**Community Onshore Project Liaison Group (PLG)**

**14th June: 6pm-7pm**

**Attendees:**

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| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Chair – Paula Seager | Natural PR |
| Chris Tomlinson - Development & Stakeholder Manager | Rampion 2 |
| Karen Algate – Senior Consents Manager | Rampion 2 |
| Cllr David Green | West Grinstead Parish Council |
| Donna Everest | Cowfold Parish council  |
| Cllr Fiona McConnachie | Thakeham Parish Council  |
| Annie Hirst | Twineham / Bolney Parish Council  |
| Jason Thomas | Washington Parish Council |
| John Goring | Wiston Parish Council |
| Mark Pinnell | Patching Parish Council |
| Renee Hobson | Angmering Parish Council |
| Paul Oakham | Storrington and Sullington District Council  |
| Richard Richards | Poling Parish Council  |
| Cllr Sam Langmead | Ford Parish Council / Lymister and Crossbush |
| Tim Worley | Worling Camp Parish Meeting |
| Trevor Brown | Shermanbury Parish Council |
| Barry Hodson | Warningcamp Village meeting |
| Note taker – Ruth Chapman | Natural PR |

**Apologies:**

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| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Daryn Grossmith | Henfield Parish Council |
| Nicky Hanley | Bolney (represented by Annie Hirst above) |

**Item 1: Public consultation recap**

Following the initial consultation in 2021, Rampion 2 analysed feedback received from statutory bodies, landowners, community organisations, residents and businesses. This was considered alongside findings from ongoing engineering and environmental studies and in October / November 2022, Rampion 2 offered a second public consultation showcasing a series of potential alternatives and modified cable routes. Over 800 people attended 20 meetings and events to discuss these options and 400 written responses were received.

Discussions continued in early 2023 with targeted consultation on a short, 3km potential alternative cable route known as ‘1d’ on the approach to Sullington Hill. This was in addition to a local consultation to extend the Bolney National Grid substation and further targeted landowner consultations, held in April and May 2023. All feedback was studied carefully, culminating in a decision to select the cable route for Development Consent Order (DCO) submission, that was largely driven by ecological concerns whilst also reducing impacts on the residential and business community.

**Item 2: Meeting summary:**

The Rampion 2 team offered a recap on the onshore fixed elements of the project, explaining their reasoning for the selection of the Bolney Road / Kent Street site (now named Oakendene) as the location for the substation. Its larger size provides greater flexibility during construction and for designing the substation, offering more space for mitigation landscaping and planting. Direct access from the A272 means there is no need to use country roads. Together, these factors reduce the potential impact on the community during the construction and operational period.

The team then moved on to show the onshore cable route they have chosen following the consultations. The selected route includes the Longer Alternative Cable Route (LACR) 1a with 1d, which proved to be the best performing for ecology, noise, traffic and impact on business.

Further north on the exit from the Oakendene Substation, the northern cable route option was selected to take the cables between Oakendene and Bolney substations.

Rampion 2 presented a recap on the offshore fixed elements. Large areas in the east and southeast of the original site have now been omitted, along with 10km2 from the western extent. The turbine array area being submitted in the DCO application is now around half the size of the original site area, with the number of turbines now reduced from 116, to a maximum of 90 turbines. This still gives Rampion the capacity to produce 1200 megawatts (MW) and by retaining the maximum 325m tip height, allows them to future-proof for advances in technology.

