



Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero

1 Victoria Street

London

SW1H 0ET

United Kingdom

Sent by email only

28 January 2025

Dear Sir

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

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

Secretary of State Re-determination of Application:

Unique Reference: EN020022

Dear Sir,

I am contacting you on behalf of Winchester City Council (WCC). If approved, WCC would host a section of the cable route and the Converter Station. Consequently, it is registered as an interested party with regard to the Aquind Interconnector Development Consent Order application. Officers have been monitoring the application web site to keep abreast of progress towards the re-determination of the application. As part of that monitoring exercise, the Council has been updating elected members and parish councils in the relevant area.

I would like to take this opportunity to raise with you two procedure points. These are being highlighted to assist in ensuring the overall determination is open and resilient.

Firstly, to seek clarification on whether a letter from Aquind has been added to the chronology of correspondence three months after its receipt.

Secondly, whether there will be a “final call” for comments at the close of the re-determination.

Regarding the first point, the current focus of attention is on the potential impact of the proposal in the Solent and at the Landfall point in the context of objections raised by the Ministry of Defence. It has been noted that a 38-page response from the applicant dated 14 October 2024 is on the application website with a published date of 14 October 2024. This submission consists of a 16-page letter, some appendices and a copy of a Military Activity Review produced by Anatic Ltd. It is believed that this submission has only recently been added to the application web site. Can you please advise me of the specific date this submission was posted on the application web site?

My suspicion that this is a “late” addition is based on two factors. Firstly, I have been monitoring the application web site and it would be strange (*but not impossible*) if I had overlooked it. Secondly, experience tells me that submissions are very rarely if ever posted on the application web site on the same day they are received, as the dates appear to imply in this instance. Experience shows that several days generally past between the date of any submission and it being posted.

WCC has no comment to make on the matters relating to the MoD objections. However, if I am correct that the letter has been added to the application web site to sit in its chronological position, I am concerned that this may be setting a precedent that could apply to a submission on an issue that is of direct interest to the Council. I therefore wish to place on record my concern over the way this letter has been handled and inserted into the application web site three months after receipt, behind nine later submissions and without any notice being issued. That means anyone regularly looking at the web site may have overlooked it. When making such an addition so long after its submission, the Council is of the opinion that a notification/informative should have been circulated to the registered parties informing them of this action and the “latest update” box on the application web site should have been used to draw attention to this action. Can I ask that all documents are posted within a specific time such as no later than one week from receipt so that they are recorded within their correct sequence. If this is not possible, then the notification/informative procedure and use of the latest update box should be adopted.

Secondly, I wish to make one further observation. Once the re-determination is reaching a conclusion, I would ask that you send out a letter setting out all the changes to the planning policy framework at the national level which have occurred since the application was first determined in January 2022 and invite parties to comment on whether the changes have altered the context within which the application should be considered. As an alternative, you could invite the applicant to

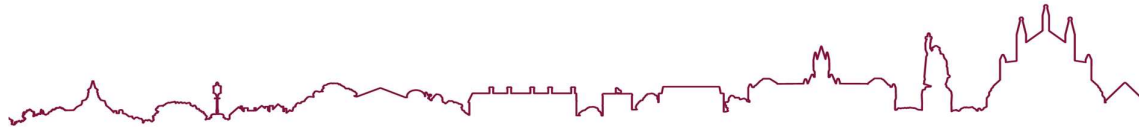
set out the changes and then offer interested parties the opportunity to comment. This would also provide an opportunity for parties to comment on whether they have seen any changes in their local planning policy frameworks or determined any planning applications that are also considered to be relevant. With the closed procedure underway at the present time, which excludes most parties from any involvement and the absence of publishing any related documents, there is a risk that the final determination stage is reached without most parties being aware.

Yours faithfully

Julie Pinnock

Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

No attachments.



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