

From: daniel bal [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 January 2025 18:05
To: Rampion2
Subject: Local representation against Rampion II

Response to the Secretary of State Request for Information

Interested Party Number 20045181

Dear Sir

I write this final representation letter on a freezing Friday 10th January morning, the BBC news today (Centrica comment) is saying our natural gas reserves are running out in a week and there has been no wind or solar generation in over a week...the UK has under invested in energy infrastructure for decades BUT we should be cautious of acting and destroying the very environment we are trying so hard to protect, we need change, that we can all agree, but we need the right change in the right location for future generations...we need a NationWide strategy and not spend on ad hoc sporadic planning applications from disparate corporations.

Introduction

I am a resident of the Cowfold Village community and member of the Cowfold V Rampion action group. I live along [REDACTED] and have been writing my representations against Rampion II since the beginning of the examination period. For the record I am very much in support of green energy and have been building zero carbon homes for over 10 years, well before it became as popular as it is now.

However, green infrastructure must be the 'right project in the right place' and there must be joined up thinking and a UK wide strategy for its implementation.

In this representation I will argue that yes we need to build more energy infrastructure but we are in danger of allowing large corporations to dictate where and when and destroy the very countryside we want to protect, yet again as with the Water Industry in previous decades, big business wins, funds and profits flow off shore via dividends and the working man has to pick up the losses. This behaviour cannot be allowed to continue.

Is the net carbon valuation equation correct, are we looking at the whole life cycle carbon emissions from our green infrastructure planning permissions - from construction to operation to de-commissioning (often not included), environmental damage in perpetuity,

infinite landscape devaluation - all valued against green energy for 25 years....the conclusion is not as one sided as big business promotes, which is why green infrastructure needs to be located in the RIGHT location to minimise long term damage and bolster the positives of green energy.

During the examination period there have been many detailed concerns voiced by the local community and I assume these have all been read and digested by both PINS and the Department. I would like to list in summary a few points pertinent to my personal opinions on the application and not delve into details which have already been stated in vast detail during the whole examination period by both myself and other local residents.

Points of Note

Ecology / Environment

One of the major criticisms of Rampion during the whole examination process was the quality of the surveys undertaken and the reliance on desktop surveys only, even when people flagged up the issues from the beginning. This was expertly and perfectly highlighted by the Cratemans Farm example which is a metaphor for how the applicant has acted on many sites and surveys in Sussex.

Cratemans Farm and its priority habitats and wild flower meadows were flagged to Rampion from the onset. However the farmer was both ignored and bullied (see 10th December PINS letter from owner) on many occasions and the applicant tried to bulldoze over his legitimate concerns. Only in the last few weeks, after months of local lobbying and having to pay an ecologist to verify the community's concerns, Natural England have now included the meadows in their Priority Habitat Inventory as Lowland Meadows, which is very rare in the Horsham area. This is extremely important as much of the cable route passes through lands which due to being undisturbed for years have not been scientifically surveyed, the applicant has dismissed all such lands but they are areas which have environmental significance. Indeed the Ecologist who surveyed Cratemans Farm said the meadows were better than a nearby SSI site he had surveyed. This area is a critically endangered habitat that the applicant was quite willing to destroy and ignore.

If Rampion act like this on this site how can their other site surveys be believed or trusted. Their desk top surveys on sky larks, insects, badgers, reptiles and many other species can now be called into question. They have vast resources to spend on genetic professional reports amounting to thousands of pages of 'copy and paste' text against local working people who have no money to counter such desktop surveys. The system is not fair, it is asymmetrical in nature and the environment suffers and will be destroyed.

We, as a community do not believe the ecology surveys provided by Rampion, and on the one site we could afford to employ an ecologist Natural England agreed with us.

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in Europe and [REDACTED] the Environment Secretary should be aware of what is happening on this site and many others in the UK. Big business paying its way through the planning process destroying the countryside

for future generations long after the wind farms pass their short term life span. The mitigations listed in the application are low due to the downplaying of the significance of the assets being destroyed, **this should be a larger negative in the carbon balance equation of green energy in this location.**

Traffic / Highways Surveys

If we question the above environmental surveys we need to question the vast amount of desk top traffic surveys presented by the applicant.

Indeed in much the same way as Cratemans Farm the local community and Cowfold Village in particular have been sending representations to Rampion about their concerns around traffic in Cowfold Village. Again Rampion have not listened to us as one of the most affected communities next to the proposed substation location at Oakendene (1 mile from the village).

The increased traffic through the village, the AQMA as stalled traffic loiter in long traffic jams will have an economic effect on us and village businesses and also a health effect as traffic fumes build up in the village and alongside the junior school. Kent Street was not even thought about and even dismissed by the applicant until 90% through the examination period when they had to ad hoc make up evidence and produce a report to prove it would be fine to bring enormous lorries down a rural country lane next to dog walkers and horse riders. The lack of engagement until the end of the examination period with Kent Street residents was something even the PINS inspectors found unbelievable at the Open Hearings in Brighton. The number of inspector's questions to the applicant regarding Kent Street was quite unbelievable and the astonishment in the room when Rampion talked about their plans for Kent Street was palpable. The proposed passing places will not function properly, and again it has been a desk top report with no onsite compatibility, it will be inevitable the strategy will cause accidents.

