

NORTHAMPTON ENERGY REVIEW SURVEY 2006

I. Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to seek the views of residents about the future of energy provision in the United Kingdom and in Northampton. It was carried out in conjunction with a public meeting that was held in Northampton on 29th August 2006 regarding energy policy.

The survey consisted of four main questions explore what direction people think energy in the UK should go in the coming years and how they relate energy provision to the environment. The questionnaire was issued to residents in the constituency of Northampton North throughout August 2006. The response was considerable and patterns can easily be identified in the answers that. For example there is a clear enthusiasm for renewable energy.

What makes this survey important is that Northampton is a fast growing town in a high growth area. If the UK is serious about facing up to the challenges of future energy requirements then how towns in growth areas such as Northampton confront them is of vital importance.

The answers of the respondents are presented and explained in the next section and a summary of the core findings is given in the conclusion. The key message to come out of this survey and the public meeting has been that public opinion appears to be ready to face up to the environmental challenges of the future.

II. The Main Findings

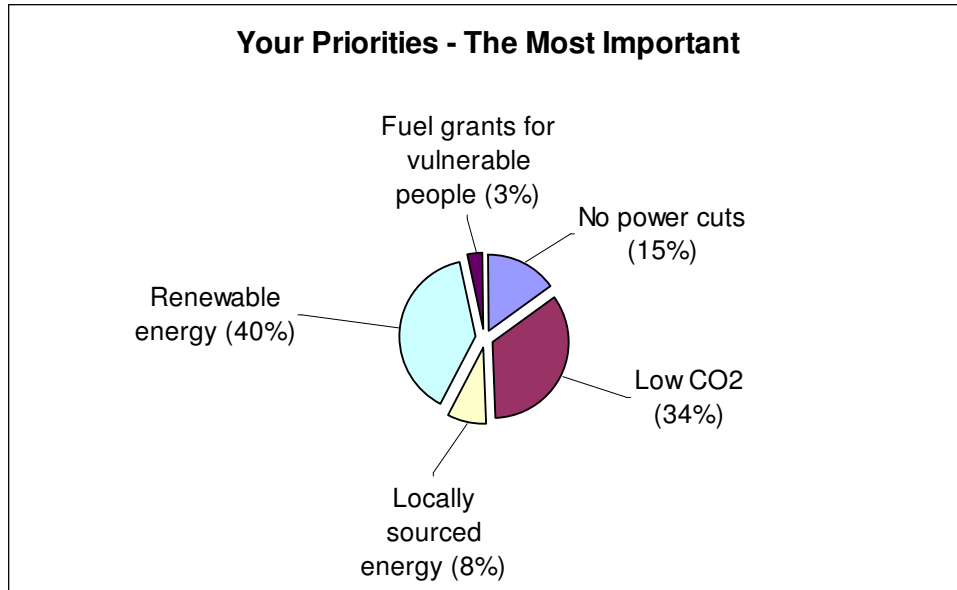
1) Your priorities

Please rank the following points by how important you think they are in the box after each statement. 1 is most important and 5 is least important:

- No power cuts Low CO2 emissions Locally sourced energy
- Using energy from renewable sources Fuel grants for vulnerable people

