From: [redacted]
To: Aquind Interconnector
Subject: Objection to Aquind Interconnector Land Plans
Date: 05 October 2020 23:44:45
Attachments: Aquind Objection.docx

I strongly object to the proposed Aquind Interconnector development and hope that you will listen to residents.
Please see my attached Word doc

Ms J Jones
[redacted]

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5 October 2020

Objection to Aquind Interconnector Land Plans

To whom it may concern.

With regards to the planned Aquind Inter Connector Cable, information has now been brought to light that suggests that the previous promise from Aquind that the Milton Piece and Eastney Lake allotments would be untouched has now been broken.

I attended a meeting on Friday 22nd November 2019 at the Eastney and Milton Allotments which was attended by representatives of Aquind and plotholders and one of the questions asked was **if there would be any disruption to any part of the allotments.**
The answer from the representative was that there would be none because the route through the allotments, (and other access through Portsmouth), would be via underground tunnels and I think the depth mentioned was 3 metres down.

At the time I thought this was quite futuristic but then I reasoned that there were machines that were capable of cutting through the earth to create the Channel tunnel so I did not question this idea further.

I have since discovered that Aquind LIED to us, obviously to stop any objections, because they DO need to remove all structures and everything else in the way to run the cables.

This will mean massive disruption through the allotments and also to any houses, shops, trees on all the route through Portsmouth.

This massive LIE should in itself be enough to stop the Aquind pipeline getting anywhere near Portsmouth because if they lied about this, what else have they lied about?

I have recently discovered that 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. In addition, the car park, onsite shop and toilets could also be impacted.

A number of the allotment plots have been tended and nurtured for decades by the same families and every single allotment holder has taken significant time to establish the plants that they have grown there.

Please bear in mind that the allotment holders grow fresh fruit and vegetables which they often donate to the community, allowing healthy eating and a more varied diet to a great many people.

Another point is that these allotments are vital towards people's mental health, especially in the current times we are facing, with limited contact with family and friends.
They are an outlet for many people and a comforting place to go to and enjoy.

If you take that away from people, it will be extremely detrimental towards their wellbeing.

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 7/11/2019 but was not published until 12/12/2019 just 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 affect.

It is incorrigible that Aquind did not feel it necessary to inform residents of the final route of the cable and just published it in over 537 documents.

The details were 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 and only then did they find the map.

Aquind were very quick to send out letters asking for information about mortgages and personal information in November 2018 which caused huge upset and panic, particularly with elderly and vulnerable residents and yet they did not send the map to all the residents it would affect from Eastney right up to Lovedean.

Residents feel that the lack of consultation is extremely poor and they have not felt part of the process of it at all.

The residents in Fort Cumberland Road had no idea about the landfall of the cable in the car park which would cause huge disruption to their road.

There is also a legitimate concern as to the Lifeboat Station and any disruption that these works could cause that may add extra time to a journey.

Added 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:

1. Southsea Marina
2. Lifeboat Station
3. Hayling Ferry and also
4. 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 received in November 2018).

Aquind gave out information on memory sticks to limited libraries across the city for residents to access at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020.

Unfortunately, for residents in Baffins, Milton and Eastney, the closest library to view this information would have been at the Central Library or Southsea Library. Milton, (Beddow library) and Baffins, (Lacey library), were both missed off the list which means that a large amount of the residents in the affected areas could not access this information.

That 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.

This is very poor oversight on Aquind's behalf and a huge problem for residents – some of 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 been down to visit the areas affected or to talk to the Council Leaders and Officers in person yet expects Residents, Councillors and MPs in all areas to let Aquind just 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, (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 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 disrupt as many lives as possible in many different ways.

The cables are proposed to go through or next to some extremely 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 gets grid locked very quickly.

What is proposed along the Eastern Road will cause nothing short 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 because 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 when we face 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 extreme pressure on the people of Portsmouth, yet there has been nothing helpful 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.

Portsmouth has 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 need to combat these issues.
Councillor [redacted] asked for funding for a free bus pass for residents or sustainable transport for example, amongst many other suggestions to try to do what they can.

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;
- Noise 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.
This further shows that we cannot lose these spaces even for a short time.

Fishermen are already concerned about 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 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 as to why existing routes used by others could not be repurposed or shared.

Southern Water has 2 concrete tunnels under the harbour, (which was allowed to be built some years ago).

Was there ever a conversation to see if these could be shared? 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.

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 well over a year and that is not including any delays or problems that may come about whilst digging these trenches.

That makes 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.

It is common knowledge that when Milton Common was reclaimed, a protective skin was laid on to Milton Common. This was to help contain the methane gas that is produced from underneath. The tall vent tubes across the common are there to protect properties around the common from this methane gas.
Has this has been considered, especially when it looks like work to dig a trench may take place on Milton Common?

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? Who is there to speak to and how long will that process take? Will any Risk Assessments be done before the work is undertaken?

Will the city or wards affected receive 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 really 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 Councils 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 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 will force on the residents of Portsmouth; yet government chastise the council to do better and enforce government policies but won't provide adequate funding to mitigate or better the issues we already face, let alone with this cable if it does go ahead.

We feel let down that we will lose our community and open spaces if this project goes ahead and we know that habitats, plant life and wildlife will be lost forever.

We also know that it will cause chaos and disruption for well 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.

Instead of forcing it onto Portsmouth and Hampshire Councils 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 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 well 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.

We implore the Planning Inspector as well as Aquind and the government to reconsider this project.

And by submitting this – I strongly object to the proposed Aquind Interconnector development and hope that you will listen to residents.

Yours faithfully
J Jones
Southsea