



# The Beeston EXPRESS



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## Blimp flies at proposed wind turbines site

A BLIMP has been flown at the site of The University of Nottingham's proposed wind turbine development in Nottingham this week, to help interested parties gauge the scale of the project.

The display took place at Grove Farm, near Clifton Bridge, between Monday, October 3 and Friday, October 7.

The university has submitted planning applications to construct three wind turbines on the site, which will supply a third of the electricity needs of University Park.

The display was arranged following requests from local residents to the planning authorities that a blimp be flown at the same height as the proposed turbines so that they could get a better idea of the scale of the masts.

The 20ft blimp was flown from approximately 9am to 5pm on each day – weather permitting – tethered at 80 metres, the proposed height of the rotor hubs.

It is estimated that the turbines, which are 126 metres tall to the highest point of the rotor, would reduce the university's carbon emissions by 7,000 tonnes per year.

Campaigners have questioned the university's motives in flying the blimp at a lower height than the turbines themselves will be.

Jock McPherson, spokesman for the Beeston and Clifton Wind Turbine Awareness Group, said that residents were unimpressed.

"It is true that locals have long requested this move. However, it has become clear that the blimp has been flown at a height of

80 metres, whilst the turbines themselves will be 126 metres high. I think people will have to draw their own conclusions as to the university's intentions here, but it cannot reasonably be argued that this stunt will give people a realistic impression of the proposed turbines. That said, since the blimp is only being flown on weekdays during office hours, few people will be around to see it anyway."

The Grove Farm scheme is one part of a broad range of initiatives — including solar power, greater energy efficiency and increased use of sustainable transport — intended to help the university become a 'greener' institution.

An assessment of the university's land holdings by the Carbon Trust identified the Grove Farm location,

off Thane Road, as the most suitable for wind generation.

The university first announced the scheme in October 2010. A public meeting was held in Beeston in November 2010, at which residents were able to direct questions to senior university staff. In March 2011, the university arranged a coach visit for 50 interested residents from Beeston and Clifton to a wind farm at Lindhurst Farm in Rainworth, Nottinghamshire, so they could see modern turbines in action. In April 2011, the university held further public meetings and exhibitions in Clifton and Beeston so that residents could find out more about the proposal and raise concerns with members of university staff.

The exhibitions included detailed maps and plans, artists' impressions of what the proposed turbines might look like in situ, a summary of progress to date and work to meet stringent requirements in terms of environmental impact, wildlife, noise and other considerations.

Formal planning applications were submitted to Broxtowe Borough Council and Nottingham City Council (the site straddles the boundary between the two authorities) in July 2011.

The application is expected to come before Broxtowe's Development Control Committee in November 2011.



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