

## Atkins, Caelan

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**From:** Patrick Whittle <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 10 March 2023 19:15  
**To:** Aquind Interconnector; Penny MORDAUNT  
**Subject:** The AQUIND Interconnector Project Review

**Categories:** Consultation Response

To : The Planning Inspectorate  
Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN

Sirs I am writing again to express concern about the Aquind Interconnector project which would undeniably adversely impact local people of whom many have clearly expressed concern, fears and anxieties, in the open hearing and in later submissions - despite a poor consultation process that did not provide enough information to allow for timely representations.

I began looking into the background to the proposal in 2019 and submitted my views to the Planning Inspectorate. The previous secretary of State rejected the project in January 2022. Published documents have revealed many unresolved issues. Since 2020 changes which were made appear not to have been communicated to all the Interested Parties who should be involved in the review process.

Regarding the latest High Court decision to allow a further review there seems to have been erroneous information on which it was based. Since 2020 the planned French landfall has been Hautot sur Mer, Bonneville, near Dieppe, NOT Le Havre in the Baie de la Seine, as stated in the judgement (that was a much earlier version of the proposal). Since Justice Lieven refers to the desirability of minimising the length (and therefore the cost) of an underwater cable, the difference between possible departure points from France is significant. It should be noted that the shortest and most direct route for a cable from France to England is to Ninfield, near Bexhill on Sea.

A misleading diagram used in the examination process of limits of suitable locations on the South Coast did not include the French coastline. The map should have included Dieppe and the various alternative landfall locations on the South Coast. It is not clear why Ninfield and Dungeness were left out of the list of sites from Chickerell in the West and Bolney in the East.

The assumption that Lovedean, near Portsmouth, is the best substation option neglects the fact that all twelve possible substations need upgrading, according to a National Grid publication. In 2017 Ninfield was considered suitable for use as a connection point to the grid for the Aquind Interconnector. There has been no published account of a re-assessment of Ninfield and the preference for Portsmouth was not explained by the Aquind agents. The judge at the High Court hearing highlighted the fact that a feasibility study by National Grid Electricity Transmission had not been seen: only unverified information from the Aquind claimant was used for the development consent process.

The Ninfield substation is 4.3 miles from a possible landfall, in an area which is not densely populated, with limited environmental impact and is a good option. Mannington was mentioned by the Secretary of State and there are several other feasible landfall sites ignored by Aquind, who prefer to dig up Portsmouth, the most densely populated city outside London. If this project was routed to Lovedean through the dense conurbations of Portsmouth and Waterlooville it would have serious consequences for the environment and the population. Adverse effects of the project heavily outweigh its potential energy advantages.

Four parliamentary constituencies are affected by this proposal: Portsmouth South, Portsmouth North, Waterlooville and Winchester. The local MPs and Councils have expressed concerns about Aquind and highlighted many problems associated with the project. These range from damage to marine environment, wildlife, green spaces, parks and trees, to allotments, playing fields, public open spaces and infrastructure. I would recommend a visit to the viewing point at the top of Portsdown Hill (which the project would wreck) to understand the

consequences for the population of the city. There is another viewing point to the west of the hill from which to see the area to the north, whose residents would also suffer. The project has made a further proposal to annex an area of 2.5 hectares of woodland known as Mill Copse and Stoneacre Copse, near Lovedean. That is another example of inadequate planning and disrespect for the local countryside and wildlife.

Portsmouth city residents strongly opposed the destruction of their allotments and a new proposed Aquind drilling process would still use chemicals harmful to the soil, and prevent access to their gardens. Many rare species are found there including slow worms, great crested newts, hedgehogs, foxes, and a significant variety of birds and insects. Farlington Marshes and Langstone Harbour are also highly environmentally sensitive wildlife areas which could be adversely affected by exposure to the proposed engineering works.

Milton Nature Reserve, (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust territory) is on the proposed route. Ruining a rare green tranquil escape in this densely populated city should not even be considered. Excavations in Milton Common, another recreational green space, could expose dangerous waste material buried there (contaminate maps are available). Playing fields there would be inaccessible during the project construction period. Aquind also inconsiderately proposes to dig trenches through the skate park facility in Bransbury Park as well as a main path of the park used by children, dog walkers and residents.

Important sea defence work is in progress, not only on Portsmouth sea front but also to the west of Langstone harbour, along the Eastern Road. The Secretary of State recognised that Aquind cable work could interfere with this. Preventing Portsmouth from flood risk due to rising sea levels is a higher priority than ripping up one of the busiest roads of Portsmouth for an unwanted project.

Eastern Road is one of only three accessing the island of Portsmouth but Aquind proposes to dig it up. This would mean at least one lane being closed for vehicles for a considerable time causing more traffic congestion, resulting not only in inconvenience to commuters but also adding to air pollution. The main pollutants which may impact human health in Portsmouth are principally the products of combustion from road traffic. The City Council introduced clean air zones to reduce air pollution but these construction works would militate against this. One fears also that the ambulance service based on the Eastern Road would be negatively affected by such works.

Viability of the whole project is open to question in view of changes in the sector particularly in regard to French ability to generate surplus energy. The Aquind project is not wanted in France where Prefet and mayors of villages in the affected areas have rejected it on environmental grounds. The telecommunication optic cables for data alongside the power cables are another contentious issue. Their inclusion would require Optical Regeneration Stations at Fort Cumberland and at Lovedean, taking up valuable parking space and woodland respectively. The need for a superfast telecoms system within an energy project is questionable.

This Aquind Interconnector Project, proposed by a private limited company based in Luxemburg, with somewhat obscure finance and ownership, is not welcome in Portsmouth and South Hampshire. The project ignores the consequences for residents, human and wildlife, as well as the whole built and natural environment. It is my view that the DCO for the Aquind Interconnector should be refused.

Patrick A Whittle

