Briefing Note Number 22

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 22 August 2022

November 2022 Date Set for Hearing of the Aquind Legal Challenge to the Secretary of State Decision.

The date for the High Court hearing when Aquind will challenge the Secretary of States (SoS) decision to refuse the Interconnector proposal has been announced. It will take place over a two-day period on 22-23 November 2022. This is referred to as the "substantive hearing". It follows an initial assessment that determined there is a case to answer. Portsmouth City Council has made the decision to join the Secretary of State in defending the original decision. On the basis the whole case centres on the interpretations by the Secretary of State of the information Aquind put forward and on the interpretation of relevant legislation, Winchester City Council made the decision not to get involved in the legal case. After careful consideration, we did not feel in a position to express any useful view on what the SoS understood to be the Aquind proposal. Another factor was if we had joined the case, then the Authority would have become responsible for a share of any costs awarded against the plaintiffs if the case went against them and costs where awarded.

As noted in the last update, (see below) the court will not make a judgement on whether the scheme should be approved or refused but on whether the correct "procedure" was followed. Our view that the court process would not offer any public access to the papers has proved correct and anyone outside the specific parties concerned is not being kept updated. Portsmouth City Council has posted the initial Statement of Facts and Claim Form that Aquind submitted back in March 2022. They provide the outline of the Aquind case and set out the reasons why Aquind think the SoS decision was in error. They can be viewed on the following web site: https://interconnectorportsmouth.co.uk/

The next key date will be the outcome of the hearing. That document will be published for anyone to view.

All of the above information is within the public domain so if you want to copy or circulate any of the detail please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

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Fick Drummond MP for Meon Valley

Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 21

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 8 March 2022

Aquind Launches Legal Challenge to the Secretary of State Decision Letter Refusing Scheme.

Aquind has launched a challenge in the Courts against the Secretary of States (SoS) decision of 20 January 2022 to refuse the application for the Interconnector. There is a short statement on the Aquind Interconnector website dated 8 March 2022 under Company News.

This challenge is not against the actual decision itself but to the procedure the SoS followed in reaching his decision. If successful, the consequence of the challenge would be for the original decision to be quashed and the decision referred back to the SoS for him to re-consider the facts and issue a fresh determination. That could be to refuse again (but with added text to correct the “error/omission” that the Court has identified), or to arrive at a different decision.

As you might expect the legal challenge will follow a structured process. However, the whole Court process is very opaque and the actual Court documents do not appear open to the public for inspection or to keep track of progress. The PINs web site does not offer any updates. Taking the A303 Stonehenge road improvement NSIP as an example, the web page simply shows an 8 month gap from March 2021 to November 2021 with a short statement saying the original decision has been quashed after a legal challenge and the decision returned to the Secretary of State for re-consideration.

Assuming the Stonehenge case is typical of the timescale involved in reaching a Court Judgement, we can expect an outcome early 2023. It is possible for either party to withdraw from the process before it is

completed. If that where Aquind then the original decision would stand. If the SoS withdrew before any hearing, that would have more significance as it would imply a voluntary acceptance of some flaw in the decision making process that would require the reconsideration of the application by the SoS.

All of the above information is within the public domain so if you want to copy or circulate any of the detail please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Fick Drummond MP for Meon Valley

Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 20

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 20 January 2022

Secretary of State Issues Decision Letter Refusing Scheme.

The Aquind application which the Council has been involved in for over 3 years has concluded, with the Secretary of State (SoS) at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy refusing permission for the development to go ahead. The PINs web site is now displaying the decision documents.

With the decision having just been issued early this afternoon, I have not yet reviewed any of the documents so cannot advise you of the grounds on which consent was withheld. I will send out a further note over the coming days.

This is a link to the application web site:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/

There are 6 document that make up the decision which consist of the following:

1 Secretary of States Decision Letter:

This is a 19 page summary document that covers the applicant, the assessment of the issues and the final decision. It also

contains an explanation of any divergence in views between the SoS and the inspectors (the Examining Authority).

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-004431-EN020022%20-%20Secretary%20of%20State%20Decision%20Letter.pdf

2 Planning Inspectorate covering letter:

This sets out the formal notification of the decision to the public and sets out the potential for a challenge to the decision. There is a 6-week period for a party to make a challenge. Section 118 of the Planning Act 2008 outlines the 6 areas under which a challenge can be made. This is a link to that section of the PA2008.