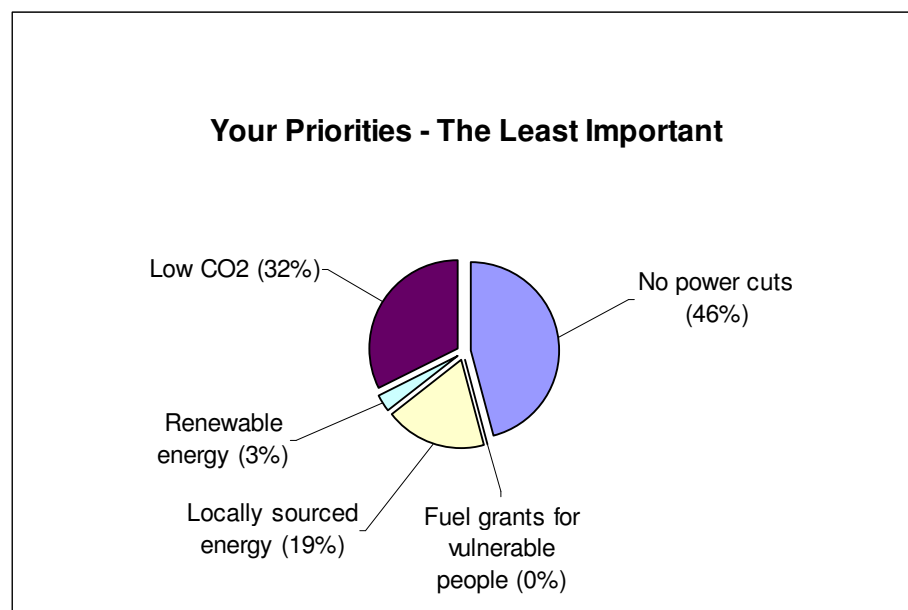
The purpose of the first question was to assess what the general public think should be the top priority for the UK with regard to energy and the environment. The results displayed in graph 1 below show us that a clear majority of people believe energy policy should either focus on lowering CO2 emissions or using more renewable sources. It is these two particular options that can be described as the most ‘environmentally friendly’ out of the five. The proportion of those believing lowering CO2 emissions should be the priority is thirty-four per cent and the proportion of those wanting more use of renewable energy is forty per cent, which means combined the two most eco-friendly options have seventy four per cent.

Graph 1



This finding is reinforced when the results in graph 2 show that nobody (zero per cent) chose lowering CO2 emissions as the least favoured option and only three per cent put more renewable energy as their last choice. Power cuts were most respondents lowest priority with forty-six per cent.

Graph 2

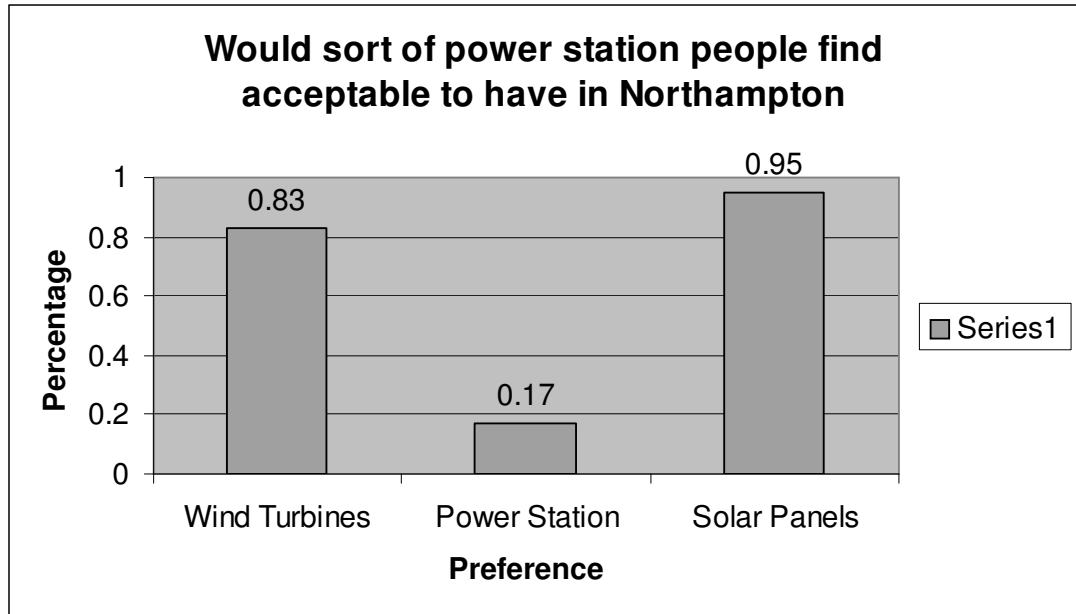


2) Energy generation types

Which of the following types of power generator would you be happy to have locally? Wind power turbine Nuclear power station Solar panels

The second question asks what type of power generator people would accept locally in Northampton. Respondents often chose more than one answer and the results are displayed below in graph 3. We can see that with ninety-five percent most found solar panels the preferred option with a nuclear power station being last. The response to this question shows again that many find renewable energy an incredibly attractive option.

