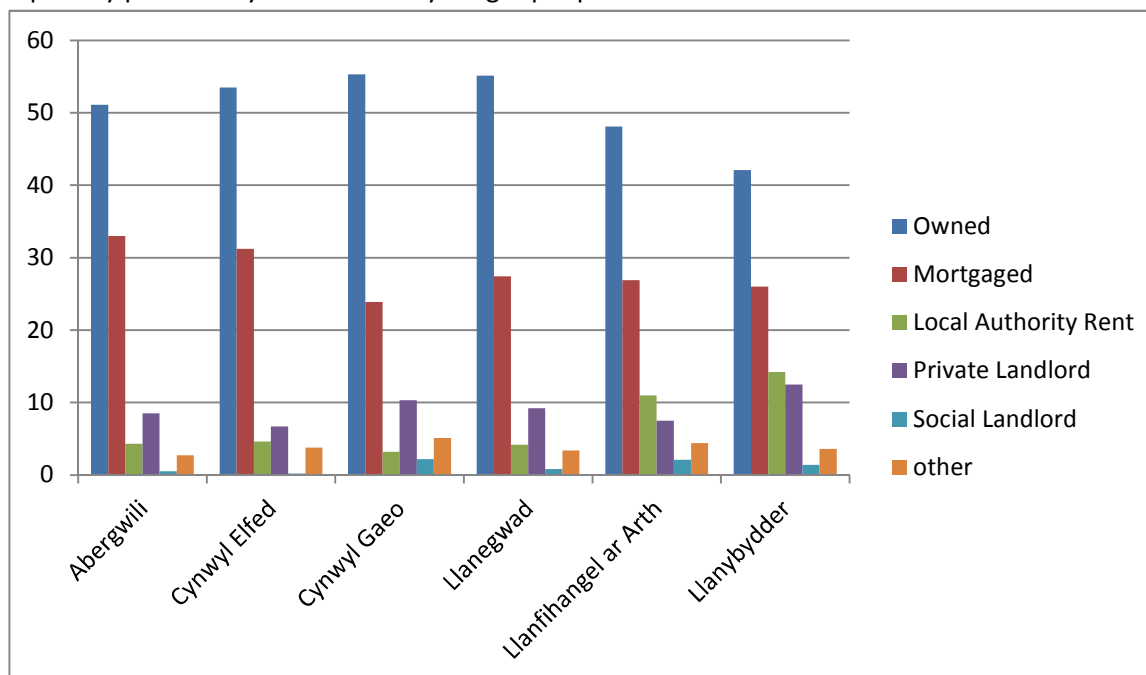
This data shows a significantly older population in these wards relative to the rest of Carmarthenshire and Wales. Many of these older/retired people have moved into the area. Migration figures published by the Welsh Government showed over 3,000 people had moved into Wales to retire between the period 2008-2011 (Welsh Government, February 2012).

It is projected that the number of people aged 65 and over in Carmarthenshire will increase by 23% and the number of people over 85 may increase by 32% over the next 10 years (Developing Modern Services for Older People, Carmarthenshire's Joint Commissioning Strategy 2008-11). According to the Welsh Centre for Health (2007) "this may mean that rural healthcare practitioners need to deal with higher levels of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and mental illness". These residents are most likely to be at risk of being unable to access such health services due to their rural location.



## Housing

Throughout the Wards statistics show housing stock is predominantly detached housing, of which 80% is owned out-right or mortgaged. A small amount of housing is rented out by the Local Authority and Private Landlords, typically around 14%. 2% is rented out by Social Landlords and the remainder (4%) is a mix of shared ownership, free rental and other rental agreements. The average house price for a detached property in Carmarthenshire is £187,256. As common across the UK, the provision of affordable housing is a priority particularly in relation to younger people.

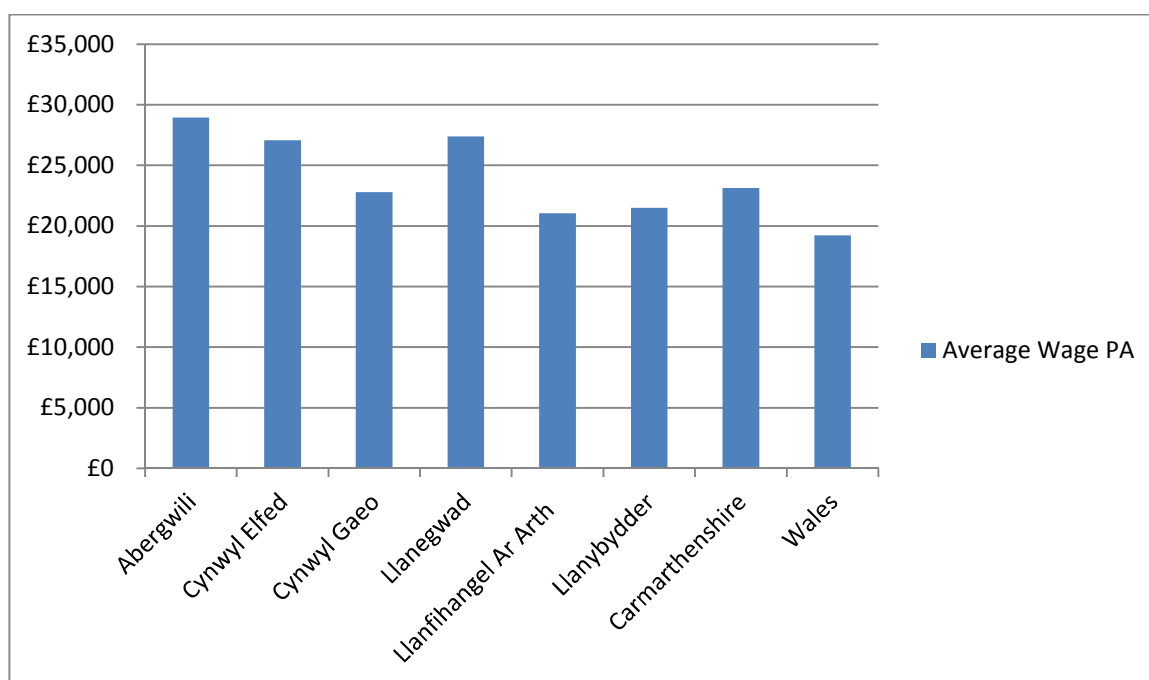


## Socio Economics

In general the **average wage** for the Brechfa Forest Wards is slightly above the Carmarthenshire average and some way above the Welsh average. The average wage in Wales according to figures released by the Office of National Statistics (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Nov 2012)\* is £19,215 and the average wage in Carmarthenshire is £23,127. The average wage across the 6 wards in this study is £24,786.

**Unemployment** is generally low, but the number of self-employed is much higher than Carmarthenshire or national averages. This would seem to be most likely down to the rural nature of the wards and the large number of farms and small holdings. Also, it should be noted that there are **pockets of low earning** in some parts of these wards, most notably Llanfihangel ar Arth1 (Pencader) and Llaynbydder1 (Town) as can be seen in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation tables below. Anecdotal research reveals both of these communities have significant numbers of low income families.

The chart below provides a view of **average earnings** per annum and makes a comparison with the Carmarthenshire average and the average earnings across Wales.



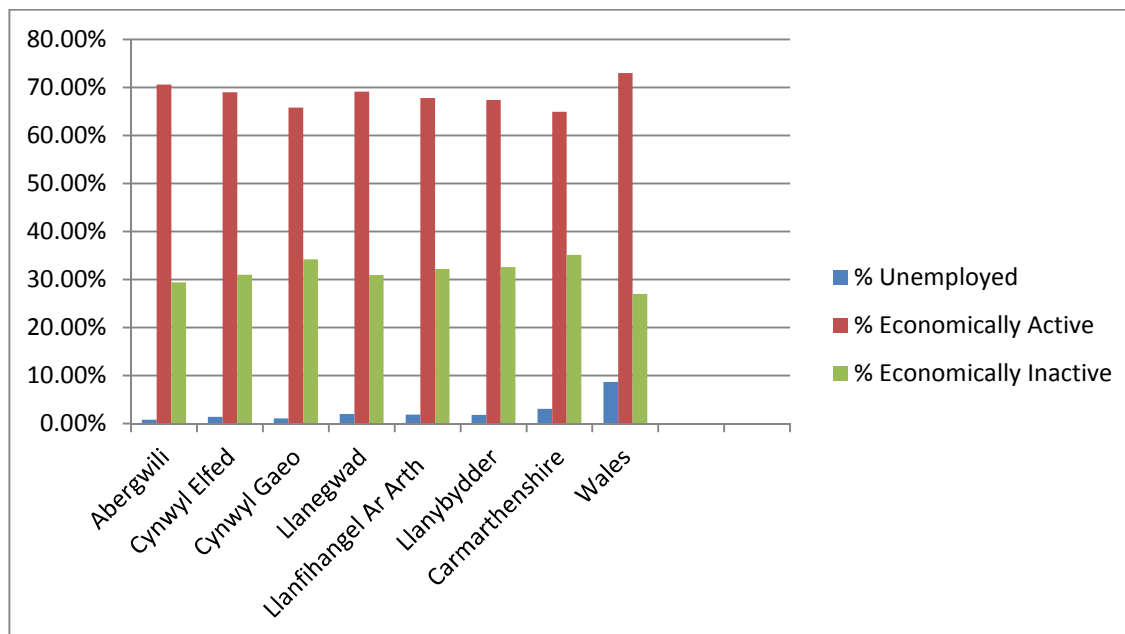
The chart below provides a view of **economic activity**, with the number of economically active persons in these Wards being lower than the Wales average. This may be due to a number of factors:

- people claiming Job Seekers Allowance are classed as economically active and in these Wards the unemployment rate is very low, whereas in Wales on average it is 8.7% of the working population.
- anecdotal evidence suggests the numbers claiming Job Seekers Allowance (classed as economically active) in this area are low due to the long distances required to travel to a Job Centre.
- economic inactivity includes people who are retired - the number of retired is much higher in these Wards than at county and national level.



There is no Job Centre nearby which makes accessing the job market and claiming benefits difficult. The nearest Job Centre is in Carmarthen. For residents with no transport or who rely on public transport it is difficult for them to access Job Centre services. In addition, poor broadband coverage reduces the ability of residents to access jobs advertised online.

The majority of businesses in the area are agricultural, with the vast majority employing less than 4 people.



Further information on the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2012 can be obtained here [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778\\_286243.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_286243.pdf)

## Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011 (WIMD) is the official measure of deprivation in small areas in Wales. It is a relative measure of concentrations of deprivation at the small area level. According to WMD, deprivation is a wider concept than poverty. Poverty means a lack of money. Deprivation refers to wider problems caused by a lack of resources and opportunities, which includes:

- income
- housing
- employment
- access to services
- education
- health
- community safety
- physical environment

Wales is divided into 1,896 Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) each having approximately 1,500 people. Similarly, Carmarthenshire is divided into 112 LSOA areas. Deprivation ranks have been worked out for each of these areas: the most deprived LSOA is ranked 1, and the least deprived in Wales is 1,896 and

Carmarthenshire is 112. One area has a higher deprivation rank than another if the proportion of people living there who are classed as deprived is higher. As WMD state, "an area itself is not deprived: it is the circumstances and lifestyles of the people living there that affect its deprivation rank. It is important to remember that not everyone living in a deprived area is deprived - and that not all deprived people live in deprived areas".

The table below presents the 6 wards of this study in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. Figures in black are the Carmarthenshire index, and in red are the Welsh index. All of the Wards figure favourably in most of the indicators with the exception of **Access to Services** where they rank very low, which is clearly due to the rurality of the Wards. For example, Cynwyl Gaeo has scored the lowest in Wales for access to services, closely followed by Cynwyl Elfed. In addition, Llanybydder scores very low for housing.