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/cy/ukpga/2008/29/section/118

This is the statutory instrument that grants the powers to undertake the development as approved together with the compulsory purchase powers to take control of the land (if needed) either temporarily or permanently.

This is a link to the letter:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-004131-211021%20-%20AQUIND%20-%20Notice%20of%20the%20Decision%20by%20the%20SoS%20Reg%2032%20REFUSED.pdf

3 The Examining Authorities recommendations to the SoS that is dated 8 June 2021:

This report running to 640 pages sets out the inspector's assessment of the issues, their conclusions and their recommendation that was presented to the SoS.

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-004425-EN020022%20-%20Final%20Recommendation%20Report.pdf

4 Habitats Regulations Assessment:

This applies to the southern end of the cable route where it meets the Solent as that area carries a number of national and international designations. This document is 52 pages long.

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-004430-EN020022%20-%20HRA%20Report.pdf

5 A Regulation 31 Notice:

This is just a procedural notice

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-004429-EN020022%20-%20Copy%20of%20Reg%2031%20Notice.pdf

What happens next?

WCC officers will review the decision. Given the length of the documentation that will take some time.

The decision is open to a legal challenge under Section 118 of the Planning Act 2008. If such a challenge is to be, made then it has to be submitted within 6 weeks of the decision. As a rejection, you would expect the applicant to seek to use this power if anyone does.

This six week period is also the window for any party to write to the SoS and ask him to use his powers under Section 119 of the 2008 Act to make any “corrections of errors or omissions” to the decision documents. Even with a rejection then the use of this power is still technically possible. With such a complicated submission and decision, this power is there to address any simple errors that have occurred. As implied, there are limits to the use of this power.

I will circulate another update once we have digested the documents and have a clear understanding of the reasons why consent was withheld. I am also anticipating issuing another update after 4 March 2022 when the 6 week period has passed and any question of challenges or changes are answered.

All of the above information is within the public domain so if you want to copy or circulate any of the detail please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 19

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 30 November 2021

Secretary of State Issues Third Request for Further Information with Updates and then Publishes Responses

Taking advantage of the deferment of the final decision until 21 January 2022 (see briefing note no.18 below), on 4 November 2021 the Secretary of State (SoS) issued a request to Aquind that they provided further information and updates on the following topics:

• ***Consideration of Alternatives.*** …(when considering alternatives, Aquind discounted a connection to the national grid at Mannington (west of Ringwood) because that connection was allocated to the Navitus Bay off shore wind farm. However, that scheme was refused in September 2015 so the question is asked why did Aquind not re- consider it?)

• ***North Portsea Island Coastal Defence Scheme*** ….(this scheme and Aquind are proposing to use same ground as a support compound, and the question is asked has any agreement been reached between the relevant parties on sharing ground or on timing of use?)

• ***National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") – Flood Risk Updates***……(Aquind asked if submission complies with recent changes to guidance)

• ***Micro-siting of Converter Station***…….(Aquind asked to give a further update on progress of reaching agreement with National Grid (NGET) on acquiring land adjacent

sub station that would enable them to move proposed Converter Station away from hedgerow and trees on west side of site).

The letter from the SoS can be found using the following link:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-004200-AQUIND-%20Letter%20requesting%20further%20information%20-%2004%2011%2021.pdf

The deadline for a response was midnight 18 November 2021. The replies from Aquind are now posted on the application web site together with any other correspondence sent in over past few weeks.

Of the issues raised, only the first and last are of real interest to us.

On the subject of alternatives, Aquind are saying that the power lines radiating out from Mannington Substation would have need significant upgrades. The cost of that work would have fallen on UK consumers, whilst the work would have resulted in environmental impacts. For these reasons and the fact Mannington did not display any clear advantage over Lovedean, its use as the grid connection was not reviewed when it became available again after the Navitus Bay offshore wind farm was refused and the connection right lost.

Regarding the micro-siting issue, following discussions with the cabinet member, we sent off a letter dated 9 November 2021 encouraging the SoS to write to NGET to ask them for their views on the reasons behind the delay in completing the land deal. At the time of writing this update, it does not appear that the SoS has written to NGET. However, Aquind are now saying in their most recent response that there has been progress and they hope to complete the land deal within 2 weeks. This mean the option to locate the Converter Station away from the hedgerow and trees on the western side could be approved by the SoS if he supports the overall scheme.

