



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero

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Web:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-energy-security-and-net-zero>

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To:

Our Ref: EN020022

AQUIND Limited  
National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc  
National Grid Electricity System Operator Limited  
Portsmouth City Council  
Coastal Partners

cc: Any interested party

Date: 03 March 2023

Dear Sir or Madam,

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

**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 (“the ExA”) submitted a Report and Recommendation in respect of its findings and conclusions on the above application to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (“the Secretary of State for BEIS”) on 8 June 2021.
2. On 20 January 2022, the Secretary of State for BEIS took the decision to refuse the application for development consent. Following an Order of the High Court made on 24 January 2023, the decision to refuse the application was quashed.
3. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero<sup>1</sup> (“the Secretary of State”) will now re-determine the application for development consent made by the Applicant.

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<sup>1</sup> On 7 February 2023 the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero was created with focus on the energy and climate change portfolio of the former Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

4. To assist him in doing so, the Secretary of State would be grateful if the **Applicant, National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc, National Grid Electricity System Operator Limited, Portsmouth City Council, and Coastal Partners**, in particular, could provide information or, noting the time that has elapsed since the original decision of 20 January 2022, updates as appropriate regarding the specific issues set out below. Responses from other interested parties will also be taken into account.

### **Consideration of Alternatives**

5. The Secretary of State requests that the **Applicant** and both **National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc** and **National Grid Electricity System Operator Limited** provide any information relevant to the feasibility of Mannington substation as an alternative, including any relevant correspondence or studies, and an explanation of whether or not Mannington is a feasible alternative location for the substation. This should include consideration of whether Mannington could offer a realistic prospect of an alternative in delivering the same infrastructure capacity, including energy security and climate change benefits in the same timescale as the proposed development. The information provided should confirm what the impact of selecting Mannington as the substation would have on the proposed development as a whole. The response should also set out the impact of the previously proposed Navitus Bay offshore windfarm on the feasibility of Mannington.

### **North Portsea Island Coastal Defence Scheme (“NPICDS”)**

6. The Secretary of State requests that the **Applicant and Portsmouth City Council and Coastal Partners** provide updates on the NPICDS and how this might overlap with the Aquind Interconnector Project. These updates should include whether a co-operation agreement is still required and, if so, whether agreement has been reached.

### **French licences and consents**

7. The **Applicant** should provide an update on any progress made towards securing the principal licences and consents that are or may be required in France and French Waters, and in particular the Autorisation Environnementale from the Préfet of Seine-Maritime pursuant to the environmental permit application under Article L.181-1 of the Environmental Code. If the relevant permits or licences have not yet been obtained the Applicant is asked to give an indication of when these are expected.

### **Environmental Information**

8. The Secretary of State requests that the **Applicant** provide any new environmental information, if such information has come forward since the Secretary of State’s decision, that would require an update to the environmental assessments within the Environmental Statement and / or Habitats Regulations Assessment. In particular, the Applicant should provide details of any new plans or projects which should be included in updated cumulative and / or in-combination assessments.

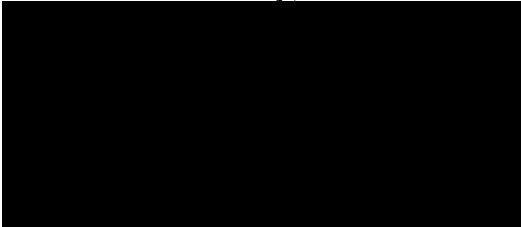
The Applicant should make it clear what updates, if any, are required to the environmental assessments and why.

9. **Responses to the requested information should be submitted by email only to [aquind@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:aquind@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) by 23.59 on 31 March 2023.**

10. 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 **31 March 2023**.

11. 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 sincerely,



David Wagstaff OBE  
Deputy Director, Energy Infrastructure Planning  
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero