

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Aquind Interconnector](#)
Subject: AQUIND Interconnector: My reference: 20025161
Date: 04 October 2020 19:29:04

Dear Planning Inspector

I write to object in the strongest possible terms to the Aquind interconnector infrastructure project, due to come to land here in Portsmouth.

I object to these plans for the following reasons:

1) Lack of clarity, overly complicated/technical and ever-changing plans.

Example: Milton allotments weren't part of the formal consultation with the public as an area that could be affected. In latest plans released by the company this area is now included.

2) Lack of quality engagement with the public.

Example: There have been several poorly managed consultations with the public, including letters to residents asking for home owners details and house prices.

3) Disruption to the city.

Portsmouth is the second most densely populated city in the country after London. There are 3 roads off and on to the island.

Example: The plans show that one of these roads (Eastern Road) would have lanes closed to traffic. These works would dramatically reduce the access to the city for a considerable period of time, causing huge delays backing up onto the M27 and A3.

4) Environmental impact on the city.

Example: The plans go directly through green spaces, protected areas and areas with specific wildlife protections. Milton Common, Locks and now Milton and Eastney Allotments. If this goes ahead the effect on wildlife due to increased pollution/traffic levels of idle vehicles in the surrounding area due to disruption caused by the projects road works will be catastrophic.

IN ADDITION:

Information has now been brought to light that suggests that the previous promise from Aquind that the allotments would be untouched has now been broken. There is a suggestion that the cable will no longer follow the path in the allotments but will now go through the allotment patches meaning that sheds, trees, wildlife and plant life will be demolished and destroyed to make way for this cable. A number of the allotment patches have been tended and nurtured for decades by the same families and every single allotment holder has taken significant time to establish the beautiful plants that they have grown there.

Please also bear in mind that the allotment holders grown fresh produce which they often donate to the community, allowing healthy eating and a more varied diet. This is especially important in the context of obesity levels and general poor health in Portsmouth.

Another point is that these allotments are vital to people's mental health, especially now when we face limited contact with family and friends. It is an outlet for many people and is a comforting place to go to and enjoy. To remove this important aspect of people's lives would be extremely detrimental to wellbeing.

The Great Crested Newt (*Triturus Cristatus*) has received a significant number of sightings at the allotments. This species of newt can live up to 25 years and its population is rapidly declining. The species and its habitat is strongly protected by law (under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). It is also a priority species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and is listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive. The Government's own website has a page dedicated to this species. Some of the activities listed as potentially harmful to great crested newts include excavating the ground; filling in or destroying ponds; removing materials such as dead wood on the ground; removing dense vegetation and disturbing the ground. Has this been taken into account when considering changing the route through the allotments? Have agencies such as Natural England been consulted? I am not aware of the existence of a mitigation licence or an ecologist's report among on the online documents. The Government cannot put protections in place for this rare species and then permit the wanton destruction of its environment by Aquind.

I hope you will seriously consider these points I make. My concerns are shared by some local councillors and my MP, who have been putting pressure on Government to think again about this national infrastructure project.

Finally, I would like to reiterate these general comments that are of personal concern to me. I am deeply concerned at what appear to be attempts to make information difficult for the public to obtain and respond to in a user-friendly, accessible manner. There seem to be changes to the original plans which have not been brought to public attention and might have gone unnoticed if it had not been for vigilant residents and local politicians. I suspect that the Covid-19 crisis is being used as an excuse to limit public scrutiny of this highly controversial project. I would also like to add that I have severe misgivings about the links that one of the company directors has to the party of Government, including making donations to the said party.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully

Shelagh Simmons

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