

THE PLANNING ACT 2008

THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES
2010

AQUIND Interconnector

Relevant Representations of Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

For:

The construction and operation of a 2000 MW subsea and underground High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) bi-directional electric power transmission link between the south coast of England and Normandy in France.

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020022

JNCC Reference: 7047

19 February 2020

JNCC's Relevant Representation in respect of AQUIND Interconnector

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020022

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. JNCC are a non-departmental public body established under the Environment Protection Act 1990 and reconstituted by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 ("NERC Act"). JNCC advise the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation. JNCC's remit within the UK marine environment is for the offshore marine environment from the limit of territorial waters out to the boundary of the exclusive economic zone.
- 1.2. Whilst the laying of interconnector cables in offshore waters do not require a marine licence, associated operations, such as cable protection, do require a marine licence, for which JNCC are a statutory consultee. In addition, JNCC are often consulted by operators as best practice, to ensure the potential impacts to offshore marine habitats and species are minimised.
- 1.3. JNCC have been consulted throughout all stages of the AQUIND Interconnector at the request of the operator.

2. Relevant Representations:

- 2.1. JNCC's advice in these relevant representations is based on information submitted by AQUIND Limited in support of its application for a Development Consent Order in relation to the AQUIND Interconnector. The project refers to the construction and operation of a 2000MW subsea and underground High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) bidirectional electric power transmission link between the south coast of England and Normandy in France. The interconnector makes landfall at Eastney, Portsmouth, and the grid connection at the existing National Grid substation at Lovedean, Hampshire.
- 2.2. JNCC have been working closely with AQUIND Ltd to provide advice and guidance on the AQUIND Interconnector since 2018. JNCC have also been working with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Natural England to provide co-ordinated advice in relation to each of the organisations' remits.
- 2.3. JNCC's response is based on the information contained in the Environmental Statement (PINS Ref: EN020022, Document: 6.1; 14 NOVEMBER 2019) and associated appendices.
- 2.4. At this stage, JNCC have no further comments and are satisfied that all matters of concern, within our remit, have been addressed. A summary of JNCC's position is included below in Section 3.
- 2.5. JNCC welcome continued engagement with AQUIND Ltd. throughout the application process to ensure that any nature conservation issues within the offshore marine environment which may arise are addressed.

3. JNCC's Position

- 3.1. JNCC are satisfied that potential impacts on the following components (within JNCC's remit) have been adequately characterised and assessed:

Chapter 6- Physical Processes;

Chapter 7- Marine Water and Sediment Quality;
Chapter 8- Intertidal and Benthic Ecology;
Chapter 10- Marine Mammals and Basking Sharks;
Chapter 11- Marine Ornithology;
Chapter 29- Cumulative Impacts;
and all associated appendices and figures.

3.2. JNCC are satisfied that there is no significant risk of the project hindering the conservation objectives of the following Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs):

Offshore Overfalls MCZ;
Offshore Brighton MCZ.

3.3. JNCC's advice is that there are no major or minor matters outstanding and all matters within JNCC's remit have been resolved satisfactorily as part of the pre-application process and/or within the Environmental Statement.

3.4. JNCC have one minor comment on the application documents that would be helpful to address in future applications:

3.4.1. Figures. It would be useful for future figures to include the territorial boundary to allow easy assessment of whether operations are within or outwith territorial waters.

3.4.2. Cumulative assessment within Chapter 11. JNCC note that just because the impact of other projects may only cause temporary and/or localised disturbance independently, it does not rule out cumulative impacts of these projects in combination to bird species. Particularly for bird species that are sensitive to anthropogenic disturbance and loss of foraging habitat. The cumulative/ in-combination impact should be discussed in this context.

Please contact me with any questions regarding the above comments.

Yours sincerely,



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