WARD	Overall Index	Income	Employment	Health	Education	Housing	Access to Services	Physical Environment	Community Safety
Abergwili	109 1496	108 1638	111 1637	94 1353	103 1541	97 1487	21 132	61 947	90 1735
Cynwyl Elfed1	73 1039	92 1380	100 1447	97 1380	84 1281	37 829	3 16	55 820	106 1878
Cynwyl Elfed2	108 1491	110 1719	108 1447	107 1616	105 1663	87 1374	16 103	71 1122	93 1791
Cynwyl Gaeo	54 892	63 1082	80 1111	109 1710	77 1202	41 857	1 3	93 1412	103 1869
Llanegwad 1	101 1410	93 1397	104 1447	110 1716	112 1778	91 1423	14 94	63 967	108 1885
Llanegwad 2	53 879	49 896	79 1111	106 1610	83 1278	12 496	6 27	87 1305	91 1739
Llanfihangel-Ar-Arth 1	48 784	47 853	66 1022	84 1137	28 632	38 835	24 149	36 545	65 1505
Llanfihangel-Ar-Arth 2	88 1204	100 1505	92 1221	87 1162	58 1012	45 918	22 134	105 1587	102 1864
Llanybydder 1	76 1099	76 1178	101 1447	98 1404	79 1233	13 514	9 71	80 1240	105 1873
Llanybydder 2	41 708	57 986	87 1221	34 562	32 672	2 253	30 227	15 237	83 1650

Research conducted by Regeneris Consulting Ltd (2012) on behalf of RWE npower renewables considered the profile of the local economy of Carmarthenshire and confirms findings from official statistical data. They considered the main economic challenges facing Carmarthenshire related to:

**"The economic base.** Carmarthenshire's employment base is highly reliant on the public sector and higher value added sectors that generate wealth are under-represented. There is also a large amount of agriculture and tourism related employment. The relative narrowness of the economic base and focus on low value activities has led to very low levels of productivity in the area. GVA per worker in South West Wales (£17,000) is half the Wales average and only 40% of the UK figure of £44,000 per worker.

**The size of the local employment base.** The remoteness of much of Carmarthenshire from major employment areas underlines the need to create jobs locally to ensure that residents can access employment. However, employment density is low in Carmarthenshire at 69 jobs per 100 working age residents compared to 71 in Wales and 78 in Great Britain. This feeds into above average levels of unemployment and economic inactivity; Carmarthenshire's unemployment rate of 15% is three percentage points greater than the GB average.

**A loss of working age population.** A net out migration of working age people from Carmarthenshire is being driven in large part by a lack of employment opportunities. Carmarthenshire's working age population is shrinking in absolute terms and as a proportion of the total population". Regeneris Consulting Ltd, 2012.

## Education & learning

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Residents from the Brechfa Forest area use a range of educational services.

There are a number of Ysgol Meithrin for pre-school age children, based in the main villages.

Primary schools which serve the area include Llansawel, Llanybydder, Llanllwni, Cae'r Felin Pencader, Llanpumsaint, Peniel, Llanfynydd, Talley and Nantgaredig. A number of smaller primary schools have closed in recent years including Brechfa, Rhydcymerau and Alltwallis forcing families to transport their children out of the community they live in.



Rhydcymerau Primary School, now closed

The nearest secondary schools are Queen Elizabeth (Carmarthen), Bro Myrddin (Carmarthen), Tregib (Llandeilo), Dyffryn Teifi (Llandysul), Pantycelyn (Llandovery) and Ysgol Bro Pedr (Lampeter).

Trinity St Davids University based in Carmarthen and Lampeter lies in close proximity to Brechfa Forest.

Family centres exist in Llanybydder and Pencader which provide advice and support to families, and assist marginalised and socially excluded families.

The MOBI project (mobile youth club) located on a mobile bus visits Llanybydder once a week. Menter Gorllewin Sir Gar have identified there is a gap in services/activities for young people in the Llanybydder and Pencader area, especially the 11-18 year old age group.

## Community activity & community facilities

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Facilities available for community use in the Brechfa Forest area include Brechfa Church Hall, Abergorlech Village Hall, Llansawel Community Hall, Festri Capel Nonni Llanllwni, Festri Capel Aberduar Llanybydder, Llanybydder Old School Community Centre, Neuadd yr Ysgol Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, The Pavillion, Pencader, Yr Hen Capel Pencader, St Marys Church Hall Pencader, and Alltwallis Old School Community Centre. This list is by no means exhaustive.

These facilities appear to be well used by a diverse range of groups, clubs and voluntary organisations operating in the area. However, they are in various states of repair, with some requiring major updating.

There is potential for these buildings to deliver a wider range of services currently not available in the area e.g. health provision, retail.

## Transport

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The percentage of households with no vehicle is particularly high in Llanybydder 2 (24%, ONS 2011) given it is a rural area, where car ownership is often essential.

Bus routes cover most of the main villages, however for the more remote locations these are not frequent. The Bwcabus service provides an accessible local bus service linking outlying villages with the main bus routes. It covers North Carmarthenshire and much of south Ceredigion. The service is available to the most westerly residents of Brechfa Forest in Pencader, Llanybydder and Llanllwni. However, outlying villages such as Brechfa, Llidiad-Nenog, Gwernogle, Rhydcymerau and Llansawel are not in the Bwcabus service area.

Community transport services such as Bws Ni no longer exist in Brechfa Forest.

## Broadband

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The lack of high speed broadband is identified as a common issue throughout this report. Broadband “notspots” have been identified near the villages of Rhydcymerau, Gwernogle, Llanfynydd and Capel Isaac. Other areas within the Brechfa Forest will also suffer from poor or non-existent broadband.

## Retail services

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Brechfa Community Shop

The main retail outlets within the Brechfa Forest are provided in Brechfa, Llanybydder, Pencader, Windy Ridge and Llanpumsaint, which are of considerable distance apart. Sadly, many village shops, Post Offices and pubs have closed in the smaller settlements in recent years. Postal and banking services are extremely limited, with some areas receiving a mobile outreach service, which do not meet the needs of a modern-day business.

Over recent years, several communities in Carmarthenshire have formed their own community-owned shops including Brechfa, Dryslwyn and Cwmdru.

## Current community projects

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A number of community projects currently exist in the Brechfa Forest area. Below is a list of many of the initiatives, although this is by no means exhaustive:

- Abergorlech Village Hall - repairs and new toilets
- Brechfa School – a business plan is being prepared to convert the primary school into a multi-use social enterprise, which will include workspace, cafe, cycle repairs, community garden etc.

- Brechfa Church Hall - plans to update the building, including a new kitchen, heating system, improved toilets, also expand neighbouring Victoria Park
- Brechfa Community Shop - a thriving community-owned shop, which also houses a GP service, cash machine and broadband service
- Llanfihangel ar Arth Neuadd Ysgol - current plans to renovate as a community hall
- Llansawel Village Hall - plans to update the hall in the coming years
- Llanybydder Old Primary School - now a gym independently operated on an honesty basis
- Llanybydder Family Centre
- Pencader Family Centre
- Pencader & District Regeneration Group - looking at a range of initiatives to improve Pencader facilities
- Pobl y Fforest - renovated a former Forestry Commission Wales building which is now leased to this group, run a forest school scheme, and created a network of paths to provide access for all



Llanbydder Community Centre

## Welsh Language

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Across the area of study, on average 61% of the population can speak, read or write Welsh (Office of National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, 2001). Menter Gorllewin Sir Gar (2013), indicate 66% of Llanybydder residents and 68% of Llanfihangel-ar -Arth residents can speak, read and write Welsh. These are among the highest percentages across Carmarthenshire.

Clearly, the need to sustain long established Welsh communities as local populations change is an important issue to consider within the framework of the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund.

## Current funding opportunities

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A comprehensive list of **current funding opportunities** for the Brechfa Forest area is included in **Appendix 5**. These include European and Rural Development Programme funding streams, where the current arrangements end in December 2013 with a transition period in 2014 before a new allocation in 2015. Such structural funds address a range of issues pertinent to rural communities in Wales.

A number of different delivery models are currently being considered for future European funds in Wales. These include the development of a regional model to guide funding delivery. This would enable local authorities to work together at a sub-regional or regional level, in partnership with other service providers. On a more local level of delivery, there are proposals to deliver integrated multi fund local projects under the Community Led Local Development model in areas such as tourism, culture, business diversification and the environment.

Clearly, there is an opportunity for RWE npower renewables to maximise and complement these major funding streams in Carmarthenshire. Early discussions with Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) should be encouraged.

Other smaller amounts of funds are also available to community groups and in some cases businesses. Up-to-date information on funding sources is available through a number of agencies including Carmarthenshire County Council Community Bureaux, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Organisations and Sustainable Funding Cymru.



Playground, Pencader



## Liaison with local organisations

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Formal meetings were held with a range of public, private and third sector organisations to gain feedback on the purpose, scope and management of the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund. Outline results from these discussions are provided below.

### Carmarthenshire County Council - Community Regeneration (CCC)

Existing EU and Rural Development Programme (RDP) funds are being reviewed currently, with the RDP fund for Carmarthenshire ending in December 2014. CCC strategy is to concentrate development in 5 rural hubs, the main market towns where people access services and employment. The Council's primary focus is on jobs, health and social care. Business starter units are being developed in key settlements. Community buildings are being encouraged to act as sites for delivering a broader range of services e.g. health services, local food buying groups etc. In the past, the RDP has focussed on soft outcomes e.g. sustaining the Welsh culture, but there will be a strong focus on job creation and improved use of match funding including loans, in the next funding round. Action plans for the main rural hubs covering the Brechfa Forest have been prepared, namely Llanybydder & Llanbedr Pont Steffan and Llandovery/Llandeilo.

### Carmarthenshire County Council - Tourism (CCC)

According to CCC and data from STEAM (a validated model for tourism monitoring), visitor numbers to Carmarthenshire have increased over recent years:

Visitors to:	2009	2010	2011
Serviced accommodation	167,100	182,800	181,900
Non-serviced accommodation	458,800	480,000	493,300
Stay with friends	278,800	279,200	279,100
Day visitors	2,023,800	2,024,500	2,050,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,928,500</b>	<b>2,966,800</b>	<b>3,005,100</b>

Source: STEAM report - GTS (UK) Ltd, March 2012 for Carmarthenshire County Council

A destination management plan for Carmarthenshire is currently being produced.

CCC support the promotion of tourism in the Brechfa Forest area. Evidence suggests tourist information centres are becoming less used as more visitors research their visits online, which clearly has implications for ensuring good broadband/wi-fi availability in the Brechfa Forest. There are currently no brown signs for Brechfa Forest. Installing brown signs is particularly costly if leading from a trunk road which requires Highways Agency approval. Brown signs must be directional, rather than promotional. CCC use the services of a PR agency to promote the area, and can assist with publicising local activities, provided there is a unique story. They will also subsidise accommodation costs for journalists. CCC does not have any other funding to promote tourism specifically.

Funding is available to tourism businesses through Visit Wales, Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS) and the South West Wales Tourism Partnership. Support is available for the purpose of upgrading the quality of facilities and increasing capacity where there is a gap in the market. See

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/investsupport/?lang=en>

## **Carmarthenshire Tourism Association (CTA)**

CTA is an independent trade membership association and non-profit making company which has the sole aim of supporting and developing tourism in Carmarthenshire. Members of CTA have access to a wide range of benefits and services aimed at helping them to develop their business. CTA provides members with marketing assistance, money saving offers, training opportunities, networking events, up-to-date industry information, and business advice and support.