At the present time the Council has not been invited by the SoS to respond to the last set of submissions by Aquind. An invite may be sent shortly, but in any event, the Council will make comments to the SoS within the next few weeks.

What this additional set of questions means to the final decision of the SoS is difficult to gauge. It does seem for us that the additional time

has meant we are closing in on potentially a better solution as far as we are concerned on the micro siting option.

All of the above information is within the public domain so if you want to copy or circulate any of the detail please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 18

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 21 October 2021

Secretary of State Announces Further Delay with New Deadline of 21 January 2021

Today was intended to be the date for the Secretary of State (SoS) to announce his decision on the application. You will recall we have already had one extension of time from September to October 2021. However, the SoS has released a statement today saying that he will extend the decision date by a further 3 months to 21 January 2022.

The reason for this extension of time is given in the statement to Parliament as the following reasons:

I have decided that further work is necessary to consider the application in detail including whether further information is required, and this requires an extension to the deadline.

The full statement to Parliament can be viewed by using the following link:

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-10-21/hcws348

Whether we will be asked to participate in providing any further information or responding to further details presented by the applicant only time will tell.

All of the above information is within the public domain so if you want to copy or circulate any of the detail please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Briefing Note Number 17

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 20 September 2021

Secretary of State invites comments on the applicant's response to the second information request

The Aquind response to the questions raised in the Secretary of States (SoS) letter dated 2 September 2021 has been published on the application web site.

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/?ipcsection=overview

Interested parties have been given 14 days to make any comments (deadline 1 October 2021). The revised final decision date of 21 October 2021 is still in force. As expected, the Aquind response goes into more detail justifying the land area that would be taken at Lovedean even if the Telecommunications Building were omitted. In summary, their case centres on the need for the land occupied by the building and its immediate area to form part of the temporary laydown area, for the proper arrangement of the land drainage proposals and to form part of the wider landscape proposals to screen the Converter Station.

In addition to the above information, Aquind have also offered the address where a full paper copy of any approved scheme will be kept for

the public to view. This detail goes in the Explanatory note to the Order. A number of local authorities where approached and both Winchester City Council (WCC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) agreed to host the documents subject to final arrangements. Only one location is required and Aquind have decided to put County Hall forward. The need to nominate a location does not seem driven by the desire for it to be easily accessible to residents who live along the route but mainly to satisfy the legislative requirements. To give you an example, the replacement Southampton to London Esso pipeline documents are kept in the Esso offices at Leatherhead Surry. That project stretches from Eastleigh up to Harlow.

Although at the 11th hour, Aquind have also put forward a request to the SoS that another Requirement is added to the Development Consent Order if it is approved. This would require them to establish a public information web site similar to the one that Esso have set up. The idea for this came from WCC supported by HCC and the Application agreed to present the idea to the SoS. It is hoped that the clear public benefits of such a Requirement will ensure its addition.

Having reviewed the applicants response to the second information request, WCC are not anticipating sending in any comment beyond noting the information and confirming our support for the additional Requirement.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 16

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 02 September 2021

Secretary of State issues statement to extend determination period by 6 weeks

Today, the Secretary of State (SoS) has released a statement saying that he intends to exercise the ability to extend the determination deadline by 6 weeks from 8 September 2021 to 21 October 2021.

In parallel to this decision, the SoS has also asked Aquind for further clarification/justification on the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers regarding the land associated with the Optical Regeneration Station at Eastney and the site of the Telecommunications Building at Lovedean. In the July 2021 response when asked to produce a draft DCO without any commercial fibre optic cable (FoC) element, the applicant did not propose to reduce the application site. The relevant landowners questioned the lack of a clear justification for no reduction in the size of the application site. It also seems that Aquind did not produce a fully edited version of the DCO without the commercial FoC in terms of listing documents and they are asked now to correct this over sight. Aquind have been given a deadline of 16 September 2021 to present the above information.

Whether interested parties will be given an opportunity to make further comments after the 16 September 2021 deadline is unclear. At present, I think this unlikely, but one thing that is emerging is that it is becoming very difficult to predict what is going to happen.

Today's statement and the letter are on the application web site:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 15

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 14 July 2021

Secretary of State issues letter seeking further information before making a decision.

