



**AQUIND Limited**

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# **AQUIND INTERCONNECTOR**

Statement of Common Ground Between  
AQUIND Limited and Sport England  
FINAL

The Planning Act 2008

Document Ref: 7.5.18  
PINS Ref.: EN020022

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**DATE: 1 MARCH 2021**

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## DOCUMENT

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<b>Approved By</b>	M. Wood
<b>Date</b>	1 March 2021

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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

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## 1.1. PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

1.1.1.1. A Statement of Common Ground ('SoCG') is a written statement produced as part of the application process for an application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') and is prepared jointly by the applicant and another party. A SoCG sets out the matters of agreement between both parties, matters where there is not agreement and matters which are under discussion.

1.1.1.2. In this regard paragraph 58 of the Department for Communities and Local Government's guidance entitled "Planning Act 2008: examination of applications for development consent" (26 March 2015) hereafter referred to as DCLG Guidance) describes a SoCG as follows:

*"A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree. As well as identifying matters which are not in real dispute, it is also useful if a statement identifies those areas where agreement has not been reached. The statement should include references to show where those matters are dealt with in the written representations or other documentary evidence."*

1.1.1.1. The aim of a SoCG is to assist the Examining Authority to manage the examination of an application for a DCO by providing an understanding of the status of matters at hand and allowing the Examining Authority to focus their questioning. The effective use of SoCG is expected to lead to a more efficient examination process.

1.1.1.2. A SoCG may be submitted prior to the start or during an Examination and updated as necessary or as requested during an Examination.

## 1.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1.1. AQUIND Limited ('the Applicant') submitted an application for the AQUIND Interconnector Order (the 'Order') pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the 'PA2008') to the Secretary of State ('SoS') on 14 November 2019 (the 'Application').

1.2.1.2. The Application seeks development consent for those elements of AQUIND Interconnector (the 'Project') located in the UK and the UK Marine Area (the 'Proposed Development').

1.2.1.3. The Project is a new 2,000 MW subsea and underground High Voltage Direct Current ('HVDC') bi-directional electric power transmission link between the South Coast of England and Normandy in France. By linking the British and French electric power grids it will make energy markets more efficient, improve security of supply and enable greater flexibility as power grids evolve to adapt to different sources of renewable energy and changes in demand trends such as the development of electric vehicles. The Project will have the capacity to transmit up to 16,000,000 MWh of electricity per annum, which equates to approximately 5 % and 3 % of the total consumption of the UK and France respectively.

1.2.1.4. The Proposed Development includes:

- HVDC Marine Cables from the boundary of the UK Exclusive Economic Zone to the UK at Eastney in Portsmouth;
- Jointing of the HVDC Marine Cables and HVDC Onshore Cables;
- HVDC Onshore Cables;
- A Converter Station and associated electrical and telecommunications infrastructure;
- High Voltage Alternating Current ('HVAC') Onshore Cables and associated infrastructure connecting the Converter Station to the Great Britain electrical transmission network, the National Grid, at Lovedean Substation; and
- Smaller diameter Fibre Optic Cables to be installed together with the HVDC and HVAC Cables and associated infrastructure.

### **1.3. THIS STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND AND THE ROLE OF SPORT ENGLAND**

1.3.1.1. An SoCG was jointly prepared by the Applicant and Sport England in accordance with the DCLG Guidance and precedent examples of SoCG available on the Planning Inspectorate's ('PINS') website which was submitted at Deadline 1. This revised draft is submitted at Deadline 4 to reflect updates following further discussions between the parties and the submission of the Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts (FMP) (Document Reference 7.8.1.13).

1.3.1.2. Sport England is interested in the Proposed Development with regards to its statutory duty to protect playing fields used in the last five years and its non-statutory responsibility to protect existing sports facilities.

1.3.1.3. For the purpose of this SoCG the Applicant and Sport England will be jointly referred to as the 'Parties'.

## 2. RECORD OF ENGAGEMENT UNDERTAKEN TO DATE

2.1.1.1. The table below sets out a summary of the key meetings and correspondence between the Parties in relation to the Proposed Development.

**Table 2-1 – Consultation with Sport England**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Form of Contact</b>	<b>Summary</b>
18/02/2020	Telephone	Initial discussion to provide additional information on the Proposed Development and the potential impacts and mitigation on sports/plating pitches, including signposting to the relevant submission documents.
19/05/2020	Videoconference	Understanding of Sport England’s remit with regards to sports/playing pitches, discussion regarding the development of a Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impact. The Framework discussion focussed on pitches within the Order Limits and the proposed mitigation. Sport England provided additional advice on its Design Guidance (reinstatement), cricket, rugby and football pitches, and player-run-off areas.
04/08/2020	Email	Comments received from Sport England on the Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts, with queries regarding the relocation of pitches as part of proposed mitigation.
24/09/2020	Email	Distribution of the updated Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts and the Statement of Common Ground to Sport England for comment.
19/10/2020	Email	Comments received from Sport England on the Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts, with queries regarding proposed mitigation and the reinstatement period. A request that reinstatement of pitches is undertaken by a specialist sports contractor or agronomist. Sport England provided confirmation that the Statement of Common Ground represents an accurate reflection of the engagement that has been had and that those aspects which have not been agreed are accurate.