**Item 3: Feedback on project overview**

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| **Raised by** | **Issue / concern** | **Project response** |
| Public Consultation & PLG’s |
| SL (Ford Parish Council) | Raised concerns about Poling community not being listened to and this route being consulted on for a shorter period than some others. At the start of the process, you told us that cost was not a factor in your decisions about the Lyminster section, and that community and environmental impacts were the biggest concerns for the decision-making process. Why are you not listening to landowners?When the landowner has suggested that you take an alternative route across their land, you’ve ignored them and taken the simplest route straight through the middle of the field.  | We have held consultations on the cable route to listen and taken into account the comments we have received from statutory organisations, landowners, parish councils, local authorities, businesses and members of the local community. It is precisely because of the many differing views, coupled with engineering, practical and environmental issues, that we have come back several times to consult on alternatives. Unfortunately, on a project this big, we cannot accommodate every stakeholder’s feedback and we are sorry about that. However, the feedback helps us to choose the least impactful route overall and to further reduce impacts to those who are affected by the selected route. Our decisions are all set out in the consultation report, which is an integral part of the DCO application. We're not hiding anything – it includes a detailed report about all the issues that were raised through feedback at the various consultations, how we’ve accommodated the feedback or why we may have been unable to do so.We are listening to you though, and we understand the frustrations from landowners in the Poling area. We will look into this in further detail and come back to you.  |
| JT (Washington Parish Council) | Washington Parish Council would like it to be noted in the PLG minutes our opposition to the route, supporting everything that Sam (SL) has said and saying Washington has had a similar experience.  |  |
| JG (Wiston Parish Council)  | Agreed with SL and JT. |  |
| DE (Cowfold Parish council) | It would be very useful if the Rampion 2 project team could create an overview document for those not as intimately involved, as opposed to the more technical documents often shown. I think that would give you a wider engagement and also make sure that people are understanding what they're reading - some of the feedback has suggested there is too much information to absorb. Would it be possible for that summary to be made accessible to parish councils to be included on their own websites?  | That's a really good point. There is a huge amount of information that we are obligated to pull together under the regulations and a lot of it won’t be relevant to everyone. When we send in our DCO application there will be a Non-Technical Summary submitted with our application. That will be a summary of all of the different chapters, without all the technical data that people may struggle with. It sets out the key mitigations and what the residual impacts are. I would recommend that you look at that. In terms of sending a copy for you to host, we would rather encourage people go online to the planning inspectorate website so that they are engaging properly with the process. We wouldn’t want someone to respond to you with their feedback, rather than the take the official route. Once we have submitted, there will be a whole examination library of documents available to you via the link that we are sending out, including the Non-Technical Summary.  |
| JG (Wiston Parish Council) | Raised concerns the cable route goes through the middle of Washington and over people's driveways and 200 yards from an 11th century chapel. Why did you ignore the Southern route that avoided the area? | We know this was raised before but there were good reasons why we couldn't explore the southern route further. When we look at a cable route there are multiple factors to consider. Every change we make in a particular locality might have a knock-on impact further east or west, south or further north and so on. We are essentially looking at a trenchless crossing through Washington. We've held various meetings and events at the community centre and fully recognise the importance of this area to the local community. That's why we made the decision to drill a long, trenchless tunnel underneath the A24, the recreational ground, the allotments and the A283, coming out briefly before going underneath the A283 again. This has been designed to reduce the disturbance on the local community of Washington, as much as we possibly can. |
| JG (Wiston Parish Council) | Is Carter Jones still employed by you? They do not respond to emails.  | We apologise if you've not been getting responses from land agents. Karen will look into that. |
| AH (Twineham / Bolney Parish Council) | The selected route from Oakendene to Bolney is not clear on the map. | This is headline information. You can see the options in our earlier consultations from October / November for detailed maps, at rampion2.com. We’ve selected the Northern Route from Oakendene. |
| TB (Shermanbury Parish Council) | We have a number of applications around Shermanbury and Wineham - three battery storage plants of well over 100 batteries and a solar farm. Looking at the applications, it is possible they are all going to happen at the same time. How are you going to manage that when it’s basically just one narrow lane? What processes have you got to combine and create a project plan with all the other conflicting interests around the Bolney substation? | We have already noticed this area is a pinch point. The good news is we are in touch with those other parties that are working there. Our construction, or the construction of all of those projects, will only work if we all work together and with the National Grid. We want to work collaboratively to ensure the best chance of success for everyone.  |
| SL (Ford Parish Council) | I know from talking to other landowners that you've had discussions with the Duke of Norfolk and the Angmering Park estates about cable locations in a W formation to try to reduce the amount of land impacted. Will you be making that sort of information available to the wider public?  | We've got lots of different people working on the project in different roles. I'm not aware of what you mean by these type ‘W’ formations but we can follow this up and come back to you.  |
| JG (Wiston Parish Council) | Are we going to get slides and minutes for this meeting circulated? | Yes |
| **Construction** |
| RR (Poling Parish Council) | Are you going to be closing Poling Street while you trench the road, which causes huge issues to residents and is an issue for emergency services, or will you drill underneath?  | We don't have an intimate knowledge of the plan for every road on the route but will find out from the Onshore Consent Manager in the morning and we will get back to you. Normally we drill under the main roads, railways and rivers, while we trench the smaller local roads. This does not mean shutting the road - we would normally trench halfway across that road and use traffic lights to keep half the road open. We did this on Bob Lane, a very narrow road, and it worked well.Post meeting note: CT sent a response to RR to confirm that following consultation feedback, a decision had been made to use a trenchless crossing technique under Poling Street, rather than trenching. |
| JT (Washington Parish Council) | The maps you have provided are not clear. Can you give us more detail as to where the proposed [Washington] compound site is and give us some idea of the proposed installation date?  | There were three compounds that we consulted on in the Washington area last year and the map we have shown you in the presentation today is only designed as a simple preview of our chosen site to the east of the village, north of the A283. There will be a much larger scale map in the DCO application but we are not in a position to show that at the moment as we work to finalise thedocumentation. To read more about the chosen site, it is possible to review the consultation materials from October / November 2022, which are on our website at rampion2.com. If you hover over the consultations tab, click on the 2022 statutory onshore consultation (Oct/Nov) and look at the most easterly site around Washington, that is the one that has been selected as the construction compound. We will also send you the details via email. In terms of when it will be installed, it depends on consent and then the final investment decision. At the moment, the best estimate is the end of 2026 / early 2027. |
| MP (Patching Parish Council) | Can I request for a map with improved scale that shows parish boundaries so that we can be better informed?  | We don’t have anything that detailed at this stage. There will be more details in our DCO application and if you register with the Planning Inspectorate you will be able to access all of those documents.  |
| AH (Twineham / Bolney Parish Council) | Will you be tunnelling with the HDD under Wineham Lane?  | CT believed that it was confirmed as a trenchless crossing under Wineham Lane but would double check and respond. |
| AH (Twineham / Bolney Parish Council) | Can you confirm that construction hours will be 8/6 and no weekend or evening workings?Last time we had workers working at half past six in the morning and finished at 9.20pm at night, drilling at weekends, reversing beepers etc. There was no consideration of local people, just a desire to get the job done when it suited Rampion.  | We absolutely understand that you want shorter working hours to best protect your residents but from our perspective, we want to get in, do the job and get out again as quickly as we can, as that causes the least disruption in the long term. The best way to do that is to elongate working days slightly. The information about our construction plans will all be in our outline Code of Construction Practice that we'll be submitting alongside our application. We would recommend you make a representation at this point and we can work together on a solution. We're very open to having discussions with you and with the examining authority about how to ensure that we construct this project in an appropriate way that protects local residents who live nearby. We will of course be undertaking and submitting an Environmental Statement that factors in potential impacts and there are definitely things that we can do to reduce noise or light nuisance to local residents, for example with sound screens and light hoods. There are many options available to us. |
| AH (Twineham / Bolney Parish Council) | How long do you expect the construction of the connecting cable from Oakendene to the National Grid to take? | That's impossible to say at this stage while it's a relatively short section of the route, we don't know how contractors are going to plan the works. As with Rampion 1 the work is often completed in short stints, with different contractors coming at different times. So, whilst construction might take two years, that does not mean we will be working constantly within that time. Another advantage of going to Oakendene was that we're not going to be having a substation site off Wineham Lane as we did with Rampion. This means there will be no need for traffic lights on Wineham Lane for the substation construction, which we know did not go down well. We will still need a compound for drilling but this is a much smaller operation for a much shorter time.  |
| PO (Storrington and Sullington District Council) | My question has to do with the construction access roads in Storrington and Sullington. When you look at the map, there are six possible entry routes.Is it the Intention to have access points on all those roads, or is this just an outline from which you would choose one or more? | It might well be that these are operational accesses which would be used during the operational lifespan of the project. We have to have the ability to get into each different land parcel where the cable runs during the operational lifespan of the wind farm, just in case of any problems. Those accesses may only be used once a year but on the scale of map that we've shared, it would be really difficult to distinguish the difference between a construction and an operational access. This might be best discussed over email as it is quite specific to one part of the route. We will get back to you about which of those are operational and how that might work.  |
| **Community benefits** |
| MP (Patching Parish Council) | With the route now chosen, can you tell us how the parishes will benefit? In particular, the social value contributions and biodiversity net gains that the project will be making at a parish level and how will you feed back to the parish communities?  | We are committed to biodiversity net gain, but at the parish level it is going to be difficult to give you any information today. We have taken on board the importance of communicating the social and environmental benefits at a Parish level, rather than through the whole scheme and will come back on that at a later date.  |
| SL (Ford Parish Council) | You talk about generating enough power to cover Sussex twice over – in Ford parish council we have a number of major projects taking place, including a hugely inefficient incinerator. My experience of other infrastructure projects is that they have often supplied power at a reduced rate to local communities that are affected. Could Rampion 2 consider the same? This would support local communities affected by the route in a far better way than making donations to local charities. If not, can they justify why not?  | We acknowledge your point about the social and environmental benefits going to those communities living in the parishes but unfortunately, we are unable to discount the cost of power. We get asked this quite regularly, as you can imagine, but we're not a retailer of electricity to consumers. This is also a joint venture project. Ultimately, we have selected the route with the least impact overall, but where we can we will also work with communities to minimise those impacts. Unfortunately, we cannot avoid all inconveniences – this is a nationally significant, major infrastructure project. We have not heard of any other developer who has been able to discount energy prices but it would be interesting to see the details.  |
| AH (Twineham / Bolney Parish Council) | I agree with Sam Langley about community benefits – it would be great to see a reduction in energy costs. We did get some community benefits from Rampion 1 such as fingerposts and benches for the cricket pitch, but there was an awful lot of inconvenience to gain those things. We don't get direct benefits as we're not landowners.  | Again, as we are not an electricity retailer and we are working in a joint venture, this is not something that can happen. |

