

## Nuon Consultation 14-15 Nov

As many of you will know, Nuon held a session at the Loder Hall to allow local residents to find out more about the windfarm proposal and ask questions. Nuon representatives were friendly and co-operative and endeavoured to give honest and open answers to questions asked of them. We did feel, however, that the level of knowledge was not consistent, and some of the information given was inaccurate. Members of this group were, in some instances, given conflicting responses to questions. Clearly they had a vested interest in promoting the concept of the development and so some answers were biased (proving that bias is not the unique domain of opposers of the Harrington proposal). A member of our team visited the Nuon consultation making notes as they went. This is the result.

### What did they say?

We live in Draughton with a fantastic view over the peaceful Northamptonshire countryside; even the A14 is in a dip and hardly visible. Mostly, the only noise we hear is the farm traffic and the pheasants. So the windfarm would have a huge impact on my family, our community and, potentially, the value of our home. I want to make sure that the windfarm would be built for the right reasons, in the right location and that the impact on my family and our community would be within reasonable bounds. So I was at the Loder Hall very early on Saturday with a long list of questions!

I found the Nuon team very pleasant, helpful and reassuring. But I did find a number of contradictions between what different members of the team told me

(and, I have subsequently found out, my neighbours) on a number of points. I also think, based on my own research and discussions with other people, that some of what was said may not be the whole story. In summary:

### Location

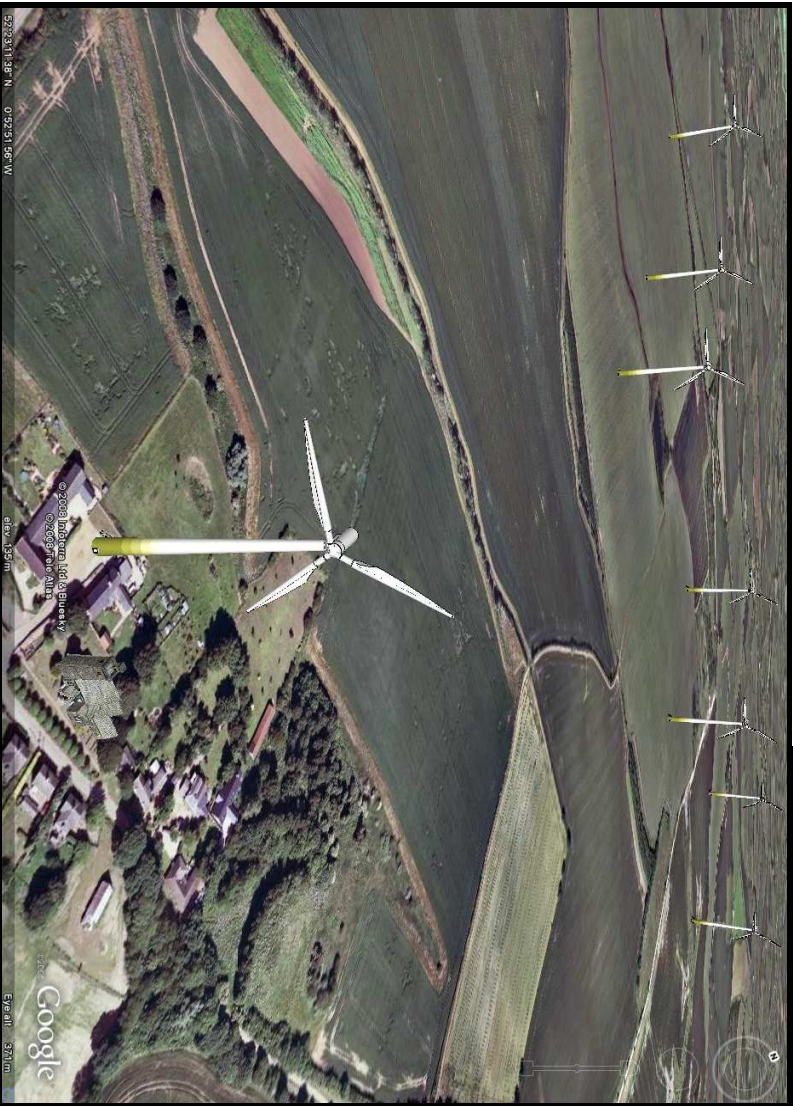
There would be seven turbines and one permanent anemometer mast in the locations set out in the booklet you should all have received.