As someone else has said, the last 24 hours have been quite eventful. Not only has the scheme been the subject of a short debate in parliament but the Secretary of State has exercised his powers to ask for further information in a letter issued yesterday. The full letter can be viewed on the PINs web site using the following link:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/

It is positive that BEIS are asking questions but I note that the range of additional information being sought is limited to 6 matters. I wonder what the inference from that is for the other topics including finance and the cross-country route? Does it mean that BEIS consider they have sufficient information on everything else from which to make a decision? I say that because I think it unlikely (but not impossible) they will come back with yet another set of different question.

For WCC there are two questions that we are particularly interested in. I have copied and pasted them below:

Fibre-optic surplus capacity

6. The Secretary of State notes that during the examination objections were raised as to the inclusion in the development consent order of the telecommunications buildings, the commercial use of the surplus capacity in the fibre optic cable and part of the optical regeneration station for commercial telecommunications. Without prejudice to the Secretary of State's decision on the proposed development, the Applicant is asked to provide a revised draft Development Consent Order excluding those elements which relate to commercial telecommunications, including as they may affect the compulsory purchase provisions.

The micro-siting of the converter station at Lovedean

7. 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.

Regarding the Fibre optic Cable (FoC), as you know we have maintained a position throughout that the capacity of the FoC meant it was not associated development and should be stripped out of the proposal. We did accept that there could be a FoC of a proportionate capacity to provide the station to station link that allows communication between the two sides of the channel. I am encouraged by the question as it seems to be hinting that the SoS may be coming down on our side of the argument, but wait to see how it finally turns out.

Concerning the micro siting option, you will recall that we were faced with two options for the siting of the Converter Station. These where option A and option B. Option A would result in the station overlapping a strong section of hedgerow whilst option B would see the station moved eastward avoiding the need to remove the hedgerow.
Option B did required Aquind to complete negotiations with National Grid to buy some land and whilst they said these negotiations would be concluded before the Examination finished, that did not occur. We have maintained the consistent view that option B which allowed retention of more hedgerow and trees was our preferred option. Without any clear control over the additional land to move the compound, our final position was to maintain a preference for option B but formally object on landscape and ecological impact grounds if option A was the only option being considered.

I think the answer to this question will be interesting for the very reasons we set out in our last submission. I think the SoS has to come down on the side of one option or the other. If the future of option B is not secured then it cannot be considered. The SoS could not offer support for both options without causing problems. Look at it from the Aquind perspective, if both options where approved they might simply choose to build option A because it is cheaper as they do not have to acquire any land from the National Grid.

The deadline for a response by Aquind to the questions is midnight 27 July. The reply will be posted on the application website.

At present, I note there is no expectation that any of the interested parties will be invited to comment on the additional information. It is possible the SoS is not anticipating the need to offer third parties the opportunity to comment or he may be waiting to see the responses before making a final decision on that matter. If he just adds the new information to that already in his possession then the decision deadline

of 8 September 2021 may still be met. However, if the SoS triggers some level of consultation then I think there is likely to be some slippage in the 8 September 2021 date.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Fick Drummond MP for Meon Valley

Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 14

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 9 March 2021

Completion of Examination Stage

A letter from the Examining Authority has confirmed that the 6 month Examination Stage closed at midnight on the 8 March 2021. Nothing new can now be accepted into the process. The ExA has three months to write up their findings and conclusions from the examination together with their recommendation and present that to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. So that means no later than 8 June 2020. The Secretary of State in turn has three months to issue a decision. This means if the parties stick to the deadlines, then we should hear the outcome of the application in early September 2021.

The last week has seen a flurry of late submissions, which can be found on the application web site. As always with any appeal type process, the applicant has the final say so all the Deadline 9 submissions come from Aquind.

In the event the application is approved, then the applicant would have 5 years to implement it. There would be a lot of detail to resolve with the various councils before any work could start on site.

As we are now entering the 6-month period where all the activity take place at the Planning Inspectorate and with the Secretary of State, this will be the last update.

As always, if you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Briefing Note Number 13

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 29 January 2021

Publication of new Timetable letter with dates for next set of hearings and publication of Deadline 7 submissions.

As we enter the last 5 weeks of the Examination process the pace seems to be quickening (if that is possible), with the realisation by all parties involved that there is little time left now to influence or resolve matters.

