

Nuon Renewables Hirddywel Project Drop-ins July/August 2009 SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

First of all, thank you to all those who came to find out more about the proposed wind farm development at Hirddywel. We enjoyed meeting with you at the drop-in events, and appreciate the time you spent reflecting on the material presented, and giving us your feedback.

Between 80 and 90 people came to the events, and *everyone* spent at least half an hour reading the material presented, studying relevant maps, talking to the organisers and technical experts and writing their comments. Several people spent rather longer than that, and we are glad that the individuals who did participate, invested so much of their time in this exchange of information and in dialogue with Nuon Renewables representatives. Having typed up your responses, Nuon Renewables have some insights, observations and opinions to work with, as they refine their proposals and consider how to remain in touch with you.

There again, having delivered leaflets to over 2,600 households, and distributed others at key locations including village post offices and local libraries, it would have been good to see more people at the events. This is not the last opportunity to comment (see later).

RESULTS

At the drop-ins, we presented background information on how this proposed development had come about, and how it is evolving. We put up sheets on the display boards for visitors to write up their own comments and contributions on issues such as visual impact, turbines, ecology and wildlife, ground conditions, hydrology, archaeology, and environmental disturbance. There were layouts of the wind farm as currently envisaged by Nuon Renewables, which also put these in the context of the other proposals for new and modernised wind farms being developed by other companies. There were photomontages for people to see how the skyline and landscape might look from different viewing points should the proposal and other proposals in the area go ahead.

To answer questions, clarify any points and listen to local people's comments, senior project staff from Nuon Renewables were present along with members of their technical team.

Many of the written comments which participants contributed related to the visual appearance of turbines. This is a subjective issue and comments spanned the full range from "They do have a beauty, especially when in full motion" to "Visual impact from the A480 will be dreadful" and "the turbines will destroy the landscape and tranquility that current users seek". Statements for and against the visual presence of turbines were not expanded upon and there were no notes about what might be disturbing in the

visual impact of specific turbines, although two or three people did make reference to particular turbines visible from their homes, "2 directly in front of our house!!" or indicated that, where the turbines were close to their dwellings, they would judge them to be "Intimidating".

There were a number of comments on ecology and wildlife issues, less on ground conditions and archaeology. The peace and tranquility of the area is clearly valued, and there were comments about the perception of how large scale wind farm developments "industrialise" the quiet rural environment. With respect to tourism, and access issues more generally, the views expressing concerns over negative impact seemed to be more or less balanced by others who thought that the development would attract eco-tourists and may lead to improved Rights of Way both in the locality and in Powys more generally. Of concern to several people was what would happen to the area once the 25 year lifespan of the project had come to an end.

Transport issues featured in a number of comments, suggesting that many local minor roads were not adequately designed for the type or volume of construction traffic of this project (and others nearby). Current difficulties around Newtown, Welshpool and Oswestry were cited as further examples of transport problems.

There were comments about the potential (or perceived likelihood) that property values and local tourism businesses would be negatively impacted by the project, and that there was no adequate provision of compensation to local property owners not participating in the scheme (i.e. not scheme landowners).

'Community Benefits' drew ideas on what to spend any money on and these included securing local facilities such as schools and health and sports centres felt to be threatened by public spending cuts and giving local people access to cheaper electricity.

The 'Others' section generated the widest range of comments, and was used by many as an opportunity for those opposing the scheme to list their main objections, while others used it to express their support. Typical overall comments included:

- Why doesn't the government put more money into making nuclear power safer? Windfarms will not replace nuclear power stations because they don't generate enough power, and much of the time the turbines aren't turning
- Keen walkers come to mid-Wales on holiday, and they don't want to see wind factories up on the hills
- Where was the consultation on the whole TAN8 concept? Promoting these developments piecemeal is misleading. It's 1,800 turbines in Wales, at least 1,100 across mid-Wales. This is the first project to present a locally "joined-up" view, thanks – now we need a nationally joined-up view. Mid-Wales will have a windfarm landscape
- We're worried about the affect of the value (going down) of our property, which is very close to the development. Until a letter on Wednesday, we've heard nothing from Nuon, because we're not landowners?! MORE communication, please!
- This is government green window-dressing
- How much copper will be used in the power lines and where is it mined?
- It would seem that there is more concern about how the windfarm will affect those that live a significant distance away and will only suffer with their view, as opposed to those that will be immediately affected by the construction (on the water-table and ground destruction) and then the implementation. Not everybody can be paid off
- How can we all invest in this commercial enterprise and receive a dividend?
- I'm all for it, I like them – the more the better

NEXT STEPS

Our full report, which gives a complete account of every single comment made, will be available soon. Please go to: www.nuonrenewables.com

We have already presented all the points raised by participants at the drop-ins to Nuon Renewables and highlighted key points, areas where there is significant public interest and aspects where changes may be needed to the evolving proposals. Nuon Renewables' team members are continuing to work intensely on the scheme, incorporating all feedback, including from statutory consultees and others, to improve all aspects of the scheme without compromising unacceptably the overall efficiency or power generating capacity. Other issues such as the preferred transport route to the project are still the subjects of intense work.

This event is one example of Nuon Renewables trying to work well with local people, though we still noted your call for more communication. A second leaflet will be sent out, letting local people know what issues were highlighted during the drop in events. This will highlight how Nuon has responded to points made and, if it has not been possible to satisfy specific points, there will be an explanation of why they couldn't. In this leaflet, Nuon Renewables will also be letting you know when they plan to submit their application, and how you can make your formal comments on it, directed to the local planning authority.

This is not likely to happen until, at the earliest, the end of the year, so there still are plenty of opportunities for you to express your views.

Thank you again for your interest and views, and for the welcome to your communities. We look forward to seeing you again as the project develops.

Catrin Ellis Jones and Jeff Bishop, BDOR Limited