CTA operates a number of tourism clusters in Carmarthenshire, including:

**North Carmarthenshire** - focusing on the towns and villages surrounding the hubs of Lampeter and Llanybydder (taking in the areas around Lampeter to Llanybydder to Pumsaint to Brechfa). This cluster is concentrating on marketing the North area as 'An Outdoors Destination' for families, and is working with BALM (Brechfa Forest and Llanllwni Mountain Tourism Cluster Association) to provide interpretive boards for Brechfa Forest.

**North West Carmarthenshire** - focusing on the towns and villages surrounding the hub towns of Newcastle Emlyn and Drefach Felindre (taking in the areas around Newcastle Emlyn, Cenarth, Drefach Felindre and Llandysul). Working on developing ideas to boost tourism and enhance the local area, with a focus on sense of place and creating a distinct identity. Current projects include Gwesty'r Emlyn Visitor Information Centre, improved local signage and themed trails.

### **CTA feedback on the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund:**

CTA convened a special meeting in April 2013 with tourism businesses from the Brechfa Forest area to discuss the potential for the Community Benefit Fund. Key issues raised included:

- Funding should be used to drive the economy, with a special emphasis on tourism businesses as they are most affected by the wind farms
- Funds should be distributed by a fully constituted body with the skills and expertise to manage the funding
- This should comprise some elected representation from the local area
- Use Fund as a lever to attract additional funding to the area
- The Fund should not be managed by the local authority
- Soft loans for small businesses
- Creation of a mountain bike centre attached to the trails with shower facilities, refreshments, cycle hire etc
- Development of the existing trail network to attract families
- Provision of other activities, beyond mountain biking e.g. fishing, canoeing
- Marketing & promotion of the area to encourage people to stay longer, including signage
- Overall village enhancements
- Visitor surveys to establish current and future customer needs
- Improved broadband and mobile phone reception
- Compensation should be considered for tourism businesses affected during the construction phase of the wind turbines



## **Brechfa Forest and Llanllwni Mountain Tourism Cluster Association (BALM)**

This group has been commissioned by the Cambrian Mountains Initiative to be the lead organisation in supporting the development of a community led action plan for the area. A comprehensive action plan has been produced which addresses a range of issues including environment, tourism, local produce, and communities.

A meeting was convened by the Chair of BALM with a number of local tourism businesses. Some common themes emerged once again around improved tourism marketing, including brown signs and a dedicated events/marketing officer for the area, and providing a greater range of activities for visitors including families, horse-riders, outward bound enthusiasts. Match funding other grants, and providing measures to relieve cash flow when awarding grants was also raised.

In relation to the wind farm construction, specific requests were made to ensure construction workers use local accommodation, priority of funding be given to homes closest to the wind turbines, provide landscaping to conceal wind farm views and not terming the wind farm “Brechfa Forest”, as this name is what attracts visitors to the area.

## **WIRE (Women in Rural Enterprise)**

A meeting was held with the Chair of WIRE for Carmarthenshire. 3 important factors were identified as being critical for business growth in rural Wales - post office services appropriate to business needs, accessible banking and fast broadband.

## **Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI)**

CMI is a wide-ranging project that aims to help promote rural enterprise, protect the environment and add value to products and services in mid-Wales. Inspired by HRH The Prince of Wales, who is President of the CMI, the Cambrian Mountains brand encompasses the characteristics of the area it represents. It is dedicated to sustaining a unique living environment through providing customers with a guarantee of quality, taste and welcome.

CMI focuses on a number of strands including produce marketing, ecosystems, tourism and community development. It extends over the three local authority areas of Powys, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Some communities have produced their own community action plans including Brechfa. CMI also sees opportunities for developing community-owned renewable energy schemes including hydro and solar.

CMI plans to extend its services with funding from the next round of Rural Development Plan funding. There are potential synergies and linkages which could be explored further between CMI and the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund.

The Cambrian Mountains is also an area of significant hydro potential and has a unique opportunity to assist the development of a substantial number of micro-hydro generation schemes. Initial studies commissioned by CMI and carried out by TGV Hydro (2012) have indicated there are 70 viable hydro schemes in the entire Cambrian Mountains region. These could be developed to both reduce carbon emissions and earn a worthwhile return on investment by utilising the 20 year guaranteed and index linked Feed-in Tariffs. One such site has been identified in the Brechfa Forest.

Community Energy Wales is looking to provide loans to support community-owned hydro schemes, subject to external funding.

### **Antur Teifi (AT)**

Established in the late 1970s, AT provides support to businesses across Mid and West Wales. It has specifically delivered direct support to businesses through the Business Wales contract since January 2013. A number of issues were identified for businesses in Brechfa Forest:

- Many small businesses rely on online communications, so lack of broadband is a real issue
- Businesses have a tendency not to work together - collaboration would help their development e.g. tourism, which would require facilitation
- Loans for small business are vital, especially for working capital. There could be possible opportunities to develop micro loan schemes at affordable rates for business through existing credit unions operating in the area
- Other schemes provide loans including Carmarthenshire County Council, Finance Wales and Wales Council for Voluntary Action, but these are relatively costly, on average 10-12% interest rate
- Carmarthenshire Local Investment Scheme (LIF) which provided grants for business was very popular but is currently closed (April 2013). This initiative has now been re-opened, but its time is limited.
- Current advice for new start-up businesses is provided from centres in Carmarthen, Lampeter and Llanelli, which are a considerable distance from Brechfa Forest. Business advisers will visit existing businesses on their own premises.
- Data supplied by Antur Teifi suggests a steady number of people wish to start their own business in Carmarthenshire over recent years, who will require adequate business support and start-up finance:  
2008 - 530  
2009 - 505  
2010 - 420  
2011 - 520
- There is a growth in schemes encouraging businesses to be more energy efficient, and funds are available to support greening up business. See <http://www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk/default.aspx>
- Discussion suggests there is a need to encourage trade levels generally in the region, where business growth is linked to neighbouring market towns.

### **Centre for Business and Social Action (CBSA)**

CBSA was originally Mid and West Wales Chamber of Commerce. It has a membership of 2,500 businesses throughout Wales and supports businesses across the region. It focuses on social action by working with private business, including mentoring, sponsorship, skills development, work placements, volunteering and charitable giving. It also supports young people in NEETS (not in education, employment or training).

A number of opportunities were identified by CBSA for the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund, including offering a regional micro-loan fund to businesses at a lower rate than existing lenders. Currently there is a lack of overdraft facilities or affordable loans. Also, providing support for green tourism initiatives. CBSA could offer its services in managing the Funds, and may be able to lever in other funds e.g. Big Lottery.

### **Natural Resources Wales (NRW)**

Natural Resources Wales was established in April 2013 and brings together the work of the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales, as well as some functions of Welsh Government. Its purpose is *"to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future"*.

30-40,000 tons of timber is produced from Brechfa Forest annually. Key issues facing Brechfa Forest include ancient woodland restoration and water quality. There has been much interest in establishing hydro schemes by households, businesses and the community. A suitable hydro site exists near Abergorlech subject to planning permission. Relative to other forest sites, few visitors use Brechfa Forest, and these are mainly mountain bikers. Maintenance of the bike tracks is the responsibility of NRW and is a financial liability. NRW are interested in attracting a wider variety of users, in line with its policy "Woodlands and You".

Carmarthenshire County Council initiated the Brechfa mountain bike trails around 10 years ago, in partnership with Forestry Commission Wales. Part of the original plan was to install a visitor centre, but this did not take place due to funding cuts. Currently 3 mountain bike hub centres exist in Wales - Coed y Brenin, Nant yr Arian and Afan Forest Park. There are no plans to develop additional hubs, but NRW would *facilitate* the development of other centres if there was interest. NRW now acts as an *enabler* rather than a direct service provider. For example, Community Management Agreements are being created with local communities on forest land to help manage the woodland estate and draw down public funding. These agreements vary in size. There are no Community Management Agreements in Brechfa Forest currently.

### **Farmers Union of Wales (FUW)**

Carmarthenshire FUW represents the interests of farmers in the county. A number of existing grant schemes exist to support the agricultural community including Glastir and through Farming Connect. Several areas were identified as opportunities for support including grants for updating farm buildings, hedging and fencing, particularly for those farmers aged over 40 who are entitled to less financial assistance than younger farmers.

### **Carmarthenshire Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (YFC)**

The YFC is the national movement for young farmers. It seeks *"to meet the needs of rural young people through educational, training and social programmes that encourage community involvement and concern for the environment"*. The Carmarthenshire Federation of YFCs is very active with 25 YFC clubs and over 800 members and 142 voluntary club leaders. Through the Fund, they are keen to support the activities of their local clubs and the county federation. YFC clubs around Brechfa Forest include Llanfynydd, Cwmann, Cynwyl Elfed, Dyffryn Cothi and Llanllwni.

## **Coleg Sir Gar**

Coleg Sir Gar is a major training provider in Carmarthenshire, and will be merging with Trinity St Davids University in August 2013. It currently has 4 campuses in Ammanford, Carmarthen, Llanelli and Llandeilo, with around 12,000 students. Coleg Sir Gar suggested a range of opportunities for the Fund including providing subsidised student transport (provided this is not available elsewhere), extra-curricular activities, student wellbeing, local sports sponsorship, scholarships for higher education, employment bursaries, developing new innovative farm businesses e.g. anaerobic digesters, lever for match funding, machinery sharing with local agricultural contractors, specialist training for local contractors in maintaining wind turbines sites, and creating an energy self-sufficient zone specifically for Brechfa Forest which has been piloted in other parts of Europe.

## **County Councillors - representing Llanegwad, Llanybydder & Cynwyl Gaeo**

A joint meeting convened by Menter Bro Dinefwr was held with 3 of the 4 county councillors representing Brechfa Forest. Suggestions for the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund included having a joint application process for community and regional funds, use the fund as a lever for match funding, broadband is a priority especially for the Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn community, job creation and affordable housing are paramount, interest in renewable energy schemes including micro-hydro and solar PV, support for community transport initiatives and provide start up funding for new business development. Maintaining existing community buildings which may be under-used is not regarded as a priority for the Community Fund. Councillors also suggested smaller community funds be provided at 100% so there is no need to secure match funding.

*“we need a vibrant working community - without young people there won’t be a community”*

## **Brechfa Community Association**

Several meetings were held with representatives from Brechfa Community Association to gather feedback on the proposed Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund.

The funds should be invested in projects and initiatives which support long term rural regeneration and provide a return on the investment. The funds could be set up as an endowment fund, where their benefits will be permanent. Any funds awarded should be matched to ensure fund sustainability, or be made as loans. Examples of projects include support for affordable housing, job creation, business growth for mutual benefit, and improved IT connectivity.

In terms of fund management it was suggested a strategic partnership be established comprising a variety of stakeholders including representatives from adjacent communities, the public and private sectors. This could be established as an independent community trust fund, which is open and democratic, with balanced representation between residents and users, and having a clear succession plan.