Again the damage to the lane, the traffic jams along the A272, the pollution in Cowfold, the loss to local businesses in Cowfold **should be a larger negative in the carbon balance equation of green energy in this location.**

Oakendene Sub Station Flood Risk

Again local people pointed out that contrary to Rampion's desk top surveys Oakendene Industrial Estate and the surrounding land often flooded in Winter. Yet again Rampion did not listen. They did not even know that fields around Oakendene flood every Winter, I own fields in the area, the land has around 10mm top soil with metres of clay underneath. The land is so wet and boggy locally that farmers (and myself) cannot put machinery on the land from October to May. The whole construction site will be quagmire of mud with surface water draining into the local swale network and into the river drainage system. The added silt in the local water courses will be an environmental disaster. Ofcourse Rampion will propose a detailed construction drainage plan in a pre planning condition sign off, but we all know how cash strapped local Councils are?

Councils do not have the financial resource to check planning condition violations until it is too late and the local river is flooded and silted up and nature suffers, again the wrong project in the wrong place **this should be a larger negative in the carbon balance equation of green energy in this location.**

Economic / Business harm

The economic business harm to the area around Cowfold has also been under reported. Again this harm should be highlighted and put against the benefits of having the sub station in this location. Jobs in the village, pubs, shops and the large current employment in the Oakendene Industrial Estate (hundreds of jobs) will all suffer and cause economic harm to the local area. Rampion have not fully reported on these negatives when analysing alternative sites which is their statutory obligation, instead they have chosen a sub station site and then tried to bend the facts to suit the site. The local community saw through this as can be evidenced in the examination submissions and I hope the Planning Inspectorate also saw it.

Summary

These are some of the local harms which have been underplayed by Rampion with 'copy and paste' reports and fake low base line surveys being used to prove facts. Rampion have tried to bulldoze through the process, this is not fair for local communities. They are not intending to use local labour and local companies for their work. Much of the work is highly specialised with world wide specialist teams contracted in for construction packages. From Rampion's own documents, submitted to the Examination, the project locally *"is estimated to support around 80 FTE jobs over the construction phase of Rampion 2"*, and almost none during the operation phase. The rest of the 4040 construction jobs will not be met locally. (Rampion's Deadline 6 submission "Socioeconomics" REP6-135 Section 17.9 and Table 17-25). And probably not even from the UK.

There is no local investment but only our country paying ever more money on bills to foreign owned companies who, via dividends, send profits off shore to foreign Sovereign Wealth funds and Canadian Pension funds as in the past on other such projects. Dale Vince the owner of Ecotricity said in 2024 that around 75% of wind farm profits are sent off shore. With ever increasing strike prices for these schemes just where does the UK benefit. We are substituting a reliance on foreign gas and oil imports for foreign Chinese supplied infrastructure (most sub station and wind turbine components come from China). Indeed [REDACTED], the former head of MI6, said on the radio on the 13/1/25 that in no circumstance should we be importing wind farm technology from China due to possible future hostile risks.

RWE will site green infrastructure in the cheapest place possible to maximise profit (as they legally have to do for shareholders), not caring about the mitigating factors local communities have listed. Rampion are supposed to look at all possible sites and choose the one with the least harm, as proved in the examination this has not be done. They have chosen to easiest and most profitable site for themselves and then massaged the data to fit this site, this should not be allowed to happen, it is insulting for local communities and local people.

We need to control this and the Government needs to dictate to big business what and where we need green infrastructure. We need it where the wind blows, in the North Sea and we need wind / solar / batteries to all be in certain industrial areas away from residential housing...we need a policy.

Decommissioning is the big elephant in the room. Older wind turbines in the US litter the countryside where nobody removes them after the 20-30 year lifespan and just build new ones next to the old. These green projects are bought and sold throughout their lifespan as the asset decreases in value, lower operational income, and different funds hold them with different credit ratings. Rather like musical chairs it will be the last owner who earns the least amount of money but has to decommission them..where will this money come from?

The decommissioning could cost as much as the construction in some cases, why is the not discussed more, why is this money not taken from the onset with the granting of planning permission and held as a bond. We have all seen the half built villas that litter the cost of the Mediterranean, we don't want the same in our countryside with sub stations, solar installations and battery sites littering the countryside in 20 years when nobody wants to pay to decommission and the companies owners are listed off shore and held in trusts....will Councils be forced to step in and pay?

Rampion and their plethora of consultants and advisors are extremely good at presenting the facts in a most favourable light as we have seen throughout the examination period. Indeed with ourselves we are an interested party with land they want to to claim a rental option on. We are not pleased with the agreement proposed and wanted discussions but on the Land Rights Tracker Rampion have stated that we are not interested in an agreement and they have tried to communicate, this is not true. How many other people have been treated in the same way, how can so few land agreements have been put in place to date, this shows that Rampion are failing in their minimal statutory duty.

This should not be allowed to happen, Government must step in and propose a UK wide strategy and tell companies where they want projects to be located. There is already enough space allocated on the Dogger Bank to meet National wind power targets and it is vastly more windy there than the English Channel. Only then can we have a joined up UK wide strategy which allows green infrastructure but not at the expense of destroying our environment. The climate crisis will not be solved by destroying our environment.

As [REDACTED] the environment minister, said in the recent Green Belt debate: **"Nature underpins all the Government's missions. Without nature, there is no economy, no health, no food and no society. Nature is at crisis point..."**

We need leadership, we need green infrastructure to be located in the right place and to tread lightly on our environment.

Cowfold and Oakendene is not the place.

I hope my representations will be read and that 'small people' have a valid voice against 'big business'.