



**Case 4 + 5:  
Crickdale Bioenergy Power Station and  
Bracknell Biomass CHP Energy Centre**

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*August, 2006*

Cultural Influences on *Renewable Energy Acceptance* and *Tools* for the  
development of communication strategies to promote ACCEPTANCE  
among key actor groups

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework  
Programme (2002-2006)

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## 1. Introduction

This paper addresses two case studies in the social acceptance of local biomass initiatives in the UK. The paper unfolds in three sections. The next section, Section 2, briefly outlines aspects of the wider UK context within which the biomass case studies can be situated. Section 3 analyses the case of a biomass development in a rural location in the south of England, whilst the third section focuses on a biomass initiative in an urban location also in the south of England. A final section offers a summary of the lessons to be learned from these particular cases.

## 2. Country Context: Biomass in the UK Context

The UK Government's Energy Review (DTI, 2006) and, in particular, its backing for new nuclear build has recently provided a degree of re-working of the UK energy policy context, building on the UK Energy White Paper of 2003 (DTI, 2003). Yet the White Paper, *Our Energy Future*, remains a pertinent entry point to thinking about biomass in the UK policy context. The White Paper offered an acknowledgment of three issues in particular - *environmental*, in particular climate change; *declining indigenous energy supplies* and related security of supply; and ageing *energy infrastructures* - facing UK energy policy and posited a number of goals and aims in addressing these issues. These included:

1. Cutting UK carbon dioxide emissions by 60 per cent 'by about' 2050 with 'real progress' by 2020.
2. Maintaining the reliability of energy supplies.
3. The promotion of competitive markets both domestically and internationally in addressing 'sustainable' economic growth and improving productivity.
4. Ensuring that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

The White Paper viewed biomass as part of the UK's future 'energy mix'. Whilst it recognised that biomass may not become economically viable before the mid-2010s, it outlined a role for biomass in which by 2020:

There will be much more local generation, in part from medium to small local/community power plant, fuelled by local/community grown biomass from locally generated waste...These will feed local distribution networks, which can sell excess capacity into the grid. Plant will also generate heat for local use.

Support for this in the White Paper was detailed around a number of measures including, supporting biomass projects through a three-year £66m Bioenergy Capital Grants Scheme and a £29m Energy Crops Scheme to help farmers and foresters establish energy crops. The Government also set up a Biomass Task Force in October 2004 to assist government and the biomass industry in optimising the contribution of biomass energy to energy targets and to provide support and boost farming, forestry and the rural economy.

The Biomass Task Force made 42 recommendations to the UK Government in October 2005 (Defra, 2005). Its main argument was that Britain should use biomass to generate heat and electricity. The Task Force stated that the main barrier to progress was 'ignorance' and suggested that the Government created a single information point on biomass for the UK. Other recommendations included introducing a capital grant scheme to aid all biomass heating boilers and the heat element of CHP biomass-fuelled plants, and to encourage the public sector to increase the amount of investment in both heat networks and standalone biomass-fuelled boilers for heating.

In 2006 the Government formulated a response to the Biomass Task Force advice (DTI and De-fra, 2006) in which it accepted the majority of the Task Force's recommendations. The Government developed an action plan for biomass which set out 11 key ways to address the recommendation. The main argument of the Task Force Report, that biomass was particularly suited for generating heat, was accepted by the Government, though the action plan made clear that electricity generated from biomass and CHP were also important parts of its future. Measures introduced included a capital grant scheme for biomass boilers; the establishment of a new Biomass Energy Centre to provide expert information and advice, along with further grant support for energy crops and a commitment to consider using biomass heating, wherever possible, in Government buildings.

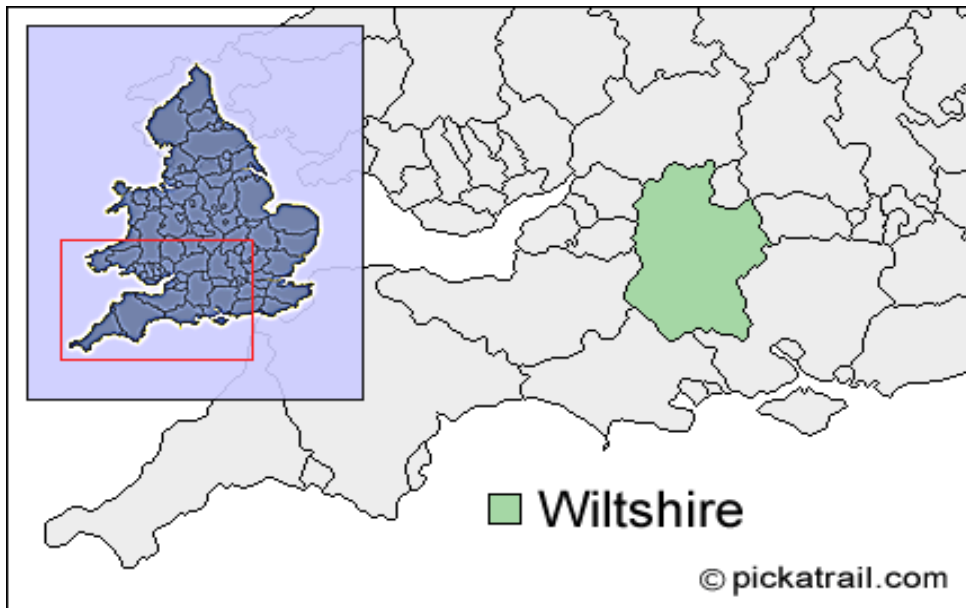
In the UK context there are currently over 370 biomass plants (excluding co-firing) with a total capacity of 848 MW (UK Trade and Investment Website), with UK Government aspirations to increase this number. With this in mind, a small number of studies in the UK context highlight a number of issues raised in terms of biomass developments and public engagement.

Many of these focus on aspects of planning processes and the role of local opposition in relation to 'negative' planning decisions (Hargreaves, 1996; Sinclair, 1998). This has also been addressed through a focus on trust, social capital and the role of key institutions in planning consultation for a biomass plant (Sinclair and Lofstedt, 2001). Other aspects of the relationships between local siting of biomass plants and public opposition are highlighted (Van der Horst, 2002), including the 'cycle of ever increasing distrust' in relationships between 'unaccountable' sub-national agencies, often performing a central role in the governance of renewable energy initiatives, and local residents and how this may be addressed through 'public participation' (Upham and Shackley, 2006).

### 3. Case One - Summary

Data for the first case study has been derived from three sources: (1) It primarily draws upon an original academic study by Upreti and van der Horst who published a paper in *Biomass and Bioenergy* in 2004 entitled 'National renewable energy policy and local opposition in the UK: the failed development of a biomass electricity plant'. (2) In addition, we utilise the appeal decision document from the Planning Inspectorate and (3) archived local media coverage has also informed this case study.

Ambient Energy submitted an outline planning application to North Wiltshire District Council for a wood fuelled biomass power station in May 2000, to be sited in the village of Cricklade in the county of Wiltshire in the south of England. Within eight weeks of the application being submitted local residents formed an action group called Biomass Lumbered on Our Town (BLOT) to oppose the development. The objections focussed on the suitability of the proposed site and lack of consultation with local residents. If the planning application for this biomass power station had been granted it would have been the second biomass plant development in the UK at the time. The first developed station was a wood fuelled electricity plant called ARBRE at Eggborough in North Yorkshire. The proposed North Wiltshire plant was similar to Eggborough but smaller in scale. North Wiltshire District Council dismissed the application in October 2000 and Ambient Energy lodged an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate in January 2001. After a Public Inquiry in May 2001, the Planning Inspectorate announced the decision to dismiss the development in September 2001 on the grounds that the scheme would have noticeable and significant effect on the character and amenity of the landscape. (For a chronology of the local events in the North Wiltshire case, see Appendix A).