## **Key themes from local organisations**

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- A range of activities and support already exist in the Brechfa Forest area which the Community Fund could assist including tourism, environment, business and community development
- There is a strong sense the Fund could act as a lever to draw down match funding, particularly for future EU/RDP schemes which will be available from 2015 onwards

- Support for tourism development and promotion, particularly broadening the tourism offer and encouraging people to stay in the area longer
- Support for environmental initiatives and renewable technologies including hydro and solar PV schemes
- Business support, grants and affordable loans, for all types of business including farming, with a particular focus on supporting working capital
- Lack of broadband and mobile phone reception is clearly hampering new business growth
- Support for collaborative working, between different businesses and community groups
- Supporting existing education/training providers to innovate e.g. agriculture, renewable energy
- Maintenance of community buildings is not regarded as a priority for this Fund
- Willingness from statutory agencies to support and enable community-led initiatives, but not be direct providers of services
- Fund should be managed by an independent, properly constituted body with grant giving expertise, and with representation from the local community, statutory and private sector. There was a common view that the local authority should not manage and deliver the Community Fund.
- A number of organisations approached would be willing partners in developing and delivering the Fund
- Active partners include Carmarthenshire County Council, Carmarthenshire Tourism Association, Cambrian Mountains Initiative, Natural Resources Wales, Antur Teifi, CBSA, and other third sector support agencies including Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services, Menter Bro Dinefwr and Menter Gorllewin Sir Gar

## Questionnaire results

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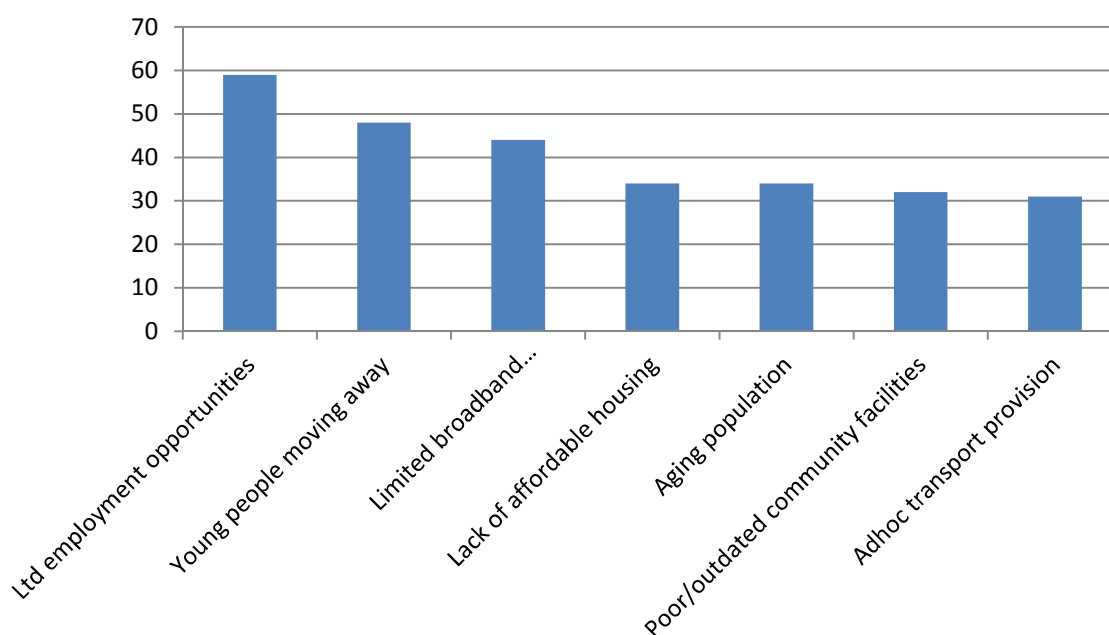
A survey questionnaire was produced and circulated in key locations around the Brechfa Forest and online. The survey aimed to ascertain views on the key issues facing the area, what type of activities the Fund could support, potential area of benefit and preferred Fund management. 84 surveys were completed, which represented just under 10% response rate of those surveys circulated as a hard copy. A full **copy of the questionnaire survey** is included in **Appendix 6**. A summary of questionnaire results is provided below.

### Q1. What are the main issues affecting Brechfa Forest and the wider region?

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Limited employment opportunities	59
Young people moving away	48
Limited broadband capacity/mobile phone reception	44
Lack of affordable housing	34
Aging population	34
Poor/outdated community facilities	32
Adhoc transport provision	31

**Main issues affecting Brechfa Forest**



#### Other identified issues:

No pub in Brechfa (4)  
Loss of Post Office and school (3)  
Children's playground (2)  
Need for a Llansawel community shop (2)  
Revenue for community facilities (2)  
Rising energy costs (1)  
Intrusion of wind farms (1)  
Church Hall Brechfa needs repair (1)  
Sports facilities Llansawel (1)

## Q2. What should this funding support?

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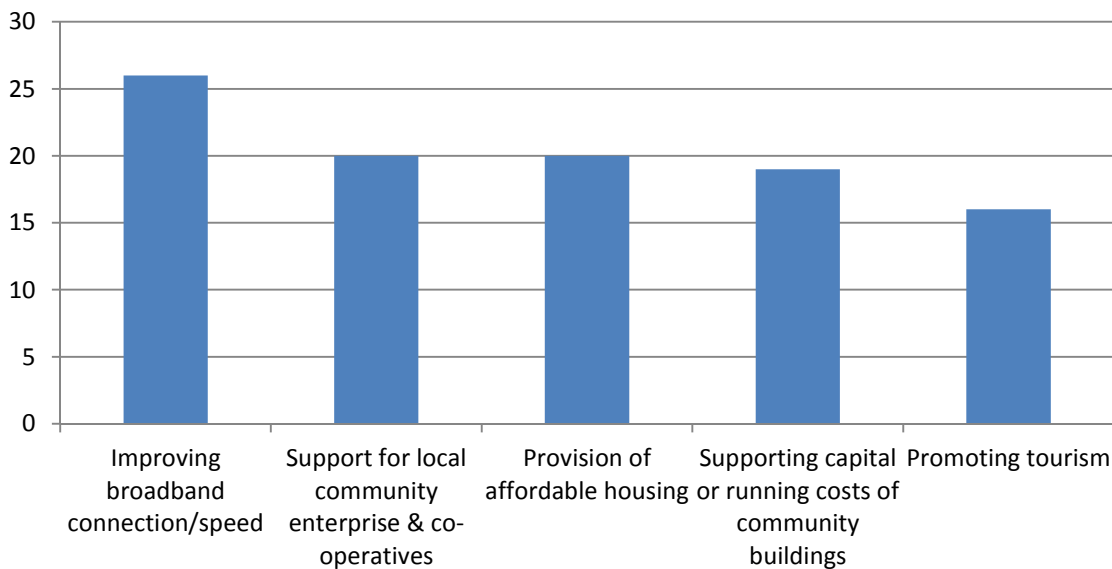
Which, if any, of these types of projects would you like to see investment helping? (Q2a)

And which three of these would be your main priorities for receiving funding? (Q2b)

Below is a list of answers to question 2b in order of the community's highest priority

	2a	2b
Improving broadband connection/speed	45	26
Support for local community enterprise & co-operatives	43	20
Provision of affordable housing	30	20
Supporting capital or running costs of community buildings	43	19
Promoting tourism	35	16
Support for rural businesses including funding	48	15
Support for environmental projects	42	13
Projects to support local housing energy efficiency	41	13
Support for leisure/arts/sports activities and/or facilities	40	12
Projects and initiatives that bring the community together	42	11
Projects to occupy teenagers and young adults	33	11
Projects to help meet fuel costs	31	11
Improving mobile phone reception	36	11
Activities/venues for young children	30	09
Improvements to rural transport	30	09
Apprenticeship schemes	30	08
Support for older people e.g. activities to reduce isolation	30	06
Educational grants e.g. awards to individuals for further education	20	05
Projects to support energy efficiency of local community buildings	35	04
Healthy living initiatives	18	01

## Top 5 priorities as identified by the community



### Other suggestions include:

- Arts courses (1)
- Community events (1)
- Hydro energy schemes (1)
- Noise prevention from turbines (1)
- Reduction in council tax and business rates (1)
- Welsh language enterprise support (1)
- Compensation to households affected by wind turbines (9)

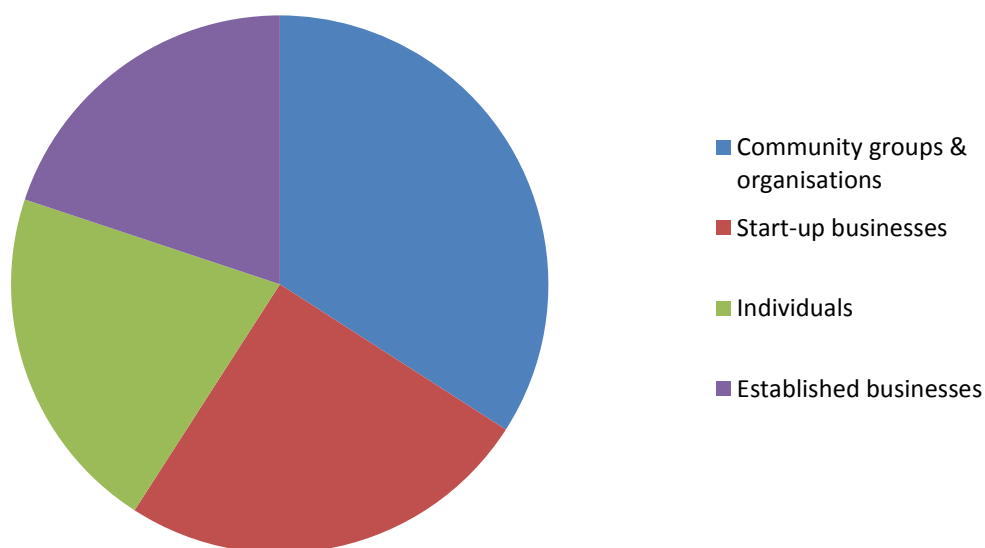
### Q3. Who should be eligible to receive such a fund?

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Community groups & organisations	60
Start-up businesses	44
Individuals	37
Established businesses	35



## Who should be eligible to receive the funding

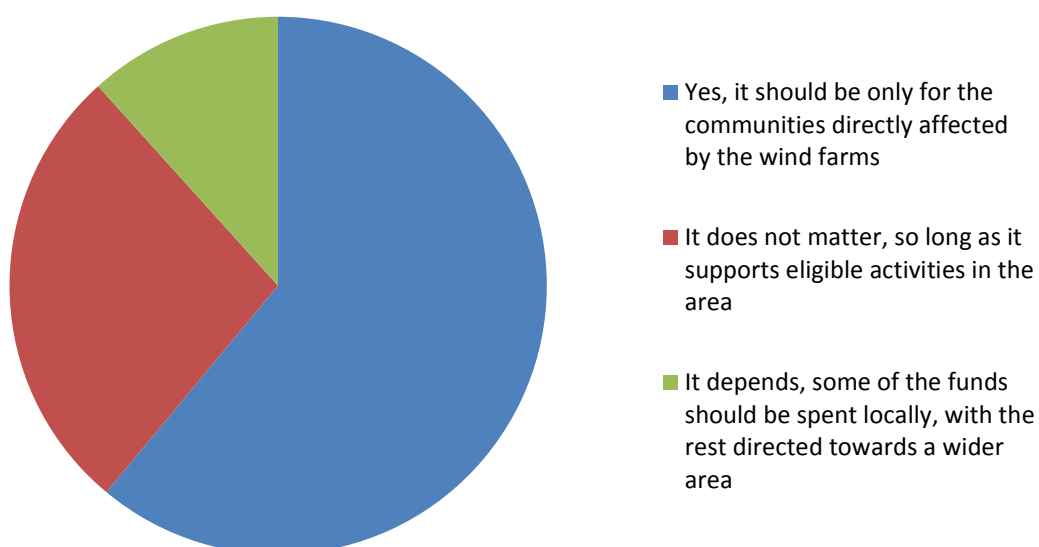


### Q4. Is it important where the funds are spent?

---

Yes, it should be only for communities directly affected by the wind farms	47
It does not matter, so long as it supports eligible activities in the area	21
It depends, some of the funds should be spent locally, with the rest directed towards a wider area	9

## Is it important where the funds should be spent



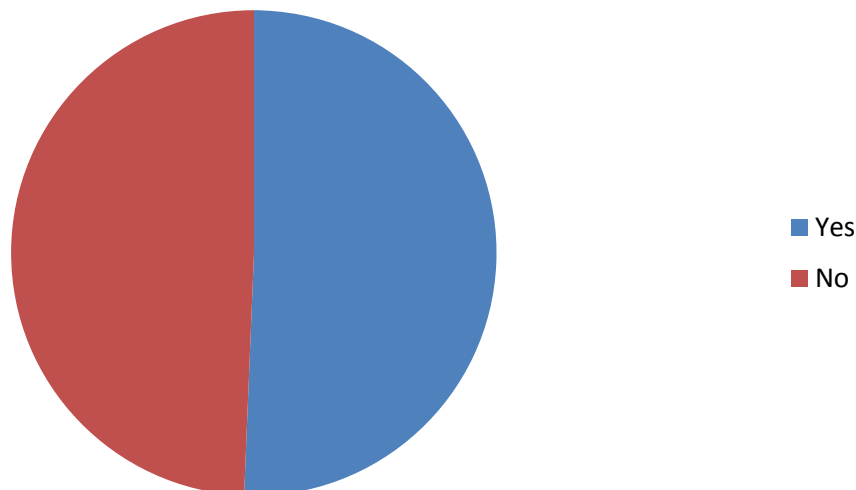
#### Q5. Should we consider making part of the fund available as loans, as well as grants?

