

Thank you. This project has been a cause of concern for many years in my area and therefore I just want to bring up some topics and explain the concerns.

- Air pollution

We are facing a climate emergency (of which has been declared in Portsmouth) yet this project will woefully destroy habitats and vegetation, close access to green areas, ignore air quality issues, not put in carbon reduction measures and disrupt many lives. There are only 3 roads on and off of this island and if there is an accident or road works, the city is grid locked. One of the routes proposed along the Eastern Road would cause nothing short of pure chaos. It could also damage our economy as people will not want to come into Portsmouth if they know that they could be stuck in traffic.

The fact that work could take 66 weeks as a minimum means that the disruption of digging could cause traffic backlog and release further toxins into the air. There has also been no guarantee that this project will result in zero carbon emissions. Any increase in particulates and carbon dioxide will result in poorer health of Portsmouth residents. We are facing government imposed air quality zones in the city and it would be completely detrimental for the government to allow such a project to gain permission without either offering help to Portsmouth or offering compensation. Councillor Vernon Jackson wrote to Michael Gove in 2019 to ask whether the government would consider helping with measures such as free bus passes or sustainable transport to combat these issues but this was denied. It is hoped that the government will step in with regards to this application due to the air quality issues alone to perhaps provide an example to developers and other projects like this. Climate emergency is a serious issue that we all face and large scale projects need to be as close to zero carbon emissions as possible. 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 as a city?

- Environmental concerns

In the scoping report, it suggests that Portsmouth city council should only comment regarding the environmental impact due to the landfall. There initially was no suggestion that they should comment on the route of the cabling even though it could go through some of the busiest roads in the city. To add to that, the report also states that 'during excavation and laying cables, 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:

'In the context of the above, the construction and operation of the Proposed Development may lead to significant environmental effects on the following parameters...' It then goes on to list traffic & transport, air quality, noise & vibration, ecology, flood risk, climate change, electric & magnetic fields and soils to name but a few.

We were told that due to the harbour being an SSSI, the cables could not be placed there. However, with new plans put forward – part of the route involves the cables going from the Eastern Road bridge across the harbour and coming out at Farlington Marshes. Why could the cables not have made landfall elsewhere closer to the proposed substation.

Furthermore, there is a question why existing routes used by others could not be repurposed or shared. Southern Water has 2 concrete tunnels under the harbour (which were allowed to be built some years ago). Was a conversation ever had to see if these could be shared?

- Loss of green spaces

There also seems to be no mitigation for residents especially when it looks like their open green spaces will be lost to them for however long 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 local newspaper report dated the 3/5/2018 – ‘Obesity-related hospital admissions in Portsmouth increase’ 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 lose these spaces even for a short time.

When Milton Common was reclaimed, a protective skin was laid onto the Common. This was to help safely release 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 could take place on there. Furthermore, residents near the route would like to know the effects impact drilling may have on their properties. They are worried about vibrations as many houses on the proposed path are over 100 years old and there are significant concerns that issues may arise.

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 plots that have been tendered to for decades by the same families could be destroyed. Please also bear in mind that the allotment holders grow fresh fruit and veg often donating them to the community allowing healthy eating and a more varied diet – something that is especially important which also goes back to the point I have made earlier about the levels of obesity in Portsmouth.

This project is full of uncertainty. Today, almost 3 years down the line since Aquind began consultation, a route has still not been set in stone. 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.

I would implore the planning inspectorate and the secretary of state to not allow this application to be approved. The people of Portsmouth's lives, wellbeing, livelihood's and mental health are literally in your hands. Please take heed of our concerns and understand why we are lobbying you in large numbers. This will only provide long term misery and problems for us all on this route.