



Our ref: 20025089  
Your ref: EN020022

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AQUIND Interconnector Case Team  
The Planning Inspectorate  
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23 December 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

**Application by AQUIND Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the AQUIND Interconnector Project (EN020022): Written Statement**

I refer to your letter of 15 September 2020 regarding the above proposal and your invitation to submit written representations to the Examining Authority's (ExA) by Deadline 6 (23 December 2020).

Highways England's responses are set out below and should be read in conjunction with the Updated Statement of Common Ground between Highways England and AQUIND which has been submitted to you by the Applicant at Deadline 4.

Yours faithfully,



Patrick Blake  
Area 3 Spatial Planner  
Email: patrick.blake@highwaysengland.co.uk

## **AQUIND Interconnector Project (EN020022)**

### **Written Statement by Highways England**

**23 December 2020**

#### Introduction

Highways England (HE) have been invited (dated 15 September 2020) to provide written representations to the ExA's Written Questions for this project. The relevant questions to Highways England and our responses are set out below.

#### Statement of Common Ground

Matters agreed to date with the applicant are set out in the agreed updated statement of common ground (at deadline 4) which was submitted by the applicant. It was intended to agree an updated statement of common ground at deadline 6 however this is now anticipated to be agreed ahead of deadline 7. A meeting between AQUIND and Highways England is planned for the first week in January.

#### Protective Provisions

Dialogue continues with the Applicant to agree the appropriate protective provisions in relation to the Strategic Road Network and protection of its assets (which includes National Roads Telecommunications Services) to be incorporated with the DCO. Highways England have submitted to AQUIND our required protective provisions on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and we await formal agreement from AQUIND prior to submitting to the ExA.

#### Traffic and Transport

Dialogue continues between Highways England and AQUIND with the intention to provide a significant update/completion of discussions at the next deadline.

#### **An updated, more detailed assessment of the collision data at A3(M) Junctions 2 and 3 and at the A27/ A2030 junction.**

This was discussed at the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November and WSP stated that this had been done but that they would await agreement on the junction capacity modelling before issuing it to us, as the two were linked (in the sense that the modelling would allow us to understand the risk that collision clusters associated with excessive queueing on the slip roads would be exacerbated by the Scheme);

#### **A firm commitment that normal sized HGVs (and not just abnormal loads) would access and leave the Farlington Playing Fields work site under traffic management control**

This was also discussed at the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November and WSP stated that this would be incorporated in an updated FCTMP, which would be issued once HE,

HCC and PCC were all happy with the responses to issues they had each previously raised.

**A further submission in respect of the junction capacity modelling for A3(M) Junctions 2 and 3.**

This was raised at the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November, at which we expressed the opinion that the ARCADY and LINSIG models submitted to date required an update. This was to be addressed by WSP by obtaining locally-derived traffic flows for these junctions, rather than those produced by the SRTM, which was regarded as not having sufficiently fine detail in the vicinity of these junctions to produce precise, accurate turning movements. We understand that WSP will incorporate their response to this issue in the updated models referred to above. This will be the subject of a WSP Technical Note, which we will review once we receive it.

It is anticipated that the issues identified to date are not showstopper issues and will if necessary be mitigated through commitments to be made either in an updated FCTMP or a supplement to the Transport Assessment.

WSP have submitted updated information to Highways England related to the matters above on 17 December 2020, a completion of a review is anticipated ahead of next deadline. Although it is noted that we have yet to receive any updates to the FCTMP.

Discussion is ongoing between all parties how statement of common ground between Highways England, Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and AQUIND can be achieved ahead of next deadline.

**Proposed Easement**

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AQUIND have submitted their completed Geotechnical Risk Assessment in accordance with CD622 (Managing Geotechnical Risk) on 3 December 2020 which will inform if Highways England can accept in principle an easement to facilitate a crossing beneath the A27. Highways England have reviewed and have requested clarification on some details on 22 December 2020 ahead of a formal approval, we await a response from the applicant.

Positive dialogue is ongoing to agree the heads of terms in advance of an agreed geotechnical assessment. Once in principle agreement has been established, formal negotiations for an easement will commence between Highways England and the Applicant.

## Other Matters

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We have now received the explanation of position from AQUIND on the matters related to Highways England not being included as a 'relevant highway authority'. Highways England are broadly content subject to the agreement of protective provisions to protect the strategic road network and its assets. We remain concerned in relation to how matters in relation to potential mitigation proposals on both Portsmouth City Council's and Hampshire County Council's road networks during the construction period and the important role the strategic road network will play. If Highways England are not formally consulted by AQUIND to determine deliverability of proposals that relate to the strategic road network, this could create unnecessary delay to allow Highways England sufficient time to review and agree. We are meeting with AQUIND early in the new year and will provide an updated position ahead of the next deadline.