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Yes 39

No 38

#### Should part of the fund be made available as loans?

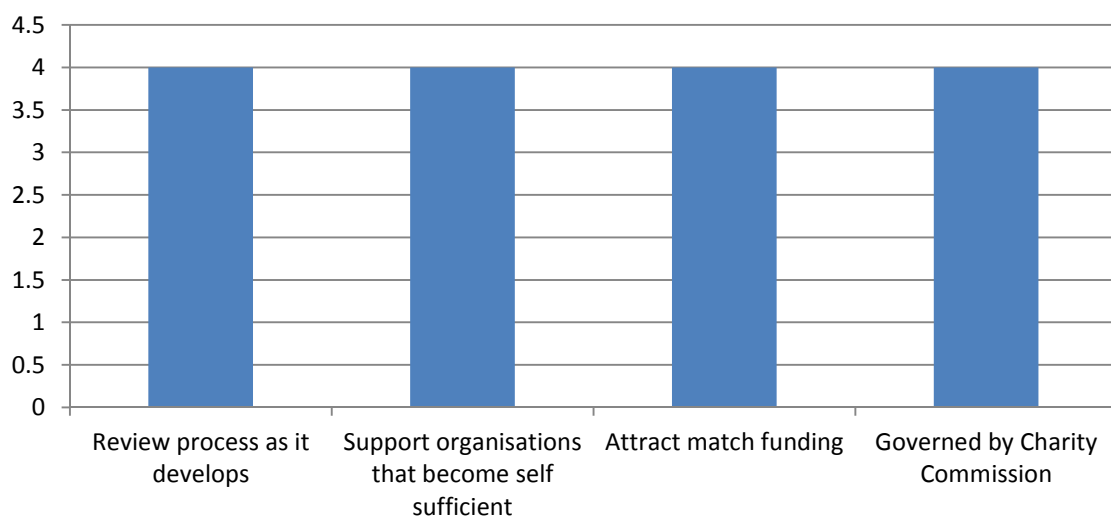


#### Q6. How can we ensure the fund provides long-lasting benefits?

---

- Review process as it develops (4)
- Support organisations that become self-sufficient (4)
- Attract match funding (4)
- Governed by Charity Commission (4)
- Professional management (3)
- Support local businesses (2)
- Broadband (2)
- Local committee with professional help (2)
- Objective measurement (2)
- Long term initiatives (2)
- Strict grant conditions/agreement (2)
- Green energy for individuals & businesses (2)
- Invest 10% into a permanent fund (1)
- Ensure it's well utilised (1)
- Core management /control (1)
- No one from RWE on the board (1)
- Community involved with professional help (1)
- Create an endowment fund for long term benefit (1)
- Solar panels (1)
- Teach young people about the environment (1)
- Grow local greenery (1)
- Art projects (1)
- Community loans (1)
- Invest in local community and schools (1)
- Pay for things the Council no longer support e.g. public toilets (1)
- Fund should be index-linked (1)
- Ensure support for local churches (1)
- Should not compete with local business or proposed new business (1)

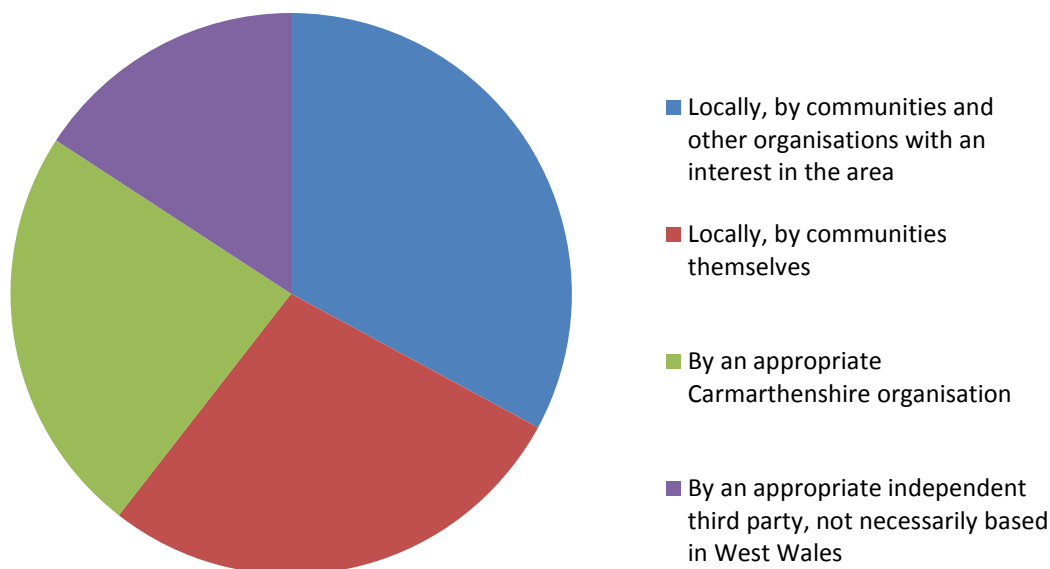
### How can long lasting benefits be ensured? (Top 4 responses)



## Q7. How should such a fund be administered?

Locally, by communities and other organisations with an interest in the area working in partnership	25
Locally, by communities themselves	21
By an appropriate Carmarthenshire organisation	18
By an appropriate independent third party, not necessarily based in West Wales	12

### How should the fund be administered?



#### Other comments:

Not managed directly by the local authority (8)

A mechanism for ensuring that the scheme continues irrespective of who owns the wind farm (2)

Fund should be administered at several levels. A strategic team that agree and monitor fund distribution against published guidance. A Sub Committee of local representatives to provide feedback. It is important that local representatives do not make grant decisions to ensure impartiality and no inter-village squabbles (1)

A well-defined, reliable and accountable approach to managing and distributing the funds involving local representatives and clearly documented procedures (1)

Clear and enforceable agreements about the provision of the benefit by the wind farm owner (1)

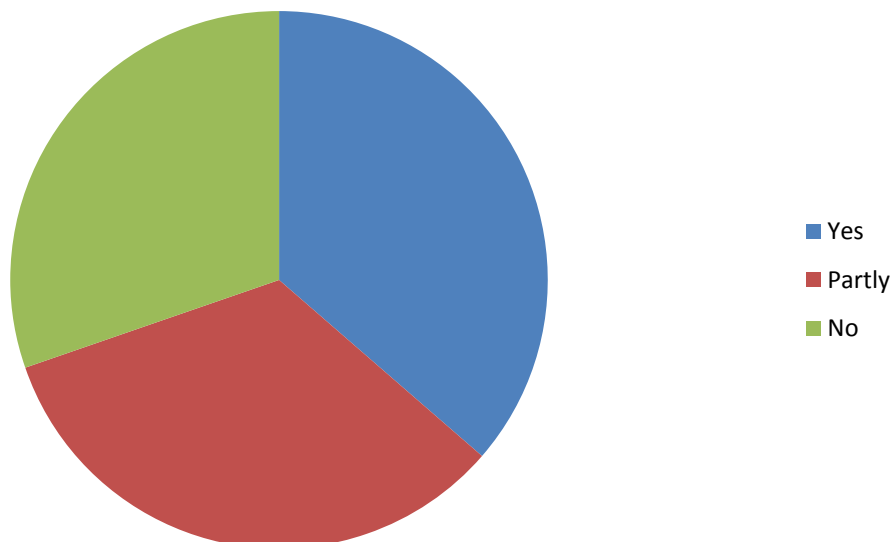
A clearly defined purpose for the funds (1)

**Q8. Other funds currently exist in the area, which support job creation, tourism development, improving facilities and services etc. Are you aware of these?**

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Yes 24      Partly 22      No 20

**Is the community aware of existing funds?**



**Q9. How can our funds complement existing grant schemes?**

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- Use as match funding (8)
- Supporting running costs (2)
- Support living costs (2)
- Reduce bureaucracy (1)
- Free adviser (1)
- Focus on apprenticeships to develop local skills (1)
- Allow more risky innovative projects (1)
- New initiatives to combat stigma of Brechfa Forest (1)
- Wider opportunities for tourism and jobs (1)
- Ask the grant givers for up front support for those receiving retrospective funding for large projects (1)
- Readily available information (1)
- Keep young people in work (1)
- By being managed and administered better (1)
- By being accountable (1)
- By being available to EVERYONE and not just the chosen few (1)
- Been better publicised (1)
- Make some available to new projects/start-up funds etc but also make a proportion available to support/further fund projects already underway (1)
- Available to larger and more significant projects with a clear long term strategy (1)
- Existing grant schemes are getting fewer and fewer and criteria often exclude residents in the area. Maybe applicants must show they have made at least two unsuccessful applications for grant funding [if two grant funding sources were available, that is] (1)
- Avoid duplication (1)
- Through consultation with other agents (1)
- Focus on geographical area (1)
- Support new areas (1)
- New projects (1)

## Summary of questionnaire responses

- The main issues affecting Brechfa Forest are limited employment opportunities, young people moving away, and poor broadband capacity/mobile phone reception
- Top 5 fund priorities are improving broadband connection/speed, support for community enterprise, affordable housing, supporting capital/running costs of community buildings and promoting tourism
- Support for rural business, including funding scored the most responses generally
- Eligible fund recipients included all types - community groups & organisations (most popular), start-up businesses, individuals and established businesses
- Over 60% of respondents want funds spent in the communities directly affected by the turbines. 27% do not mind, provided they support eligible activities in the area
- There is a 50/50 split on whether the funds should be made available as loans, as well as grants
- There was strong consensus on how the Fund can ensure long lasting benefits e.g. use to attract match funding, support organisations that can become financially sustainable, regulated by the Charity Commission, and review process as it develops. Many of the responses centred around proper governance and accountability of the Fund
- There was a divided view on how the Funds should be best administered, with a slight majority in favour of local control with community and other organisations with an interest in the area working in partnership. Anecdotal evidence suggests some external, professional support is required
- There was a clear desire expressed that the Fund should not be managed by the local authority
- Awareness of other existing funds is limited, with as many respondents not aware or partly aware of other grants
- The Fund can clearly complement other funds by being used as match to draw down significantly larger amounts and to ensure the amount of money available can go further



Brechfa School, recently closed

## Community events

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### Community Benefit Funding – Have your say! Cyllid er Budd y Gymuned – Eich cyfle i leisio

3 informal drop-in sessions were held in the following locations:

- Llansawel Village Hall, Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 - Attendance: 10
- Cae'r Felin Primary School, Pencader, Wednesday 24th April 2013 - Attendance: 15
- Brechfa Church Hall, Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 - Attendance: 29

These locations were selected to encourage as many residents as possible from different parts of the Brechfa Forest to attend. The same locations were also used to hold public exhibitions as part of RWE npower renewables consultation regarding the wind farm applications. The meetings were held between 3-7.30pm to capture all age ranges - young parents, elderly and people returning from work.

