

BHFOE Agreed Rampion Position

Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth (BHFOE) welcomes the changes made by E.ON to its Rampion wind farm proposals. In particular, BHFOE is pleased that E.ON has listened to concerns about the impact on the Heritage Coast and significantly reduced the visibility of the wind farm from that part of the National Park.

While BHFOE remains committed to supporting the Rampion wind farm due to the overriding need to generate renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions and to mitigate climate change, it would like to see further improvements. With regard to the Heritage Coast, BHFOE believes that there is scope to further reduce the impact on this special area, and given its importance in being one of the few undeveloped coastlines along the south coast, this should be prioritised.

Secondly, while welcoming the undergrounding of the power lines and the proposed measures to minimise the impact on biodiversity and recreational users, BHFOE is not entirely convinced that a shorter route is not possible through the South Downs National Park. It is frustrated that E.ON is either unwilling or unable to work with other power companies to combine power lines through Shoreham and over Southwick Hill and Fulking, to deliver not only the connectivity to the National Grid but to also bring about significant landscape benefits by the removal of the existing overhead power lines.

Thirdly, BHFOE would like to see significant community benefits arising from the development to recompense for the permanent landscape impact the development would have and for the short term disruption it would cause the local community and visitors to the area. These should include:

1. Funding to remove eyesores in the South Downs, including existing overhead power and phone lines
2. Funding to improve rights of way in and to the National Park, particularly an improved crossing for the South Downs Way where it crosses the A283 near Upper Beeding
3. The creation of a visitor / educational centre which could explain the need for the wind farm and teach people about climate change, but also about the wider environment, particularly linking with the Biosphere Reserve bid

Finally, BHFOE would like to see the opportunities for community ownership of one or two wind turbines explored, to enable the local community to have a stake in the wind farm and thus directly benefit from its construction.