

WIND TURBINE NUISANCE

Salford forced to reveal sources

The Renewable Energy Foundation (REF), a body highly sceptical about the benefits of wind turbines, has used the Freedom of Information Act to force Salford University to reveal its sources.

Salford University and consultant Hayes McKenzie produced a report in 2007 that was used by the Government to claim that amplitude modulation from wind farms wasn't a problem. The Salford report suggested that there was only one wind farm out of 133 studied that produced lasting amplitude modulation problems. Amplitude modulation is the swishing sound of blades, a bit like a helicopter.

Using this report as proof that amplitude modulation wasn't a problem, the

Government said that this noise should not be considered a material consideration in planning inquiries for windfarms. This prompted noise expert Dick Bowdler to quit the wind farm and noise expert group in disgust (*Noise Bulletin Aug/Sep 2007 p1*).

A key criticism of the Salford Report was that the responses used to collate the nuisance statistics were not published. It was therefore impossible for anybody to peer review the findings. Salford has since steadfastly refused to release the information.

The REF submitted a legal challenge to the BERR statement based on the University of Salford report and the amplitude modulation (AM) issue. The grounds of the challenge were "that the statement ignored the actual

measurements of amplitude modulation described in the 2006 DTI report and that BERR was seeking by a policy statement to arbitrarily terminate scientific debate on AM noise, and to assert irrationally that AM was not a significant problem and should be ignored in the land use planning process".

REF then submitted the Freedom of Information request which was successful. REF says the results appear to contain "puzzling omissions". It believes wind farms known to cause amplitude modulation problems were not picked up in the Salford report.

Salford University and Hayes McKenzie, authors of the Salford report, both declined to answer questions put to them by *Noise Bulletin*.

● Web: www.ref.org.uk

IN BRIEF

Refuse trucks, wind turbines, students and skateboards...

Epuk is holding its popular annual overnight workshop next month (10-11 March)..

It asks: "How can we maintain vibrant, viable communities with acceptable levels of noise? Concentrating populations, business and leisure activity in urban areas reduces need for transport and travel. Increasing traffic levels and the need to secure our renewable energy supply present planning and mitigation challenges."

"This year, our annual noise workshop addresses these issues, covering:

- Refuse truck noise in neighbourhoods – recent case study;
- Studentification and noise – encouraging transient student populations to care about their community;
- Managing urban construction noise;
- Does traffic noise affect property noise?
- Micro wind turbines – update on nuisance impacts;
- Prediction of noise from wind farms.

More details www.environmental-protection.org.uk/

B&K buys Lochard

Brüel & Kjær has bought Australian noise and aircraft tracking company Lochard Ltd

Lochard has built up expertise in monitoring and management of noise and climate parameters in cities and airports with the purpose of reducing environmental impacts and to ensure compliance of national and international regulations.

The Lochard business will be combined with Brüel & Kjær's airport and urban monitoring business within the Brüel & Kjær group, focused on delivering innovative Environment Management Solutions for airports and urban environments. The new global EMS business will be headquartered in Melbourne and run by the existing Lochard executive team.

● www.bksv.co.uk

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Bristol tries new style consultation

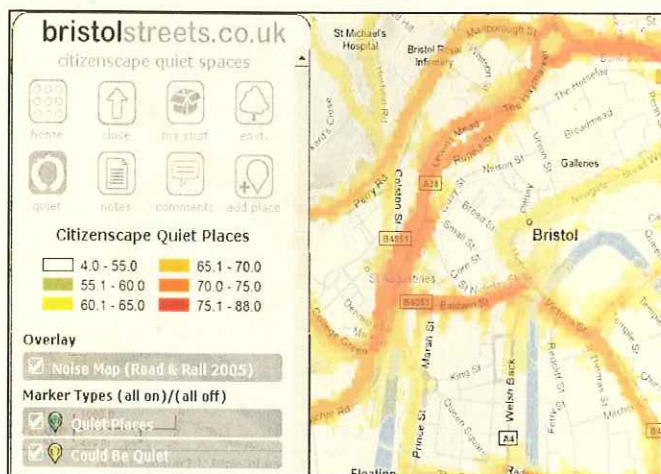
Bristol is developing new approaches to consultation as it sets out to seek public opinion on how road traffic noise affects their lives.

Building on a noise map launched last year (*Noise Bulletin June 2008 p7*) the consultation aims to engage people in a debate about traffic noise and sustainable travel by using a variety of internet tools.

Bristol's Steve Crawshaw said: "Enabled by Web 2.0 methods, blogs, wiki's and social networking sites like Facebook and Flickr will help people interface with the consultation and give their views on how they would like issues of traffic noise addressed.

"Other innovative ways of participating in the debate include viewing webcasts of council meetings, uploading video and photos, and starting a petition about a noise or sustainable transport issue."

The consultation will also use Google Maps technology to enable people to nominate their favourite quiet places on Bristol's mapping portal (www.bristolstreets.co.uk/#tmQuiet/). This will contribute



Bristol's new website (and blog) helps residents comment

towards delivering the requirement in the Environmental Noise Directive to identify and protect quiet spaces.

Crawshaw added that traffic noise is a source of annoyance for 35% of people in the city and the consultation gives them a chance to influence Bristol's strategy for reducing noise.

The recently published noise map for Bristol showed that over 300,000 people live in areas where the daytime noise

level from traffic is above the WHO's guidelines of 55dB(A). The motorways and main roads are the principal sources of noise.

The consultation is supported by the European Citizenscape Project, and as well as giving people a chance to have their say on noise, aims to increase participation in democratic processes.

● The main page for the noise consultation is www.bristol.gov.uk/noisedebate