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10th December 2015
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For the attention of Mr. Daniel Butler - Sent by e-mail to: danbutlercoach@gmail.com

Dear Mr Butler,

I refer to your letter regarding the proposed hydro scheme on the Afon Conwy. May I first of all thank you for bringing this matter to our attention and can confirm that the matters raised have now been investigated in full. As I am sure you are aware the planning process is an open and transparent process where members of the public may either support or object to a proposed development. As such it is not the Authority's usual practise to investigate each and every letter in case the authors have an interest in the development for the simple reason that by its very nature letters of objection or indeed letters of support will usually emanate from people who have some form of interest in the development and not mere disinterested observers.

The Authority does however check each and every letter to seek to ensure that no libellous materials are reproduced by this Authority. To undertake a more detailed analysis of the authors of each and every letter received would be beyond the Authority's financial resources.

On investigating the issue raised in your letter it became apparent that many of the authors of the letters listed (although not all) had in fact declared that they worked in the hydro industry. I take the view that as they are also members of the public they do of course have every right to express their personal opinion in much the same way as anglers or canoeists or indeed local businesses who are of the opinion that the development is unacceptable are also entitled to write in to object to the proposed development. It is important to us as a Planning Authority that information pertaining to the letters both objecting to and in support of the proposal is disseminated to the members who will ultimately decide the matter.

In this instance, due to the large number of letters received it was simply not practicable to reproduce each and every letter. As such the main issues raised both for and against the development was reported to the Authority's Planning and Access Committee at their meeting on the 21st October 2015. As part of that process it was also reported that the Authority had received over 650 letters expressing concern over the scheme with 32 letters of support. As such there can be little doubt that the Authority's members will be aware of the strength of opinion as to the proposed development and will also have received a summary of the salient points arising from the correspondence received.

The Authority will as with all planning applications consider the material planning considerations within any letters received as part of the application process.

In the circumstances, having regard to the above I am satisfied that the Authority's process to date on what can only be described as a contentious application has been correctly followed and that no further action is needed on the matters raised in your letter. If you have any further observations arising from the contents of this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Aled Lloyd

Aled Lloyd
Head of Development Management and Compliance