



25th August 2016

Rampion Offshore Wind Ltd
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry, CV4 8LG.

eonenergy.com/rampion
T +44 (0) 2476 192000
E rampion@eon.com

Rampion construction piling noise complaints

Statement from the Rampion Project Team

We would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused by recent noise from our offshore construction works and we hope that the below statement will explain the situation clearly and put residents at ease.

We have been piling since early February this year and are nearly half way through our piling operations having completed 55 out of 116 foundations. We are aiming to complete this work by the end of the year, weather permitting. Until fairly recently these works have been carried out without complaint including many instances of overnight piling activity.

The Sussex coastline is a highly populated area and Rampion is a major construction project where construction noise may be heard occasionally. However, in the early hours of 19th July, we received a number of complaints regarding audible noise that we have since investigated and can confirm were due to our foundation piling activity.

Since these complaints we have been monitoring the issue closely to better understand the specific conditions under which the piling is likely to be audible at night and have taken action accordingly.

Over the five weeks since the 19th July, we have occasionally implemented a policy of self-regulation when piling at night, whereby we delay operations until the following morning when we are concerned that conditions may cause audible noise. However this is a not an exact science and requires the balancing of a number of highly complex factors such as weather and atmospheric conditions, seabed geology, and the safety of our colleagues and contractors.

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Westwood Way, Westwood Business Park
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Following the implementation of this policy, shortly after the initial complaints, up to the 23rd August we had received only seven complaints relating to piling issues. We are currently trying to relate these complaints to the various conditions at the time to increase our awareness of the specific conditions under which noise is becoming particularly audible inside homes.

However on Tuesday 23rd August, we received further complaints about piling noise disturbing resident's sleep in the early hours and would like to offer a full explanation.

In planning our activities the day before we were aware of changes in weather and atmospheric conditions which could cause audible noise. As such we decided to complete piling before the onset of these conditions (which were forecast for Tuesday morning). However due to an unforeseeable issue with the operation we encountered a number of delays. For the safety of the installation vessel and all on board, the piling operation must be completed once it has commenced and as such piling had to continue until 05:00. This coincided with an earlier than anticipated change in wind direction, weather and ambient conditions which made the noise more noticeable.

It appears from current forecasts that conditions in coming nights may be similar to those when we have previously experienced complaints (periods of very warm weather and particularly low ambient background noise). We will therefore continue to review conditions on a daily basis and suspend activity in instances where we anticipate the noise levels will affect residents at night.

We also understand that some residents heard piling noise on the afternoon of Wednesday 24th August. At this time we were piling the single most difficult foundation location in terms of seabed geology, which means the hammer energy had to be increased, causing audible noise. We knew this location (of all 116 piling locations) would be the most likely to cause a disturbance due to seabed geology. As such we deliberately scheduled it to be carried out in the daytime to minimise the impact on local residents.

Once again we apologise for any inconvenience that the piling activity has caused and would like to assure you that we are working hard to ensure this is minimised in the future. If you do experience any issues relating to this or any other matter concerning the Rampion project please contact us as at Rampion@eon.com.

