

OVERVIEW ATTACHMENT

ONE-PAGE SUMMARIES OF THREE PROTECT COASTAL SUSSEX (PCS) WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS (WRs) SUBMITTED TO THE RAMPION 2 EXAMINATION AUTHORITY ON 28 FEB 2024

Guidance: from the Examining Authority (ExA)

Interested Parties (IPs) were advised by the ExA that two overriding considerations in the Examination are that the Rampion 2 Application must be decided, “in accordance with any relevant NPS, “... subject to certain provisos.

Essentially, the provisos are that the application must not breach legal or treaty obligations, and any adverse impact of the Proposed Development would not outweigh its benefits.”

Equally, we felt that a third overriding proviso was important and relevant, which is both stated and implicit in the NPS and in wider national policy: that is the judgement as to whether Rampion 2 would advance, or risk undermining the achievement of sustainable development on the south coast of England and affected inland areas for both current and future generations.

Undermining sustainable development has implications for both provisos referred to by the ExA.

We accept the Examination task is complex and multifaceted.

Our conclusions based on the Evidence:

Looking at evidence from different perspectives (local and local to national) we disagree with the well-meaning, but what we see as misinformed or misplaced views that Rampion 2 should be consented at any cost. In part that is understandable due to the conflation of strong public support for renewable energy with support for this Rampion 2 proposal, as we observed in the commercial developer’s narrative.

The evidence and analysis that we offer indicates that consenting Rampion 2 is not in the local or national interest. It otherwise would lead to an inequitable and unfair distribution of the benefits, adverse impacts and risks within in UK society, with affected coastal and inland communities bearing the brunt of the adverse impacts unnecessarily.

Rather urgent attention to viable low-emission alternatives is indicated in the evidence that we offer as a “least regret’s” path to decarbonise power supply by 2035 with less risk. Full application of environmental and social safeguards should be given substantial weight in the Rampion 2 Examination in the national, wider public and local interest.

One page of bullet points on each of the three Sussex community Representations made under the PCS umbrella follows.

WR#1 Local Impact Assessment (LIA)

- This first substantive representation offers the Examination information and evidence on how local community organisations view local impacts as well as local to national impacts. It cross-references corroborating information in Principle Areas of Disagreement (PAD) Statements that reach similar conclusions, and it tracks relevant NPS provisions.
- This identifies the need to establish whether Rampion 2 is in breach of the European Convention on Landscapes (ECL) and the closely aligned and reinforcing UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS, 2021) and the Levelling up and Regeneration Act (LRA, 2023).
- Specifically, in terms of interpretation of an ECL breach, in the Rampion 2 case, the Government’s own Offshore Energy SEA programme in its latest OESEA-4 (2022) states its very objective is, “To accord with, and contribute to the delivery of the aims and articles of the European Landscape Convention and minimise significant adverse impact on seascape/landscapes including designated and non-designated areas.”
- We understand the OESEA visual buffer advice interprets what is required to conform to the ECL, which means wind turbines the size and scale of Rampion 2 should be greater than 25 miles from designated landscapes and highly sensitive visual receptors. That generally conforms to the interpretations of the ECL in other EU jurisdictions, including German law (the WindSeeG - Offshore Wind Act, 2017), that would not permit “a Rampion 2”.
- Even if the ExA were to recommend setting aside the OESEA’s interpretation of the ECL - which a recommendation to consent would imply - Rampion 2 challenges any reasonable interpretation of the ECL aims and aligned UK policy and law. The Levelling up and Regeneration Act (2023) specifically imposes a new active duty for such developments to enhance the designated functions of National Parks and the protection of Designated Landscapes (i.e., the South Downs National Park in this case).
- Each Chapter of our LIA otherwise provides evidence, perspective, and local knowledge that concludes there are no net positive gains across the social, economic or environment objectives of sustainable development due to the Rampion 2 construction and operation. We believe that informs the judgement on whether Rampion 2 contributes to or undermines the principal objectives of sustainable development, and whether adverse impacts outweigh the national benefits.
- Consenting to Rampion 2, poses an unacceptably high risk of undermining sustainable development on the south coast and affected inland areas where we live and work. That is due to its sheer scale, and the consequent location-specific significance of its adverse ecological, social and economic effects; as well as being in a sensitive inshore marine ecosystem and disrupting protected designated landscapes.
- 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 long-term climate change.
- The Application otherwise fails to recognise that as a national climate response, more UK citizens will be encouraged by government at all levels to remain on these islands for recreation and vacations to reduce their travel carbon footprint. We feel, therefore, protecting the integrity of our natural coastal assets and designated landscapes with all its intrinsic values and national benefit for both current and future generations should be paramount and central to holistic thinking in this Examination.

WR#2 Local Community Due Diligence: On the Applicant’s Claims about the Performance, Benefits and Adverse Impacts of Rampion 2

