

The Planning Act 2008, Section 89, and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010, Rules 8, 9 & 13

Application by AQUIND Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the AQUIND Interconnector Project

Written Submission - Deadline-7 for 25th January 2021

APLEAL – Community Action Group

Registration Number - 20025022

1. General

This examination process that is involving many Local Governments, Action Groups and private residents is not the only issue of concern. The work of the Planning Inspectorate is, as I observe is aimed at validating that the Application is in accordance with National and Local Government construction rules and regulations. This work is technical and examined in a democratic and in a transparent way. Other issues of concern which are not been examined in democratic and transparent way, include:

1. AQUIND's Lack of Track Record and Expertise, i.e. it is a shell company.
2. AQUIND's decision to offshore the business, first in the British Virgin Islands and now in the principality of Luxemburg.
3. The two AQUIND principals are both Russian exiles; having fled Russia - one of whom lives in fear of his life. Both appear to have access to substantial financial resources, the veracity which has not to my knowledge been tested.
4. Validation that AQUIND has the financial backing to bring the project to completion and that the true source of the finance has not been subject to any 'Money Laundering' activities.
5. The substantial donations made by the AQUIND directors to the Tory Party, often targeted at those who are or may be influential in this examination procedure.

In normal circumstances I would not raise these matters in this forum. However I have addressed these questions to my MP and asked specifically who has or will examine the issues raised above. To date I have received no acknowledgement or reply. So my question to the Planning Inspectorate Examining Authority is if you are concerned with only technical matters, who is it that is examining the ethical issues?

Finally, the IFA2 project which comes ashore at Lee-on-Solent and has just been commissioned has provided 23 acres of common land for community recreation. Whereas, in the whole of this project I find that there is no community amenity provided whatsoever. Neither a footpath, cycle path, nature area or common access land. In the course of the work by AQUIND to be done there is clearly the opportunity to provide some community benefit. Will the Examining Authority please explain why it is not taking AQUIND to task and forcing them to search out opportunities to provide some community benefits as these must surely be possible?

2. Landscaping

In our submission for Deadline 6 we asked that a measurable performance parameter be provided for the landscaping work. To support this the Day Lane Solar Farm was given as an example where the landscaping totally failed to meet the purpose for which it is intended. The AQUIND proposal states an intention, unless this intention has something that is measurable it is totally worthless. The response from AQUIND did not offer any measurable assurance that it would do the job. In addition, the question of the long term management of the landscaping was also not addressed - that is who will be responsible for the long term upkeep task?

Changing the subject slightly, it would seem that the examining authority has little or no resource to provide a view on the objections that are being raised. As in this example a question has been raised here about landscape performance measurability, it is then posed by the authority to the applicant who replies. At no point does the Examining Authority take a view or provide any input as to the validity of the question or the reply from the applicant. I hesitate to say this but is the role of the Examining Authority to 'tick boxes'? This is a serious question and many others would like to know what value does the Examining Authority provide?

3. Traffic and Transport

In our submission for Deadline 6 we raised our concerns about the safety of non-motorised users of Day Lane. Since then four passing places have been proposed in Day Lane. I have spoken with Hampshire CC Highways who inform me that these are necessary to ensure safe passing places for HGVs and cars. When I asked HCC Highways on their view about the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders in Day Lane the reply was the regulations did not require that provision be made for their safety. AQUIND have the opportunity to provide safe passage for these users by accessing the perimeter area of the Day Lane Solar Farm, this would involve very little cost. Especially considering that their plans include a slip road for large loads, which will cut across the perimeter land.

It would seem beyond the wit of any man that we see an issue regarding the safe passing of HGVs and cars, but have no issue with the safe passing of HGVs, cars and non-motorised users. If neither HCC Highways or AQUIND provide a rational case it is beholding that the Examining Authority to press the matter and /or explain themselves the reasoning?

Further to the applicants response to our submission given at Deadline-1 we offer the following reply(s):

1. Landscaping

A key issue for the APLEAL members is the viability of the Landscaping. The AQUIND proposal is full of intent, but this is not supported by any measurable commitment.

For example, the Solar Farm off Day Lane was commissioned in April 2014 this included landscaping. The photo below was taken on 22nd December 2020, that is 6.5 years plus since commissioning. The photo shows scant landscape cover, which is totally ineffective.



The AQUIND proposal does not give any commitment or assurances about the effectiveness and long term viability of the Landscaping Plan.

Therefore, it is not unreasonable to demand that a commitment be given that the landscaping will be effective within a specific timescale. This needs to be implemented by a management that can be held to account by local authorities.

2. Traffic and Transport

In our submission at Deadline-1, we made reference to traffic safety issues particular to Day Lane and its junction with Broadway Lane. In the submission, we acknowledged that numbers associated with accidents and traffic volume did not require any remedial work on the roads in question to meet the existing regulations. The response from the applicant was simply a repeat of what was contained in the AQUIND Proposal – no action required. This response is less than useful, as it does not seek to find a resolution or engage with local residents. In fact, it shows a total disregard for the safety of local road users.

Our issue here is that because nobody chooses to walk or cycle up or down Day Lane as it is not fit for any non-motorised users. Pedestrians, in particular, have minimal chance to escape oncoming vehicles. The photo below shows the situation at the top of Day Lane.



The fact that minimal pedestrian use is made of Day Lane will distort any statistics and hence the conclusion. The proposed work to include a special slip road for the transformers offers a great opportunity to improve safety for pedestrians and others and be of benefit to the wider community. The cost of this would be minimal, especially compared with the costs that may be incurred by the project as the result of an accident.

We ask that the applicant reviews the arrangements for all Road Users using Day Lane and the junction with Broadway Lane. Not just site traffic.

3. Temporary Site Access off Broadway Lane

APLEAL has been previously informed that some short-term use will be made of the existing farm track from Broadway Lane, which leads to the Lovedean Converter site. We are now informed that this could extend up to 12 months. This entrance off Broadway Lane is also, the residential access to numbers 1,2 and 3 Broadway Farm Barn, 2, Broadway Farm Cottage and Little Lovedean.

Having to share the residential property access with a stream of construction traffic is a considerable incumbrance on all the residents. Our strong recommendation is that this access off Broadway Lane should not be used and an alternative access sort.