

Letter of Representation from Cowfold Parish Council – dated 2 November 2023

This letter of representation is made by Cowfold Parish Council on behalf of its residents and provides a proportionate response, taking into account the varied views put forward by householders within the parish.

The Parish Council acknowledges the progress made in diverse green energy generation across Great Britain and the future scope of non-fossil based alternatives. However, the impact of the proposed Rampion 2 project on the road infrastructure, an ongoing cause of anxiety in Cowfold as the village stands on the confluence of the A272 and A281, is of concern to the whole community. Particular aspects of which are highlighted below at Serial 2.

Correspondence between the Chairman of the Parish Council and Rampion 2 (dated respectively 11 January 2023 and 24 April 2023) iterated and reiterated misgivings about the volume and clarity of communication between Rampion 2 and the local community which resulted in confusion, disinformation a lack of understanding regarding the potential longer term impacts on the parish. Cowfold Parish Council wishes to take a proactive part of the Development Consent Order process of inquiry and investigation supporting the Examining Authority's exhaustive process to ensure that further uncertainties do not proliferate.

Principal Areas of Concern Identified by the Parish Council on Behalf of Residents

1. Clarity of information provided:

As noted above the initial standards of communication(s) from Rampion 2 to residents, in particular those proximate to the proposed substation development site, were found to be varied and at times sparse. The volume of material given on the Rampion 2 website is exhaustive but not necessarily easily digested by the general public. This has been a recurring issue, raised directly with Rampion 2 by a number of residents and the Parish Council, the concerns remain outstanding causing perplexity and upset within the community.

2. Traffic, Road Safety and Levels of Pollution:

Cowfold parish is already subject to significant daily levels of traffic movements with concomitant concerns in specific areas of the village relating to air pollution levels. Rampion 2 initially provided, at a Parish Council sponsored Public Meeting held in November 2022, an overview of proposed traffic volumes specifically relating to the project. Sight of recent material indicates these have been revised by Rampion 2 showing the A272 and A281 (south) routes through Cowfold as being used for construction traffic. This is directly in contravention to the assurances given by Rampion 2 to the Parish Council and residents.

There are extant concerns over road safety usage, particularly in respect of traffic volume and speed management, as a number of recent accidents (November 2022 – October 2023) on both arms of the A272 east and west of Cowfold have demonstrated. Additional vehicular movements will enhance the possibility of further accidents and incidents. Increased traffic volume (heavy and light) is likely to see significant numbers of motor vehicles travel down adjacent narrow, single track roads which are unsuitable for such use.

Cowfold has a primary school, situated adjacent to the A272 (west) with parents bringing, often by foot, their children to the school five days per week. For those families which live within Cowfold village there is at least one major road (A272 or A281) to cross whilst walking their children to

school. Increased traffic is likely to impact on the already challenging road safety issues both pedestrian and vehicular for parents taking their children to or collecting them from the primary school.

3. Impacts on Local Economy:

Reservations have been expressed by a number of businesses in the parish, particularly in the proximate Oakendene Light Industrial Estate, about the impact of construction traffic on their ability to conduct, supply and fulfill their business obligations throughout the extended construction period. This in turn may impact on the continuation of these businesses in Cowfold and the supporting employment which they provide to the members of the local community.

4. Landscape and Ecological Impacts:

The earliest documented records of Cowfold date back between 1210-1232 (Common Era) and it has remained a primarily rural parish with areas of historic woodland, diverse wildlife and established ecology. Cowfold Parish Council, whilst appreciating that part of the Rampion 2 project requirements are the reinstatement of areas affected by the cable trenches and the provision of an effective and appropriate green screen/landscaping protocol around the substation, raises concerns about habitat disturbance. This is at a time when conservation groups have evidenced a 41% decline in UK species since the 1970s (Natural History Museum) with more than one in seven native species facing extinction. Clarification in respect of preserving this noteworthy landscape and its associated habitats is a matter of particular concern to the Parish Council and residents alike. The community looks to the Examining Authority to ensure that all government guidelines in respect of nature preservation and promotion are upheld.

5. In Conclusion:

As the formal representative body for the community and thus an Interested Party, Cowfold Parish Council wishes to play a proactive part for the duration of the Inquiry in addressing these issues identified in the Development Consent Order process.