Since the last update note on 6 December 2020, we have gone through the two weeks of hearings, seen the submission of a change to the scheme, passed Deadline 6 just before Christmas and entered the New Year with a revision to the timetable and the publication of the dates for a new round of hearings in mid-February 2021. We have also just passed Deadline 7 which has seen some movement by the applicant on a number of topics raised by WCC.

If anyone is interested the audio recordings of the December hearing is available on the web site.

The change to the scheme was submitted mid-December and as far as we are concerned at the northern end of the project, relates to the inclusion of two woodland areas (Mill copse and Stoneacre Copse). This is in response to concerns raised by WCC and the SDNP regarding ash die back. The applicant is now proposing to manage these woodlands to maintain their landscape screening and biodiversity value.

The 23 December 2020 Deadline 6 comments by all parties are available to view in the Examination Library. This is the link to the relevant section in the Library.

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-000996-Exam%20Library%20%E2%80%93%20Published%20Version.pdf

A revised timetable letter was published on 11 January 2021. It is referenced in the Library as document PD-032. This is link to the letter:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-003467-20210111%20EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Rule%208(3),%209%20and%2013%20letter.pdf

The letter has changed some of the dates but not the final closure date for the Examination of 8 March 2021. The main dates in the letter that are worthy of note are the following:

- **1 February** registration date to speak at forthcoming hearings
- **3 February** publication of ExAs views on the DCO
- **15 February** new deadline for comments on D7 submissions
- **17 February** Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) No.4 on the dDCO
- **18 February** Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) No.5 on Environmental Matters and Highways
- **19 February** Open Floor Hearing No.3 and Compulsory Acquisition Hearing No.3

The agendas for the hearing will be published at least 10 dates in advance of the hearings. As I write this update, the deadline to register to speak at any hearing is Monday but the actual topics for discussion at the hearing are not yet known. Look out for the agendas to be published before the end of today (Friday 29th January). My advice to anyone thinking of speaking is if in doubt, register to speak. It is a lot easier to withdrawn than get your name added at a later date. The additional OFH & CAH (Feb 19) are intended to specifically address matters arising from the additional land added to the Order Limits. They will not be an opportunity to revisit concerns about the proposal that where covered at the previous hearings in December. WCC expects to be participating in both ISHs.

All these hearings will take place online and follow the same procedure to the ones undertaken in December.

Deadline 7 has just passed which has seen Aquind show some movement on a number of the issues raised by the Council. The

applicant appears to have accepted the need for an Employment and Skills Plan. They have also accepted that the launch compound for the drilling under Denmead Meadows should be located on the south side of the Hambledon Road, rather than on the northern side which they had favoured to date. Hopefully we can see some further agreement on other issues over the coming weeks.

WCC has made comments at D7 on a range of issues including the ash dieback situation. The Council has also taken issue with the inspectors over the proposal not to undertake a site inspection of any of the land at Lovedean or Denmead Meadows.

If you need any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

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Council Leader

Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing

Denmead Parish Council Clerk

Hambledon Parish Council Clerk

Southwick & Widley Parish Council Clerk

Newlands Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

Local Contact Group members not listed above

Fick Drummond MP for Meon Valley

Horndean Parish Council

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Briefing Note Number 12

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 6 December 2020

Publication of Links to View Hearings

The link for viewing any of the hearings that are scheduled to take place over the next two weeks (week commencing 7 December and 14 December) has been published on the Aquind web site. The following link will get you through to the main page and you then click on the link in the box.

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/South%20East/AQUIND-Interconnector/

The update box on the web site also refers to the Deadline 5 submissions which can be viewed in the Examination Library.

The hearing link to the "livestream" allows observer status only. Those people who are speaking at any of the hearings have already registered. They have a separate link that allows them to speak. The full list of the hearings with dates and links to the agendas was outlined in the last update, which is below. The hearings are not like planning inquiries, which tend to be a bit adversarial. These hearings will explore a series of points or questions with people offered the opportunity to comment. The applicant will not cross-examine anyone speaking. As we do seem to be the first examination going through the online process from the beginning, I suspect the inspectors will be feeling their way into the process.

If anyone who is just observing wishes to make a point about something they have heard, then they are encouraged to write in by Deadline 6 which is 23 December 2020. All parties have to follow up any comments made at the hearing with a written statement by this date.

The second and third weeks in February 2021 are reserved for another set of hearings, so if an issue does not come up now then it may be considered later. However, the hearings will only explore topics that need open discussion and will not cover the full range of issues associated with the application,

As always, there is nothing in this update that is sensitive or confidential, it is all publicly accessible information. So, if you wish to use or circulate any part of this paper please feel free to do so.