#### 4. STEP ONE: Possible futures?

The initial vision for the development of a biomass electricity plant in North Wiltshire in the UK began with South Western Electricity plc, a major private utility<sup>1</sup>, that won a number of Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation (NFFO) contracts for wind, hydro biomass and electricity. The 1989 Electricity Act introduced NFFOs in England and Wales and they required electricity supply companies in the UK to secure specified amounts of new generating capacity from non-fossil sources, including renewables. This renewables capacity was secured through contracts with renewables generators at premium rates. NFFO contracts required the applicant to specify the site of the location which was not transferable. NFFO contracts were awarded to the cheapest bids per £/MWh and therefore necessitated NFFO applicants to keep the site location confidential which resulted in the exclusion of engagement with the public on pre-site selection. South Western lost interest in the NFFO contracts as a result of disinvestment by their American parent company. Ambient Energy Limited was established in January 1998 by one of the managers of South Western after he acquired the renewable energy business from South Western and subsequently took over all NFFO contracts.

In 2000, Ambient Energy proposed the development of a £10 million wood fuelled biomass power station on Kingshill Farm, a two-acre rural buffer<sup>2</sup> site near the town of Cricklade in the south west of England. Ambient Energy stated that the site of the plant had been chosen very carefully based on the following criteria:

- The surrounding area was suitable for growing short rotation energy crops.
- It had good access to forestry residues.
- It had good road connections for the delivery of fuel supplies.
- It provided good access to the electricity distribution network.
- It delivered electricity to the national grid in decentralised location which would help to reduce grid maintenance costs and the reinforcement costs associated with accommodating the peak electricity demand.

(Taken from Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p63).

<sup>1</sup> Formerly the publicly owned regional electricity distributor before privatisation in 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Rural buffer zones are to provide areas between towns and villages that are free from industrial development.

Kingshill Recycling Plant would be 23 metres high, 126 metres long and 46 metres wide, with two thirds of the building for woodchip storage. It was estimated that heavy goods vehicles would make 15 deliveries a day to transport the 32,000 tonnes of Willow needed to power the station each year. The wood gasification plant would be able to generate 5.8 MW of electricity, enough annual power for more than 10,000 domestic properties. The wood would be supplied from forestry residues and short rotation crops (SRC) grown within a 30 mile radius of the power station (Swindon Advertiser, 17 September 2001).

## 5. STEP TWO: What were the various expectations of the case?

As Ambient Energy had inherited the NFFO contracts from South Western Electricity in which the location of the site for development was already tied, they began initial conversations and interactions with Cricklade residents in 2000 and held workshops for local farmers to identify local interest in turning arable land into Willow production. Ambient Energy's expectations of the biomass plant in North Wiltshire were primarily two-fold. First that it would fulfil the inherited NFFO contractual obligation between themselves and UK Government of developing a renewable energy initiative. In relation to this Gerry Swarbrick, owner of Ambient Energy, stated that 'The station would put into practice Government ideas about renewable energy' (Swindon Advertiser, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2000). The development would also provide a local contribution to the UK Government's policy of reducing carbon dioxide energy by 60% by 2050 and perhaps 80% by 2100 (Department of Trade and Industry, White Paper 2003).

Second, Ambient Energy clearly regarded the biomass plant development as a business opportunity for themselves and local farmers of SRC. If this proposal was accepted it would be only be the second developed biomass energy plant in the UK at the time and Ambient Energy believed that the project would place North Wiltshire in a leadership position in biomass energy in the UK. Ambient Energy presumed that local Cricklade residents would be pleased to be part of the development claiming a local pride and identity in being involved in a renewable energy initiative. Swarbrick was quoted in the local media as stating:

I think it could turn out that the people of Cricklade will be proud that their town was chosen for one of the first in a wave of renewable energy plants (Swindon Advertiser, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2000).

The biomass plant would be reliant on energy crops specifically grown for the purpose of energy regeneration. SRC Willow would be grown on at least four different farms in the area and either chipped on site and transported to the station, or stored until required. Since the nature of NFFO applications meant that the site had to be stated, it is likely that Ambient had already come to agreements with local farmers. Ambient Energy claimed that the biomass development would provide economic advantages to local farmers by providing opportunities to diversify the local farming industry by growing SRC:

Bio-mass energy crops will provide an alternative source of income to the agricultural sector that has been and continues to be, under severe financial pressure... Farming short rotational coppice is an excellent opportunity for farmers. It is a viable alternative enterprise for them (Swindon Advertiser, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2001).

Ambient Energy highlighted the local employment benefits, with the expectation that new plant would create 15 new permanent jobs at the plant and 18 jobs indirectly from the procurement of goods and services required by the plant.

Table 5.1 *Actors, expectations and 'publics'*

Actor	Expectation	Speaking for 'publics'
NFFO contracts	Increase the uptake of renewable energy initiatives.	Devolved to applicants.
Ambient Energy Ltd, the developer	To fulfil obligations under NFFO. To take advantage of a business opportunity; provide local business opportunities and contribute to UK Government's aim of reducing carbon emission via renewable energy sources.	Not directly speaking for 'publics', however they did state a number of local benefits such as being UK 'leaders' in this area, employment and economic benefits to local farmers.

## 6. STEP THREE: Understanding 'participatory' decision-making: negotiating expectations

Step three focuses on understanding the ways in which these expectations were negotiated, or formed the basis for interactions around the biomass plant in North Wiltshire over time. As previously outlined, the initial 'vision' of the development of a second biomass energy plant began in 2000 and involved communication and interactions between Ambient Energy, a local energy company and Cricklade residents. The biomass energy development faced considerable opposition from a large number of local residents who claimed that the station would be unsightly and inappropriate (Swindon Advertiser, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2001).

Ambient Energy submitted the planning application to North Wiltshire District Council (NWDC) in May 2000, at which point Ambient Energy gave a presentation to Cricklade residents and also held workshops for local farmers to identify interest in turning arable land to SCR Willow production. Local residents quickly mobilised opposition to the proposed scheme. In July 2000, two months after the development was announced, local people formed an action group called Biomass Lumbered On our Town (BLOT)<sup>3</sup>. BLOT generated support and organised their activities very effectively, including the creation of a home page on the Internet ([www.cricklade.com](http://www.cricklade.com)) to facilitate debate, express opinions and reactions from the residents. They also asked commissioned Oxford Scientific Services Limited, a private consultancy firm, to examine the environmental impacts of the development and produce a report of findings.

The Chair of BLOT argued that Cricklade was a county conservation area with a clean and peaceful rural character. A local Cricklade resident described the town as:

One of Wiltshire's small conservation gems, circled by idyllic and largely unspoilt ancient meadowlands, full of rare and unusual flora and fauna (Swindon Advertiser, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2000).

Whilst arguing that in principle local residents were generally in favour of sustainable energy and eco-friendly power stations, the Chair of BLOT felt that the local area would be disturbed by the proposed development and stated that:

We are clearly living in important times; we acknowledge that renewable energy is the right way forward and must be supported. And it is true that it must start somewhere. But somewhere must not be anywhere (Swindon Advertiser, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Appendix B outlines the local opposition to the development and Appendix C outlines the main issues raised by the action group BLOT. Information is taken from Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p64).

The wood fuelled biomass power station was also opposed by a local MP and Councillor Kirkbride of Cricklade Town Council. Furthermore, local people submitted a total of 439 protest letters to the NWDC in contrast to the one letter of support submitted from a Willow growing farmer. Additionally, local people submitted a petition to the NWDC with 861 signatures. Opposition to the development also came from Cricklade Town Council and Purton, Blunsdon and Castle Eaton Parish Councils<sup>4</sup> on the grounds that it would cause negative effects to the environment.

Councillor Atfield of the NWDC acknowledged that the plant may be beneficial to the environment in contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions, but he suggested that the location of the site was not the most suitable. Atfield felt that the site was 'inappropriate' because of the conflict it would cause in the local area in terms of local policies of the rural buffer zone or Cricklade's 11<sup>th</sup> Century church which was of archaeological significance. In his opinion, there was a more suitable site on an industrial estate on brownfield land (land that has previously been developed on) in the north of the neighbouring town of Swindon. The Planning Officer added that the site selection process should have been more robust in matching the local plan priorities<sup>5</sup> (Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p65).

Other concerns were raised. The Highways Agency expressed concern about road safety (Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p65) and Friends of the Earth (FoE) North Wiltshire questioning the 'credibility and legitimacy of the Environmental Statement' (Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p65). The local media played an active role in highlighting the potential risks of traffic and pollution. The BBC regional magazine programme, 'Look West', highlighted wider public concerns about the development.

NWDC rejected the planning application on 26 September 2000 for the following reason:

The Biomass Power Station is a major development proposal which would, if allowed, seriously undermine the openness of the rural landscape, resulting in a loss of countryside creating an inappropriate form of major development in the Rural Buffer...; The Biomass Power Station, if allowed, would cause demonstrable harm to the amenity and rural character of the countryside, significantly impacting on the open landscape of the area by virtue of the proposal's scale and design... (NWDC, September 2000).

Ambient Energy appealed against the decision on the grounds that: a) although it was in the rural buffer zone the development was linked to the forestry and agriculture sectors, b) it would not be technically feasible to change the shape or size of the proposed plant and c) the NFFO contract was a commitment between the Government and Ambient Energy to develop the scheme at the specific site and therefore the contract could not be moved to another site (since 2001 outstanding NFFO contracts are no longer tied to the original location. However this came too late for Ambient Energy who had already launched their appeal - Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p67).

A Public Inquiry was held between 9 May and 13 July 2001. The final decision was delayed as a result of the region's footpaths being closed because of the foot and mouth crisis<sup>6</sup> and evidence still being outstanding. On September 11 2001, the Planning Inspector for the Secretary of State dismissed the appeal and in reaching this decision placed emphasis on the visual harm

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<sup>4</sup> A parish council is a council of members of a particular parish or religious community who have a responsibility to administrate the affairs of that community.

<sup>5</sup> A local plan is prepared by the district council and includes a written statement setting out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land in that area. This sits under a development plan and the structure plan.

<sup>6</sup> Epidemic in the farming industry in 2001 caused by a viral disease of cloven hoofed animals (sheep, cattle, pigs etc).



of the proposal within the countryside. The Inspector stated:

The development plan<sup>7</sup> supports the principle of renewable energy. It also seeks to protect the character and amenity of the countryside. In this case the development plan policies pull against each other. The scheme is supported by the County Council and by the local authority planning officers. Government policy, in general and at all levels, encourages the success of these schemes. However, having taken account of all matters raised, my interpretation of the plan policies is that they do not support this building in this place (Baker, 2001, p17).

Table 6.1 *Forms of participation in the North Wiltshire Development*

Type	Organisers	Where	Involvement	Purpose
Workshop	Ambient Energy	Local venue	Local farmers	To identify local interest in SCR willow production.
Presentation	Ambient Energy	Local venue	Local residents	To provide information on the proposed bio-mass plant development to local residents.
Media articles	Local media	Reported in the local newspaper	The Wilshire and Gloucestershire Gazette Evening Advertiser Herald Western Daily Express Swindon Advertiser	To provide information covering the issues related to the plant such as traffic and pollution and cases of community opposition.
Media - TV	BBC	'Look West' Programme	BBC	To highlight public concerns.
Internet dialogue	BLOT Action Group	Home Page on the Internet <a href="http://www.cricklade.com">www.cricklade.com</a>	Local residents	To facilitate debate, opinions and reactions from residents.
Protest letters	Local residents	NWDC (439 in total)	Local Residents	To demonstrate community opposition to the development.
Letter of support	Local farmer	NWDC (1 in total)	Letter sent by a willow growing farmer	To demonstrate support of the development.
Petition	Local residents	Submitted to NWDC	861 signatures in total	To demonstrate community opposition to the development.
Expert scientific research & report	BLOT action group	Oxford Scientific Services Ltd	BLOT Oxford Scientific Services Ltd	Oxford Scientific Services Ltd asked by BLOT to examine the environmental impacts of the development and produce an specialist report.
Public Inquiry	Planning Inspectorate, ODPM	Conducted between 9 <sup>th</sup> May and 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2001.	Planning Inspectorate Planning Committee Members local councillors MPs Residents BLOT Local media NGOs Town and Parish councils	To have a quasi-judicial hearing and make a decision on the granting of the planning application.

<sup>7</sup> Development plans are plans for land use planning policies and proposals for sites and roads within are area and they sit under the Structure Plan which is prepared by the county council.

## 7. STEP FOUR: From visions to actualities

There was a huge gap between Ambient Energy's initial vision in 2000 to develop a wood fuelled biomass power station in Cricklade and the dismissal of the application by the Planning Inspectorate in September 2001. The proposed development met with rapidly organised opposition. This opposition can be partly explained through public unfamiliarity with the proposed development. The original researchers, Upreti and van der Horst, identified in their paper two conflicting views 1) a 'not-in-my-back-yard' response by the local residents, and 2) 'there's no alternative' attitude from Ambient Energy the developers (Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p61). Within eight weeks of the development being proposed, local residents had formed the opposition group BLOT and campaigned vigorously via protest letters and petitions, employing their own scientific experts to carry out research into the environmental impacts of the development, and using the local media and Internet as vehicles to express their concerns and drum up support. As demonstrated in Appendices 2 and 3, there were wide ranging reasons for local opposition to the development.

BLOT had produced arguments against the development of the plant, including those detailed in the report produced by Oxford Scientific Services which stated that water vapour from the plant would produce mist and fog hazards constituting serious road safety issues (albeit this was not provided as evidence at the Public Inquiry). The key issues, however, can be highlighted through two points in particular: 1) the siting of the plant and 2) lack of consultation.

1. Location of the proposed biomass plant was critical, with both the County Council and local planning officers agreeing it was 'inappropriate'. The Chair of BLOT felt that the wrong site had been chosen and expressed the view that allowing such a big plant development to be built would set a precedent in the rural buffer zone. She felt that Ambient wanted to develop in the rural buffer zone because the land was much cheaper there. However, it must also be noted that the institutional barriers of 'fixed locations' of NFFO contracts tied the developers to the site. The NFFO contracts were awarded for the cheapest bids (£/MWh). As the NFFO bid process was competitive developers wanted to keep locations confidential from competitors and consequently the public through a fear of competitors proposing a similar development on the same site for a lower price. This then created a tension with a second issue, forms of engagement.
2. Lack of 'upstream' engagement and consultation may have greatly hindered the development of the biomass energy plant. The structure of NFFO contracts meant that developers did not engage with residents regarding site selection before the NFFO contract had been awarded. Councillor Atfield, however, stated that the developers should have engaged in public consultation before making the final decision on site selection. He also felt that after the site selection had been made public Ambient Energy failed to adequately respond to requests for information by the public who needed it to make judgements (Upreti and van der Horst, 2004, p65). The local planning officers expressed a different opinion and felt that after the site selection had been declared Ambient Energy had made sincere efforts to inform 'the public'. The Chair of BLOT felt that the overall approach of Ambient Energy was very 'top-down', as they had not consulted local people before selecting the site and they had also ignored 'public opinion'. The lack of initial consultation led to distrust among a large swathe of Cricklade residents. Residents felt that the developer's arguments of economic benefits to the local communities were too simplistic and the fact that the developers wanted to keep their original building design fuelled suspicion. Rather than winning support a negative attitude developed which strengthened the overall opposition of BLOT and the County Council. This context led to the eventual dismissal of the development by the Planning Inspectorate.

## 8. Lessons learned

Three particular lessons can be taken from this case:

### 1. The Institutional Framing of the Debate

The lock in provided by NFFO contracts, in particular were crucial in that the contracts had to be negotiated in confidence and therefore many decisions made prior to planning application. This drove the developer to meet deadlines and obligations but raised concern about transparency and openness to the public.

This, then, led to lock out in that the NFFO contracts saw a contractual framing of the parameters of engagement at an early state of the development. This meant that definitions of 'stakeholders' to be engaged excluded 'the public'.

### 2. The importance of being an 'early mover' in 'implementing' the technology

Early mover status meant few precedents to draw upon and little local knowledge of the technology.

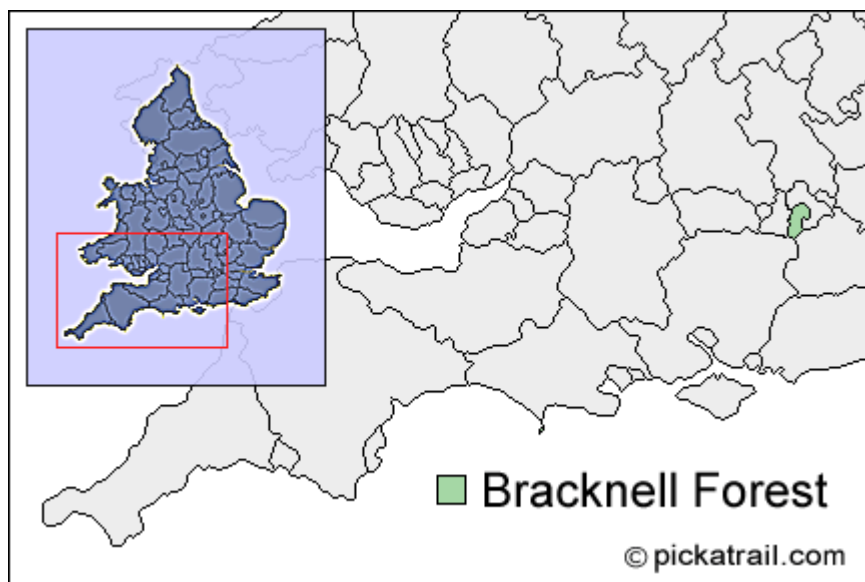
### 3. Scale: tiers of government with different views

There were tensions between different tiers of government with differing views of the possibilities and desirability of local biomass initiatives.

## 1. Case Two - Summary

The second case study is primarily based on original research undertaken by SURF during June and July 2006. This included: (1) interviews conducted with key participants in a planned biomass CHP Energy Centre in Bracknell in the south of England, such as ‘stakeholders’ from Bracknell Forest Borough Council, the chief protagonist representing local ‘residents’, TV Energy and Friends of the Earth; (2) The utilisation of a number of secondary sources, including key documents from Bracknell Forest Borough Council and TV Energy; and (3) information from various websites and local media coverage.

In November 2004, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership, a local economic regeneration agency, submitted an outline planning application to the local authority, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, for the redevelopment and regeneration of Bracknell town centre. The Masterplan for the town centre redevelopment, unveiled in December 2004, also included the development of a biomass fuelled combined heat and power (CHP) energy plant. The energy plant initiative drew numerous objections from local residents who principally argued that the proposed site was inappropriate as it was in a residential area in the town centre. Biomass CHP energy centres, like the one proposed for Bracknell, were a new innovation in the UK. The distinctiveness of the energy centre proposed for Bracknell was that it was (1) *biomass fuelled* CHP, it was (2) proposed for a *town centre* location therefore requiring the development of a heat and cooling distribution network, and (3) the establishment of an energy saving company (ESCo) to manage it. The latter three innovative characteristics effectively rendered Bracknell a ‘test-case’ in the UK. Discussions were being held in July 2006 to decide whether to go ahead with the energy plant development and a decision, at the time of writing in August 2006, has yet to be announced. (For a chronology of the local events in the Bracknell case, see Appendix D).



Bracknell lies in the southeast of England approximately 20 miles west of London and covers an area of 36 hectares. The town was designed and constructed during the post war New Town period between 1950 and the 1960s and was built for a population of 25,000, which by the 1991 UK Census had reached 95,949.

## 2. STEP ONE: Possible futures?

This is a complex case study and when reading this document it is useful to think about it as being comprised of two components:

1. the redevelopment and regeneration of Bracknell town centre, with
2. the development of a biomass fuelled CHP energy centre, being part of it.

Please see Appendix D for a diagram of the network of stakeholders and funders involved in this case study.

In 2001 Bracknell Forest Borough Council (BFBC) began discussions with professional consultants and community leaders to discuss the redevelopment of Bracknell town centre, with the result being that any future redevelopment plans should combine urban regeneration with an energy strategy. Two competing landowners, Legal & General and Bracknell Regeneration Trust had come together to form a private organisation called Bracknell Regeneration Partnership (BRP). BRP employed project managers, architects and other consultants and devised a draft Masterplan in March/April 2002. After public consultation and revisions, the final Masterplan, which cost BFBC approximately £300,000 to produce, was unveiled in September 2002 ([www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknell-town-centre-masterplan.pdf](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknell-town-centre-masterplan.pdf)).

The Masterplan included:

- 56,000 m<sup>2</sup> of new retail space,
- 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> of new bars, cafes, restaurants, leisure and entertainment facilities,
- 1,000 new homes,
- 3,500 new car parking spaces, 62,000 m<sup>2</sup> new and replacement business space, and a
- 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> food store (BFBC Website).

BRP would finance the redevelopment and regeneration scheme with £750 million. It was hoped that the planning application for the redevelopment would be submitted in December 2004 and, if accepted, building could begin in 2006 with the completion of the major initiatives in 2009.

Part of the Masterplan supported the need for Bracknell to be a 'green and sustainable town', with an emphasis on the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency. This element of the scheme required additional funding to be generated. In order to acquire the necessary funding for the biomass fuelled CHP energy centre, BFBC became involved in a European project called RENNAISSANCE (Renewable Energy Activity in SuStainable And Novel Community Enterprises). The RENNAISSANCE project consisted of a consortium of partners to redevelop three urban town centres in Bracknell, Zaragoza in northern Spain and Lyon in France. BFBC would lead on the project with management support from TV Energy, an independent regional renewable energy agency. The RENNAISSANCE project would:

Support local communities in demonstrating the social, environmental and economic benefits of integrating renewable energy and energy-management systems on a community scale (Oxford Trust, 2005, p29).

Through the RENNAISSANCE project, in May 2004, BFBC secured a € 4.17 million grant from the European Commission's Framework 6<sup>th</sup> Concerto Programme. BFBC additionally received a £1.85 million Energy Saving Trust capital grant to support the renewable energy initiative.

BFBC's focus was on the installation of a renewable district woodchip-fuelled (CHP) and heat/cooling distribution network of 8 MWe capacity. The aim was that this would heat public buildings, including council offices and potentially a new library and police station, and ultimately produce approximately half of the town centre's energy 'requirements'. The energy centre was to be located on a roundabout on Council owned land at the entrance to the town to the

north-west of the town centre. Newsletters produced by TV Energy provided contradictory information. They stated that the proposed centre would be sunken into the roundabout by 3 metres so only a 'small part of it' would be visible from ground level. However, the newsletter also claimed it would be between 5 and 10 metres above road level, with the flues no more than 35 metres (TV Energy Newsletter, March 2004, p3-4). TV Energy also assured in its newsletters that there would be no smell from the design and technology, the building would be designed to ensure that any noise from the plant was not audible at local residences, that the local community could be involved in the final design decision and that the centre could be designed to blend in with the surrounding area (TV Energy Newsletter, March 2004, p4). The site was situated between the residential area of Priestwood and the town centre and was separated from adjoining property by the roundabout and verges. There were 500 residences within 250 metres of the roundabout, with the nearest property, a bungalow, 20 metres from the roundabout and several others within 50 metres.

Waste wood thinnings supplied by local tree-felling businesses from local forests and woodland would help power the energy plant in the short term with new short rotation coppice planted to provide fuel in the medium to long term (TV Energy Website, Bracknell information). Approximately two lorry loads of wood would be delivered daily, which would be four movements in and out of the centre, with the maximum of six lorry loads or 12 movements of 25 ton trucks at times when demand was high, such as in the winter months.

If the outline planning application was accepted, BFBC planned to go out to procurement to establish an Energy Savings Company (ESCO). The ESCo would develop and operate the infrastructure of the energy centre, and sell electricity and heat in the district heat and cooling network. The CHP energy centre would also be combined with other renewable technologies such as architecturally integrated photovoltaics, micro wind turbines and a link to exploit the biogas potential of anaerobic digestion of locally derived green wastes (Richards and Deveson, undated). In November 2004 BRP submitted the outline planning application and a public exhibition was held to launch the Masterplan in December 2004.

