

The Kent Street CTMP is ill conceived and has not been properly thought out, displaying a breath-taking lack of consideration for local communities.

We still cannot be certain whether the amounts of hedges they now say will need to be removed are accurate-it is likely that more will need to go when they actually do swept-path analyses for the access points on Kent Street. Currently, however, we see that an extra 10m of hedge needs to be removed at A64 and 20m at A61 (presumably on either side of the visibility splay), and a 35m splay at the entrance to Kent Street, plus a huge turning arc for the massive low loaders. There are also more hedges to be removed at compound A62 to allow access although, yet again, we have yet to hear any details.

Many of these hedges contain large trees, and the turning arc area contains a cluster of trees and scrub.

Many of these trees and hedges are important nightingale habitats (see previous mapping by [REDACTED]).

The visual destruction of this beautiful lane will be immense, making it impossible for Rampion to claim that the industrial landscape of the substation can be adequately screened from either Kent Street or the A272.

They have not followed the mitigation hierarchy which seeks first to avoid, as they have only just realised the need to do this. They should never have submitted such a half-baked plan in the first place, but properly considered the consequences of what seemed on paper like an easy option. Proper consultation and a genuine desire to listen to residents and land owners would have quickly revealed the deep flaws in this proposal.

An alternative site exists, which would have been far less destructive, as little additional tree and hedge removal would have been required at Wineham Lane North.

The national need for green energy infrastructure needs to be considered of course, but in such a nature depleted country the destruction of so much habitat and landscape is not just a local issue but a national one. Similarly in these difficult economic times, the economic impacts on the businesses around the substation site and the effects on tourism across the county, have national consequences not just local ones.

CowfoldvRampion assert that the original substation site was intended to be Wineham Lane North, and not Oakendene until after the initial stages of the consultation, and that the decision was based largely on the lack of opposition from Cowfold, as the consultation had been inadequate there. In support of this, I have recently been made aware that a landowner on Wineham lane bought his house in 2022 having been told by Carter Jonas that the substation would be built at Wineham. He had no objection, and discussed compensation with them, right up to the time of exchanging on the property. Having moved in in July 2022 he was therefore astonished to learn from them that the decision had recently been changed and that the cable route would now not pass through his property, as the substation was to be built at Oakendene. This does not suggest a full assessment of the alternatives, but rather, lends weight to the assertions made by CowfoldvRampion.