



Nuon Renewables Rhyd Ddu Wind Farm Proposal Drop-ins September / October 2009 SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

First of all, thank you all for coming to find out more about the proposed Wind Farm development at Rhyd Ddu. We appreciate the time you spent reflecting on the material presented, giving us your feedback, as well as engaging in frank and open exchanges with the Nuon team. We feel that these events successfully conveyed to participants the nature and the detail of the Nuon's specific proposals, as well as placing them in the local and national context. More importantly, many of you attending the events commented particularly on the comprehensive and rigorous nature of Nuon's presentation. For their part, Nuon are pleased of the opportunity to better understand the very many perspectives of local people living in the vicinity of this proposed development.

More than 60 people participated in the events. The amount of time people spent studying relevant maps and visuals, reading and digesting the material presented and feeding back their views and reactions varied. On average, this was around three quarters of an hour, though several people spent longer. We are glad that all those who participated invested so much of their time in this exchange of information and dialogue with Nuon representatives. Having collated your responses, Nuon have some insights, observations and opinions to work with as they refine their proposals and consider how to remain in touch with you.

Over 1,200 households received leaflets from Nuon containing background information, an indication of the scope of the Rhyd Ddu project proposal, and advertising the drop-in events. So it was a little disappointing to Nuon that only comparatively few people were able to and chose to come along. While it is understood that there may be a number of demands on your time, in terms of wind farm consultation events, Nuon Renewables sincerely want you to feel a part of this project and to take advantage of the genuine opportunity to contribute to something that could be a part of the area's future development. Can we please encourage you to encourage others to engage with the project at future stages of its evolution.

The next event to be held will be a workshop for key stakeholders where we hope to encourage more shared discussion about the project, gauge local views, and begin to explore opportunities to contribute to the sustainable development of your area that the project can offer. If you are part of a local community group (e.g. Young People's Organisation, Naturalist Society, Young Farmer's Club, Women's Group, Local Sports Club, Parent and Toddlers Group etc.) and would like to find out more, please contact us directly.

RESULTS

At the drop-ins, we presented background information on how this proposed development had come about, and how it is evolving so far. We also put up – for people to comment on - sheets about the legal requirements of the development on issues such as visual impact, turbines, ecology and wildlife, ground conditions, hydrology, archaeology, environmental disturbance and so forth. There were layouts of this specific project and of a more extensive area, showing the spatial context of this project with proposals from new and other wind farms being developed by other companies. There were also some photomontages available for people to look at, indicating the changes to the local skyline from different aspects, should this (and other adjacent) proposal(s) go ahead. To answer any questions, clarify any confusion and to listen to local people's comments, there were senior project staff from Nuon Renewables and from their technical team present.

Several written comments which participants contributed related to the visual impact of turbines. This is a subjective issue and comments spanned the full range from "*I think they are beautiful, and in 200 years time will probably be "listed"!*" to "*Will be a blot on the landscape if even 2 or 3 proposals are consented*". (This second comment referred to the large number of proposals being considered independently by a number of developers.) Many people though, seemed to be relatively accepting during conversation of the way turbines impact on the landscape and their visual appreciation of it. This was reflected in several ways: from approving measures taken by Nuon to ensure proposals are in keeping with landscape scale and features, to humour at the expense of the local weather ("*Only when you can see them through the cloud and mist!*"), to relative low numbers of comments on this aspect compared to equivalent consultation events in other areas. However, a recurring and keenly felt concern, relating to visual impact of the project and its infrastructure development, is captured in the following comment: "*The pylons that will be required to take all (not just this project's) power out to the national grid are not acceptable. Underground cables, please!*" Only one person commented directly on specific turbines, and suggested re-positioning them, so they would not be so "*...LOW down the hill*".

While some feared the potential disturbance caused by noise and shadow flicker, others expressed approval of the measures undertaken by Nuon to minimise these disturbances, and to ensure that cumulative noise levels would be well within guidelines. Someone also chose to suggest that: "*Streams are noisier and trees flicker*".

On the subject of ecology and wildlife, participants indicated the presence of certain bird species, and urged consideration of the cumulative effects of all proposed developments on wildlife and on hydrology in particular, rather than the impact of the Rhyd Ddu project in isolation. Others welcomed the opportunity presented by projects like this to study and disseminate knowledge relating to local wildlife.

Under the heading of "Economy, Society and Tourism", again a broad range of views were expressed, from worries on the negative impact on tourism, to proposals to take advantage of the project and create more access for walkers and horse-riders, and developing educational and informative displays and notes on the site. Others suggested that the positive, regenerative aspects emerging in Carno and

Adfa should be looked at and could be replicated here, were the project to go ahead. Others also pointed out the benefits to farmers.

Transport, Construction and existing infrastructure prompted most comment – with people expressing concern about the need to improve local roads (thus losing their “rural nature”) particularly along the Talerddig road, while conversely, others welcomed necessary modifications, and the prospect of lasting repairs to roads damaged by forestry and other heavy-load trucks. People were also fearful of disruption during the construction phase, both to regular road-users, but also that more traffic would have a negative impact on wildlife. There were suggestions that improved access into the countryside would bring significant benefits.

The question of ‘Community Benefits’ raised some interest. It was suggested that some communities are already benefitting from local wind farm developments, and that it would be worth hearing about their experiences. Others suggested funds could help support individual as well as local energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes. Others indicated that establishing sustainable village/community stores would be an important service. There were one or two suggestions that the community fund should help pay for renewable energy installations on local houses (*helping to offset any lowering of house values which might result from proximity to a project*). A few people indicated their preference for the community fund not to be managed by Powys CC.

The ‘Others’ section generated very few comments. There was a comment indicating that the cumulative effect of all the proposed wind farm developments going ahead would be too much of an imposition, but that the Welsh Assembly Government would somehow force this through. Another person used this section as an opportunity to list their main objections: the embedded energy is greater than the energy turbines produce, and investment in wind energy diverts money away from research and development of other renewable technologies.

NEXT STEPS

Our full report giving a complete account of every single comment made will be available soon. Please go to:

<http://www.nuonrenewables.com/newsite/projects/rhdu1/default.aspx>

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 intensively on the scheme, incorporating all feedback, from statutory consultees and others, to improve all aspects of the scheme without compromising unacceptably the overall efficiency or energy generating capacity of the site. Other issues such as the preferred transport route to the project are still the subject of intense work.

Nuon Renewables intends to respond to your call for more and better communication by holding a meeting with key stakeholders in the near future and, later, by sending out a second leaflet, letting local people know what issues were highlighted during all the face-to-face events, and what assurances they can give. If

Nuon are unable to satisfy specific points, they will endeavour to explain why they can't. In this communication, 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 to the relevant planning authority.

This is likely to happen in Spring/Summer 2010, 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 shortly.

Catrin Ellis Jones and Jeff Bishop, BDOR Limited