

## **AQUIND Interconnector**

### **Application by AQUIND Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent**

#### **Local Impact Report**

#### **Havant Borough Council**

### **1. Introduction**

1. For the purposes of this application, Havant Borough Council is an “interested party” under the Planning Act 2008 as a planning authority in relation to the works. Hampshire operate a two-tier local government system and Hampshire County Council (HCC) is responsible amongst others for the provision of highways and is also the minerals and waste planning authority.
2. The Borough Council is in discussions with AQUIND Limited (hereafter the ‘Applicant’) with the intention of preparing a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) on a number of matters of particular relevance to this application. Accordingly, this Local Impact Report (LIR) has been prepared to provide a general overview of the key impacts that Havant Borough Council consider it appropriate to highlight, given its responsibilities and interests. Further, more detailed comments on the specifics of the identified impacts (and the Borough Council’s perspective therein) are likely to be forthcoming within the context of the SoCG and written representations at the invitation of the Examining Authority.
3. This report should be read alongside more locally specific local impact reports produced by the other respective host Councils, including specific reference to Hampshire County Council as Local Highway Authority, and the other boroughs and districts. The Borough Council has been working closely with Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Highways England, as the respective Highway Authorities for the area affected by the proposed Development Consent Order (DCO), in respect of the highway implications of the application.

## 2. Details of the proposal

1. The proposal is to provide an electricity interconnector between France and the UK, providing a net transmission capacity of 2,000 megawatts.
2. The proposed development includes:
  1. High voltage direct current marine cables from the boundary of the UK Exclusive Economic Zone to Eastney in Portsmouth;
  2. Jointing of the marine cables and onshore cables;
  3. The onshore cable consisting of two high voltage direct current circuits from Eastney to the converter station;
  4. Up to two 'Optical Regeneration Stations' - structural units housing telecommunication equipment for the proposed development and responsible for optical signal amplification purposes. They will be located at the landfall within Fort Cumberland car park at Eastney;
  5. The converter station area and associated electrical and telecommunications infrastructure.
  6. High voltage alternating current onshore cables and associated infrastructure connecting the converter station to the existing National Grid substation at Lovedean; and
  7. Smaller diameter fibre optic cables together with the high voltage direct current and high voltage alternating current cables and associated infrastructure.
3. In terms of the element of the proposed development that is within the administrative area of Havant Borough Council, the cable crosses the border into Hampshire at the A3 London Road at the junction on Boundary Way (south of Purbrook) and continues up the A3 London Road to the Hambledon Road roundabout. It then follows the B2150 Hambledon Road, where it leaves the Borough to go into the administrative area of Winchester City Council, towards Denmead. As such the element within Havant relates only to the cabling under the highways.

## 3. Relevant planning history and any issues arising:

1. The planning history provided in the applicant's Planning Statement accompanying the submission is considered to sufficiently capture the relevant planning history within Havant. The LIRs of individual host city, district and borough councils and the South Downs National Park Authority may be of relevance in relation to any subsequent applications and decisions considered to be of relevance to the determination of this application.

## 4. Planning Policy

1. Havant Borough Council is content with the planning policy context as presented in the applicant's Planning Statement, and as supplemented by the individual LIRs of the affected host city, district and borough councils and the South Downs National Park Authority.

## 5. Impacts: Highways and Transportation

1. Hampshire County Council is the Local Highway Authority (LHA) for the three boroughs affected by the cabling and construction works in Hampshire. As such HBC rely on the advice of the Highway Authority. We do share a number of concerns that have been raised by HCC. These are in response to the individual traffic impacts identified it is requested the ExA the LHA's advice on the workability of the temporary highway restrictions propose by the applicant.

### *High level description of the highway characteristics*

2. The A3 connects Portsmouth to London, albeit that A3(M) has replaced its function as part of the strategic road network on the route from Farlington to Horndean. The section affected by this DCO from Portsmouth to Waterlooville, within the administrative county of Hampshire, and borough of Havant is a largely single carriageway road with varying speed limits between 30mph and 40mph. Peak hour flows range from 1519 to 1611 vehicles per hour in the AM peak and 1285 to 1773 vehicles per hour in the PM peak. The A3 is primarily characterised by its alignment through areas of 'urban edge', providing direct frontage access to a number of individual residential properties and other uses such as shops and businesses. The carriageway widths range from 6m to 14m (including bus lanes). Bus priority measures, in the form of sections of bus lanes and high-quality bus stops, are a significant feature along this section of the A3 providing a high-quality bus link between Waterlooville and Portsmouth. It has a number of accesses and key junctions along it including Ladybridge Roundabout, Maurepas Way Roundabout and Hambledon Road Roundabout. The road is also a recognised diversion route if the A3(M) has to be closed for planned or emergency activities.
3. The B2150 Hambledon Road, where it meets the A3 London Road, adjoins Waterlooville town centre and provides one of the main entrances to the West of Waterlooville urban extension. Nearby, access is also provided, via the Aston Road signal junction with the B2150, to Wellington Retail Park. The B2150 is also subject a number of direct residential and business vehicular access points and other key

junctions such as the Milton Road roundabout and the Darnel Road signalised junction (providing access to the northern parcel of the West of Waterlooville urban extension). The B2150 is subject to a 30mph limit along its length from the Hambledon Road Roundabout to Forest Road Roundabout. Peak hour traffic flows along the route vary between the southern and northern end of the route with 1399 and 874 vehicles per hour respectively in the AM peak and 1474 and 907 vehicles per hour respectively in the PM peak.

