



Our ref: 20025089
Your ref: EN020022

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AQUIND Interconnector Case Team
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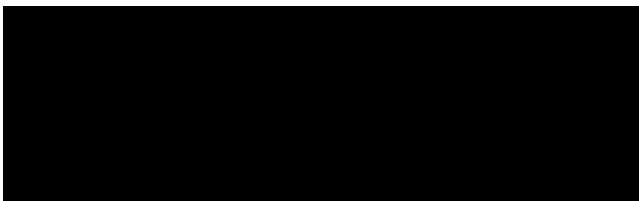
25 January 2021

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 7 (25 January 2021).

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 7.



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AQUIND Interconnector Project (EN020022)

Written Statement by Highways England

25 January 2021

Introduction

Highways England (HE) have been invited 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 7) which was submitted by the applicant. Meetings between AQUIND and Highways England were held on 7th and 21st January 2021.

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. Formal agreement is imminent and is anticipated to be submitted to the ExA well in advance of deadline 8.

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 meetings held on 6th and 21st January 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 has now been incorporated in the updated FCTMP dated December 2020, which refers (at item 7 of Table 6) to the use of construction traffic marshalling at the access to Farlington Playing Fields.

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 18th 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. WSP have now incorporated their response to this issue in the updated models referred to above. This is the subject of a WSP Technical Note, received on 17th December 2020.

A review of this material is currently under way. At a meeting held on 21st January, some initial comments were fed back to WSP. These will require a small amount of additional work to overcome one specific issue relating to queueing at A3(M) Junction 2. However, the initial review has found that, in principle, these are credible model runs which appear to show acceptable outcomes. This will be formally confirmed ahead of Deadline 8.

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.

It has been agreed by all parties that a statement of common ground between Highways England, Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and AQUIND is not required. Although all parties remain committed to continue dialogue throughout the construction period to manage any potential issues as they arise.

Proposed Easement

Following the formal approval and geotechnical certification in accordance with CD622 by Highways England, dialogue is continuing to agree in principle the heads of terms for a formal easement to facilitate a crossing beneath the A27.

Dialogue is ongoing.

Other Matters

'Relevant Highway Authority'

We have reviewed and understood AQUIND's position on the matters related to Highways England not being included as a 'relevant highway authority'. We remain concerned in relation to how matters in relation to potential (as could be formally agreed in the Construction Management Plan that might not be detailed in the FCTMP or FCMS) 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.

This potential issue for matters on the local road network that could indirectly impact the strategic road network is mitigated by the applicant's suggested additional wording in the DCO for the Construction Management Plan (Requirement 17):

“to be submitted to and approved by the relevant highway authority in consultation with Highways England”.

Highways England would be agreeable to the change wording in the DCO, if it can be confirmed that matters formally approved by the relevant highway authority in the Construction Management Plan (Requirement 17) only relates to matters on the highway network the relevant highway authorities are responsible for. For avoidance of doubt, the current two relevant highway authorities, Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council are unable to approve matters that relate to the strategic road network managed by Highways England. Any matters that may be identified in the Construction Management Plan that require formal approval on the strategic road network managed by Highways England will require additional consultation by AQUIND and formal approvals sought that can only be given by Highways England. Highways England recommends early engagement on any such matters to avoid any unnecessary delay.

ExA further written questions

TT2.16.9

The Applicant proposes using lay-bys on the strategic road network to hold construction-related HGVs temporarily until such HGVs are given the authorisation by a traffic marshal to travel and approach the Converter Station construction site. Can Highways England confirm if the identified lay-bys shown in the applicant's Day Lane Technical Note [REP6-073] have capacity for such vehicles to park and wait and if there are any safety or capacity concerns with the use of the lay-bys in this way?

Hampshire County Council have confirmed that their Hulbert Road layby facility can be used to hold HGVs associated with the construction of the Converter station prior to arriving on site. This will negate the need to utilise laybys on the strategic road network as part of a managed access strategy although they can still be legally used for statutory breaks by HGVs travelling to the converter station. This will therefore involve a change to AQUIND's HGV management strategy within the FCTMP which WSP will prepare. There will need to be a possible Temporary Traffic Regulation Order covering Hampshire County Council laybys which AQUIND are currently discussing with Hampshire County Council.