### 3. STEP TWO: What were the various expectations of the case?

The production of the initial vision began with the call from BFBC for the redevelopment of Bracknell town centre. BFBC claimed that despite Bracknell thriving as a community there had been little development since the 1960s, it was in decline and it was in desperate need of urban regeneration (Richards and Deveson undated). In 1997, two private competing land owners, Legal & General and Bracknell Regeneration Trust<sup>8</sup> (that later formed BRP) developed schemes for comprehensive redevelopment of the town centre. Following a Public Inquiry in 1999, in 2001 the Secretary of State refused planning permission of all three proposals on the grounds that they were too large, did not integrate the existing shops and could potentially damage nearby towns (BFBC website).

With this in mind, in 2001 BFBC began discussions with consultants to discuss future plans for the town redevelopment. In order to increase the chances of the next proposal being accepted BFBC made the decision to incorporate an energy element in conjunction with the regeneration and redevelopment of the town centre, as renewable energy was a key focus of UK Government policy. They also commissioned a retail feasibility study of Bracknell town centre in February 2002 to ensure that any proposal was of a size appropriate to the needs of the town. This was funded by the Energy Saving Trust (EST), a not-for-profit organization funded by Government and the private sector. The EST aims to achieve sustainable use of energy and cut carbon emissions through encouraging energy efficiency and the integration of renewable energy sources

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<sup>8</sup> Private partnership previously formed between Allied London Properties Limited and Schroders Exempt Property Unit Trust.

([www.energysavingtrust.co.uk/](http://www.energysavingtrust.co.uk/)). The feasibility study was conducted by Thames Valley Energy Agency (TV Energy) ([www.tvenergy.org/](http://www.tvenergy.org/)). TV Energy assessed the town centre's energy needs in order that a green energy source solution suitable for the size of the town centre could be developed.

The development of the 'vision' involved multiple actors, with a variety of expectations at the local, regional, national and European levels. As the Masterplan focused on the redevelopment of the entire town centre there was a complex mix of stakeholders and networks, including those in the shopping and leisure sectors, housing, business and transport. The energy centre element of the scheme also involved multiple stakeholders, funders and partners. (Please see Appendix D for an overview of the network of stakeholders and funders involved in this case study).

In April 2003, two competing landowners, Legal & General and Bracknell Regeneration Trust, came together to form, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership (BRP). BRP was responsible for the planning of the town centre working closely with BFBC and Stanhope Plc, who were appointed to manage the development of the project, coordinate the professional team and manage the build process. BRP appointed two architects, Richard Rogers Partnership, who were responsible for master planning, and Chapman Taylor, who specialized in the retail sector. There were a large number of consultants also working on the redevelopment, including quantity surveyors, environmental consultants, movement and space analysts, traffic consultants, development and planning lawyers, planning consultants, property lawyers, development consultants and construction lawyers.

BFBC sought to redevelop through what it saw as updating and improving the existing built environment in the town centre. BFBC claimed that part of achieving this aim was through renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives to heat and cool, and power buildings within the town centre. BFBC stated they would be environmentally irresponsible if they engaged in urban redevelopment without incorporating a sustainable approach to energy. BFBC also viewed the introduction of renewable energy and energy efficiency as 'a unique opportunity to show itself as an innovator and leader in this area by making the Town Centre demonstrably energy efficient' (BFBC 09/02 Masterplan, p13). BFBC needed funding to develop the energy centre and became involved in the European RENAISSANCE project. BFBC felt that inclusion in such as project would provide further opportunity to exhibit its claims to be a 'high performing' local authority, 'become a flagship European project and to lead in the Thames Valley and the South East more generally' (BFBC 09/02 Final Report p13). A representative from BFBC stated during interview that the redevelopment of the town centre was its main priority and whilst renewable energy and energy efficiency were part of the overall Masterplan, it was not the key focus.

BFBC stated that it would work in partnership with TV Energy to develop the energy centre. TV Energy was established in 2001 by Dr Keith Richards ([www.tvenergy.org/](http://www.tvenergy.org/)), and has described itself as a 'one stop shop' for all matters relating to the 'understanding, promotion and delivery of renewable energy projects' locally, regionally and internationally (TV Energy website). TV Energy has a number of spin out companies including TV Bioenergy Limited as a wholly owned subsidiary to trade in wood fuel, supplying hundreds of tonnes to local UK projects, and TV Bioenergy (coppice) Limited which was established soon after as a separate trading company and the UK's third coppice producer group. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TV Energy was also project manager for the European RENNAISAANCE project.

TV Energy placed emphasis on the involvement of BFBC in the RENAISSANCE project as being advantageous, with its CEO claiming that: 'This is a major project which will put Bracknell on the map as a pan-European beacon for renewable energy' (University of Reading Newsletter). TV Energy also acknowledged that although there were centres in the UK that used different kinds of 'sustainable fuels' to produce energy, there were currently no comparative exemplars of the proposed energy centre for Bracknell. The distinctiveness of the energy centre proposed for Bracknell was that it was biomass fuelled CHP, it was proposed for a town centre lo-

cation therefore requiring the development of a heat and cooling distribution network and an ESCo to manage it. Thus Bracknell offered a ‘test-case’, and positioned itself as a renewable energy ‘leader’, which informed the bids for European and national grants.

The focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency agendas within Bracknell also needs to be set within the context of various political scales, including the European Commission, UK Government and the UK regional Government Office of the South East (GOSE). The European Commission’s Renewables Directive, for example, has been in place since 2001 and it aims to increase the European Union’s share of electricity produced from renewable energy sources to 21% (up from 15.2% in 2001), thus contributing to reach the overall target of 12% of energy consumption from renewables by 2010 (EurActiv website). The UK Government has proposed that 10% of the UK’s electricity requirements should be met from renewable sources by 2010, with an aspiration to reach 20% by 2020. The UK currently generates about 3% of its electricity in this way (DTI Energy Website). The GOSE also supports renewable energy development as the South East region currently only generates less than 1% of electricity from renewable sources (GOSE website).

The variety of expectations of these actors and the ways in which these actors claimed to be speaking on behalf of certain notions of ‘publics’ is captured in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 *Actors, expectations and ‘publics’*

Actor	Expectation	Speaking for ‘Publics’
BFBC	To redevelop the town centre, incorporating a local sustainable energy supply. To be a leader in energy efficiency and to become a flagship European project.	Benefits including job creation via use of renewables, diversification opportunities, training and education.
BRP	To transform Bracknell over the coming years, providing a revitalised centre with good housing, facilities for business, beautiful public spaces, excellent shops and leisure activities.	Benefits for ‘publics’ as residents?
TV Energy	To put Bracknell on the map as a pan-European beacon for renewable energy.	‘Publics’ as consumers, to provide education for communities, businesses, organisations and individuals.
EU Concerto programme	To increase the EU’s share of electricity produced from renewable energy sources. Consortium partners to increase the take-up of sustainable energy and learn from one another in the process.	Concerto projects providing social, environmental and economic benefits.
UK Government	To increase UK’s share of electricity produced from renewable sources, and specifically refers to the increased used of biomass and waste.	‘Publics’ seen in terms of diversification opportunities for farmers and foresters, in addition to job opportunities in growing, supply, and electricity plant building.
GOSE	To increase renewable energy development in the South East of England region.	Meeting regional energy targets.



#### 4. STEP 3: Understanding ‘participatory’ decision-making: negotiating expectations

Step three focuses on understanding the ways in which these expectations were negotiated over time. It became apparent at an early stage that the specific development of a biomass fuelled CHP energy plant was problematic and became an issue of contention.