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
10/11/2020	Email	WSP contacted Sport England to enquire whether they had any comment on Chapter 25 Socio-economics of the Environmental Statement and sent a copy of the submitted document, in order to follow up on one of the outstanding current position points within the Statement of Common Ground.
17/11/2020	Email	WSP sent Sport England the updated Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts and Statement of Common Ground with Sport England documents for comment. WSP requested feedback on both these documents.
23/11/2020	Email	Sport England confirmed that they have no further comment on matter 4.1.2 in the Statement of Common ground with Sport England.
01/12/2020	Email	Sport England provided feedback, noting concerns that the Framework Management Plan covers a best-case scenario and emphasised that community sport should not be affected to the detriment of users. Comments received from Sport England centred on phasing of works and reinstatement of pitches, and suggested that a specialist agronomist be appointed to advise on the appropriate time frame for reinstatement of sports pitches.
10/12/2020	Email	WSP suggested a call with Sport England in January 2021, once further updates to the Framework Management Plan have been made, in order to discuss phasing of the works and reinstatement of pitches.
10/12/2020	Email	Sport England agreed that a call would be useful following the next update of the Framework Management Plan.
12/02/2021	Email	WSP sent Sport England the updated Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts. WSP requested feedback on both these documents.



Date	Form of Contact	Summary
23/02/2021	Conference call	<p>WSP and Sport England discussed the updates to the Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts, and the appointment of a specialist sports agronomist to assess the options for pitch reinstatement. Sport England emphasised that they had also sought specialist advice from an agronomist to review the Framework Management Plan, and that whilst the proposed pitch works and reinstatement was overall feasible in principle, further detail was required in terms of planning, preparation, carrying out of works and maintenance and this would have to be managed carefully. Sport England reiterated the point that the Order Limits remained wide, in particular, across Farlington Playing Fields, and that they felt the indicative route/works represented a 'best case scenario'. Sport England felt that given the width of the Order limits across this site, a 'worst case scenario' could result in more pitches being affected with a greater impact on community sport. Sport England also raised questions regarding the alternative arrangements for clubs/teams/pitch users where pitches would be unplayable during the season. WSP confirmed that this would require refinement and further agreement at the Detailed Design Stage, following appointment of a Contractor and agreement with Sport England, national governing bodies for sport, Portsmouth City Council and University of Portsmouth. Overall Sport England noted that whilst there were points of agreement in the Framework Management Plan, there were still outstanding considerations which require resolving. Sport England will provide responses as part of the consultation, on the Framework Management Plan and its contents.</p>

### 3. SUMMARY OF TOPICS COVERED BY THE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

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#### 3.1. TOPICS COVERED IN THE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

3.1.1.1. The following topics discussed between the Applicant and Sport England are discussed in this SoCG:

- Socio-economic – impacts on sports pitches

## 4. CURRENT POSITION

### 4.1. SOCIO-ECONOMICS

Table 4-1 – Socio-economics

Ref.	Description of matter	Current Position	RAG
<b>Socio-economics</b>			
4.1.1	Sites of consideration	<p>The following sites within the Order Limits are agreed to be of interest to Sport England due to the nature of sports provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farlington Playing Fields</li> <li>• Baffins Milton Rovers Football Ground</li> <li>• Langstone Harbour Sports Ground</li> <li>• University of Portsmouth Playing Fields and Langstone Sports Site</li> <li>• Bransbury Park (sports pitches only)</li> </ul> <p>It is also agreed that the Proposed Development will have a temporary impact on the playing field provision at these locations during construction and reinstatement.</p>	Agreed
4.1.2	Sites of consideration	<p>Sport England confirmed that they have no comment on the assessment of effects contained within Table 25.14 of Chapter 25 of the Environmental Statement (ES) Socio-economics (Examination Library Reference APP-140) and its associated Appendix 22.5 Illustrative Phasing of Works at Example Open Spaces (APP-473).</p> <p>WSP and Sport England conclude that this matter can be marked as agreed.</p>	Agreed
4.1.3	Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts – matters agreed	<p>The draft Appendix 13 Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts (FMP) (Document Reference 7.8.1.13) building on sites assessed as having a significant effect, was distributed to Sport England for comment and a response received on 04/08/2020.</p> <p>Sport England reviewed the FMP prior to it being issued at Deadline 1 and provided comment on the following sections, which builds on ES Chapter 25 Socio-economics and its associated Appendix. The FMP identifies the pitches within the Order Limits, those affected by the Proposed Development, and the proposed mitigation which could be implemented by the appointed contractor, including the indicative phasing of works and alternative pitch layouts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Paragraphs 4.1.2.1 to 4.1.2.4 Reinstatement</li> <li>(b) Paragraph 4.1.2.5 Temporary pitch realignment</li> <li>(c) Section 4.2.1 Farlington Playing Fields</li> <li>(d) Section 4.2.2 Baffins Milton Rovers Football Ground and Langstone Harbour Sports Ground</li> <li>(e) Section 4.2.3 University of Portsmouth Playing Fields and Langstone Sports Site</li> <li>(f) Section 4.2.4 Bransbury Park (sports pitches only)</li> <li>(g) Section 5 Securing Mitigation</li> </ul>	Agreed

The Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts was updated following the receipt of this feedback, and returned to Sport England for final comments on 24/09/2020. Sport England reviewed the FMP and provided further comments on the following sections following its issue at Deadline 1:

- (h) Paragraphs 4.1.2.1 to 4.1.2.4 Reinstatement – Sport England queried the duration of the reinstatement period and whether this was long enough to re-establish turf, particularly for cricket pitches
- (i) Paragraph 4.1.2.5 Temporary pitch realignment - Sport England raised concerns about the Order Limits and a lack of certainty about the scenario being assessed.
- (j) Section 4.2 - Sport England raised concerns regarding disruption to pitches during the playing season, whether any spare capacity in other pitches is available.

The Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts was revised for Deadline 4 submission in light of discussions and advice received, addressing the queries from Sport England. It is confirmed that the order limits have been refined further.

Ongoing actions related to the reinstatement period for turf and capacity of pitches; specialist advice was sought from a turf contractor, and further information was requested from PCC to understand the existing capacity and booking levels of pitches.

It was agreed with Sport England that a call will be arranged following the revision of the Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts for Deadline 7 (which will incorporate further feedback from PCC) to further discuss the phasing of works and reinstatement of pitches, in light of PCC feedback.

A call was held between Sport England and WSP following Deadline 7 on 23/02/2021 to discuss the updates to the Framework Management Plan, following the document revision and incorporation of detail based on reports from a specialist sports agronomist. Sport England will provide further comments to the Examiner on the content of the Framework Management Plan at Deadline 8.

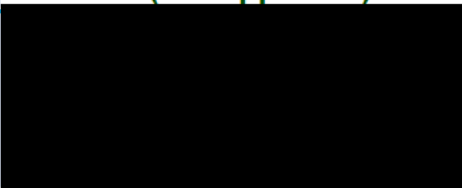
Within the Framework Management Plan, the Applicant has agreed the following topics with Sport England:

- (a) Sport England stated that the feedback was that proposals for reinstatement were achievable at Farlington Fields, but there are a number of risks, uncertainties and the works would need careful planning and preparation as well maintenance and after-care. Sport England will provide further detailed technical comment on the proposals for reinstatement.
- (b) At Farlington Fields, it has been agreed with the applicant that Cricket Pitch 3 (disused) will not be affected by works (however will remain in the order limits) and this will be outlined in the OOCEMP. This addresses Sport England's concerns regarding any potential reinstatement possibly taking 12-18 months, and this is now not an issue.
- (c) At Baffins Milton Rovers Football Stadium, there would be no impact as a result of the works assuming these can be undertaken outside the playing season, and the pitch reinstated in line with the Club's annual pitch maintenance works.
- (d) The re-sizing of pitches at Bransbury Park, due to restrictions in relocation, and the existing pitches being larger than the current regulation size.
- (e) The potential for refinements of the works at all sites at detailed design stage, which would better enable planning for the mitigation relating to pitch realignment and management during the works, and reinstatement after the works are complete.

		<p>However further items were not agreed on, as set out below.</p>	
<p><b>4.1.3a</b></p>	<p>Framework Management Plan for Recreational Impacts – matters not agreed</p>	<p>It was noted on the call held with Sport England after Deadline 7 on 23/02/2021, that some items had outstanding considerations that still required resolution. As a result, the Applicant and Sport England have been unable to reach an agreement on the following matters:</p> <p>Mitigation and management of pitches, in relation to Farlington Fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Reinstatement of excavations at where they affect Sports Pitches, where Sport England felt that the 5% CBR was quite high and this could result in problems with levelling.</li> <li>(b) The width of Order Limits and Sport England’s concern that other pitches could still be affected.</li> </ul> <p>Mitigation and management of pitches, in relation to Langstone Harbour Sports Ground:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(c) There is concern that there is not an alternative cricket pitch for use at Langstone Harbour Sports Ground and this would be lost for most of the season as a result of the works.</li> </ul> <p>For Farlington Fields, Langstone Harbour Sports Ground, and University of Portsmouth Playing Fields, the need to agree an approach to relocation of sports teams where pitches are unavailable during the playing season. Sport England raised concerns about the lack of capacity on alternative sites to accommodate relocated matches/training.</p> <p>Sport England are therefore unable to agree to the overall Framework Management Plan.</p> <p>The Applicant’s final position on these matters is that further refinements to these matters will be made at the detailed design stage, but at this stage these matters are not agreed.</p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>

## 5. SIGNATURES

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Ref.	Sport England	AQUIND (the Applicant)
Signature	Owen Neil	
Printed Name	Owen Neil	Kirill Glukhovskoy
Title	Planning Manager	Managing Director
On behalf of	Sport England	AQUIND Limited
Date	01 March 2021	01 March 2021

