From: [redacted]
To: Aquind Interconnector
Subject: EN020022
Date: 05 October 2020 10:03:38

Letter of objection to
Reference: Aquind proposed mutilation of Portsmouth

Residents feel distrust and anger towards the application that has been put forward. The complete lack of information over the last 2 years has meant that we have not known what the proposed route of the cable was. It was drawn up (date on the map in the plans on the government website – Aquind Connector) on the 7/11/2019 but was not published until 12/12/2019 right before Christmas, literally the busiest time of year and whilst a General election was playing out. It has therefore left a limited amount of time to be able to process this information and get this out to the residents that it will most definitely effect. It is a shame that Aquind decided not to alert residents as to the final route of the cable rather than just publishing it in over 537 documents. We only found out due to a few people taking the time to sift through all the documents and then informing residents. These residents had taken over a month to reach this stage of sifting through the documents where they had then found the map. Aquind were very quick to send out letters asking for information about mortgages and personal information in November 2018 that caused huge upset and panic particularly with elderly and vulnerable residents yet have decided not to send out the map to all residents it would effect from Eastney right up to Lovedean. Residents feel that the lack of consultation is poor and they have not felt part of the process of it all. The residents in Fort Cumberland road had no idea about the landfall of the cable in the car park and therefore causing huge disruption to their road. I believe there is also a legitimate concern as to the lifeboat station and any disruption that these works could cause that may add on extra time to their journey. Add to that that there is a proposed new development at Frasers range (just past the Fort Cumberland car park) of 134 homes. It has been said that this has been

taken to account in the cumulative assessment but with a single road to the site, this will cause huge issues for the residents as well as to the users of Southsea marina, the lifeboat station, the Hayling ferry and people who enjoy the beach near to the Hayling Ferry.

Furthermore, residents are concerned with how they have been treated (other than by the upsetting letter they have received in November 2018). Aquind gave out information on memory sticks to certain libraries across the city for residents to access at the end of 2019/beginning of 2020. Unfortunately, for residents in Baffin's, Milton and Eastney, the closest library to view this information would be have been at the central library or Southsea library. Milton (Beddow library) and Baffin's (Lacey library) were both missed off the list which is a huge shame. Libraries on the west side of the city were given sticks but not in the areas affected which is shocking. It is another reason why residents feel distrustful. It feels like these libraries were missed off on purpose so that residents would not know what was happening to their area. A very poor oversight on Aquind's behalf and a huge problem for residents – some who were unable to make the trip to the libraries to the west and centre of the city due to mobility issues and involving several bus trips making it unfeasible. A leaflet was also sent out in May 2019 and stated that out of 155 responses that Aquind had received, 52% supported or were neutral regarding the proposed approach to the cable route'. Not only was that a poor response (and I am still yet to find a single person who is in favour of the cable), but it was only recently that the route was publicised and officially decided on. How can anyone make a decisive decision on how they feel if they have not been properly informed of the route in good time. This 'consultation' has been going on for over 2 years now and only in the last 6-8 weeks has something set in stone been publicised yet not actually distributed to the public it will affect.

Also, it is disgraceful that the decision has not only been taken

out of Portsmouth City Council's hands, but out of the hands of the surrounding councils who also face the cable coming through their boundaries. Why should they only be consultees when they know their own areas and should oversee planning in their own areas. The Secretary of State has not come down to visit the areas effected or to talk to the council leaders and officers in person yet expects residents, councillors and MP's in all areas to let Aquind get on with it. The level of opposition this proposal is bringing from residents and all political parties in Portsmouth shows that this goes above and beyond party politics and that all councillors are worried about the effect this will have on their wards and residents

We are facing a climate emergency (of which has been declared in Portsmouth and other cities across the UK) yet the government are suggesting (if they allow this application to go forward), to woefully destroy habitats and vegetation, to close access to green areas and community spaces, to ignore air quality issues, to not put into place zero carbon measures and to just disrupt as many lives as possible in many different ways. The cables are proposed to go through or next to some pretty major junctions and roads including the Eastern road, A and B roads and residential roads. Portsmouth residents know that there are only 3 roads on and off this island and if there are any accidents or road works, our city is grid locked. What is proposed along the Eastern Road will cause nothing sort of pure chaos across the city. It will lead to huge amounts of air pollution due to queueing cars and could also damage our economy as people will not want to come into Portsmouth if they know that they could be stuck in traffic for large amounts of time.