All meetings were fully bi-lingual and a Welsh speaker was present to answer any queries in the preferred language of choice. Posters were displayed on walls asking questions about the purpose of the fund, area of benefit and how it should be managed. Display boards provided ideas on potential project themes and further information about other funding currently available in the area. Refreshments were provided, and attendees were encouraged to talk to consultancy.coop representatives in detail about their views.

**Full results from the events** are contained in **Appendix 7**.

The key messages raised are as follows:

#### **Fund activities:**

- A range of community initiatives should be supported
- Meaningful, well-paid employment opportunities
- Sustaining community services e.g. shops, post office, health, transport using a variety of models - community enterprise, mobile provision
- Improving community buildings, particularly community halls
- Developing more tourism opportunities, especially to encourage people to stay in the area longer
- Improved tourism marketing
- Support for renewable energy schemes for households, businesses and community initiatives e.g. solar, PV, micro hydro, ground source, wood pellet and also advice on energy efficiency
- Improved broadband and mobile phone reception
- Support for business growth, including social enterprise and grants/loans
- More affordable housing and interest in shared ownership and self-build schemes
- Safer paths for pedestrians and cyclists
- Support revenue costs for community projects where there are no other sources of income
- For smaller, community projects, grants should be paid up front to assist with cash flow
- Use as match funding to lever in other funds
- Compensation should be provided for those directly affected by the wind farms

- More information on what is happening with the wind farms, particularly Brechfa Forest East which has not yet been decided

#### **Area of benefit:**

- Clear definition of area of benefit
- Strong support for concentrating resources on communities directly affected by the wind turbines, especially interference from visibility, noise and during construction
- Support for a criteria-led fund, where projects directly benefit Brechfa Forest and the communities affected, in preference to an area defined by boundaries

#### **Fund management:**

- Managed by an independent organisation
- Clearly defined purpose for the Fund
- Accountable and regulated by the Charity Commission
- Local and regional representation
- Professional staff with grant-giving experience
- Some interest in establishing an endowment fund for long term benefit
- Invest in community leaders/activists now to develop a common vision for the area and appropriate proposals
- Spend some of the Fund before the turbines operate to help build up community support

#### **Some quotes from the public events**

*“we need to invest in reasons to attract people here”*

*“grants for green energy to reflect and endorse turbine strategy for the area”*

*“set up an endowment fund that generates interest that is distributed”*

*“fund management – independent, but based within, and in touch with the community”*

*“clear & accountable objectives for the funding”*

*“this Fund is for future generations”, “we need to encourage young people back to the area”*



## Area of benefit

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The majority of wind farm developers work to industry best practice when deciding areas of benefit for community benefit funds. Best practice guidelines recommend considering the following factors:

- Where communities actually live in relation to the development.
- The level of disruption that is likely to be felt as a result of construction activity and traffic.
- The visual impact of the development.
- How the area is used for work and recreation by the wider community.
- The size of the immediate local population.

For the purpose of the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund, this report recommends the Brechfa Forest area is defined as the communities within, and neighbouring, Brechfa Forest. At this stage, specific recommendations on eligible Community Councils or Wards have not been made as the boundaries of these areas may change under proposals made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (January, 2013).

Due to the relatively large amount of funding that will be available over a 25 year period, there has been discussion as to whether some of the Fund should be allocated regionally. This is a pragmatic approach given there is already an existing Community Fund in place in the area, through the Alltwallis Wind Farm.

Responses from the general public and at an organisational level indicate a general acceptance of a regionally-distributed fund provided projects also benefit the Brechfa Forest. Such a regional fund should be criteria-led, rather than be governed by constitutional boundaries.

The balance of funding allocated between local communities versus regionally should give priority to those communities most affected, particularly at the outset. In time, this approach should be reviewed, particularly if demand for regional funds from eligible projects begins to grow.

The community consultation revealed a clear desire for flexibility in supporting local projects, including the ability to support revenue costs, to make 100% awards and to pay grants up-front to assist smaller organisations with cash flow. In contrast, it would be prudent for regional grants to be targeted on specific themes, in line with the key themes identified in this report. Such regional grants could also act as match funding to lever in other funds available at the time.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

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Both the community consultation and desk research highlight the main priority for the Brechfa Forest area is **encouraging a sustainable local economy which maintains community life**, where everyone can enjoy fair access to employment, housing and other services.

Emerging key themes include enabling meaningful and better paid employment opportunities, expanding the tourism industry to encourage people to stay in the area longer, support by some (but not all) for the development and improvement of community facilities, providing business support through grants and affordable loans, supporting the development of community/social enterprise, improving communications including mobile phone, broadband and transport provision, encouraging the supply of affordable housing, and supporting renewable energy schemes for local households and businesses.

Our desk research identified critical challenges for Brechfa Forest, in particular, **an increasing aging population and poor access to services**.

**Current and future European and RDP funds** for North Carmarthenshire will focus on many of the issues identified, with increasing emphasis on job creation, innovation and the use of financial instruments (loans) and match funding. Clearly the Brechfa Forest Community Benefit Fund is well timed in working with these larger future funding streams.

Wind Farm Community Funds are increasing in size, and are recognised as an essential part of onshore wind farm development. With this, there will inevitably be a move to developing schemes which benefit a larger area. Given the significant funding available through this scheme, consideration should be given to reserving a portion of the funds to establish a **permanent endowment** scheme for long term benefit.

The local community expressed strong opinion that the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund should be **managed professionally, involving individuals with grant giving expertise** led by an accountable body. Representation should be from a cross section of public, private and third sector, along with the local community. Sole local control of the Fund was not deemed appropriate. Clearly there is some merit in looking at how the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund can complement the existing Alltwallis Community Fund.

Our fieldwork revealed a sense of scepticism about whether public consultation is truly valued - i.e. will RWE npower renewables really listen to what local people have to say on the Community Fund? As such, it is recommended that RWE npower renewables develop an **ongoing relationship** with the Brechfa Forest community to outline next steps in the wind farm construction, with specific focus on the development of the Community Fund.

**Managing community expectations** between now and turbine operation is critical. Many residents expressed a desire for compensation which is not the remit of the Community Fund. Investing some money early on locally may go some way to help alleviate residents' concerns. The local community also seek reassurance that community benefit fund conditions must be tied if future ownership of the wind farm changes.

## Collaboration

Collaboration has emerged as a critical theme in ensuring future prosperity for Brechfa Forest. The Brechfa Forest area comprises many different and fragmented communities, who do not naturally look to work together because of local geography. RWE npower renewables should **support the work of existing agencies** delivering community development in the area namely Menter Gorllewin Sir Gar, Menter Bro Dinefwr, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Organisations and Carmarthenshire County Council. Other long standing, trusted partners delivering community support on the ground should be included in future fund development work. These include YFCs, children and young people groups, Merched y Wawr, etc.

**Community activists** and leaders are prevalent in all communities. Such activists should be encouraged in the area to take a lead in developing proposals now in order to make best use of the Funds which will be available in the future. These activists include individuals, and representatives of local community organisations, including Community Councils.

A number of organisations approached would be **willing partners** in developing and delivering the Fund. Potential partners include Carmarthenshire County Council, Carmarthenshire Tourism Association, Cambrian Mountains Initiative, Natural Resources Wales, Antur Teifi, CBSA, and other third sector support agencies including Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services, Menter Bro Dinefwr and Menter Gorllewin Sir Gar.

Clearly both the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm and the associated Community Fund form an important milestone in the future of the area. A generation of investment will be made available which can potentially reap long term benefits. This study goes some way in sowing the seeds, and like all funding initiatives will require **regular review**.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Declaration for community benefits by onshore wind farm developers and operators in Wales

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## **Appendix 2: Map of Brechfa Forest, the wind farm sites and neighbouring wards**

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## Appendix 3: Organisations consulted

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- Alltwallis Statkraft Community Benefit Fund
- AnturTeifi
- Brechfa Community Association
- Brechfa School
- Brechfa Tourism Cluster, Cambrian Mountains Initiative
- Cambrian Mountains Initiative
- Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services
- Carmarthenshire County Council - Community Regeneration & Tourism
- Carmarthenshire Federation of Young Farmers Clubs
- Carmarthenshire Tourism Association
- CBSA (Centre for Business & Social Action)
- Coleg Sir Gar
- Collaborative Communities
- Community Councils for Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn, Llanfihangel ar Arth, Llansawel, Llanllwni, Llanybydder and Llanfynydd
- County Councillors representing Llanegwad, Llanybydder, Llanllwni & Cynwyl Gaeo
- Farmers Union of Wales
- Llansawel Village Hall
- MenterGorllewin Sir Gar
- Menter Bro Dinefwr
- Natural Resources Wales
- Pobl y Fforest
- Primary Schools - Llanfynydd, Nantgaredig, Llansawel, Talley, Llanybydder, Llanllwni, Cae'rFelin, Peniel, Llanpumsaint
- WIRE (Women in Rural Enterprise)

## Appendix 4: Overview of community benefit funds

Name & location	Year established	Mega Watt	Amount p.a.	What will it support	Area covered	Management	Index linked
Llandinam Powys	1991	30 MW	£25,000	Community projects		Llandinam Community Trust	
Taff Ely, RCT	1992	9 MW	£2,500			Administered by Community Foundation Wales	
Bryn Titli, Powys	1993	9.9 MW	£5,000	A Charitable Trust has also been established with an endowment of £100,000 to support local education and training.	To assist local community projects in Rhayader and Llangurig	Administered by Rhayader Town Council and St Harmon Community Council	Yes
Dyffryn Brodyn, Ceredigion	1994	5.5 MW					
Carno 1, Powys	1995	33.6 MW	£32,000			Carno Community Council,  Llanbrynmair Community Trust Fund	

Llyn Alaw, Anglesey	1996	20.4 MW	£24,000	In 2008 grants included:  Llanfechell Educational Society - £420 towards the cost of a course for members  Young Farmers - £75 towards the local Eisteddfod  Carreglefn Playing Field - £670.93 for tree planting  Llanfechell School - £1,500 towards purchase of a whiteboard for community use		Administered by TrefAlaw, Llanerch-y-Medd and Mechell Community Councils.  Additional £2,000 administered by Community Foundation Wales.	
Mynydd y Gorddu, Ceredigion	1997	10.2 MW	£10,000		To assist local community projects	Amgen have established the CronfraEleri Advisory Committee comprising local representatives	Yes
Trysglwyn, Anglesey	1997	5.6 MW	£5,000			Administered by Rhosybol Community Council	Yes
Hafoty Ucha, Gwynedd	2003	3.15 MW	£1,000 per MW			At discretion of wind farm owner	
Ffynnon Oer, NE of Neath	2003	33 MW	£32,000		Local community projects in Glyncorrwg, Cymmer, Resolven, Clyne and Melincourt.	Administered by two local organisations	Yes

Cefn Croes, Ceredigion	2003	58.5 MW	£72,240			CefnCroes Community Trust	Yes
Moel Maelogen, Conwy	2007	11.7 MW	£115,000			Dyffryn Conwy Rural enterprise	Yes
Carno, Powys	2008	15.6 MW	£12,000			Carno Community Council	
Wern Ddu, Conwy	2009	9.2MW	£10,000			Derwen Community Council	
Maesgwyn, Neath & Port Talbot	2009	26 MW	£87,000			Onllywn Community Council	
Alltwallis, Carms	2010	23 MW	£75,000	Funds activities to create a vibrant community including those with a focus on environmental, educational and community improvement projects, including outdoor activities.	Local villages of Alltwallis and Gwyddgrug, thereby leaving £25,000 for the remaining Llanfihangel ar Arth electoral division area. Will re-allocate funding in each of the first two financial years of the Trust to other areas within the Llanfihangel ar Arth electoral division area should the villages of Alltwallis and Gwyddgrug not use their full allocation of £25,000	Managed by trustees from local Community Councils and Carmarthenshire County Councillor who were decided by the developer, Statkraft.	Yes