The draft Masterplan was based on consultation with ‘community’ and business people and councillors of Bracknell and was unveiled for ‘public consultation’ in Bracknell in March/April 2002 ([www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknell-town-centre-consultation.pdf](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknell-town-centre-consultation.pdf)). The draft Masterplan did not include any details of the energy centre. The final Masterplan for the town centre redevelopment was subsequently unveiled in an exhibition over five days in Bracknell in December 2004. TV Energy and Stanhope Plc attended the exhibition as exhibition stallholders through which information, including Newsletters, regarding the plans for the energy centre on the roundabout. TV Energy claimed that this was the opportunity for people to come and speak to them and find out more about biomass, in terms of what it does and how wood can be used to be carbon neutral.

One small business owner, Mark Ovenden, who lived and worked close to the site of the proposed centre attended the exhibition and was ‘shocked’ to hear of the plans for the development of the energy centre as, he claimed, no letters had been sent to residents and no prior consultation had taken place. At the exhibition, Ovenden asked Stanhope Plc for more information, and whilst they could not provide him with further details at that time, they did send him a letter the following February. The letter made reference to a similar development in Southampton but it did not provide any definitive details of the development proposed for Bracknell. Ovenden claimed that it was at this point he:

realised that they [BFBC] had not done any of the research and the due diligence to find out what it was all going to become. They were going for the outline application based on a thought process which was not based on anything physical or tangible.

Ovenden stated that he subsequently began asking local residents near to the proposed site what they knew about the energy centre and from this it became apparent to him, that they too had a lack of knowledge about this. Ovenden organised what he referred to as a ‘regional public meeting’ in March 2005 at a Café close to the proposed energy centre development. Between 70 to 80 people attended and the purpose of the meeting ostensibly was to provide an overview of the letter from Stanhope Plc and to discuss what action to take. Ovenden claimed that residents attending the meeting were upset and angry with the behaviour of BFBC because, in his opinion, they had been given no prior notice of the development.

Ovenden stated that at this meeting ‘The Residents’ decided to demand a public meeting to achieve greater clarity from council planners and developers about what the plant would look like and to gain more information generally. Ovenden explained that residents had nominated him to contact the Council requesting that he be able to attend any future meetings regarding the energy centre. A formal private meeting to allow Ovenden to ask questions regarding the energy centre was arranged for 21 April 2005. This meeting was attended by council officers, TV Energy, Stanhope and Bracknell town centre renewable energy steering group. Whilst Councillor Terry Mills, Chairman of the Bracknell town centre renewable energy steering group felt that the meeting was very ‘positive and productive’ (IC Berkshire, 21 April 2005), Mark Ovenden had a different opinion, claiming during interview:

It was apparent from the first meeting that they weren’t prepared to discuss any of it with it. They were just simply making statements which were an attempt to appease us.

Following from this, Ovenden felt that legal representation was necessary and personally funded and appointed Peter Simpson OBE, a solicitor with knowledge of planning law. Ovenden and Simpson attended further meetings with BFBC and the borough's solicitor. When questioned of the success of these meetings Ovenden stated:

They didn't provide me any information about what a biomass plant was, other than to say there were lots of them all around the world and there was a nice one in Sweden I could have a look at on the website. But when I asked them where the wood would be coming from, where the transports routes would be, what size it would be, the visual design, they had no idea except to say it will be a wonderful thing and we must think about global warming. I said I agree, we all agree as residents, but we want to know what is happening literally on our doorstep, and they either wouldn't or couldn't provide us with the information.

Ovenden and 'The Residents' had mustered support for opposition of the energy centre from a number of sources. Bracknell MP, Andrew MacKay, wrote letters to the GOSE stating that he fully supported their case and that the Council had been negligent by not considering alternative sites. The local doctors in a surgery close to the development site felt the site was inappropriate and the local media reported on what is suggested was a lack of information provided on the energy centre. Friends of the Earth (FoE) Bracknell also held two meetings on 14 June and 8 November 2005 to discuss the energy centre. FoE supported the energy centre in principle, but did feel that the site was inappropriate. FoE compiled a list of questions for BFBC but argued that questions were not fully answered, for example questions relating to clarity of fuel supply. Bill Dowling of FoE stated:

I am very disappointed to have not yet received any more answers, or even helpful guesstimates to the outstanding questions we have raised. In the absence of this information the local FoE can only conclude that the plans for this energy centre really are only 'half baked', and that the local residents are absolutely right to mount their protest... This is the nub of the problem here, too many uncertainties at the outline planning stage (Email correspondence to Consultant Planner, BFBC).

Ovenden claimed that 'The Residents' and himself were keen for the redevelopment and regeneration of the town centre to go ahead and only opposed the energy centre development part of it. Ovenden stated that 'The Residents' and himself were aware that their opposition to the energy centre could lead to a judicial review and the possibility of long delays for the whole town centre redevelopment. Ovenden claimed that in order to try and ensure this did not happen, they made suggestions to BFBC of how the redevelopment of the town centre could still go ahead whilst putting the energy centre development on hold. A suggestion included putting the energy centre development as a sub-clause on the outline planning application which could be applied for at a later date. Ovenden claimed that BFBC were not prepared to do this. In his opinion this was because BFBC had already spent a lot of money putting together the outline planning application and they were unwilling to spend any further time or money making changes to this.

On 9 February 2006, BFBC held a 'special' meeting to consider the outline planning application. Members of the Planning & Highways Committee, local councillors, local residents and invited guests attended the meeting and given the opportunity to express their views. The objections to the energy centre were summarized by the Planning & Highways Committee in their report of the proceedings:

- a. The development should be on an industrial estate/an alternative site should be chosen/this is a residential area and such a building is appropriate here.
- b. The CHP will be an eyesore, particularly at this important entrance to the town.
- c. The CHP will add to pollution, pump carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and cause fumes affecting the health of residents.
- d. The plant will generate noise nuisance around the clock.

- e. Traffic in the area is already excessive and additional HGV deliveries to the plant will cause more noise, fumes and disruption.
- f. The 3M roundabout is a wildlife haven and it should be protected from development. (BFBC, Planning and Highways Committee, Special Report, February 2006, p218)

During interview Ovenden stated that throughout the whole process that residents had been treated ‘appallingly’. He argued:

They haven’t been informed, they have not been sent information, they haven’t been kept up to date, other than what we have squeezed out of the local Council...It was a last minute thing, tagged on, surreptitiously done and all of the residents felt that the Council had been underhanded and slid it through... They haven’t got anything like it in the UK and we would then be the guinea pig.

The special meeting in February 2006 reinforced the position of ‘The Residents’ opposition to the energy centre. In light of this, BFBC acknowledged that the energy centre was likely to attract continued opposition, leading to the possibility of the abandonment of the whole Masterplan. As a representative from BFBC stated, ‘there was nothing significant for them to worry about but it was a case of ‘not-in-my-back-yard’...suddenly we are getting this kind of tainted brush that’s all been about the renewable energy centre’. BFBC are currently discussing whether to go ahead with the energy centre component of the Masterplan or develop a revised renewable energy and energy efficiency initiative. Discussions were being held in July 2006 and a decision has yet to be announced.

Table 4.1 *Forms of participation in the Bracknell Case*

Type	Organisers	Where	Involvement	Purpose
Consultation workshops	BFBC	Local Bracknell venues	Local community Business people Local Councillors Invited guests	To guide the formation of the Masterplan
Staffed Exhibition	BFBC	Former Bradford and Bingley Shop	Local residents	To gain comments on the draft Masterplan
Environment Fair/Exhibition	TV Energy	Charles Square	Local residents Interested parties	Launch of Masterplan
Consultation exercises	BFBC	Local Bracknell venues (400 individual letters, 50 notices around the site, statutory notices in the local press)	Statutory bodies Adjoining local authorities Parish councils Utility providers Internal Council departments General public	To gain feedback on the application
Regional public meeting	Mark Ovenden	Café, Binfield Road	70/80 local residents	To discuss the energy centre
Support letters	Local residents	GOSE	Bracknell MP Andrew MacKay Local residents	MP wrote to GOSE to back the resident’s case
Formal private meeting	BFBC	Council Offices	Core campaigners Council officers TV Energy Stanhope Plc	To answer residents questions

Type	Organisers	Where	Involvement	Purpose
Meetings	FoE	Coppers Hill Centre (2 in total)	Members of FoE Local residents Interested parties	To prepare questions regarding the energy centre & discuss their stance on the issue
Newletters	BFBC	Local community (3 in total)	TV Energy BRP BFBC	To keep residents up to date with the plans for the energy centre & provide additional information requested by residents
'Special' formal meeting	Planning & Highways Committee, BFBC	Sandy Lane Primary School, Bracknell	Planning & Highways Committee Local councillors Local residents Invited guests	To consider the outline planning application

## 5. STEP 4: From Visions to Actualities

The primary vision for the purposes of this case study was the redevelopment and regeneration of Bracknell town centre, driven by BFBC and BRP in the form of a Masterplan; and the additional plans to link urban regeneration to energy strategy by developing a biomass fuelled CHP centre, driven by BFBC, TV Energy and the RENAISSANCE project. To date, this vision has not been met largely because of opposition to the energy centre. The reasons for this are four-fold: 1) site and location 2) lack of consultation 3) funding complexities and 4) the procurement process.

