

Opposition to proposed AQUIND Interconnector

Fact 1. The amount of British electrical energy generated from different sources fluctuates, being roughly gas 38%, wind 28%, nuclear 17%, biomass 12%, solar 6%, wave, marine and hydro 4%, coal and oil 1%. Britain currently has 4GW of interconnectors importing energy with others under construction. In 2019 we imported 5.5 TWh and exported 1.1TWh - this net 4.4 TWh was 6% of UK needs). The proposed AQUIND Interconnector link would have a capacity of 2GW and aims to provide 5% of all British electrical energy needs by 2023.

Objection 1. The need is questionable as it has to be considered with overall energy forecasts including renewable energy. British dependence on importing even more energy from various sources in Europe could impede progress towards targets for our own provision of renewable and sustainable energy (40% target by 2030).

Fact 2. The proposed 238 km (145 mile) AQUIND high voltage cables between Normandy and Portsmouth would, for half of the submerged route, be adjacent to the IFA2 cable already in place across an extremely busy shipping lane and designated conservation zone.

Objection 2. Laying new cables would not only inconvenience shipping but more significantly further disturb the Solent Marine Conservation Zone which is designated to preserve rare and threatened habitats and marine species.

Fact 3. The AQUIND proposal for 20 km of thick underground high voltage cables, laid in deep trenches, require considerable insulation, alongside separate fibre optic cables. Both types of cable require roads to be dug up for servicing in future, impeding local traffic.

Objection 3. Overhead high voltage power lines can be installed over water or land without digging up roads and disrupting traffic. They require less insulation and are far more economically viable than underground cables. Overhead cables are also easier to service without more digging up roads and inconveniencing local traffic.

Fact 4. The underground route of the proposed cables follows busy main roads under Portsmouth, one of the most densely populated cities in Britain. From Eastney it runs along the Eastern Road, Farlington Avenue, Portsdown Hill Road to the A3 London Road, then through Purbrook and Waterlooville and along the Hambledon Road towards Lovedean.

Objection 4. The route from Eastney to Lovedean appears to be one planned by Satnav. It follows one of the two major roads in and out of Portsmouth, through Waterlooville, without consideration of effects on residents within this densely populated conurbation. Apart from the months of construction with roads closed and traffic disrupted, this project would almost certainly result in further degradation of road surfaces.

Fact 5. Eastern European entrepreneurs, formerly with the defunct OGN company based in Newcastle (whose address they use) are behind this project. Their firm Aquind Energy Sarl, is registered in Luxemburg and appears to have limited assets and heavy liabilities.

Objection 5. It would be unwise to invest in a project by a company with no proven civil engineering record and which lack adequate manpower and financial resources.


5 February 2020