

Meera Smethurst deadline 5 submission

A272 and Traffic:

There is no evidence that Rampion have looked at anything other than percentage increases in vehicle numbers when assessing the impact of their construction traffic on the flow of traffic on this busy and congested road.

It may have been the case that WSCC and HDC told them, in the scoping stages of the consultation, that that would be sufficient, but they did not tell them *not* to, if it became evident during the examination that they should.

We, as residents, know all too well that the A272 backs up beyond Kent Street when heading into Cowfold, often several times a day. This is not just during peak hours; it takes very little to tip it into queues and congestion, and Rampion's extra vehicles will do just that. There is clear evidence provided by Cowfold v Rampion and the Parish Council that further assessment of the impacts should be carried out. The focus, at the time of scoping, was not on Cowfold as the main hub of the construction, but on Wineham Lane and the A272 as a means of transport to the construction site. There was therefore no specific consideration of the effect of the Cowfold mini roundabouts or the queues which will be caused by the vehicles turning on and off the A272 where it is most congested, at the Oakendene Industrial estate, the substation and Kent Street, all so close together.

There appears to be no clarity as to whether private cars of workers getting to and from the main compounds at the beginning and end of the working day are included in the LGV numbers. If they are, please can Rampion make the figures absolutely clear? The overall numbers compared to the smaller Rampion 1 seem rather low, so we would ask the examining authority to ask Rampion to justify their figures please.

Rampion have said they will use the compounds as holding bays to control the traffic and that a separate one is not needed. How can this make sense when the congestion is where the compounds are? How can it control the presumably hundreds of workers queuing to get in each morning?

We know they are planning to use the A62 compound to control the traffic to Kent Street. How will the traffic to A56 and A57 be controlled, as they have said HGVs to those access routes won't come through Cowfold?

Oakendene Industrial Estate and Compound A62:

There has been no assessment of the actual current traffic using the access road to the industrial estate. A monitoring cable was in place some weeks ago but no results have been made available. I know Cowfold Parish Council asked for this some time ago. All Rampion have done so far is to say that 'we stood and watched HGVs go in and out so there shouldn't be a problem'. This is to miss the point that increased numbers will make a huge difference.

Also, the size of the vehicles using the compound is far greater than the majority of vehicles going to the industrial estate. This will be particularly true of the vehicles which wait to go down Kent Street. They are so enormous that banksmen are needed to get them safely on to the A272 and they will need to be held at the Oakendene compound. Is there space for two such vehicles to pass on the

industrial estate access either? Will banksmen be needed here also? Will we see yet more destruction of ancient trees and hedges to accommodate them?

What is more, Rampion have not published any design for the access at the moment, but it seems impossible to access it without having to turn across the path of people going in and out of the estate, with obvious collision risks. They mentioned at one of the hearings putting in a new access off the A272, but people will see them indicating and assume they are going into the industrial estate and then collide with them on the A272 instead.

It is not just the traffic which will be affected. In order to get into the compound from the access road they will have to remove a large length of hedge, which also contains two very large, old, ecologically valuable oak trees near the A272. These will have to be cut down. If they access via a new road off the A272 this will also require the loss of great lengths of hedge, will alter the visual approach to this rural village, and will then be a fourth entrance very close together where traffic will be coming and going.

Everyone in Cowfold is worried about the impact on the businesses in the industrial estate, which provide a valuable resource, not just of local employment, but of many services the local people and wider community use. If they are no longer there, residents will have to travel far further to access such facilities and for work.

The manager of the industrial estate tells me that there are : *“52 units approximately, 10 offices approximately 55-60 containers approximately, 26 compounds approximately, 100 plus companies approximately some individuals using containers as storage.*

We do have a long waiting list for people wanting units and open space too which just shows how important employment space is.

We are full at the moment and have been for some years now and as soon as people go, we contact people on our waiting list. We are in a fortunate position to be able to pick the companies we have now which has reduced the numbers of heavy vehicles on the estate now, since the days of the cement company running lorries in and out constantly.”

And yet we know that accidents still occur as vehicles come in and out of this road, despite the reduction in HGVs. It also means that Rampion saying they watched lots of HGVs go in and out of the industrial estate just doesn't ring true. It also shows just how important a resource this is to the local, and wider community. It should not be written off 'in the national interest'.

It's not just the thousands of vehicles using this route everyday who will be affected by delays, there are over a hundred Cowfold businesses that will suffer directly, and not just those on the industrial estate, as compared to less than a handful if Wineham Lane were to be used. Sadly no one seems to be listening and yet this is so obvious.