Graph 3

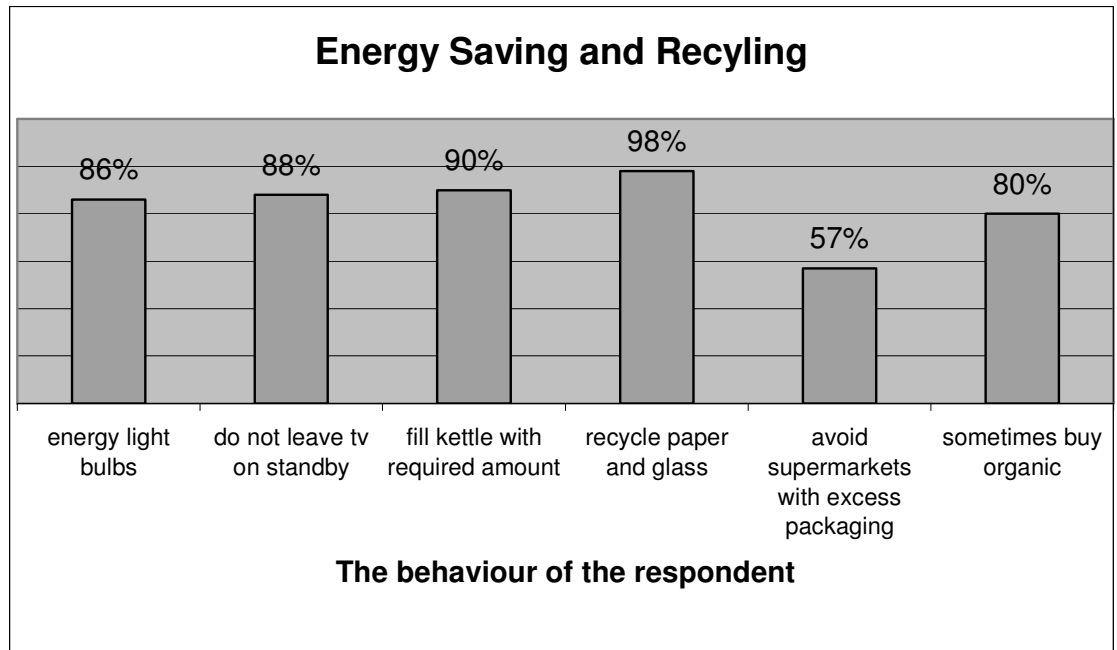


3) Energy saving and recycling. What do you do?

- I use energy efficient light bulbs. I do not leave my TV on standby all day
- I fill the kettle to the required amount I recycle paper and glass
- I avoid supermarkets with excessive packaging I sometimes buy organic

This question looks at identifying the existing habits of people to see whether stated support for the environment translates into action in respondents' every day life. Overall answers to this question show there is already an enormous environmental awareness in Northampton. For example, ninety-eight percent of respondents recycle glass and paper and eight-eight percent ensure that their TV is not left on standby. Every measure shows that people in Northampton are keen to protect the environment and prepared to change their habits to do so. The results are below in graph 4.

Graph 4



4) Nuclear

Tick as many box as apply to you:

I am happy for nuclear power to continue to be part of the UK energy mix:

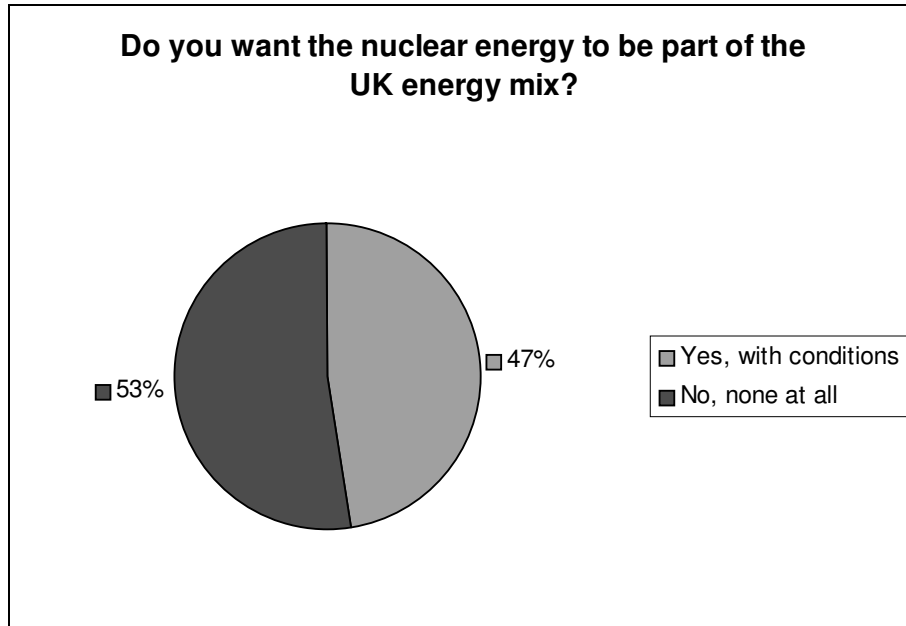
- if it can deliver significant reductions in CO2 emissions
- if it means my energy bills are lower
- if it makes us less dependent on fuels from areas such as the Middle East.

Or

- I am not happy for nuclear energy to continue to be part of the UK energy mix.

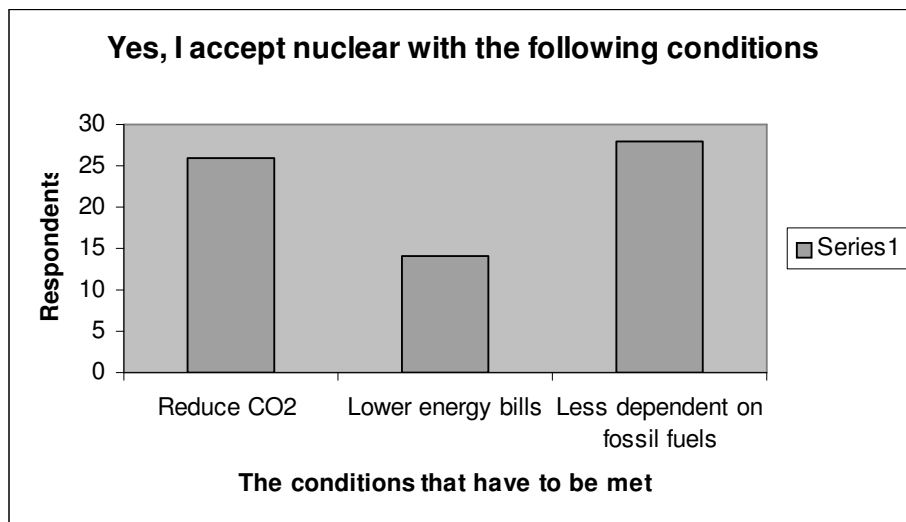
Looking at graph 5 we can see that views on nuclear are surprisingly divided. Nearly half of respondents would accept the continued use of nuclear power with conditions with the other half opposing it regardless.

Graph 5



A further analysis of the forty-seven per cent of respondents who are prepared to accept nuclear power but with conditions can be seen from graph 6. This graph shows us that the main reason for them supporting nuclear power is that it could reduce UK reliance on fossil fuels coming from countries in the Middle East. Reducing CO2 emissions was a close second and interestingly lower energy bills came third.

Graph 6



III. Conclusion

This survey found that there is strong support for environmentally friendly energy provision and in particular a greater move towards using more renewable forms such as

wind and solar. A surprising number of people do see a role for nuclear power if it can meet certain conditions **although others are not persuaded**. To summarise,

- Northampton has a large degree of public awareness about the environmental issues such as CO2 emissions.
- This awareness translates into action in the way people run their homes and live their lives – with a high percentage of people developing good environmental habits, such as using low energy light-bulbs.
- Public opinion is split about nuclear power. Nearly half of respondents are prepared to see it as part of the UK energy mix if it will result in a reduction of CO2 emissions and dependence on fossil fuels from unstable states.
- There is a public desire to see more use of renewable energy.

This report provides a strong foundation from which Northampton can develop its environmental policies and opportunities. There will be an chance for anyone who is interested in energy and environmental policy to join a discussion in Northampton with a Government Minister in early 2007 about how to take the conclusions of this research forward. Sally Keeble's office will contact you about this nearer the time.