

**From:** Meera Smethurst [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 06 December 2024 19:57  
**To:** Rampion2  
**Subject:** Ref EN010117. Response to the Secretary of State

Dear Mr Miliband,

I write in response to the 6<sup>th</sup> December deadline in the recent letter from Mr Wheadon: ref EN010117

According to the BBC online article of 6 December 2024, entitled 'Bidders line up for struggling Thames Water', "*When Thames Water was privatised in 1989 it had no debt. However, over the years it borrowed heavily.*

*A large proportion of that was added when Macquarie, an Australian infrastructure bank, owned Thames Water, reaching more than £10bn when the company was sold in 2017."*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpvnz43gx9o#:~:text=When%20Thames%20Water%20was%20privatised,company%20was%20sold%20in%202017>

Macquarie also currently owns Southern Water. Both companies are in dire financial situations, for similar reasons: they have borrowed heavily just to pay dividends to shareholders without investing in the underlying assets and now both companies have huge debts which threaten their very existence. These water companies were incredibly cash generative, until they were privatised and exploited. Sadly, asset stripping is common for these businesses.

Macquarie is also a major investor in Rampion 2. Nobody thought through the longer-term consequences of water privatisation. In the same way, we risk making the same mistake with private investment in Green Energy. The Rampion 2 Examination has really shown, to those who have closely followed it, that the investors behind the proposals are not interested in providing the most cost-effective energy for the nation, or in paying anything more than lip service to environmental considerations by choosing wisely where this project should go. Instead, they have simply attempted to downplay the mounting evidence that the locations they have chosen for the wind turbines, the cable route and the substation are highly ecologically damaging. The latter site, in particular, would have been very easy to rethink, with very little disruption to their project.

In the same way, we also risk a lack of forethought which we will come to regret, by not looking at the longer-term need to recycle the turbines and substation. After their lifetime of just 25 years, will they just end up in landfill? Will we finally realise that the environmental costs are, as with coal and plastics, a price which is too high to pay in the long term for something which seemed like a really good idea at the time?

We cannot save the planet by destroying the environment, yet the government's policies blindly support proposals such as these, which destroy *unnecessarily* (because far less damaging options exist, which might be marginally more difficult or expensive for the Applicant) the very habitats which make our wildlife more resilient to climate change.

The Clean Power by 2030 mission

This government initiative aims to "*increase the country's energy security by replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources. The mission is intended to **create jobs, protect consumers, and deliver clean power to Great Britain by 2030.***"

We see from Rampion's own documents that only 80 FTE jobs will be created in West Sussex during the construction and hardly any during the operation. West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council presented good evidence

that the negative impact on jobs in tourism would be many times greater, and the Cowfold area alone risks the closure of over a hundred businesses if the substation goes ahead where planned.

Almost all technology for the wind turbines and associated infrastructure is likely to be imported from the Continent and China, [REDACTED] extending around the world to source and mine rare earths and critical minerals of sufficient vast quantities. This is not Clean Energy, nor does it protect us from the risks of overreliance on Putin and China, a lesson we should have learned in recent times.

The Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) will “set out a strategic blueprint for GB’s energy system, addressing the spatial requirements for future electricity generation and storage infrastructure. Its overarching goal is to create a coordinated approach to energy planning, ensuring that the **transition to low-carbon energy is both efficient and aligned with national goals for net zero by 2050.**

*The first version of the SSEP will be a GB-wide spatial energy plan mapping potential locations, quantities and types of electricity and storage infrastructure and hydrogen assets. This will be modelled across a range of plausible futures, **considering public views, environmental considerations, known constraints and cross-sectoral demands on land and sea.** “*

There has been plenty of evidence put forward during the Examination to show that the English Channel is a much less **efficient** location for the turbines than other offshore sites; not giving the country the best value for money. The Examination also showed how little **public views, environmental considerations, or known constraints** had been taken into consideration.

Furthermore, I understand that the SSEP is not due to be completed before 2026. **Until that time, how can it be decided where best to install Nationally Significant Infrastructures?**

My conclusion must be that consenting to Rampion 2 poses a clear and unacceptably high risk of undermining sustainable development on the south coast and affected inland areas where we live and work; this is due to its sheer scale, and the consequent location-specific significance of its adverse ecological, social and economic effects, as well as sitting in a sensitive inshore marine ecosystem, and physically disrupting protected designated landscapes and critically endangered habitats and species.

**Overall, the construction and operation of Rampion 2 risks making sensitive marine and terrestrial ecosystems, already under multiple pressures, even more vulnerable and less resilient to the effects of long-term climate change.**

Thank you for your consideration of this email,

Yours Sincerely  
Meera Smethurst