

Lesley Griffiths high on ambition for clean energy

Electricity generation from renewables in Wales has trebled since 2010, and last year provided 32% of the electricity we use. The Cabinet Secretary said she believes Wales can be at the forefront of global efforts to decarbonise and today announced challenging new targets for renewable energy production.

She told Assembly Members she wanted Wales to generate 70 per cent of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Wales must be able to compete in global low carbon markets, particularly now we face a future outside the EU. The ability to meet our needs from clean energy is the foundation for a prosperous low carbon economy.

“This is why I am today announcing targets to focus action across the country and to capture the benefits for Wales.

“Firstly, I am setting a target of Wales generating 70 per cent of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030.

“Secondly, I am setting a target for one Gigawatt of renewable electricity capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030.

“Finally, by 2020 I expect new renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership.

“I believe these are stretching but realistic targets which will help us to decarbonise our energy system, reduce long-term costs and deliver greater benefits to Wales.”

The Cabinet Secretary said the Welsh Government needed to take action to support delivery of these targets but is also looking to UK Government to deliver on areas not devolved to Wales. The UK needs to support technologies to the point where they can compete in the market.

She said:

“The rapid changes of UK Government policy have decimated large parts of the renewable sector in Wales and developments potentially valuable to Wales have been stopped in their tracks by UK Ministers. The bulk of UK Government renewables investment is now going to offshore wind projects outside Wales. This investment is paid for by Welsh bill payers, amongst others.

“There is a need for the bulk of energy supply to come from the most affordable technologies, if the costs are to be found from energy bills. These technologies therefore need a route to market if we are to meet our ambitious targets and deliver the most benefit to Welsh bill payers. That is why I have called repeatedly on UK Government to stop the ideological exclusion of onshore wind and solar from the Contracts for Difference process.”

Welsh Government is doing its share. We have made around €100m of EU Structural Funds available for investment in marine energy.