In a time where we face these climate problems, surely the government should be looking to provide reassurance during projects like these that zero carbon initiatives will be used to help mitigate air quality problems this cable will put on the people of Portsmouth. Yet there has been nothing from either the government or Aquind. Councillor [redacted] asked

during a Milton Forum public meeting whether the project would be looking at zero carbon emissions and there was not really any comment or promise back. We have a huge issue with air quality in parts of the city, so much so that the government are looking to force air quality zones onto Portsmouth. Yet in the same breath – are now looking to accept such a huge project that would add to the climate emergency and air quality issues through traffic build up/congestion and emissions from building equipment and transportation. This is also whilst refusing to help with extra funding that Portsmouth could do with to combat these issues. Councillor [redacted] asked for funding for a free bus pass for residents or sustainable transport etc amongst many other suggestions to try to do what we can to. How can this government approve a project that will add to these issues when they are actively telling US that we need to do better?
In the scoping report, it suggests that Portsmouth city council should only comment regarding the environmental impact due to the landfall. There is no suggestion that they should comment of the route of the cabling even though it will go through some of the most busiest roads in the city as well as one of 3 roads out of the city that will cause misery for the inhabitants of the city in general. (1.3.2 in Part 1 of the Scoping report submitted to Portsmouth City council). To add to that, the report also states that 'during excavation and laying cables in roads, it is proposed that roads go down to one lane whilst works are ongoing to 'limit the impact of the local community during cable installation works'. This adds to the evidence that it will cause huge disruption across the city.
Furthermore, regarding concerns about environmental impacts, Section 3 states:
3.8.1 In the context of the above, the construction and operation of the Proposed Development may lead to significant environmental effects on the following parameters, although effects could be limited in their temporal and geographical scope:

• Traffic and Transport; • Air Quality; • Nosie and Vibration; • Landscape and Visual; • Heritage and Archaeology; • Ecology (with Arboriculture); • Socio-economics; • Water Resources and Flood Risk; • Ground Conditions; • Carbon and Climate Change; • Human Health; • Soils and Land Use; • Electric and Magnetic Fields; and • Waste and Material Resources.
This shows that there will have to be some very serious considerations made and thought out because of the impact this will have on many different species and plant life not just in Langstone harbour but at the allotments, Farlington marshes and Bransbury park. There also seems to be no mitigation for residents especially when it looks like their open, green and community spaces will be lost to them for however long building work takes place. There are high levels of obesity and long-term ill health in the city and people need these spaces for fitness but also, to enjoy the city they live in. A news report (3/5/2018 – 'Obesity-related hospital admissions in Portsmouth increase' The News, Portsmouth) states that Portsmouth had the third highest number of total obesity related admissions in the Wessex region in 2016 and the highest rate per 100,000 people so this further shows that we cannot loose these spaces even for a short time. Fishermen are already concerned with how the cable will affect where they fish out in the Solent but also, there are concerns when it comes to the Harbour. We were told that due to the harbour being an SSSI (Site of Specific Scientific Interest) that the cables could not be placed there. However, with the new plans put forward – it can now be seen that part of the route involves the cables going from the Eastern Road across the harbour and coming out at Farlington Marshes. Why is it OK to put the cables across this part of the harbour but nowhere else? Also, what effect will this have on the wildlife that live in the harbour. Why (to save the disruption) could the cables not have made landfall elsewhere closer to Lovedean such as to the east of Hayling or via Thorney Island. It would mean less disruption to many people and it would be closer to the proposed substation

especially as they are already underwater coming from France. Furthermore, there is a question why existing routes used by others could not be repurposed/shared. Southern Water has 2 concrete tunnels under the harbour (which was allowed to be built some years ago). Was a conversation ever had to see if these could be shared? But why choose Portsmouth? It is the most densely populated city outside of London and is an island city with 3 roads on and off. This is a city that also has an air quality issue, a large population density and a protected harbour and nature reserve to the east of the city. Also, there is the lost green space where the power station will be built in Lovedean which is now suggested to be several buildings with a height of up to 22m. A pressure group in Lovedean are highly concerned with the proposed height of the building which they believe will affect property values in the area. Why could it not make landfall somewhere that does not have all the issues we as a city face.

66 weeks is the proposed/estimated time that this work will take to complete. Although it has been said that this is not constant – this means that this project will take over a year (and that is also not including any delays or problems that may come about whilst digging these trenches). That is 66 weeks of disruption for the city with no break and no benefit to well over 210,000 residents who live and work here. Two 0.7m trenches are required for the interconnector. This will cause disruption twice over because they cannot be placed during the same excavation. This is due to the combined effect of the magnetic field which can sometimes become an issue.

There are many unanswered questions that residents have. It is common knowledge that when Milton Common was reclaimed, a protective skin that was laid onto Milton Common. This was to help contain the methane gas that is produced from underneath. I have yet to see conclusive remarks made as to whether this has been considered, especially when it looks like work to dig a trench may take place on Milton common. The tall vent tubes are across the

common but are there to protect properties around the common from this methane gas. This is a worry for residents near to the common. Furthermore, residents near the route would like to know the impact drilling or any type of work that happens may have on their properties. They are worried about vibrations but also, their home insurance premiums. Many properties on the path of the cable are over 100 years old and there are significant concerns that issues may arise and, what would then happen and who to speak to and how long that process would take. Residents have contacted Aquind but have reported that the phone number given is not answered or going through and that emails have also not been replied to. Also, will the city or wards effected received financial compensation for the disruption caused such as CIL funds or a general compensation payment. When wards face development, CIL is paid to help towards the community and its infrastructure. Will each city and ward be compensated in any way, shape or form. Residents believe this should be the case.

All in all, we as residents feel let down by Aquind and by our own government. We feel let down that our own council has had their rights to decide this taken away and that they are in the same position that we as residents are. We feel let down that the Secretary of State has not come down to talk to the council's face to face. We feel let down that Aquind have not kept residents informed with the route and we also feel let down that they scared residents into believing that their homes would be taken away from them. We also feel let down that they decided not to keep us up to date with what was happening and we feel let down that we had to find out the actual route via residents using their own time to delve through the hundreds of documents and through our councillors rather than from the company proposing it. We also feel let down that the government will not help with the air quality issues that this project with force on the residents of Portsmouth yet government chastise the council to do better and enforce government policies and not provide adequate funding to

mitigate or better the issues we already face let alone with this cable if it does go ahead. We also feel let down that we will lose our community and open spaces for this to occur and we know that habitats, plant life and wildlife will be lost due to this project. We also know that it will cause chaos and disruption for over a year to the residents and workers of Portsmouth and further afield whilst no proper mitigation or help has been offered or suggested by the government or Aquind. We implore the planning inspector as well as Aquind and the government to reconsider this project. Instead of forcing it onto Portsmouth and Hampshire Council's and going through heavily congested routes and junctions, we hope that other options can be considered. We also hope and pray that our views will be taken into consideration but also, the lack of trust on many levels makes us believe that this will just be another bit of paper and just part of a 'tick box consultation'. I/we hope that is not the case and that this application will not be allowed or at least, will be reconsidered for somewhere else on the South Coast away from any cities that face similar issues that we do. We implore whoever is reading this to consider all that has been said and understand where we are coming from as residents who will have to live with the choices you are about to make. It will probably not affect the people reading this, but you literally have the lives and wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of residents in your hands whether it comes to health, mental health, safety, wellbeing or general day to day life. Please take note of our objections and the number of objections that you will be receiving from the residents of Portsmouth and further afield. But by submitting this – I object to the Aquind Interconnector and hope that you will listen to us residents.

Additionally:

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 tendered to 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 fruit and veg which they often donate to the community to eat allowing healthy eating and a more varied diet – something that is especially important which also goes back to a previous point I have made earlier on about the levels of obesity in Portsmouth. Another point is that these allotments are vital towards people's mental health, especially in the times we face with limited contact with family and friends. It is an outlet for many people and is a comforting place to go to and enjoy. If you take that away from people, it will be extremely detrimental towards resident's wellbeing. There is also the question as to the fact that there is a species of newt (the Great Crested Newt – Triturus cristatus) that has been sighted a significant amount of times all over the allotments. This species of newt can live up to 25 years and its population is rapidly declining. Therefore, this 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. On the government's own website, there is a page dedicated to the great crested newt and some of the activities the government themselves have said could harm great crested newts includes: excavating the ground, filling in or destroying ponds, removing materials such as dead wood on the ground, removing dense vegetation and disturbing the ground. I would like to know whether this has been taken into consideration when considering changing the route through the allotments and also, with the original plan to follow the allotment path. Has Natural England been briefed about this as I have not seen a mitigation licence from them or a report from an ecologist on the planning inspectorate's documents online. The government cannot put up rules about protecting this rare species then allow the wanton destruction of their environment by Aquind and their cable.

Caron Johnson

[redacted]

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