### *Consultation and Scoping*

4. HBC is aware that the Applicant engaged with Hampshire County Council in its capacity as the Highway Authority prior to the submission of the application for a DCO.
5. Following on from the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) consultation period, the Highway Authority provided a detailed list of comments that would need to be addressed to better understand the implications and long-term impacts of the project.
6. The Applicant and Highway Authority held further discussions prior to the submission of the DCO application to discuss the scoping of the Transport Assessment and the use of the Sub-Regional Transport Model. The use of the model offers the potential to understand the re-distribution of traffic on the road network as a result of the temporary traffic management measures in place during the construction of the cable route. Future potential disruption to the network arising from ongoing maintenance of the cable route, and its eventual decommissioning, is expected to be appraised on a case-by-case basis.
7. The Highway Authority has continued to provide comments to the Applicant on matters that need to be addressed as part of the DCO submission. This report comments on the proposals within the Transport Assessment which have addressed the Highway Authority's comments, and also those matters that remain outstanding.

8. The proposed route of the cable along the highway network within the administrative control of Hampshire County Council is shown on sections 1-4 of the onshore cable corridor plans. This brings the cables from the proposed converter station site at Lovedean down to the Portsmouth City Council boundary at the A3 London Road (south of The Dale). The route primarily runs along the A3 corridor and B2150, which are highly trafficked, important priority bus routes, and play a key role within the local network. The cable route corridor in this area caters for the bus 'Star' routes 7 and 8 between Portsmouth and Waterlooville which is a key access facility to Queen Alexandra Hospital and Portsmouth's employment areas.
  
9. The proposed route is already constrained to further improvement in general capacity due to the available highway land and frontages of private properties. The ongoing ability for the Highway Authority to be able to maximise the use of the highway land therefore remains paramount on this key connection to Portsmouth and the A27/M27 corridor and therefore should not be constrained by the provision of non-highway infrastructure within the Highway Boundary.
  
10. The road is also subject to a significant number of private accesses which during the construction period will be subject to access issues, night-time working and additional delay along the corridor as a result of the extensive construction programme. The route also importantly provides access to key retail areas such Asda Waterlooville store, Sainsburys and Wellington Retail Park along with local centres within Purbrook and Hambledon Parade which would all be affected by the works. The western side of the northern section of A3 London Road is also the Waterlooville Major Development Area which is under construction and seen delays previously as a result of the 2008 recession. This site is providing vital housing supply for Havant Borough Council and access works and improvement works secured through the S106 for this site are programmed to conflict with the proposed construction programme for the cable laying along this corridor. Additional delays to construction of the supporting highway works and knock on implications for construction access could lead to delays in buildout of the site and therefore have a negative impact on the surrounding community as a result of increased congestion and delayed delivery of new housing supply.

11. Whilst the Environmental Assessment provides some consideration of an alternative non-highway focussed route, Havant Borough Council is yet to be convinced that the conclusions that the ES reached on this matter are fully justified. In particular, little understanding, and weight, appears to be given to temporal disturbance to the highway during construction, subsequent longer term impacts of this disruption and the impact on future planned highway schemes including:
  1. Ladybridge Roundabout Capacity Improvements as a s106 obligation of the Waterlooville MDA planning permission and potential TCF works;
  2. Stakes Road/Stakeshill Road capacity improvements as a s106 obligation of the Waterlooville MDA planning permission;
  3. Milton Road/Lovedean Lane junction improvements as a result of permitted development at Woodcroft Farm secured within the s106 agreement for the development; and
  4. Resurfacing works at the A3 corridor.

There is also the ongoing potential for future transport works with long term aspirations to improve the bus provision along the A3 corridor to further support the bus 'Star' routes and improve the sustainable transport offer within the area.

12. The Transport Assessment does not provide any justification as to why the cable must take this route, or the alternatives that have been explored and as previously noted this should be provided for clarity to all parties. There may be opportunities along the route to take the cable off the highway or at least off the main A3/B2150 corridor in either part of whole such as:
  1. Fields running parallel with the A3 from B2177 Portsdown Hill Road to Purbrook Heath Road.
  2. West of Waterlooville urban extension site from Purbrook Heath Road to Hambledon Road/Darnel Road junction
  3. Fields on the south western boundary Hambledon Road to Forest Road roundabout.
  4. Service road provisions along the main A3 and B2150 corridor which would take the route off the mainline.

