

23 April 2024

EN010117: Application by Rampion Extension Limited for the Rampion 2 Offshore Windfarm – Letter of Representation by Cowfold Parish Council (20045197).

While not a statutory authority Cowfold Parish Council's role, to quote from the National Association of Local Councils guidance, is "to represent the local area and people who live in it... being an advocate for local residents". This is a responsibility which councillors take extremely seriously and endeavour to support, as far as their remit permits, the representative views of the parish.

The Parish Council remains dissatisfied with the evidence provided by the applicant demonstrating that sufficient traffic management planning and associated projected vehicular movement data has been identified and addressed effectively. Also the pronounced lack of consultation with wider parish residents relating to this particular aspect of the planning application.

Whilst appreciating that West Sussex County Council and the Highways Authority will provide technical evidence relating to these matters to the Examining Authority the voices of residents and local businesses also need to be heard. Many of these have been expressed independently to the Examining Authority. However, the Parish Council believes that on behalf of the wider parish the impact of potential increases in traffic movements both during the construction phase and throughout the life of the site, needs to be forcefully reiterated. For example Cowfold Parish Council seeks clarification from the applicant in respect of ongoing concerns among residents to suggestions of water bowser trucks travelling through Cowfold village to supply the construction site, thus amplifying traffic congestion issues. The proposed development is predicated on taking an already heavily utilised road network (specifically but not exclusively the A272, Bolney Road) to even more unacceptable levels of use. It is also noteworthy that Horsham District Council has undertaken a Horsham Transport Study (Santec December 2022) as part of its Local Plan Review. This found that when the local plan scenario outputs were modelled, the junction capacity analysis showed at least one arm of the A272/A281 roundabout north of Cowfold junction AM Peak and one arm of the A272/A281 roundabout south of Cowfold junction PM Peak would be over capacity (meaning increases in delays experienced by travellers as flows increase), even with the embedded highway mitigation to be provided elsewhere on the district's highway network in the draft local plan.

As the Examining Authority is already aware there are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS) within Horsham District, one of which is Cowfold (A272, Bolney Road). Horsham District Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2023 (Draft), Part 2, Infrastructure Provisions Within Horsham District, p.23 clearly states that "These two AQMAS are of particular relevance to any development which is close to, or is assessed as impacting on traffic levels through, Storrington or Cowfold". The Parish Council does not believe that the applicant has given sufficient thought or dedicated an appropriate level of consultation and planning to their documentation in respect of (major or minor) roads or haul routes usage. The risks of traffic over-saturation of the roads in and around the village of Cowfold, incorporating the wider parish, represents enhanced dangers to multiple elements of the community. Including those who travel through the village, i.e. road users in transit, as well as cyclists, motorcyclists and local pedestrians. Many of the latter, given the demographics of the community, are either parents with young children or residents of more mature years who may have degrees of impaired mobility. Currently, despite application to West Sussex County Council, Cowfold has no pedestrian crossing signalling system on the A272, Bolney Road to protect pedestrians' right of way. Traffic over congestion also brings to the fore the likely impact on the ease with which the emergency services will be able to traverse these additionally clogged routes.

Therefore, Cowfold Parish Council reiterates its objection to this planning application on multiple levels, as outlined in its previous letters of representation. This includes acknowledgement of written submissions by Interested Parties which testifies there has been continued difficulties in engagement. The focus of this document is to restate the belief that to subject this parish to a perceived significant level of increased vehicular traffic of all sizes, which undoubtedly is going to lead to a greater usage of minor, single track roads as 'cut throughs', will be of conspicuous detriment to the quality of life, levels of business prosperity and exacerbate the degree of environmental damage within this community.