- This second substantive representation offers due diligence on claims made in the developer-led statutory consultations and in the Application about the performance, benefits and impacts of Rampion 2 that we believe lack evidence and credibility.
- Due diligence is routine on a £3-4 billion infrastructure investment and typically covers all aspects of benefit and risk for investors. The same principle applies to local communities who would essentially be forced to host the Rampion 2 infrastructure, if consented, and ultimately help to pay for the development costs (and opportunity costs) through local electricity bills and taxes, including the investors’ commercial rate of return, incentives and other costs.
- One concern is the demonstrable “chilling effect” in a planning context, which we observed suppressing the appetite for engagement in consultations and participation in the Examination.¹ It also allowed the commercial Applicant to successfully advance a narrative which conflates strong public support for renewable energy with support for Rampion 2. We believe the Applicant significantly inflated or exaggerated the local and national benefits, and at the same time, understated the adverse effects.
- While the chilling effect put off many people from objecting who otherwise might have objected, it also shaped the nature of comment and feedback on the proposed design, as well as awareness of the likely scale and significance of the adverse effects that Rampion 2 would have on residents and communities, in transforming the character of the area, and its impact on nature.
- In terms of understating adverse effects: These are also seen in the Principal Areas of Disagreement (PAD) Statements of statutory consultees on the environment and socio-economic effects and uncertainty and adequacy of proposed mitigation measures. It includes the Applicant’s categorical rejection that safeguards such as the OESEA visual buffers even apply to Rampion 2.
- In terms of inflation of benefits: the Applicant claims Rampion 2 will reduce UK carbon emissions by around 1.8 million tonnes/yr, implying over its economic life of 20-25 years from 2030 to about 2050 (40-45 million tonnes Co2). Though in fact, the carbon benefit from Rampion 2 would only be for 5 years, 2030 to 2035, if consented.
- That is because the UK power sector is to be fully decarbonised by 2035 (as in the NPS). There will only be low emission generation on the national grid from 2035 on. That will include renewables and NetZero ready gas-fired power stations with full carbon capture (and hydrogen ready) and nuclear, such as small modular reactors SMRs in the bulk generation mix.
- Rampion 2 thus will not displace carbon after 2035; only compete with other low emission generation sources on a price and power system impact basis – i.e., what may be needed to keep the lights on, keep the grid from collapsing and supply the demand growth due to mandated electrification, and at what cost to society and the environment. Rampion 2 will simply be part of a complementary low-emission generation mix, as a comparatively lower efficiency location for wind turbines compared to truly offshore locations (as seen in load duration curves).

¹ The chilling effect in the context of the UK’s Development Consent Order (DCO) planning process for offshore wind developments refers to the dampening effect on community engagement and participation caused by perceived or actual difficulties in the planning and approval process. When communities feel that their input is not being valued or that the process is too complex and burdensome, or feel developers are not transparent or acting in good faith, they become less willing to actively engage in the planning process. This can lead to a lack of trust between developers and communities, as well as decreased willingness to cooperate, negotiate and participate. For affected inland communities it may relate to compulsory acquisition of land or rights. Chilling effect also applies to warning away potential investors due to slow or uncertain regulation. Chilling effect was entertained but not upheld due to insufficient evidence in a windfarm High Court Judicial Review in 2022.

WR#3 **Consideration of Alternatives in the Rampion 2 Windfarm Examination**

- This third representation responds to a case-specific policy requirement for the Rampion 2 DCO Examination (for assessment of, “*the cost of, and scope for, developing all or part of the development elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way*”), under “*Developments Proposed within Designated Landscapes*”, EN-1 (2011) paragraph 5.9.10. The assessments are to be made under NPS, EN-1, Section 4.4, “*Alternatives*”.
- This is because Rampion 2 affects nationally designated landscapes, both physically and visually (i.e. adversely affecting the statutory functions of the SDNP (that objected to Rampion 2 on these and other grounds). The Levelling up and Regeneration Act (2023) also applies.
- Consenting Rampion 2 means accepting an inefficient location for wind turbine output (in terms of wind energy density and output) at a cost of £3-4 billion to be repaid via consumer power bills and taxes. Rampion 2 also has serious economic opportunity costs, including the requirement to import relatively more of the expensive and price volatile liquefied natural gas (LNG) that has high carbon emissions in processing and transport, together with more import of costly power from undersea cables from the Continent (not the best help for UK energy-self reliance).
- At the same time, there are practical and viable alternatives for low emission generation to feed the National Grid over the same economic life of Rampion 2, and longer, which can do more for less money than Rampion 2. Among these alternatives are those the UK Government calls “game changers”, which do more to achieve decarbonisation of the power sector by 2035.
- We identified three alternatives for the Section 4.4 assessment and conformance to NPS.² We then offer a simple benchmarking and ranking exercise as a way to help break down and understand the national benefits and disbenefits of Rampion 2.³
- Among the conclusions, for assumptions set out in this representation, are:
 - Extending a recent offshore wind licence on Dogger Bank to include the equivalent capacity of Rampion 2, where turbines will be more efficient. The indication is that would lead to 1.3 times more national benefit than Rampion 2. Economies of scale are also possible, if not likely. There is also potential to link to an offshore ring grid to minimise on-shore transmission and facilitate connection to EU grids for better 2-way power trade.
 - Retrofitting an existing natural gas-fired power station with carbon capture (CCGT/CC) and adding Rampion 2 equivalent new capacity at that site (or replacement power station fitted with CC, or a new power station with CC) in the south where existing transmission and gas infrastructure is already in place, with multi-fuel capability to switch to hydrogen when that is available. That would lead to 1.7 times the national benefit as Rampion 2.
 - Co-locating a small modular reactor (SMR) at a decommissioned large nuclear site or an existing / under construction nuclear site, or a decommissioned coal-fired or gas-fired power station site in the south could lead to twice the national benefit as Rampion. Power connections are already there to reduce transmission needs. That can bring the UK genuine home-grown technology, industry, export, and job creation benefits, also giving the UK the capacity to help developing countries on their low emission journeys.

² NPS guidance was “... three key elements of the Government’s strategy for moving towards a decarbonised, diverse electricity sector by 2050: (i) renewables; (ii) fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage (CCS); and (iii) new nuclear”. NPS (Nov, 2023) designates each as Critical National Priorities (CNP).

³ In the absence of power system value modelling (which we argue for) this technique uses Rampion 2 as a baseline to rank order the options, thus qualitatively benchmarking Rampion 2 against the three alternatives