13. These opportunities should be considered by the applicant and justification will be needed should it be considered unfeasible e.g. landscape impact. It is accepted that utilising the public highway may be considered less complicated than negotiating with individual private landowners and will likely be more contained within the existing urban landscape. However, this route will inevitably cause prolonged delay on key areas of the network and has potential ongoing implications for the Highway Authority, private developers where planning permissions rely on delivering improvements to the affected highway and other utility companies. Havant Borough Council therefore requires clear justification as to why the highway is the preferred option. This is especially pertinent for the southern section of Hambledon Road and northern end of London Road (north of Ladybridge roundabout) within the development red line given that these areas are particularly heavily trafficked and there are several planned improvement schemes, making cable installation particularly challenging.

### Works Programme

14. There are significant works to the highway planned in the area and the applicant will need to coordinate with these works. Some schemes may have secured funding, or planning triggers, which if delayed due to unavailable road space could have wider impacts on securing sustainable development objectives. Discussions regarding programming should be proactively held with the Highway Authority, and other stakeholders, to ensure that road space conflicts are managed effectively.

### Cable Route and Conflicting Works

15. On a general note, Havant Borough Council, together with the Highway Authority have sought confirmation during the PEIR consultation that access to individual properties along the A3 London Road would be retained during construction of the cable route. However, the Transport Assessment does not provide details regarding access to these individual properties. This information should therefore be provided, especially considering the unknown presence of those with mobility issues and likely absence of alternative appropriate on or off-road parking.

16. A plan showing the highway boundary overlaying the order limit should be provided to enable a clear understanding of the highway land affected. This can be obtained from HCC's Asset Information Team [assetinformation@hants.gov.uk](mailto:assetinformation@hants.gov.uk)

### Planned Works

17. There are several planned highway works within the area, primarily as a result of the ongoing build out of the West of Waterlooville urban extension site, along with other traffic management and safety engineering programmes. This includes a significant improvement scheme planned at Ladybridge Roundabout. In addition, Portsmouth Water and Southern Water are planning to create a new reservoir at Havant Thicket with significant associated construction traffic movements arising. The programme dates for these works are broadly consistent with those proposed for project subject of this proposed DCO. Consideration must be given to committed schemes and the requirements under the relevant planning permissions (and/or Local Plan allocations) for the works to be delivered within specified timescales.
18. The proposed development must be coordinated with the other planned works on the network in order to avoid undue disruption for users of the network, and to ensure that the planning requirements of local developments are complied with. There is an increasing importance being placed at a national and local level on improving the operation of the local road network and reducing congestion, thereby improving air quality and supporting non-car based sustainable modes of travel.

### *Highways and Transportation Summary and Conclusions*

19. Havant Borough Council require additional information in order to fully assess the application, which should be covered through a specific Transport Assessment and Construction Traffic Management Plans. Fundamentally the Highway Authority require further clarification and justification within the submitted material as to the discounting of suitable alternatives to the utilisation of the A3 and B2150 for cable



laying. This is in order to demonstrate clearly that the likely prolonged delay and disruption to the general public arising from utilising this route can be considered a necessity for delivery of this project. Havant Borough Council together with the Highway Authority will require appropriate mitigation measures to offset the impacts of the development. This includes ensuring all highway users, residents, nearby development sites, future highway improvement schemes and businesses are not unduly affected by the proposed works.

## 6. Impact on amenity of area

1. The A3 and Hambledon Road have a significant number of both residential properties and business, as such the impact on these properties and business needs to be fully considered. The submitted Environmental Statement and Onshore Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan provides a helpful starting point for considering matters relating to noise, vibration, air quality and socio-economic matters. HBC are in dialogue with the applicant regarding these matters and progress is being made, although areas of clarification are required.
2. HBC are content with the approach and methodology used for undertaking construction and noise assessments. However, with regards to ES tables 24.4 and 24.6 (APP-139) additional clarity is required, in particular to confirm what a period is, and also, we would agree that the approach currently in place could lead to some receptors "experience" being underrepresented, because there are "breaks" in between noisy periods. HBC will be asking for clarity on this matter from the applicant.
3. The definitions of magnitude of impact to the noise environment as set out in Table 24.13 of the ES [APP-139] further clarity is required and this might lead to a requirement for the assessment to be rerun. HBC will be asking for clarity on this matter from the applicant

## 7. Conclusion

1. Havant Borough Council notes the potential benefits that could arise from the proposed development, including the potential for improved resilience of energy supply for the United Kingdom and France, increased competition within the energy market and the scope to continue to reduce the reliance on non-renewable/carbon-intensive sources of energy supply.
2. Nevertheless, the development as currently proposed raises a number of concerns about its local impact within Havant. These include:

1. The impact on the highway network, whilst acknowledging that this is a matter for the Highway Authority, the associated impacts on the Borough are of concern.
2. Whether alternative locations for the cabling having been adequately considered, to avoid the A3 and Hambledon Road, and its associated impacts.
3. The impact on the amenity of the area, including socio-economic impacts of residents and businesses accessing properties through the construction period.