One member of the Nuon team told me that no more turbines would be added at a future date due to restrictions on where they can be placed. Another member told a neighbour that although he didn't think Nuon had plans for enlargement, there was no guarantee, if the site was sold to another operator, that they would not seek to add further turbines. Note that the project was considering twelve turbines initially including some on the other side of the Brampton Valley Way close to Maidwell.

The turbines would be only 800m (1/2 mile) from a number of homes and only 500m (1/3mile) from one house. The turbines are close to the bridleway and footpaths with 6 of them being only around 200m away and one much closer. The British Horse Society recommends a distance of three times the turbine height ie 375m, but Nuon do not feel this is an issue for their proposal as the landscape is fairly open. (Riders - what do you think?) Apparently, if Nuon changed the location of the turbines so they are further away from homes and public rights of way, there would only be room for a much smaller number of turbines! Nuon stated that they would be protecting the Thor missile site,



## The scale of wind farm proposals



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**Disclaimer:** Please note that this newsletter represents the views and opinions of the SAY NO TO HARRINGTON WIND FARM committee and our members. Although we have tried to be as accurate as we can in relaying facts on the subject of this proposed development and the industrial wind industry in general, we cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies found therein.

This image, using Google Earth, shows the potential impact of turbines on the Harrington site. Google has no 3D representation of images so we have added turbines as 3D models, and to aid understanding have also added a 3D model of a church of similar appearance to St Catherine's in Draughton, albeit with a slightly taller tower, so in real terms the relationship between the turbines and the church errs in favour of the turbine. You should note that no turbine is planned for, or will be sited on, this area beside the church. This image is simply to show scale. The 7 turbines in the background are the actual planned locations.

but are still looking into whether the turbines would encroach on the World War II site. The turbines would be located on the old airfield but also lower down the hill.

**Efficiency**

The turbines would be 126m to the tip. I read somewhere on the internet that they would be the highest in the UK apart from one other site. They would also be sited on the ridges so very visible both locally and remotely in several directions.

I raised concerns about whether all the turbines would be as efficient as the 29% in the brochure and was told that the lower turbines may even generate more electricity due to the direction of the prevailing wind. I have since been told by a local meteorologist that generally a prevailing wind only comes from that direction about 30% of the time which means that for a considerable proportion of the time the wind won't be blowing in the best direction for the lower turbines at all. There also appears to be a discrepancy and uncertainty around the actual efficiency quoted in the brochure, by Nuon representatives, and on the website.

Nuon said they will be basing their planning application on publicly available wind data rather than on results of the installed anemometer as they will need 12 months of data from the mast. When asked if they would make the data available to the local community so that we can see exactly how efficient these huge structures will be they said this data is commercially confidential.

I asked about safety, having read several news reports about blades crashing to the ground and being flung 400-500m in at least one instance, and two recent reports of entire turbine collapse one in Scotland. I was told that the turbines would be safe.

**Noise and flicker**

Nuon installed five noise meters for the minimum period required by the DTI i.e. two weeks. They didn't actually install any in Draughton village because, they say, they were unable to find any willing hosts. They say they knocked on doors but could find no-one at home (presumably we were all at work - convenient or am I being cynical?). They did apparently write to one resident but say they didn't receive a timely response (though we know the person in question replied immediately but requested data from the noise meter). However, they told me that they could draw conclusions about Draughton from the data received at the other sites even though the landscape is different. When I asked whether they would install meters in Draughton to address our concerns I was told

that this would not be possible before the planning application was submitted. Nuon also don't appear to have taken weather conditions into account when measuring noise levels though they say they *could* obtain rainfall information from equipment at Pitsford and use wind information from central meteorological sources (this in spite of having a wind monitor on site - see above).

I talked about the fact that I had read a lot about aerodynamic modulation. Noise can be within DTI limits when measured conventionally but aerodynamic modulation is less well understood. It is claimed by some residents at several locations to be causing health issues (sleep problems and nausea). Nuon stated that this is at one location only (though that conflicts with articles I have read!), but conceded that more research is required into this perceived problem. I mentioned reading that there had been a case this summer where a resident close to a windfarm had received a reduction in her council tax on the basis that the windfarm had affected the value of her home. Nuon thought this was a one off.

Nuon don't think shadow flicker will be an issue but have not yet completed the survey on whether homes potentially affected have windows pointing in a direction which may cause problems.

**Link to the national grid**

I was left rather confused about this as I had read that there would be another planning application concerning the connection to the grid, but at the meeting received conflicting information from Graham Davey, the Project Manager, who confirmed that view, and Gavin Ward, the planning consultant, who said that it was not subject to a planning application and was a matter for National Grid at a later stage.

