



Rugby Friends of the Earth
Response to Bransford Bridge Wind Farm Application (Churchover)
[Ref: Planning Application R10/2303 LAND AT CESTERSOVER FARM]

Rugby Friends of the Earth is a local group that is passionate about creating a thriving world for everyone. That means a healthy natural environment, a fair economy and a world where everyone's needs are met, now and long term.

Our areas of interest include Climate and Energy Security; Nature and Ecosystem security; Fair and planned transition; Land use, Food and Water Security; Economics and Resource Use.

Rugby Friends of the Earth express our **SUPPORT** for this exciting proposed development. Although we have not yet prepared our full response, at this stage we **SUPPORT** the proposed development for the following reasons:

Our response to this consultation not only outlines why we support certain aspects of the application, including its contribution to a sustainable vision for energy generation in Rugby and Warwickshire, but also suggests how it could form part of wider solutions towards truly sustainable development.

We are writing to express our support for the proposed Bransford Bridge Wind Farm. Rugby Friends of the Earth would like Rugby Borough Council to consider the following points when making a decision on the windfarm:

Climate and Energy Security:

Global environmental crisis

POINT 1: We have to look at the big picture. The UK faces devastating impacts as a result of future climate change. The floods around the country over the past few years are a reminder of the kinds of weather events that will become more frequent and more extreme. Global temperature rise should be kept as low as possible. Scientists warn that we must stabilise greenhouse gas emissions in the next 10 years to limit global temperature rise to 2 degrees centigrade and prevent catastrophic impacts.

Climate-change adaptation and low-carbon energy

POINT 2: As part of its strategy to cut emissions, the UK Government supports an EU target of 20% of all energy from renewable sources by 2020. This will require the participation of every community around the UK in adoption of low carbon energy technologies. Britain is Europe's windiest country. Wind power offers huge potential to reduce our emissions and offer energy security.





Mature efficient technology and experience

POINT 3: Onshore windpower is the best developed and most economical renewable generation currently available, allowing us to make much needed reductions right now. The effectiveness and efficiency of new generation capacity is significantly affected by its location because of the power lost in transmission associated with the power flow across the grid, to get the power to the area where it is needed. Thus areas allocated for new housing should also ensure their future demand is more than covered by local new wind energy provision to save on transmission losses and costs.

The developer for this application is SSE Renewables Developments (UK) Limited, a division of Scottish And Southern Energy PLC.

- This is the UK's largest generator of renewable energy with over 2,200MW of wind, hydro, and biomass electricity generation capacity in the British Isles, and a portfolio of over 15,000MW of renewable energy projects in construction, with consent or in development.
- The Scottish and Southern Energy Group trades under names such as Scottish Hydro, Southern Electric, SWALEC, Atlantic Electric and Gas, S+S and Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution.

SSE Renewables' agent for this development is Dulas Ltd of Machynlleth, which is also the home of the Centre for Alternative Technology, so if the environmental aspects are being handled by an organisation with the pedigree of Dulas then this inspires some confidence.

Nature and Ecosystem security:

Biodiversity, wildlife, habitats and natural environment

POINT 4: No development should go ahead without proper studies. However, these have been done. Although appropriately positioned wind farms do not pose a significant hazard for people, birds, bats or other wildlife, there also needs to be management action plans to support and promote the protection of wildlife. Natural biodiversity should be preserved to the greatest possible extent in ways adapted to climate change and these issues have been taken into account. High-grade agricultural land should also be protected.

Audio and Visual impacts

POINT 5: We of course understand there may be concerns about the visual impact of this proposal. However, this is a subjective issue.

- The area (in Leicestershire) north of this site is already blighted by the huge warehouses of Magna Park [[http://www.magnapark.eu/\(F\(cJxSgqSZquZBBXttb6lCzcLiJ1vlbrRF0S8kO9dKlg8xa_UH9K2PSPMeEcBnW1YoLkIFEMHFK5uvgywBk4bzoEdvYmyHDrx5hSqt0P4TnLokRdEcZWoiOKZW6jDhtH1Q0iLwugjJm_6oVxQujj3mkwy3enfTalw3Uvchmx-yT5QC-Sgl0\)\)/es-ES/Our_Sites_UK_Build_to_Suit_Magna_Park_Lutterworth.aspx](http://www.magnapark.eu/(F(cJxSgqSZquZBBXttb6lCzcLiJ1vlbrRF0S8kO9dKlg8xa_UH9K2PSPMeEcBnW1YoLkIFEMHFK5uvgywBk4bzoEdvYmyHDrx5hSqt0P4TnLokRdEcZWoiOKZW6jDhtH1Q0iLwugjJm_6oVxQujj3mkwy3enfTalw3Uvchmx-yT5QC-Sgl0))/es-ES/Our_Sites_UK_Build_to_Suit_Magna_Park_Lutterworth.aspx)].





