

# Experience in local politics and wind energy

Cllr Jim Hakewill

Leader - Kettering Borough Council

# Objective of the next 15 minutes

- I'm a councillor get me out of here! – hard decisions made in the public interest – planning committees
- Conference has already heard about the Global, National and Regional debate
- I will try to pose some questions about the local debate – I promise no answers!

# Making planning decisions

- No different from any other controversial decisions made by councillors – maybe more visible ...
- We all use electricity and it has to be generated somewhere.
- Get the best advice and communicate with everyone through the process

Depends which way you look at them, from here or ...



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# Or here ...



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# Location, location, location

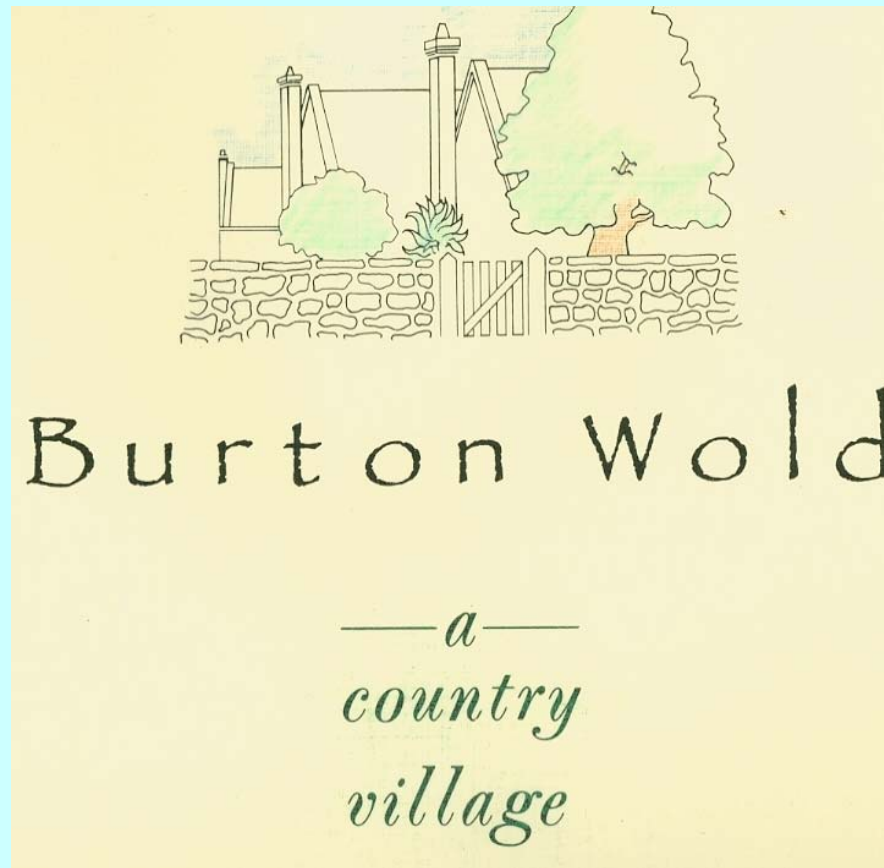
- Previous examples located to gas supply, water supply, coal supply
- Turbines only need wind - so can be anywhere where there is wind
- Taller turbines catch more wind

# Its all about land use

Burton Wold has been a success in many people's eyes

It could have been ... a new village ...

# Proposals in the KBC Local Plan circa 1990 ...



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# Government policy?

- Little guidance – free for all?
- Cumulative effect
- Subsidies – skewing the economics
- Environmental considerations
- Cost of linking to the grid
- Environmental impact of linking to grid
- New legislation - removing some decisions (larger scale) from local people

# Local councillors on the front line

- Hard decisions
- Unpopular almost where ever – choosing the least controversial
- Intelligent and articulate arguments on both sides
- Tasked with deciding - based on land use

# Communication

- Open and transparent
- Explain the planning process
  - how people can comment
  - quality consultation opportunities near where people live
  - many people will be attending a planning committee for the first and last time
  - how the planning committee works
  - who is making the decision – name plates
  - how officer advice is weighted
  - “right to speak” – ask people to work together
  - ask questions before the planning meeting

# The Committee Decision

- We can never please everyone who contributes to the planning process
- We can, at the very minimum, have people respect the process and the diligence with which we make, even the hardest, decisions
- Its not a popularity contest!

# Possible policies

- Areas of search – windy places
- Minimum numbers – Burton Wold significant number, now increasing
- Maximum heights according to location
- Away from communities, homes and distraction on major roads

# Conclusion

- In the right place with the right safeguards wind energy has a contribution to make.
- Old adage “it aint what you do but the way that you do it!”
- Every application/proposal needs, like all others we are asked to determine, to be treated on its merits.