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To:
First Minister Mark Drakeford MS
Economy Minister Vaughan Gething MS
Creative Wales

Dear All,

As you are aware, I recently held a Public Meeting in Talybont-on-Usk to discuss Gilestone Farm. Unfortunately you chose not to attend, as did the Community Council, Powys County Council and Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

The feedback I have received following this meeting was that it was very constructive, held in a cordial and dignified manner. Over a hundred residents were in attendance. It would have been beneficial for Welsh Government Officials to attend as more information and detail could have been supplied, and their concerns and questions could have been addressed at that time. Some questions were answered on the evening through your FAQ's and information in your Written Statements.

The overwhelming impression was that the local population want more information so that they can make an informed decision about whether this proposal is right for this community and whether its benefits outweigh any harms.

Many questions were posed to me during the meeting and to this end, I have produced a list to which I would be grateful if you could supply me with answers for, so that I may then forward onto the meeting attendees.

The community have received flyers from Green Man that same week giving some detail and are aware that Fiona Stewart will be engaging with them going forward. However, the questions posed to me are in respect of Welsh Government actions rather than that of a potential commercial company that you may/may not sign the lease to. As such, I would be grateful to receive answers from yourselves in regards to the following:

Questions to Welsh Government:

1. The impact of Green Man Festival in Glanusk is significant on the wider local area. This festival generates £10m for the economy. Welsh Government's figures propose the Gilestone site will generate £23m. This would need to be a significant step-up from existing operations at this site in order to generate such a large economic benefit. We understand that Green Man Festival Business Case is commercially sensitive, but can Welsh Government outline in broad terms how it expects to

achieve £23m? What body has produced this financial forecast and based on what facts or assumptions?

2. Given the scale of your plans and aspirations for this site (irrespective of who takes on the lease) – what impact assessments have Welsh Government carried out to date to assess any future development's (a) the impact on the community (b) the current level of infrastructure and the impact such large scale development would on this – particularly the surrounding roads network, lack of public transport to the site, current healthcare capacity, local housing capacity.
3. The proposed uses – festivals, bakery, brewery – are all energy intensive. What work has Welsh Government undertaken to date to assess the electricity capacity in the village, the impact on the water and sewage network in the village. Are there any plans for a wind farm, solar farm, hydro scheme on this site to generate its power use?
4. What discussions have taken place to date with NMWTRA or PCC Highways on the impact on the existing road network and the suitability for any large-scale development on this site.
5. The current planning system only allows for Talybont-on-Usk Community Council to be the consultee and not the neighbouring Community Councils. Given the scale of these plans, the impact on the surrounding roads and other infrastructure, all four surrounding Community Councils ask that for developments on such a large scale, could an exception be made in the planning process to allow them to be consultees on this occasion? This would include Cwmdu & Tretower; Llangorse; Crickhowell; Llangynidr. Will you consider their request to be formal consultees?
6. Could Welsh Government explain why such investment occurred in a region of relatively low unemployment and high economic prosperity, when there are other regions in Mid Wales more economically deprived and in greater need of this type of investment?
7. Has any consideration been given to supporting and expanding existing developments in Mid Wales, for example the Royal Welsh Show is in desperate need of funding to enable expansion.
8. Could Welsh Government explain why no other developer is being considered for the lease at this site? Why is Green Man Festival Ltd your preferred developer. Why Welsh Government have chosen not to put this out for tender and allow the wider market to express an interest? How can WG demonstrate that they are deriving best value from dealing exclusively with one party?
9. It is cited that 300 jobs will be created. What assurances have been provided to Welsh Government as to the nature of these jobs. Could you supply your projections on how many of the 300 will be full time, have career progression opportunities, numbers that would be skilled jobs and unskilled jobs.
10. There is some speculation that genetically modified crops could be grown on the site under the 'Scientific Hub' banner. Can you confirm whether Welsh Government would allow any GM crops to be grown at this site?
11. There are major concerns from local residents and environmentalists about the rare species located on and around this site. What safeguards are Welsh Government putting in place to protect these rare species from being impacted by a commercial development? What studies have been undertaken by Welsh Government to date to assess the current ecology, flora and fauna on the site. What assurances can Welsh Government provide to show the community that the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance bio-diversity will not be in conflict with your development ambitions for this site.
12. Has Welsh Government undertaken an air quality surveys in this area to date? If not, will the Welsh Government commit to undertaking a survey now, together with ongoing future surveys, to ensure any development does not impact the air quality in this location.
13. What work has Welsh Government undertaken to date to assess the proposed benefits of this economic development on the local area and what harms/concerns have been identified by those assessments.
14. Does Welsh Government have any plans to make further investment on this site once a lease has been signed? For example grants for the development of a bakery?

15. Can Welsh Government confirm that any lease negotiated on this site will be at full commercial rent values. Can you confirm commercial enterprises operating on Gilestone Farm site will not be in receipt of any subsidy or grant and have an advantage over existing commercial operators in the area?
16. What assessment has Welsh Government on the impact of having a brewery, bakery etc. on this site and its impact on similar businesses in the surrounding area.
17. For a scheme as significant as this it is reasonable to assume that WG has prepared a Risk Register. Please provide a copy of this, together with your weightings for the risks and the mitigations that Welsh Government intend to take to reduce any risks.
18. How does Welsh Government intend to uphold Mr Beor-Roberts' fishing and shooting rights over Gilestone Farm whilst commercial activity is taking place?
19. Can you provide evidence of the work you have undertaken to date to assess whether this lease/development is in harmony with the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The community feel that whilst there are procedures for any planning applicant/developer to follow and licences to be obtained, there is a sense that prior to any lease being signed with a commercial company, that there is a responsibility on Welsh Government to undertake some level of assessment as to the site's suitability.

I would expect Welsh Government, prior to signing any commercial lease agreement, undertake its duties by considering in-depth its responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity and any legal requirements or reasonable expectations for public consultation.

I look forward to receiving details responses to the Community's questions above.

Kind regards

James Evans MS/AS

Member of the Welsh Parliament for Brecon & Radnorshire