

Rampion – Deadline 6

Proposed substation at Oakendene, Cowfold

Environmental Impact

Cowfold village were not advised about the proposed substation at Cowfold until Rampion 2 announced their decision, buried next to a classified advert in a local paper.

A concerned local resident had seen a notice pinned to a tree along Kent Street, and contacted the telephone number but received little response. She also sent recordings and wildlife data, which has since been independently verified, but which Rampion simply chose to ignore. All this information is well documented.

For the past couple of decades, our family and visiting friends have enjoyed regular walks with our dogs along Kent St, with its beautiful magnificent oaks, and dense vibrant hedgerows. We then walk around the beautiful, unspoilt lake at Oakendene before heading through Taintfield Woods, and along the bridleways. Even when the fields are water logged we see an abundance of wildlife. Often, we encounter people who have driven from Brighton just for the day. This pristine and beautiful countryside has remained untouched for over four decades, and we always take pride in sharing this unique oasis with our guests. We were stunned to learn that this area had not been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as it is even more captivating and beautiful than the AONB north of the A272. There is an abundance of undisturbed wildlife, including mammals, birds and flora, which sadly cannot be said of Wineham Lane, which has already been largely desecrated.

There are several badger setts in this area, and we have heard that it is not uncommon for these setts to be filled with lime or rocks before an environmental survey is completed. We also learn from industry insiders that wildlife cameras often malfunction and fail to record wildlife activity, which has reportedly occurred at Oakendene.

It would be an absolute travesty if the substation were built on this floodplain, which is home to numerous protected and red-listed species. This is especially concerning given that an alternative site just a couple of miles away along Wineham Lane, has already been disturbed.

As a consequence of realising that the land was a floodplain, plans are now in place to raise the ground level, with the attendant visual impact. This will obviously make it even more of an eye sore on the landscape.

The proposed substation would tower above the quiet countryside and be completely out of keeping with its surrounding. It would dominate the landscape and no amount of screening would hide it. This would result in significant harm to both the landscape and character of the surrounding countryside and many old vintage oaks and thick hedgerows would have to be removed, thereby destroying the habitat for numerous species. The views from both

south and north across the AONB would be damaged and spoiled for generations to come. This beautiful oasis would be turned into an industrial landscape and ruined forever.

Traffic

We remain extremely concerned and unconvinced by the traffic numbers disclosed by Rampion. Both the Kent St traffic survey and the construction vehicles numbers for HGV's, LGV's and private vehicle numbers do not reflect reality. Extrapolating from Rampion 1, which is 30% smaller, these numbers are a few hundred thousand short. The construction vehicle figures have been significantly understated and do not portray the true situation. If these inaccurate numbers have been used in traffic modelling, then the results are unreliable and should not be trusted or used.

The data regarding the numbers of HGV's, LGV's, and private construction worker vehicles has been deliberately presented in a confusing manner, making cross-referencing and verification nearly impossible. Despite this obfuscation, it is evident that the Rampion 2 numbers do not make sense. Rampion 2 is at least 30% larger than Rampion 1, yet this is not reflected in the construction vehicle figures provided. They also fail to take account of the following factors:

- 1 Rampion discovered that Oakendene was a floodplain after they had chosen the site. Consequently, considerably more hardcore and concrete will be needed, which does not appear to have been included.
- 2 Floodplain land will need more preparation, for which no allowance has been made.
- 3 To comply with the requirements of water neutrality and manage the thousands of HGV's and LGV's, wheel washing will be necessary. This means that thousands of gallons of water will need to be transported to site. There appears to be no allowance for these water lorries. If they were to connect to the mains, then additional workers and construction vehicles will be needed to enable this, none of which has been included in the figures.
- 4 Road reinforcement for Kent St and the additional passing places will require lorries for removing the trees, vegetation and subsoil, in addition to numerous tarmac lorries. No allowance appears to have been made for these.
- 5 Assessing the tables of HGV, LGV figures, there are several contradictions that significantly understate the true number of HGV's & LGV's and private construction workers vehicles required.

Traffic Survey

How is it possible that the Kent Street Enso traffic survey completed for the battery facility was so markedly different from the Kent St traffic survey completed for Rampion 2?

The traffic survey disclosed by Rampion is heavily edited and directly contradicts the recent traffic survey completed for Enso. It should not be accepted at face value, but requires further analysis and examination to explain the anomalies. It gives the impression that Kent St is busier than Wineham Lane in terms of HGV traffic, which is not accurate. Perhaps the

Rampion survey was conducted when there was an accident or road works on the A272, causing traffic to divert to nearby lanes. Or perhaps the horse boxes were counted as HGV's, it is difficult to tell as only a highly edited version was disclosed by Rampion. On a normal day, the majority of traffic along Kent Street consists of horses, cyclists with some cars and horse boxes, but it is much quieter compared to Wineham Lane.

I understand that CowfoldvRampion are submitting two other surveys broadly in line with the findings of the Enso survey, which contradicts the information supplied by Rampion.

The traffic survey disclosed by Rampion is yet another example of highly edited information, underscoring the necessity for independent verification. We would like to see the full details of the survey and assess the traffic conditions at the time it was conducted. Was there an accident on the A272 or road works which could account for the unexpectedly high number of HGV's recorded? Were these actually HGV's or horse boxes? Perhaps another independent survey should be conducted to verify the results of the first.

We would also like to have detailed accurate numbers for the HGV's, LGV's and private construction workers vehicles associated with works at the proposed substation.

Road Traffic Management

Last summer, Rampion agreed to finally disclose their road traffic management plan to the village of Cowfold. In particular how they were going to navigate their thousands of HGV's across two lanes of fast moving traffic, along the busy A272. At the meeting, they assured residents that they would not have one- way traffic lights, when questioned further, they could not confirm that there would not be two-way traffic lights. They also said that this was not their problem, as traffic control was the responsibility of WSCC.

During the first public meeting with the Planning Inspectorate, they then suggested that no traffic management measures were necessary. More recently, they disclosed plans to use banksmen to control the construction vehicles exiting Kent St, Oakendene and the compounds, which are within one mile of each other and across two lanes of 18,000 vehicles, which will result in huge traffic congestion and significant disruption to the local road network for several years.

The stretch of the A272 beside Oakendene is an accident hot spot, with traffic frequently backing up towards and often past Kent St. When there is an accident or road works along the A272 in Cowfold, traffic backs up for miles and the surrounding single- track lanes bear the brunt of frustrated motorists seeking to avoid the traffic jams. These lanes become a nightmare to navigate as drivers seek alternative routes. The queuing traffic will have a significant negative economic and financial impact on over one hundred businesses at the Oakendene estate and numerous businesses in the village of Cowfold, not to mention the thousands of businesses that use this route daily.

Insufficient consideration has been given to the alternative less damaging sites along Wineham Lane.

Building on a flood plain?

Rampion discovered that the Oakendene site was a floodplain only after announcing it as their chosen location, following a supposedly rigorous examination process.

As a consequence of this discovery, they have since realised that they will have to raise the ground level, with the attendant visual impact, but have not said by how much. Therefore, any visuals that they may have been presented will also be inaccurate.

The Oakendene site has been in private hands for several decades and remained untouched for at least 40 years, with no surveys being completed until very recently. The Government data and floodplain maps appears to be outdated. However there is now an abundance of photographic and video evidence showing the wide spread flooding that regularly occurs in this area.

Considering the rapidly changing temperatures and the frequency of severe flooding that many communities have suffered, who in their right mind would build a power substation on a flood plain? Insurance companies will not want to take the risk unless a very high premium is paid. Who will end up paying the astronomical premiums and covering the ongoing costs of repairs? Not only would this decision risk power outages when people need electricity the most, but it would endanger the lives of downstream villages through unnecessary and avoidable flooding.

Choosing Oakendene would be an extraordinarily bad decision, given the significant flood risk to downstream villages, the very real threat of polluting the River Adur via the Cowfold stream, and the increased risk of power outages during heavy storms - precisely when communities most rely on a steady power supply. This decision is even more perplexing considering that a viable alternative site, which features good drainage and lacks nearby rivers, exists a couple of miles away along Wineham Lane.

Realistically, by the time these issues manifest, Rampion and their contractors would have long departed. They would have benefitted from generous grants and cheap land, bearing no responsibility or liability due to the initial approval of these cost-effective sites. Consequently, the burden of repairing the substation and addressing community damage will fall on the end users – those whom this project was meant to serve.

Concluding comments:

Rampion executives have conducted this type of exercise numerous times. They are adept at confusing, misleading and misrepresenting (through omissions), and providing skewed data. Local councils likely lack the time and resources to verify all the submitted information thoroughly. Who would spend hours trying to interpret the maze of confusing and inconsistent data? Many of the tables have different categories and references, deliberately designed to confuse. When questions are raised, the reader is often directed to another table or appendix, only to find that it doesn't answer the query. Rampion likely

counted on the fact that most people would give up and accept that the proposal would be rubber stamped.

The truth is that Rampion is very skilled at avoiding direct answers and disguising data to create uncertainty and confusion. This information should be basic and straightforward, but it is deliberately complicated to prevent cross-referencing and checking. When it comes to traffic modelling, inaccurate input will inevitably lead to inaccurate output and poor decision making.

Many local residents believe that this entire exercise is a waste of time and money, convinced that the Planning Inspectorate will approve the proposal regardless of the evidence provided. Consequently, many have refrained from submitting their concerns, seeing it as a futile effort.