- In comparison to developments of such a massive scale, SSE's application is only talking about nine slender streamlined masts and their aerodynamic blades, and it must be borne in mind that modern wind turbines are planned to be in situ for a period of 25 years, after which time they may be removed, or replaced. Construction of wind farms is quick and simple with very little space used by the wind turbines themselves. At end of their lives, turbines can be decommissioned quickly and simply, with the site reinstated to what the landscape formerly looked like .
- As for the neighbours, the nearest residents to the site are happy with having a windfarm built and the Liberty hotel (also in Leicestershire) and its customers are unlikely to be going to be bothered by the view [<http://www.libertyelite.co.uk/lower.php?filename=grandtour.php>]

POINT 6: Audio-visual impacts must also be weighed against the likely damage to our landscapes and environment caused by climate change. Wind farms provide clean, efficient, safe, sustainable energy that contributes to renewable energy targets to fight climate change. In comparison, large trucks can constantly be seen and heard travelling to and from Magna park, the M1, M6 and DIRFT, yet their emissions give rise to an enormous impact on the climate. The noise of all these trucks that are currently driving up the hills either side of Bransford Bridge itself will far outweigh any audible impact from the windfarm. There is also a parking lay-by on either side of the A5 over Bransford Bridge itself which is constantly used by many trucks stopping for the night. It will not be the windfarm that might keep them awake in the middle of the night, but the noise of the traffic.

Fair and planned transition:

Response to local sensitivities

POINT 7: People's right to a healthy environment is a given, and taking responsibility for its care is essential. The developer has put on exhibitions and held consultations with the community. The aim for this development should always be to avoid over-intensification and indeed, SSE have already scaled their plans back in response to local sensitivities and local wildlife/habitats such as bats etc.

Transparency

POINT 8: SSE appear to be as open and transparent as possible;

- Their 20-page environmental statement (non-technical summary) is already in Rugby Library,
- for further information the public can also see Bransford Bridge Project Information at [<http://www.sse.com/BransfordBridge/ProjectInformation/>]
- and they even have a 'Bransford Bridge Wind Farm' facebook page at [<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bransford-Bridge-Wind-Farm/107753709316445>].

Wellbeing services, Housing, Public access and Green spaces





POINT 9: Wellbeing is more important than wealth, and this development restores what has been lost to rural communities, whilst it does not impact adversely on public access and green spaces. The emphasis can be on developing local skills to successfully manage the transition to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy. Studies show that wind farms have no adverse impact on house prices.

Distribution of Infrastructure and connections

POINT 10: We live in a modern world and we rely on its infrastructure. We need it in place because of the great benefits it gives us and there is already a lot of infrastructure around the site, such as

- the M6 and A5, with a motorway junction (M6 J1) nearby and the M1/M6 interchange not very far away too. Clearly there is a suitable access route to bring the structures in via motorways and major roads whilst avoiding disruption to the local community.
- National Grid's gas pipelines and their multi-junction site to the south west of Churchover village [See <http://www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk/detail.asp?AltRef=R06/1419/MAJP&ApplicationNumber=R06%2F1419&AddressPrefix=&Postcode=&CaseOfficer=&ParishName=&WardMember=&DateDecidedStart=&DateDecidedEnd=&Locality=&AgentName=&ApplicantName=&ShowDecided=&DecisionLevel=&Sort1=FullAddressPrefix&Sort2=DateReceived+DESC&Submit=Search>].
- electricity pylons. Proximity to the National Grid is essential (usually the link travels underground following the roads).
- telecoms
- Pailton Radio Station, which is quite close by [OS grid SP4881 <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/79791>]. All test equipment used within National Air Traffic Services (NATS) is accepted, repaired and calibrated at the Radio Measuring Station (RMS) on Montillo Lane near to Pailton [<http://www.pailton.org.uk/environment.htm>].

We are not aware that any of these have any problems with the development or are adversely affected by it despite some of them going through or very near the site. We all need the infrastructure for the wind farm in place, regardless of the few minor negative impacts that may arise, because of the greater benefits it offers in operation.

Land use, Food and Water Security:

Food, Resource-use and Water resilience

POINT 11: The wind farm offers a good use of land with extra income for the farmers that does not impact adversely on food production, resource-use or water resilience. This step on the journey towards achieving sustainability should help create greater fairness in which there are benefits to the local community.

Economics and Resource Use:





Local skills

POINT 12: The wind farm will offer many benefits to the community and the emphasis should be on developing local skills to successfully manage the transition to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy;

- our town should be a greener place designed to minimise unsustainable use of resources and to generate renewable energy wherever possible. Green designs should prevail and traditional building and reuse should be encouraged where environmental standards can be maintained or raised.
- the construction and operation of the wind farm will provide local jobs. We would welcome a commitment from the developer that all materials used in construction are, wherever possible, sourced locally to support the local economy and reduce carbon emissions. Building materials should also be selected from recycled options and more sustainable greener alternatives. There should also be plans for

local sourcing of other resources, including local food for the construction and maintenance crew.

