



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Web: www.gov.uk/beis

To:

AQUIND Limited

cc: Any interested party

Our Ref: EN020022

Date: 4 November 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

Planning Act 2008 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Application for Development Consent (“the Application”) by AQUIND Limited (“the Applicant”) for an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed AQUIND Interconnector (“the AQUIND Interconnector project”)

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

1. Following the completion of the Examination on 8 March 2021, the Examining Authority submitted a Report and Recommendation in respect of its findings and conclusions on the above application to the Secretary of State on 8 June 2021. The original statutory deadline for determining the Application was 8 September 2021. The Secretary of State previously extended the deadline to 21 October 2021.
2. The Secretary of State made the decision to extend the statutory deadline for taking the decision on the Application by a further three months. The Statutory deadline has therefore been extended from 21 October 2021 to 21 January 2022. A statement confirming the new deadline for a decision was made to the House of Commons and House of Lords in accordance with section 107(7) of the Planning Act 2008 on 21 October 2021.
3. There are issues on which the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (“the Secretary of State”) would be grateful if the **Applicant** could provide information as appropriate.

Consideration of Alternatives

4. The Secretary of State notes that the document *Environmental Statement Addendum – Appendix 3 – Supplementary Alternatives Chapter*¹ states that ten existing substations were evaluated as part of a feasibility study carried out by National Grid Electricity Transmission. One of the substations which was assessed in the feasibility study was the substation at Mannington. That substation was not considered to be suitable for the proposed connection because, at the time of the feasibility study, there was already a connection agreement in place for the proposed Navitus Bay offshore wind farm. The Addendum notes that the Navitus Bay project was subsequently abandoned but the connection agreement remained in place “for some time following the feasibility study” during which “significant progress” was made on the AQUIND interconnector proposal meaning that it was not reasonable for the Applicant to re-consider the potential for a connection at Mannington at that later stage.
5. The Secretary of State is aware that the decision to refuse development consent for the Navitus Bay development was taken on 11 September 2015. He would be grateful for clarification from **the Applicant** in respect of how long the connection agreement for the Navitus Bay development remained in place following that refusal, what enquiries the Applicant made in respect of the potential use of the Mannington substation following the refusal of the Navitus Bay project and at what stage the development of the AQUIND interconnector project was when the connection agreement ended.

North Portsea Island Coastal Defence Scheme

6. The Secretary of State notes the concerns raised by Portsmouth City Council regarding the potential impact of the proposed AQUIND Interconnector on the construction programme for the North Portsea Island Coastal Defence Scheme (“NPICDS”). The Secretary of State understands that the same six construction compound areas required for the NPICDS are also required for the proposed AQUIND Interconnector.
7. The Secretary of State therefore requests that **the Applicant** provides further information detailing how the construction programme and use of the relevant construction compounds for the proposed AQUIND Interconnector will be managed to avoid causing delay to the NPICDS construction programme.
8. The Secretary of State also requests an update from **the Applicant** on the proposed co-operation agreement between the Applicant and Portsmouth City Council.

¹ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-001488-7.8.1.3%20ES%20Addendum%20-%20Appendix%203%20Supplementary%20Alternatives%20Chapter.pdf>

National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) – Flood Risk Updates

9. The Secretary of State notes that Chapter 14 of the NPPF which covers Flood Risk was updated in July 2021. The Secretary asks **the Applicant** to advise if they have any comments to provide in light of these changes to the NPPF.

Micro-siting of Converter Station

10. The Secretary of State requests that **the Applicant** provides an update on the discussions with National Grid Electricity Transmissions regarding the micro-siting of the converter station at Lovedean. The update should state whether or not an agreement has been reached on the location for the converter station. If the agreement has not yet been reached, the Applicant should explain when this is anticipated.
11. **Responses to the requested information should be submitted by email only to: aquind@planninginspectorate.gov.uk by 23.59 on 18 November 2021.**
12. Responses will be published on the AQUIND Interconnector project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website:
<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/> as soon as possible after **18 November 2021**.
13. This letter is without prejudice to the Secretary of State’s consideration of whether to grant or withhold development consent for the AQUIND Interconnector or any part of the project. Nothing in this letter is to be taken to imply what the eventual decision might be or what final conclusions the Secretary of State may reach on any particular issue which is relevant to the determination of the application.

Yours faithfully



Gareth Leigh

Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning