

Atkins, Caelan

From: Lucy Stones <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 30 March 2023 14:30
To: Aquind Interconnector
Subject: Objections

Categories: Consultation Response

To whom it may concern

I am writing once again to strongly object to the Aquind interconnector planning application. It has already been rejected by the previous Secretary of State, Mr Kwarteng, but the threat still, inexplicably, hangs over the people of Portsmouth.

Residents, City Councillors and MP's all along the proposed route (along with our French counterparts) are united in opposition to this wholly unnecessary and detrimental project.

The idea of importing nuclear energy from France seems entirely at odds with government policies regarding energy security, reducing imports and the push towards renewables and net zero. Questions will remain over the availability of the promised surplus electricity as France needs it for its domestic market (not to mention the potential politicisation of supply from our more volatile neighbours). Aquind's claim of providing cheaper electricity seems unlikely given their pursuit of exemption from pricing regulation.

The proposed route of this project would cause untold disruption to everyone in Portsmouth and surrounding areas, during installation and future maintenance of the cables. Our island city does not cope well with minor issues on any of the 3 main artery roads. The proposal to lay cables, in trenches up to 23m wide, through the eastern side of the city (including the Eastern Road, one of those 3 arterial routes), over several years would have numerous far-reaching implications. These include increased traffic with resulting higher pollution levels, problems for emergency vehicle access to all areas of the city and the only A&E department in Portsmouth area, and misery for residents, businesses and tourists alike.

The proposed route would also have a devastating effect on many of Portsmouth's green spaces and wildlife habitats. It would cause irreparable damage, ploughing through playing fields, common land, much-loved allotments and Langstone Harbour. The latter contains Farlington Marshes Nature Reserve and both are designated Sites Of Special Scientific Interest, Nature Conservation Review sites and part of a Special Area of Conservation. Langstone Harbour is also a Ramsar site and Special Protection Area. All of these designations highlight their importance, at local, national and international level, in providing habitats for threatened species of flora and fauna. Brent geese and other migratory birds are also particularly fond of these wetlands. The loss or damage of any of these green spaces, protected or not, is unacceptable and, again, contrary to government policy.

Milton Common is another of these well-used green spaces that deserves a special mention as it was formerly a landfill site. Evidence suggests a number of toxic substances are buried there, including asbestos, mercury and other heavy metals. To dig this up again and expose local residents to such hazardous toxins is downright dangerous.

The issue of national security should be considered due to the proposal to run data cables along with power cables. This was slyly added to the application, as if an afterthought, but seems alarming to me - to allow a majority-Russian-owned company to develop telecommunications infrastructure through the home of the Royal Navy? At the very least this requires much further scrutiny to assess the security risk.

Residents along the route also have the continued threat of compulsory purchase hanging over them. And the land acquired would include a 25,000 sqm woodland near the terminus at Lovedean. Allowing a private company to do this would be a disgrace.

A number of underhand tactics seem to have been employed by Aquind. Adding data cables to the application at a later date; ensuring the decision-making is out of the hands of local, democratically elected representatives; making many donations to the Conservative Party and a sizeable number of individual members; continuing to try and push the project through despite everyone having already said no; even insulting a local MP for presenting citizen's concerns. My guess is that must be what is required to gloss over the empty shell that is Aquind, a company with no proven experience of delivering a project of this magnitude (or any other size, for that matter), with no trading income, and with an overriding interest in profit and no regard for the people who's lives have been, and continue to be affected by this calamitous project.

There is no justification for this project. To allow it to go ahead would have devastating effects on many thousands of residents and businesses.

Please, for the sake of Portsmouth (and Drayton, Farlington, Purbrook, Waterlooville, Denmead, Lovedean & Normandy), once and for all,
SAY NO TO AQUIND

Yours sincerely
Lucy Stones