Firstly, the siting of the energy centre was a major issue of contention. BFBC claimed that the roundabout had been chosen because the energy plant needed to be close to the town centre in order to supply energy to local buildings. However, 'The Residents' argued that the plant should not be located in a residential area and they also raised concerns regarding the height of the stack, the noise and the emissions it would generate. The Planning & Highways Committee at BFBC stated that Government advice and planning policy did not specify that CHP plants must be confined to industrial estates or discreet locations (BFBC, Planning and Highways Committee, Special Report, February 2006).

Secondly, lack of consultation with local 'residents' at an early stage led to further problems. Ovenden claimed that 'residents' living close to the proposed energy centre were upset that they had not been consulted and when they did learn about the proposed energy centre there were not enough details available for them to be able to make an informed decision. This lack of consultation was acknowledged by a representative from TV Energy who stated:

The problem was that we allowed too much time to go by without doing enough consultation so that local residents became very entrenched in their views and were not then perhaps open to discussion. They had made their views and they weren't going to change them no matter how hard we tried to explain what we were doing.

During interview, a representative from TV Energy stated that they felt that they should have worked harder at promoting the environmental credentials of biomass schemes at an earlier stage. As the energy centre was the first of its kind in the UK in terms of it being in a town centre residential location, Ovenden claimed that 'The Residents' were unhappy at the prospect of being 'guinea pigs'.

Thirdly, due to the large scale complexity of the town centre redevelopment and combined initiative of the energy centre, problems arose related to funding. Due to the outline planning application being delayed as a result of opposition to the energy centre, EST funding was not extended. BFBC argued that major regeneration schemes of this complexity and size take 10 to 15 years to come forward and the current energy funding streams available are much shorter term and do not therefore provide the capital to support initiatives such as the energy centre. BFBC also faced difficulties which were a result of trying to gain additional funding for the energy centre by becoming involved in a European grant programme via RENAISSANCE, where they grossly underestimated the complexity of aligning this funding with broader objectives.

Fourthly, the development of the energy centre would require the establishment of an ESCo. However BFBC encountered further difficulties when considering this, in relation to the procurement process. The new town centre was not built when BFBC went out to procurement for the establishment of an ESCo. Consequently BFBC stated that the feedback was an ESCo was not 'commercially viable' because a high level of investment in the energy centre was required without any guarantees that users would take their energy.

In summary, the key lessons learned centre around the importance of site location and lack of public consultation at an early stage. This lack of initial consultation regarding the energy centre led to feelings of distrust of BFBC and this was much harder to regain once it had been lost. Ovenden claimed that 'The Residents' did not feel comfortable with BFBC's argument that the energy plant would be a 'wonderful thing' and that residents should trust them when they said that they could be involved in the final designs and that the plant would be environmentally sound and safe.

## 6. Lessons Learned

Four sets of lessons, in particular, can be gleaned from this case:

1. The issue of being an 'early mover'  
Early mover status meant few precedents to draw upon and little local knowledge.
2. The politics of integrating energy initiatives into wider 'regeneration' schemes  
The integration of urban regeneration and energy initiatives created tensions - particularly in terms of funding timescales, varying 'stakeholders'' priorities and difficulties in coordinating these - where despite a degree of desirability in integrating energy into a major redevelopment scheme there was a difficulty in achieving this.
3. Related complexity of funding issues  
The proposed integration and interconnection between wider urban regeneration and energy required integrating a variety of different funding streams. The coordination of these funding streams and their timescales proved to be problematic.
4. Leading to: lack of clarity as to who engages  
The multiplicity of actors involved in the initiative led to a lack of clarity about who was engaging with the public, who should and in what ways.

## 7. Comparative lessons from the two cases

Two sets of lessons can be drawn from looking comparatively across the two cases:

1 Lessons from being 'first mover'

The lessons of being 'first mover' were different between the two cases: the Cricklade case suggests 'public engagement' was too late - as a response to problems - whilst in the Bracknell case 'public engagement' was much earlier. This raises issues about *when* forms of public engagement should occur as part of a process. Indeed there were issues in finding *explicit processes* within which public engagement could be situated. This led to a lack of clarity about how public engagement should occur and whom it should involve.

2 Issues of scale

An issue apparent in both cases was the 'gap' between the national scale at which government policy and targets were articulated and local issues of siting and location of particular biomass initiatives - between the general and particular. There are important issues of communication and translation of national policy at local scales: why here, why now and with what consequence?

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## Appendix A Chronology of notable events in the North Wiltshire case

May 2000	Ambient Energy submitted the planning application.
May 2000	Workshops held for farmers to identify local interest in turning arable land to willow production.
Jul 2000	Ambient Energy gave a presentation to Cricklade residents and the BLOT pressure group was established.
Aug 2000	District councillors visited the proposed site for the development.
5 Sep 2000	Prior to the meeting Cricklade Town Council submitted a report detailing objections to the plans. 40 people from Cricklade attended a meeting with the council in Chippenham Town Hall to voice opposition to power station. Over 400 letters of complaint were submitted. 5 local people spoke at the council meeting voicing their concerns and a representative from Ambient Energy also spoke at the meeting. Decision on plans delayed to allow councillors to make a closer inspection. A total of 31 councillors voted to look at the site and 5 voted against.
26 Sep 2000	Council meeting in Chippenham, with more than 100 people in attendance. The North Wiltshire District Council rejected the planning application.
3 Oct 2000	Special council meeting held. Councillors rejected the plans by 19 votes to 13.
Jan 2001	Ambient Energy lodged an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.
10 Feb 2001	Letter signing session held between 9am and 5pm where people could sign a number of different versions of pre-written letters, which were also available from Cricklade Council Offices and Cricklade library.
19 Feb 2001	Residents to send comments on the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate by this date.
13 Mar 2001	Pre-inquiry meeting held in Chippenham, where lawyers representing Ambient Energy and the district council told planning inspector Edward Simpson that the recent closure of the countryside footpaths and byways as a result of the foot and mouth crisis could hamper the gathering and preparation of evidence for the inquiry.
Apr 2001	Flyers were posted through the post boxes of Cricklade homes opposing the biomass power station.
3 May 2001	Final signing session held between 6pm and 9pm where people could sign a number of different versions of pre-written letters.
9 May 2001	Public Inquiry held over 5 days from 9 <sup>th</sup> May and 16 <sup>th</sup> May at the Cricklade Hotel and Country Club. The hearing also included a special evening meeting to accommodate local residents who could not attend the day time proceedings.
22 May 2001	Public Inquiry extended for two days (22 <sup>nd</sup> and 23 <sup>rd</sup> May) from 10am to 5pm due to the weight of the evidence still to be heard. The inquiry was held at the White Horse Social Club in Cricklade High Street and was open to the public.
May 2001	Decision delayed until 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2001 when all the region's footpaths that are shut due to foot and mouth are re-opened.
Sep 2001	Planning Inspectorate decision opposed the development on the grounds that the scheme would have a noticeable and significant effect on the character and amenity of the landscape.

