Urban Design

Planning Consultation Comments

RE: 19/00522/NSIP Aquind Interconnector Site, Old Mill Lane, Lovedean, Denmead

Policy considerations

High Quality Places SPD 2015

- Part 4 – Layout arrangement of buildings and creation of spaces
- Part 5 – High quality spaces
- Part 6 – High quality buildings
- Part 7 – Materials and detailing

Winchester District Local Plan Part 1, Joint Core Strategy 2013

- CP13 – High Quality Design

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2, 2015

- DM15 – Local distinctiveness
- DM16 – Site Design Criteria
- DM17 – Site Development Principles

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 12 – Achieving well-design places

National Design Guidance

The site proposed for the Converter Station is located to the west of the existing Lovedean substation. The site is surrounded by agricultural fields and woodland, including areas of Ancient Woodland. The nearest village is Lovedean and there is a small cluster of residential properties located on Broadway Lane to the east of the proposed site. The boundary of the South Downs National Park is located in close proximity to the north and west.

Site context and selection

Four alternatives were considered for the site location of the Converted Station and Option B was identified as the preferred option. At 3.2.1.14 (document 5.5 Design and Access Statement) it is mentioned that there are still two variations of Option B for the final siting of the building *'subject to landowner discussions and to be finalised following the grant of the DCO'*. From an urban design perspective, Option B (ii) offers the best balance between an engineering solution and the environmental impacts.

Layout, scale and massing

The design development was driven in a way that fixed, at a very early stage, a number of parameters that did not uphold what is considered to be a good design approach, i.e. exploring and demonstrating different options of how the design is informed by the surrounding context and address all the constrains and opportunities of the site, in order to help minimising the visual impact of the proposed building from

close and distant views. During the engagement meetings, a few alternatives were suggested, in order to avoid proposing a bulky building, such as partially burying the building into the ground, breaking up the building mass, achieving a better articulation with the context.

The applicant argued how much the building design was constrained by its operational requirements. Therefore, it was explained that the design inspiration for the proposed building is the South Down National Park with its distinctive colour palette and undulations. The applicant rather believes that, through an 'aesthetic treatment' of the façade, the building could seemingly blend into its surroundings.

Should it become demonstrated that the proposed layout and built form is the only way forward, then the design approach to the elevations treatment should be a reflection of the landscape analysis from distant and close views, instead of reducing the exercise to a rather simplistic 'dressing up' of the elevations, with different colours or materials.

It should be included as a Building Design Principles (Document 5.5, chapter 6, paragraph 6.2.2.) that recognition should be given to the orientation of each particular view, when proposing the colour palette of the external material, for each elevation of the proposed building.

As it is presented on the DAS, it seems relatively random the choice of the colour palette within a wide spectrum of autumn colour options, which goes from light yellow to dark grey, including several tones of blue. It would be of good approach to choose the colour based on the landscape and topography analysis of the site bearing in mind which horizon each respective elevation is facing.

Furthermore, the concern raised by the Landscape Officer regarding the RAL colours suggested is shared in this comment; only dark recessive colours would be acceptable.

Appearance (document 5.5, chapter 5, paragraph 5.3.1)

The concept idea of having vertical fins to the external treatment is acceptable in principle as it would allow for continuous curved corner details on the building and hopefully this would create an interesting texture, composed by the sequence of the proposed fins and shadow gap. Light reflections throughout the day (and the year) will play an important role to blend the building with the surroundings.

However, to ensure that the external appearance of the building is of high quality standards, a sample of the proposed pre-coated metal cladding system should be submitted. It is mentioned on paragraph 5.3.3.1 that this material incorporates insulation panels and meets the functional requirements of durability, thermal, acoustic and fire separation; however, the lack of evidence at this stage does not allow to confirm the abovementioned and it is even difficult to acknowledge how effective in this regard, this proposed illustrative material would be. It is quite

common to have large farm buildings cladded in corrugated sheeting, therefore some kind of analogy would be expected to be established, ideally whilst raising the quality standards of the material.

Building Design Principles (Document 5, chapter 6 paragraph 6.2.2)

The following amendments should be considered to the Building Design Principles:

0. Recognition should be given to the orientation of each particular view, when proposing the colour palette of the external material, for each elevation of the proposed building.

1. External cladding and roofing to the buildings will be pre-coated metal, or equivalent durable low-maintenance material subject to approval by WCC council.

2. The wall cladding be comprised of narrow vertical elements of varied colours to break up the mass of the building.

3. Colours will be selected from a dark recessive palette of colours within the ranges below chosen to complement the surrounding landscape.

- RAL 7043, 7010, 7009, 7039, 7003 (as per Landscape Officer suggestion)
- The roofing will be in a dark recessive non-reflective colour to minimise visual impact.

4. Building massing will be designed to rationalise the different functions required and avoid visual clutter.

6. Curved corners will be included, to soften the visual impact and attention will be applied to relationships between the component parts of the main structures to add interest and further reduce the perceived mass of the building.

7. All materials proposed should be of high quality standards and allow for a curved corner detail.