Mynydd y Betws, Carmar	2013	37.5 MW	£112,000	Six themes including recreation, education, health, environment, energy efficiency/sustainability & culture. For capital & revenue costs.	10 local specified wards including Ammanford, Betws, Garnant, Glanamman, Llandybie, Pontamman, Penygroes, Saron, Tycroes and Quarterbach	Carmarthenshire County Council Community Bureau	?
Gwynt y Mor Offshore, North Wales	Operational late 2014 - details tbc	576 MW	£768,000	TBC	TBC	TBC	Yes
Mynydd y Gwair, North of Swansea	City and County of Swansea voted to grant planning permission in 2013 - not operational	48 MW	Up to £240,000 depending on final installed capacity	TBC	TBC	TBC	Yes
Brechfa Forest West, Carmar	Planning permission granted in 2013 - not operational	84 MW	£560,000	TBC	TBC	TBC	Yes

Taff Ely, RCT	Planning permission granted in 2013 to 'repower' the existing site (original site and fund still currently operational – see above)	17.5 MW	Up to £87,500 depending on final installed capacity	TBC	TBC	TBC	Yes
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## Appendix 5: Other sources of funding currently available in Carmarthenshire

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Below is a comprehensive list of funds currently available in Carmarthenshire. Funding streams change regularly, and so this list may not contain all sources. Up-to-date information on funding is available through Carmarthenshire County Council, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Organisations and Sustainable Funding Cymru.

### Convergence

The Convergence programmes for West Wales and the Valleys comprise funding from two separate European Structural Funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The current European programmes operating in Wales will end in December 2013 with delivery continuing up to December 2014. The new round of programmes will operate from 2014-2020.

Welsh Government has announced its key principles and priorities for the new Wales operational programmes, in line with the EU's EUROPE 2020 strategy. The proposed Structural Fund priorities are:

- Research, Technological Development and Innovation (ERDF) - e.g. support for businesses to undertake demand-led innovation
- SME Competitiveness (ERDF) - e.g. access to targeted business financial support
- Sustainable Transport and Network Infrastructure (ERDF) - e.g. investment in strategic road networks
- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ERDF) - e.g. loans for businesses to improve energy efficiency
- Skills (ESF) - e.g. actions to develop skills at all levels from apprenticeships to high level leadership
- Employment (ESF) - e.g. activities which support access to employment for those with prolonged periods of worklessness.
- Young People (ESF) - e.g. projects which ensure that young people gain the skills and competencies to access employment.

A number of different delivery models are currently being considered. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) advocates the development of a regional model to guide the delivery of future EU funding for Wales. This would enable local authorities to work together at a sub-regional or regional level, in partnership with other service providers. On a more local level of delivery, there are proposals to deliver integrated multi fund local projects under the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) model in areas such as tourism, culture, business diversification and the environment.

It is anticipated that the Welsh Government will announce the commencement of the new EU Programmes early in 2014, with a realistic start of programmes in Summer 2014.

### Rural Development Programme, Carmarthenshire

Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) secured funding of approximately £8m to regenerate rural Carmarthenshire through the second phase of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-13. This is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. CCC has overall responsibility for overseeing the successful delivery of these projects, and is supported by Grŵp Cefn Gwlad, a sub-group of the wider Carmarthenshire Regeneration Partnership.

A key principle of RDP funds in recent years has been to provide greater emphasis on strategic projects boosting tourism and heritage, improving local amenities and the environment and providing grants for small enterprises. A review of the RDP scheme to date for Carmarthenshire is expected shortly.

Here is a summary of current RDP grant schemes in Carmarthenshire. Information below is obtained from the West Wales European Centre:

- **Supporting Farmers to Diversify (RDP Grant: £942k)**

The project aims to broaden the economic base of rural Carmarthenshire whilst safeguarding the



future of farming families by maintaining and increasing the income of farm households; providing the necessary capital resource required to enable farming families to diversify into non-agricultural activity; and retaining young people in the farming industry by helping them to develop alternative sources of income and alternative employment opportunities.

- **Strengthening the Tourism Appeal (RDP Grant: £1.2m)**

The project aims to strengthen the identity of rural Carmarthenshire as an all year round, quality tourist destination by improving the quality of the existing tourism product through the provision of financial support. It will assist in extending the season and promote Carmarthenshire as an all year round destination, ensure tourism businesses/facilities are able to make the most of technology to remain competitive, safeguard existing and create new employment opportunities within the tourism sector and instill a sense of place within the community.

- **Rural Community Inclusion (RDP Grant: £1.5m)**

The project will tackle rural access and social exclusion in rural Carmarthenshire. This will be achieved through a comprehensive package of support for communities including mentoring support combined with a community grant that is designed to increase access to basic services and facilities in rural communities. 5 regeneration officers will be employed to engage with rural communities in developing and enhancing services and facilities that will lead to a better quality of life in each of the identified rural hubs.

- **Innovative Hubs (RDP Grant: £1.6m)**

The project will achieve sustainable healthy, rural communities in Carmarthenshire and maximise the potential of local people to deliver local services as identified in the Local Development Strategy. This will be achieved by following the LEADER principles i.e. supporting grass roots, community-driven projects that are pilot or innovative in nature which test new development ideas which fit the Carmarthenshire LDS.

- **Gwelliant Sgiliau Cefn Gwlad (RDP Grant: £668k)**

The project will raise the productivity of key sectors identified within the Carmarthenshire Local Development Strategy by addressing the gaps in current skills provision and to broaden the economic base of rural Carmarthenshire by providing openings for future economic development centred around the tourism and construction heritage sectors.

- **Rural Entrepreneurship (RDP Grant: £1.3m)**

The project will broaden the economic base of rural Carmarthenshire by supporting the growth of micro rural businesses; promoting entrepreneurship amongst young people; addressing the shortage of industrial and office accommodation in rural areas to increase the competitiveness of key settlements; and creating a more entrepreneurial culture within the rural economy, leading to innovative business creation and higher skilled employment opportunities.

- **Darganfod Sir Gar (RDP Grant: £759k)**

The project will strengthen the identity of rural Carmarthenshire as a place to live and visit by promoting the distinctiveness of rural communities by conserving the rural heritage and culture of rural Carmarthenshire, protecting and enhancing the area's natural environment through protecting the area's biodiversity and improving the quality of life for rural communities and to instill a sense of place.

## **Other funds in Carmarthenshire:**

### **Local Investment Fund (LIF)**

The Local Investment Fund provides capital grants to local enterprises, including voluntary sector groups (subject to certain criteria). The use of the grant is subject to application but can be used to purchase equipment, improving premises and marketing. Capital grants are available for up to 40% of eligible project costs with a minimum grant of £1,000 and a maximum of £5,000.

<http://lifcymru.org/english/lif4/pages/contactlifsouthwestwales.aspx>  
[\\S089a9824re54712\\$lif@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:\S089a9824re54712$lif@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

### **Carmarthenshire County Council - Rural Conversion Grant Programme**

Provides assistance to micro businesses for the conversion of redundant rural buildings into business use where either new jobs are created or existing jobs are safeguarded. Applications can be submitted by individuals, partnerships, small limited companies, co-operatives, charitable trusts and voluntary organisations. The grant is directed to micro businesses, which employ less than 10 full time equivalent staff. The grant will be either based on £20,000 per job created or 50% of the eligible project costs, whichever is the lesser figure.

[http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/business/regeneration/fundingopportunities/pages/redundant\\_ruralbuildings.aspx](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/business/regeneration/fundingopportunities/pages/redundant_ruralbuildings.aspx)

### **Carmarthenshire County Council's Sport & Leisure Grant**

Clubs and organisations can apply for funding towards minor facility improvement, hosting an event or enhancing an existing sports development programme. Disability sport organisations can apply for funding for a team of athletes to compete in competitions or for performance squad training for a maximum of 20 weeks (only one application can be submitted).

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/leisure/sportsdevelopment/pages/fundinggrants.aspx>

### **Sport Wales SPORTLOT Community Chest Grant**

The SPORTLOT Community Chest Scheme, administered locally by CCC is designed to support the development of sport and physical activity in the community. Clubs/organisations can apply for up to £1,500 funding towards anything new or additional to their existing programme.

<http://www.sportwales.org.uk/funding--support/our-grants/community-chest.aspx>

### **Carmarthenshire County Council Community Fund**

Described as a 'fund of last resort'. The fund supports a wide range of community, voluntary and not for profit organisations. Contributions can be made towards revenue costs, project studies and equipment. The fund should only be applied to as a last resort and other funders should have been investigated or approached before applying to this fund. Contact: Community Bureau, Carmarthenshire County Council

### **CWM Community and Environmental Fund**

The CWM Community and Environmental Fund have approximately £200,000 available each year for deserving community and environmental projects in Carmarthenshire. There are 2 funding rounds each year, and deadlines are usually in March and August. Grants will be awarded for amounts between £5,000 and £50,000.

<http://www.cwmenvironmental.co.uk/community/cwm-community-and-environmental-fund.aspx>

### **Cambrian Mountains Initiative Trust Sustainable Development Fund**

To develop and support community based projects promoting sustainable development through conservation/protection of the environment, the relief of poverty, economic growth and regeneration. The Fund will support capital, staffing and development. Maximum grant is £5,000.

<http://cambrianmountains.co.uk/apply-for-funding>

### **Carmarthenshire – Business Loan Scheme**

Loan provision for new and established businesses.

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/business/advice/pages/businesssupportloan.aspx>

### **Carmarthenshire Lottery Loan**

Provide loan assistance to businesses/community groups based within Carmarthenshire seeking to start up, consolidate or grow.

<http://www.carmarthenshirelottery.co.uk/business-loans/>

### **Other national funding schemes:**

**Welsh Government** - provides information on a range of sector based funds

<http://wales.gov.uk/funding/fundgrantareas/?lang=en>

**Big Lottery Wales** - incl Awards for All, People and Places, and other schemes

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/wales>

**The Community Foundation in Wales**

<http://www.cfiw.org.uk/>

### **Welsh Church Fund**

The Welsh Church Fund provides 'lender of last resort' funding to churches, chapels etc. Eligible projects include churches, chapels and charitable organisations as well as individuals. The fund is available for the advancement of education, libraries, museums, art galleries etc, relief of poverty, advancement of religion and other purposes beneficial to communities. The amount of funding available depends on the category of applicant.

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/business/grants/coregrants/pages/welshchurchfund.aspx>

**Tourism Investment Support Scheme** - for new & existing tourism businesses

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/investsupport/;jsessionid=BBD4C3AAB0041FD0099685248AC1A0A7?lang=en>

### **The Prince's Countryside Fund**

Grants of up to £50,000 available to improve service provision in rural areas, support rural enterprise, support farming businesses, and provide training opportunities for young people and educating people about the value of the countryside.

<http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/about/how-it-works>

### **Communities 2.0**

Communities 2.0 is a Welsh Government project which helps communities in Wales to benefit from technology. Eligible groups include community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. A range of support is available to shape communities, including financial and to provide training and networking opportunities around digital inclusion.

<http://www.communities2point0.org.uk/technology>

### **Broadband Support Scheme**

Provides support funding for the purchase of alternative broadband solutions where telecommunication companies have not been able to provide a service. The Scheme will allow individuals, businesses and communities in Wales' remaining broadband slowspots to approach service providers directly, with support of Welsh Government funding. Up to £1,000 available.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/businessandconomy/broadbandandict/broadband/bbss/?lang=en>

## Appendix 6: Sample questionnaire

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### Brechfa Forest Community Profile – Your Views

Brechfa Forest and the wider region will benefit in the future from **community investment funding** becoming available through Brechfa Forest West and potentially also Brechfa Forest East Wind Farms.

**Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm**, which received planning consent on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013, will deliver a Community Investment Package totalling in the region of **£560,000 per annum** once fully operational. This annual fund will be paid for the life of the Wind Farm (up to 25 years). Furthermore, if **Brechfa Forest East Wind Farm** also gains consent, additional funding in the region of **£240,000 per annum** will be made available.

We would like your views on how to make best use of these funds in order to benefit both the communities that neighbour the site and the wider region.

Please return your completed questionnaire by Wednesday 17th April 2013 to the collection box at the location you obtained it from, or please post to consultancy.coop, c/o Bryncelyn, Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Carmar, SA19 6YL. If you need help with completing the form, please call 07739 748627.

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#### Q1. What are the main issues affecting Brechfa Forest and the wider region? (Please tick where relevant)

- ☐ Limited employment opportunities
- ☐ Lack of affordable housing
- ☐ Adhoc transport provision
- ☐ Poor/outdated community facilities (please specify)
- ☐ Limited broadband capacity/mobile phone reception
- ☐ Young people moving away
- ☐ Aging population

Other issues (specify)

## Q2. What should this funding support?

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Which, if any, of these types of projects would you like to see investment helping? (please tick as many boxes as apply at Q2a below).

And which three of these would be your main priorities for receiving funding? (please tick three boxes only at Q2b below).

### Q2a    Q2b

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Projects and initiatives that bring the community together                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Supporting capital or running costs of community buildings                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support for older people e.g. activities to reduce isolation                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Projects to occupy teenagers and young adults                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Activities/venues for young children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provision of affordable housing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Projects to support local housing energy efficiency                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Projects to support energy efficiency of local community buildings            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Projects to help meet fuel costs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Improvements to rural transport   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Promoting tourism   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support for rural businesses including funding                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Apprenticeship schemes  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Educational grants e.g. awards to individuals for further education           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support for community enterprise & co-operatives which help the local economy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Improving broadband connection/speed  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Improving mobile phone reception  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Healthy living initiatives  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support for leisure/arts/sports activities and/or facilities                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support for environmental projects  |

Other suggestions?

## Q3. Who should be eligible to receive such a fund? (Please tick where relevant)

- |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Community groups & organisations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Start-up businesses              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Established businesses           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individuals                      |

## Q4. Is it important where the funds are spent? (Tick one only)

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes, it should be only for communities directly affected by the wind farms                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | It does not matter, so long as it supports eligible activities in the area                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | It depends, some of the funds should be spent locally, with the rest directed towards a wider area |

**Q5. Should we consider making part of the fund available as loans, as well as grants? (Tick one only)**

Yes

No

**Q6. How can we ensure the fund provides long-lasting benefits?**

**Q7. How should such a fund be administered? (Tick one only)**

- ☐ Locally, by communities themselves
- ☐ Locally, by communities and other organisations with an interest in the area working in partnership
- ☐ By an appropriate Carmarthenshire organisation
- ☐ By an appropriate independent third party, not necessarily based in West Wales

Other (please specify)

**Q8. Other funds currently exist in the area, which support job creation, tourism development, improving facilities and services etc. Are you aware of these? (Tick one only)**

Yes

No

Partly

**Q9. How can our funds complement existing grant schemes?**

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

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Results from this survey will be used to compile a Community Profile which will consider the needs, issues and opportunities facing both the Brechfa area, and the wider Carmarthenshire region. It will also look at how any community investment funding from the Brechfa Forest Wind Farms can best be directed. The Community Profile will be made freely available to all.

This survey is being carried out by consultancy.coop on behalf of RWE npower renewables (RWE NRL).

## Appendix 7: Details of Community Events

### Llansawel Village Hall, Monday 22 April 2013, 3-7.30pm

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7 members of the public attended.

#### Suggestions from posters included:

- Community shop and post office 11
- Mobile doctor's surgery 1
- Village hall improvements/renovation – needed in next 2 years, around £300K 1
- Public car park on land adjacent to Llansawel Chapel 1
- Develop more tourism opportunities 1
- Improved marketing of area 1
- Loans must be carefully monitored & must be repaid 1
- Mobile health services e.g. pharmacy, chiropody 1
- Micro-hydro power schemes 1
- Compensation to individual households 1
- More information on what is happening with Brechfa Forest East 11

#### General comments:

Views ranged from people clearly supporting the wind farm development, to those who are vehemently opposed and very cynical about how any Fund would help the area. Example quotes included:

*“the Funds are not enough to make a real difference”, “young people have left the area, we will never get them to return”*

*“this Fund is for future generations”, “we need to encourage young people back to the area”*

*“the area is mainly farming and retired people”, “there used to be dozens of shops in Llansawel, it was a real hub and meeting place for the area”*

Low attendance could have been for a number of reasons - lack of interest/apathy; not wanting to be associated with the Fund at this stage particularly as planning consent for Brechfa Forest East has not yet been decided; and/or low population in this area.

Sensed more work is needed to encourage local residents to work together to create a common plan for the area, which would ensure any Funds distributed would be co-ordinated.

## **Cae'r Felin Primary School, Wednesday 24 April 2013, 3-7.30pm**

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15 members of the public attended. The vast majority were opposed to the wind farm development.

### **Suggestions from posters included:**

#### **Activities:**

Grants and loans for renewable energy 1111  
Improve broadband & mobile phone reception 111  
Improve footpath network and pavements/pedestrian bridges through Pencader 111  
Micro-hydro energy schemes 11  
Meaningful jobs = manufacturing e.g. green energy, insulation production etc 1  
Community shop for Gwyddgrug & New Inn, also Llanfihangel ar Arth 1  
Mobile community shop 1  
Extend Gwili Railway to Llanpumsaint 1  
Local bus service 1  
Hobbies for children e.g. gardening, fishing 1  
Tidying up the area 1  
Larger community meeting space in Pencader, with gym/boxing etc 1  
Tourism promotion - local history, signposting, cycle tracks, walks, bridle paths, tourist information centre 1  
Improving housing quality 1  
Funding Housing Association to do more 1  
Shared ownership housing company to provide low cost housing, using local labour 1  
Supporting elderly at home more 1  
Local food production company 1  
Ongoing running costs for small community groups e.g. maintenance, staffing – as genuinely difficult to raise money elsewhere, and other funders won't help with revenue costs 1

#### **Area of benefit:**

Support idea of criteria led regional economic fund which directly benefits local area Brechfa Forest area (i.e. no boundaries) 111  
What is the Brechfa Forest area? The proposed entrance to the site is Gwyddgrug 1  
What is local community? How far afield? 1  
How do you define the area that will benefit? 1  
More money should go to places directly affected by the turbines. 1  
Radius preferred to Community Council areas 1  
Communities further away from wind farms, but have direct visibility should be included 1

#### **Fund management:**

It should be managed by a statutory body, trustees answerable to the Charity Commission 111  
Provide funding /loans in advance, especially for small groups who will cannot cover cash flow 11  
Managed by a Trust whose members live within the Community Council areas where the turbines are located 1  
Management group to administer the Fund for the whole area 1  
Management group to directly manage and arrange clean up of villages, and general tidying up 1

#### **General comments:**

Tourism will be lost due to wind farms 11  
Use as match funding for other projects 1  
Announcement of fund was too soon, especially as the transmission lines have not been agreed 1  
Many were sceptical about the consultation event, saying that RWE npower renewables would not necessarily listen to their comments and would ultimately do what they want



One questioned the venue as inappropriate (i.e. a primary school), when there are 3 other venues in the area 1

Compensation for those directly affected 111111

29 members of the public attended

### **Jobs**

**How could the Fund create meaningful jobs? What type of jobs are needed in the area?**

- Improved tourism marketing/marketing strategy 111
- Supporting business start-ups 11
- Social enterprises 11
- Education/scholarships 11
- Encourage young enterprise 11
- Invest in reasons to attract people here 1
- More bike trails 1
- Business units at Old School 1
- Improved broadband 1
- Affordable, self-build homes 1
- Trekking/riding centres 1
- Mountain biking lessons 1
- Wheels to work scheme 1
- Vision/co-ordination 1
- Support necessary infrastructure 1

### **Tourism**

**How would you like to see tourism promoted in the area? What tourism facilities could be improved?**

- Visitor centre or several smaller hubs, to make the area more of a destination 111
- More to do to keep tourists in area longer 11
- Promoting the area 1
- More facilities for mountain bikers - places to eat, stay, shower, camp 1
- Address the losses to current tourism businesses from the wind farms 1
- Brechfa Forest Crafts promotion 1
- Promote local history including farming, ancient settlements, community story by village 1
- Campsite in the Forest 1
- More bike trails 1
- Fitness trails 1
- Kids educational trails 1
- Sensitive & sustainable tourism promotion 1

### **Community Facilities**

**Can the Fund help support community facilities. If so, what is required?**

- Refurbished school 1111
- Transport 11
- More meeting/workspaces 1

- Facilities for children in evening/weekends 1
- Place to showcase local crafts 1
- Underground connection for broadband and mobile phone 1
- Broadband/mobile phone connection in Gwernogle, Abergorlech 1
- Nature park in woods at Abergorlech 1
- Repair roads 1
- Fast broadband 1
- Community meeting space in New Inn 1
- Pub and eatery 1

## **Housing**

### **How can the Fund support affordable housing?**

- Local, self-build housing 11111
- Need employment & education first 11
- Housing association 11
- Small loans for start-up business 1
- 50-50 buy/let scheme for first-time buyers 1
- Mixed housing & small business units 1

## **Local business**

### **How can the Fund support local business?**

- Grants/loans for start-up/existing businesses 111111
- Compensation 11111
- Fast broadband 1111
- Local contractors for wind farm construction 111
- Wood pellets from the Forest 1
- Supporting the Brechfa School project 1

## **Environmental**

### **How can the Fund support energy-efficient buildings and business?**

- Grants for green energy 1111
- Advice on energy efficiency to individuals and business 11
- Double-glazing, solar panels, ground source heat pumps 11
- Community-owned wind scheme 1

### **What else can the Fund support?**

- Affordable housing 111
- Public toilets/Community Park in Brechfa - running costs 111
- Purchase of Brechfa School 1
- Support for children & young people 1
- Safe walking/cycle paths btwn Brechfa and Abergorlech 1

- Toilets & new car park for Gwernogle 1
- Children's park in Abergorlech 1
- Play days in the Forest 1
- Buy a stretch of community fishing rights 1
- Insurance cover for local contractors through FUW 1
- Include funding for local churches 1
- Re-routing of mountain bike paths during turbine construction 1

### **Who should manage the Fund?**

- Local organisation 1111
- Staffed by professionals with grant-giving experience 111
- Registered charity 111
- Independent 111
- Endowment fund 11
- Not the local authority 11
- CAVS 11
- Clear & accountable 11
- Invest in community leaders/activities to take Fund forward 11
- Manage expectations over coming years, spend some money now 1
- Needs visible/immediate effects 1
- Ensuring the Fund continues irrespective of who owns the wind farm 1

### **Area of benefit?**

- Local community only 11
- Only wider area if directly benefits the local communities affected 11
- More information on what wider community means 11
- Not wider community 1

### **Some quotes from the event:**

*"we need to invest in reasons to attract people here"*

*"grants for green energy to reflect and endorse turbine strategy for the area"*

*"set up an endowment fund that generates interest that is distributed"*

*"fund management – independent, but based within, and in touch with the community"*

*"clear& accountable objectives for the funding"*

## Appendix 8: References

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