## Appendix B Local opposition to the development

*Local opposition to the development included the following:*

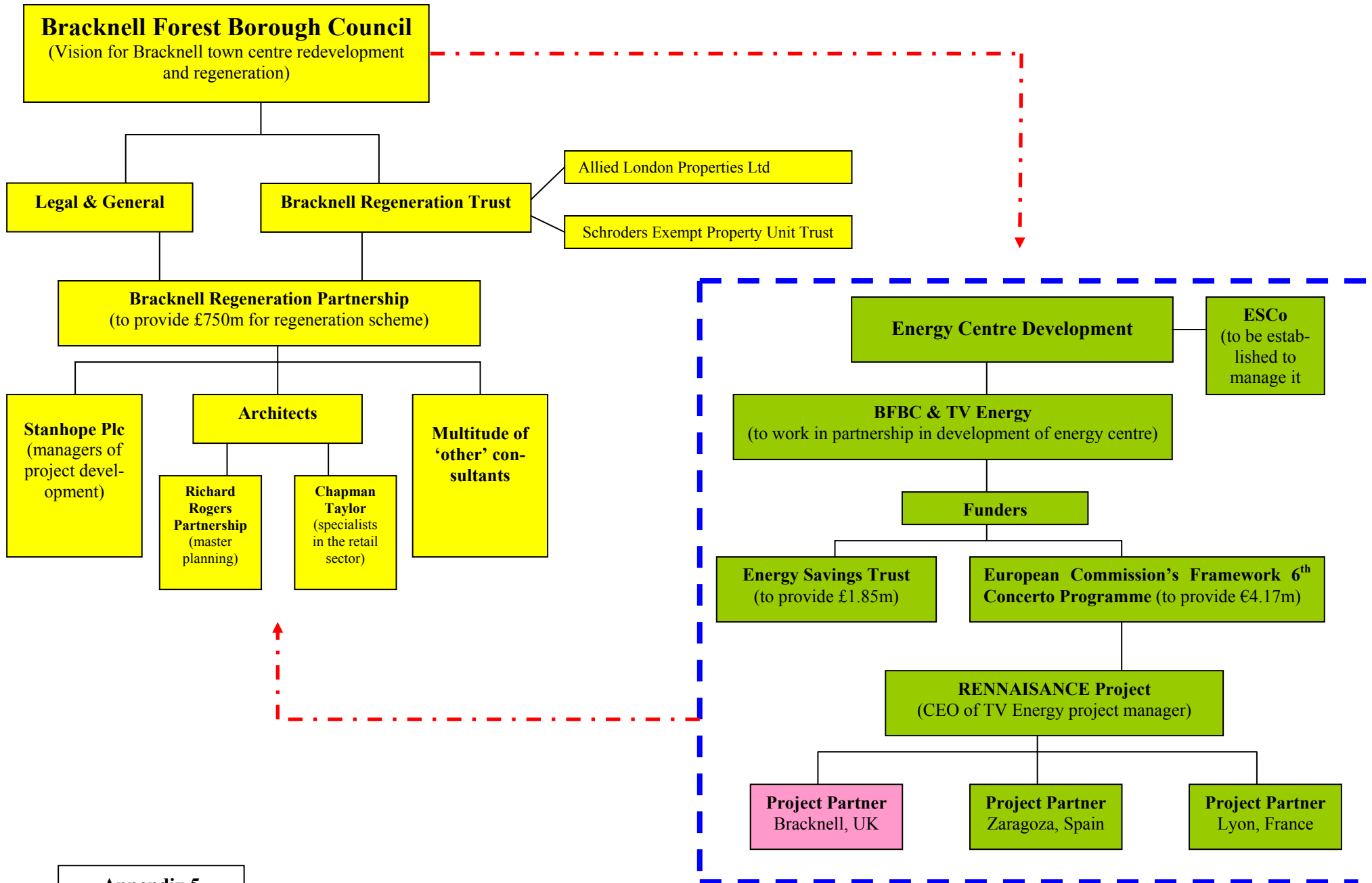
- inappropriate location selected for the power plant,
- close proximity to local residents,
- emission of greenhouse gases and water vapour,
- unpleasant odour,
- emission of light at night,
- vibration and noise from the power plant,
- fear of public health hazards,
- nuisance from traffic, increases in traffic movement and flow of high speed vehicles,
- accidents and noise,
- fear of negative impacts to wildlife and ecosystems, aquatic environment and rural buffer zone,
- negative impact on the local weather system,
- undermining openness,
- visual effects resulting from the relative height of chimneys and other associated structures,
- negative effects on cultural heritage and archaeological significance,
- low benefits to local community compared to associated social and environmental costs,
- negative effect on tourism and business,
- no compensation to local people,
- negative effect on property prices,
- no significant employment opportunity for local people.

## Appendix C Main issues raised by BLOT

- The proposal would set a precedent for further industrial development and deters people moving into the area.
- It would contradict local designation policies, namely the Area of Special Archaeological Significance and the Rural Buzzer Zone.
- It would lead to a huge increase in daily Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on the A491 trunk road.
- Six chimneys of the proposed plant are very tall and thus affect the view from afar.
- 117 million litres per year of water would be steamed into the atmosphere.
- The plant would give rise to odour, dust noise and emissions nuisances.
- There may be long-term uncertainties about the general health impacts caused by the plant.
- There could be unquantifiable damage to Cricklade's south east meadows, flora, fauna and unique water systems.
- It was not clear if there would be any compensation to those affected, if anything would go wrong in/with the plant.
- There would be negative effects on property prices in the area.

## Appendix D Chronology of notable events in the Bracknell Case

1997	3 most significant planning applications submitted to the BFBC.
Mar 1999	Public Inquiry to consider all 3 planning applications.
May 2001	John Prescott refuses town redevelopment plans from both Legal & General and Bracknell Regeneration Trust on the basis that both are too big.
Oct 2001	BFBC appoint professional consultants to discuss future redevelopment plans for Bracknell.
2001/2002	Community leaders meet to discuss Bracknell Town Centre Masterplan.
2001/2002	BFBC hold workshops with community and business people and councillors to get their views.
Feb 2002	BFBC commission a retail feasibility study of Bracknell town centre.
Mar/Apr 2002	Draft Masterplan unveiled for public consultation in the former Bradford & Bingley in the High Street.
Apr 2002	Public consultation ends.
Jul 2002	Masterplan receives cross party support and is approved.
Sep 2002	The final Masterplan is published by BFBC.
Dec 2003	Application to European Commission's 6 <sup>th</sup> Framework Concerto Programme.
Apr 2003	Town's major landowners Legal & General and Schroders Exempt Property Unit Trust, formed BRP and entered a partnership to work together.
May 2004	BRP receive confirmation that they have received Concerto funding.
Jul 2004	Application to the Energy Savings Trust's Community Energy Programme, by BFBC and TV Energy.
Nov 2004	BRP submit the outline planning application.
Nov 2004	Consultation exercises.
Dec 2004	Exhibition in Charles Square to launch Masterplan, including plans for the energy centre.
Mar 2005	Residents hold a regional public meeting at the Café on Binfield Road to discuss letter from Stanhope and energy centre.
Mar 2005	Residents demand a public meeting where they can ask experts, applicant and planning officers about plans for a green power plant to be built near their homes.
Mar 2005	Newsletter to residents with details of the energy centre.
Mar 2005	Consultation exercises.
19 Apr 2005	Formal private meeting between core campaigners, council officers, representatives from TV Energy and Stanhope. Opportunity for residents to ask questions. 2 further meetings held with the Borough Council's Solicitor and Resident's Councillor.
14 Jun 2005	FoE meeting to prepare a list of questions to be passed on to BFBC.
August 2005	Newsletter to residents with details of the energy centre.
Nov 2005	Consultation exercises.
8 Nov 2005	FoE meeting to discuss if they should give support to the Energy Centre. It was poorly attended with no residents. 8pm, Coppers Hill Centre.
9 Feb 2006	Planning & Highways meeting, 7.30pm Sandy Lane Primary School. Residents to voice objections.
July 2006	BRP discuss whether to go ahead with the energy centre or submit a revised proposal with RENAISSANCE partners.



Appendix 5