**Item 4. Action Points**

**ALL** – to share information with networks

**CT –** to respond to SL about the landowner in Poling and the reasoning re: route through landowner’s field

**CT –** to speak to the Onshore Consent Manager and respond to RR abouthow the Poling Street crossing will be managed

**CT** – to send JT information about the chosen compound site

**SL** – to go back to CT with details about other providers who have supported communities through reduced energy bills

**CT** – to respond to JG about the reasoning behind the dismissal of the southern route near Washington

**KA** – to contact land agents Carter Jones to investigate the lack of response to emails from landowners

**CT** – to confirm to AH whether they are tunnelling under Wineham Lane

**CT** – to respond to PO about operational construction access points in Storrington and Sullington.

**CT** – at a later stage, when more information available, to provide more info on a community benefits package and how it would offer benefit at a local level

**Item 5. Next Steps**

The Development Consent Order (DCO) application will be submitted later this summer. Subject to the Planning Inspectorate accepting the application, the timetable for the examination process will be announced and there will be an opportunity for people to submit ‘relevant representations’ - essentially a request to be kept informed and to keep open the option to submit written representations and appear at Public Hearings during the examination phase. The examination is due to take place from the end of 2023 until spring 2024. The next PLG meetings are proposed to be held once the examination timetable has been announced.

A decision on whether to award DCO consent is most likely to happen towards the end of 2024.

**Item 6. AOB**

PS thanked everyone for attending.

Contact details for the team to provide feedback or comments:

Chris Tomlinson – chris.tomlinson.extern@rwe.com

Paula Seager – paula@naturalpr.biz