Nuon said that there are three possible connection points: Harborough, Desborough and Kettering. Whilst their preference would be for the connection to be underground, they could not guarantee that pylons would not be required. Whilst there is some debate about whether turbines can look majestic, I don't believe I have heard anyone say the same about a line of pylons, though Nuon did say that 'smaller' pylons would be used or that cables could be run overground using large poles.

**Access, construction and local jobs**

Nuon would be able to use the Rothwell to Lamport road to access the site without rebuilding the road, but might need to take down some road signs when long loads were being transported. If the road needed to be closed when the turbines were delivered this would likely be done at night. The turbines and blades would enter England via North Sea ports (probably Felixstowe) and would use the A14 to the A6 junction.

Although large lorries would use the B road and not drive through villages (a contractual restriction imposed by Nuon), no restrictions would be placed

on contractors with smaller vehicles. The turbines would be erected by teams brought in by the turbine manufacturers (I understood they are based in, and will come from, Germany). A neighbour asked about using local labour to maximise jobs but was told that the development company would control this and it was outside Nuon's jurisdiction. They were asked whether they couldn't make this the subject of a contractual restriction too but received no comment. I was told there is a 12 month waiting list to get the turbines (compared to some newspaper reports of up to 4 years). A neighbour had the impression that they were immediately available. Construction should be completed within 12 months, "unless wind causes delay in erection of the turbines". Errr????!!

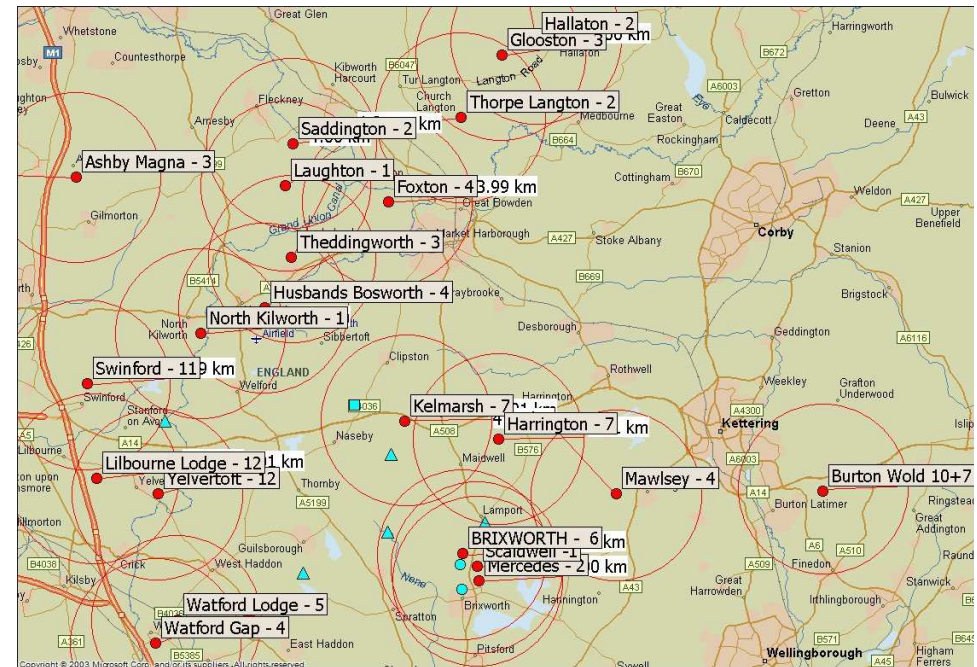
**Community funding**

Nuon stated that the community would receive £50,000 per annum to fund affected villages, although another member of the team said the amount had not yet been decided. Apparently some mention was made of Nuon trying to persuade Merton College to hand over some land as a playing field. When asked by a neighbour if the funding was a "bribe" to get local support, this was denied.

The Environmental Assessment is due to complete mid December, with the planning application likely to be submitted to Daventry in January. **We would be interested to hear your views about the proposal, both for and against.** If you have any concerns you would like us to investigate or take up with Nuon,



# The scale of wind farm proposals – coming to a landscape near you soon!



The Harrington Airfield wind farm proposal is not an isolated instance of developments planned for the area east of the M1 along the A14 corridor. In an area of approximately 17 x 20 miles there will be, if all planning applications are successful, some 113 wind turbines, and the number is increasing weekly! The map above (courtesy of Michael Benn) shows the sites.