

Senedd Cymru
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau
Effeithiau COVID-19: Galwad Agored am dystiolaeth a phrofiadau
EIS(5) COV – 33
Ymateb gan: Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK

Welsh Parliament
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
Impacts of COVID-19: Open Call for evidence and experiences
Response from: Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK

Date: 14th December 2020

For the attention of: Mr Russell George MS
Senedd Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Dear Mr George

Re: Impacts of Covid-19 Consultation

Jones Bros has been following closely the consultation that your Committee has been undertaking into the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Open Call for evidence and experiences. In relation to your committee's terms of reference Jones Bros will focus on the; effects on jobs – including job retention; effects on apprenticeships and other skills provision and how skills and the skills system could contribute to the nation's recovery.

Jones Bros as Principal Contractor on Vattenfall's flagship onshore wind farm at Pen-y-Cymoedd is fully aware of how Vattenfall's Community Benefit Fund has been distributed in response to the impacts of the Covid-19 virus, and its attendant lockdowns and how vital it is to continue to distribute this funding to these vibrant but deprived communities.

Jones Bros believes that the social and economic impact of supporting businesses and organisations to deliver services and keep organisations thriving is through projects such as Pen-y Cymoedd with their community benefit funds and their contribution towards the major long term challenge facing us all, the Climate Emergency.

Jones Bros note from the evidence submitted to your committee and from the Welsh Government responses to date the acknowledgement of the climate crisis, the need for urgent decarbonisation of industry and the role that the renewable energy will play in responding to this environmental challenge.

In Jones Bros view, there is an urgent need for the Welsh Government to boost the renewable energy industry in Wales to ensure that it delivers the targets it has set in response to the Climate Emergency by working with developers, regulators and energy infrastructure providers to accelerate the development of low carbon energy generation.

Jones Bros believe that Welsh Government should provide strong leadership and accelerate the development of new wind farms such as Pen-y-Cymoedd, on Welsh Government owned land in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales.

-  Landfill & waste
-  Infrastructure
-  Highways
-  Coastal & marine infrastructure
-  Renewable energy

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Jones Bros current pipeline of future work in the renewable energy sector is currently focussed on Scotland. Scotland has created an environment where they are very well placed to make the energy transition to a low carbon economy and harvest all the positive outcomes. The investment in the supply chains, communities, skills and training is a legacy of previous projects which is reinforced by the current workload and the strong pipeline of opportunities in the future. Scotland is able to benefit directly because they have had clear ambitions, they have welcomed investment and they have created the opportunity, which in the majority of cases is on publicly owned forestry land.

As a native company Jones Bros want the ability to create similar benefits in Wales creating sustainable jobs, apprenticeships and skilled training for local communities that reflect the goals of the Future Generations Commissioner in the "Future Generations Framework".

Jones Bros has constructed over 50 wind farm projects over the past 20 years and Pen-y-Cymoedd was particularly successful, winning the Constructing Excellence National Civils Project of the Year 2018 Award and also a Considerate Constructor Scheme National Site Award winner. More than 70% of all plant operatives were sourced from within 30 miles of the Pen-y-Cymoedd site and a total of 12 apprentices were employed as part of the project.

At the peak of onshore wind construction some 5 years ago, this sector was sustaining over 300 skilled operatives and engineering staff with 20 new apprenticeships being achieved every year just within the Jones Bros company. This workload also allowed expansion of our technical expertise with the development of our in-house specialist concrete production and materials processing and soils improvement division which has become industry leading and exported throughout the whole United Kingdom.

Wales has huge potential but at present it is not clear to us where, when and how Wales will be able to harvest successes from the transition to a low-carbon economy. The situation is actually much worse than you may think as by the time an opportunity for investment and development comes forward, there may not be a supply chain remaining within Wales to supply and service the necessary inputs which enables these complex infrastructure projects to be constructed and delivered.

If your Committee would wish to know further evidence of how Jones Bros create sustainable jobs, apprenticeships and skilled training for local communities on low carbon energy generation schemes then you are welcome to contact Mike J Jones (email: mikejj@jones-bros.com) for further details.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Dielhof', written in a cursive style.

JOHN DIELHOF
MANAGING DIRECTOR