- and give rise to an opportunity for local skills for a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy to be encouraged much more strongly via the Power Academy. Climate Change awareness should be particularly encouraged to support community sustainability in the neighbouring rural communities.

Local health, air quality and safety

POINT 13: Our economy should support sustainability, as implementing appropriate plans can improve health and air quality, as well as the safety and attractiveness of the pedestrian environment, through vastly improved energy efficiency in conjunction with embedded energy saving measures. When compared to other power generation, windpower is also quiet, safe, and has a small footprint and minimal impact on the land, residents and any wildlife. It creates no waste and, as it requires no fuel, has no pollution or risk of accidents in the supply chain.

Climate and Energy Security (renewed and sustained):

Renewable and Sustainable Energy Provision

POINT 14: The West Midlands Region produces very little of the energy it uses. We would like to remind you that national planning policy now prioritises action on climate change in the new Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change. These guidelines must now be embraced at a local level and strongly emphasise the guidance contained in PPS 1 paragraphs 13 and 22, and PPS 22, to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources.

The use of the area for wind power has local authority support. A joint local authority study has identified an arc of land along the A5 corridor running roughly from Gibbet Hill to Copston Magna as a viable location for wind power.

[See <http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?saddr=Gibbet+Roundabout,+Churchover>.





[+Warwickshire+LE17+6&daddr=copston+magna \]](#)

This appears to be exactly the area in Warwickshire, between the M6 and (adjoining the) A5, immediately to the north of Churchover, where Bransford Bridge Wind Farm sits, 5 km north of Rugby and a little to the SW of Lutterworth close to Cotesbach [i.e. roughly here -> [POINT 15: Studies have shown that around 80% of the population is in favour of wind energy and that at least about two-thirds of people would like to have a windfarm near them. The turbines in operation at DIRFT already prove that wind generation is feasible in the locality. Not only do Tesco clearly feel that there is public support for such thinking, but there are already a number of other plans for Large Wind farms approved nearby, e.g. Low Spinney, Swinford, Yelvertoft and New Albion \(in Kettering\), some of which will be in operation soon.](http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=52.435764,-1.237593&sll=53.800651,-4.064941&sspn=18.021622,35.727539&ie=UTF8&ll=52.435201,-1.237442&spn=0.009053,0.017445&t=h&z=16]</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Residents in the area can now already see the Low Spinney four-turbine wind farm on land between Gilmorton and Ashby Magna [see [POINT 16: The Local Government Association recently urged councils to demonstrate leadership in tackling climate change. The West Midlands produces very little of the energy it uses and had hoped to ensure that 5% of its electricity comes from renewable sources by 2010. Although Bransford Bridge will supply enough on average for 7,800 homes, Rugby is growing fast, with the building of up to 23,000 new dwellings by 2026.](http://broadviewenergy.com/low-spinney].</p></div><div data-bbox=)

POINT 17: As a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change 2000, Rugby Borough Council is committed to deliver carbon dioxide reductions at a local level. Our industry, transport and homes should be powered by safe, renewable energy. Tall structures are a historic feature of this landscape. Having already had twelve 820ft high masts on Rugby Radio Station site supporting plans for a windfarm would be in keeping with its heritage.

Conclusion

There are environmental limits to what mankind can do to the planet and we are really pleased the applicant has a desire, vision and ambition for sustainable development. There is evidence in the design and approach of an attempt to utilise what is already there to create a sustainable addition to the existing community's income.

Large wind turbines are visible but not intrusive. Most of the land within the site can generally continue to be used as before.

This development will give a visible signal about the value of nature to us all, including schoolchildren and future residents, and that we local people need to take positive action to save our planet.





It is worth noting that the construction of Burton Wold Wind Farm near Kettering was quick, but it displaces around 40,000 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), 475 tonnes of Sulphur Dioxide and 140 tonnes Nitrogen Oxides from entering the atmosphere annually. The wind farm also paid £40,000 into a community fund administered by the local council and contributes a further £10,000 every year for the life of the project, for the implementation of energy efficiency and education projects in Burton Latimer such as for solar panels, children's books, grants and interest free-loans for energy efficiency projects and so on.

This Bransford Bridge development provides an opportunity to add to the turbines already in operation on the DIRFT site to the south east and it will serve as an example to the rest of Warwickshire. Other councils in the county will no longer be allowed to stand back and just rely on more forward thinking neighbouring councils in other counties, but instead this development will encourage them to focus on socially fair solutions within their communities that address the root causes of environmental problems.

Finally, given the potential offered by this development to deal with deficiencies in the organisation and design of energy and environmental issues in and around Rugby, it is an opportunity which we as a community cannot afford to miss. We feel that the applicant presents a considerable opportunity to develop a truly sustainable contribution both for the existing community of Rugby and for all the new homes that are planned as urban extensions nearby.

We therefore strongly urge you to approve the Bransford Bridge Wind Farm proposal which will make a significant contribution to cutting emissions from the area and let us all hope that this can be the first proper Wind Farm success not just for Rugby but for Warwickshire.