If you need any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

…….

Circulation list:

All members within the following wards

Denmead Ward

Central Meon Valley Ward

Upper Meon Valley Ward

Southwick & Wickham Ward

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Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing

Denmead Parish Council Clerk

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Newlands Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

Local Contact Group members not listed above

Fick Drummond MP for Meon Valley

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Briefing Note Number 11

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 13 November 2020

Submission Deadlines and Publication of Agendas for Hearings

The Examination process is now well under way and we are rapidly approaching deadline 4 which is midnight 17 November 2020. Both sides seem to have settled into the routine of commenting on each other's previous responses submitted at the last deadline. As time passes Aquind are also adjusting the proposal by submitting new or revised details. Obviously, this repetitive process is supposed to resolve matters or identify where there are clear disagreements that will not be resolved. One example of where a clear disagreement exists is our view that the commercial fibre optic cable is not "associated development" and that it should be removed from the proposal altogether. Conversely, an example of where common agreement has been reached is on the air quality issues.

As part of this examination, we continue to meet the applicants so we can clearly understand what they are proposing, express views on the level of detail submitted and suggest they consider changes. We have over the past weeks held meetings on carbon, transport & traffic, air quality & noise and the draft Development Consent Order. The draft DCO is the actual legal document that sets out the powers under which Aquind would construct the interconnector. Just like in a planning appeal these discussions are without prejudice to the final outcome of the application. This contact is encouraged by the Examining Authority and we think that given the online meeting structure for the forthcoming hearings, that these *side meetings* will be more important than ever.

Following on from the above, the agendas for the seven hearings that will take place in December 2020 have been published. Copies are all in the events section in the documents Library (page 55). These are the hearings, dates and a link to the agenda:

Open Floor Hearing1: Monday am 7 December 2020

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-002785-EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Agenda%20for%20Open%20Floor%20Hearing%201.pdf

Open Floor Hearing2: Monday pm 7 December 2020

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-002786-EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Agenda%20for%20Open%20Floor%20Hearing%202.pdf

Issue Specific Hearing1: the draft Development Consent Order; all day Wednesday 9 December 2020

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-002787-EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Agenda%20for%20Issue%20Specific%20Hearing%201.pdf

Compulsory Acquisition Hearing1: all day Thursday 10 December 2020

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-002788-EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Agenda%20for%20Compulsory%20Acquisition%20Hearing%201.pdf

Compulsory Acquisition Hearing2: all day Friday 11 December 202

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-002789-EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Agenda%20for%20Compulsory%20Acquisition%20Hearing%202.pdf

Issue Specific Hearing2: Traffic, Highways & Air Quality; all day Monday 14 December 2020

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-002839-EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Agenda%20for%20Issue%20Specific%20Hearing%202.pdf

Issue Specific Hearing3: Environmental Matters; all day Tuesday 15 December 2020

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-002840-EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Agenda%20for%20Issue%20Specific%20Hearing%203.pdf

It is worth looking at the agendas as they do seem to be covering a broader range of issues than you might first imagine under the title of the hearing. CAH1&CAH2 do seem to list a particularly broad range of issues. Those people who have registered to speak are listed. The hearings will be livestreamed so anyone can watch them. The Council has registered to speak at all the hearings except the open floor hearings which are focused on letting residents express a view. Denmead Parish Council have also registered to participate at some of the hearings.

Public interest in the proposal has been raised at the southern end of the project following concerns over the means by which the cables will cross some allotments in the Milton area of Portsmouth. You may have seen the item on the BBC Sunday Politics Show (25 October2020). The programme focused on the allotment issue. This local interest seems to have turned into a campaign against the whole project and there are now several groups springing up such as Let's *Stop Aquind*, with their own facebook group.

There is nothing in this update that is sensitive or confidential, it is all publicly accessible information. So, if you wish to use or circulate any part of this paper please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

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All members within the following wards

Denmead Ward

Central Meon Valley Ward

Upper Meon Valley Ward

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Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

Local Contact Group members not listed above

Fick Drummond MP for Meon Valley

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Briefing Note Number 10

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 9 October 2020

Publication of Deadline 1 Responses

The first of what will be a total of nine deadlines which mark distinct phases in the Examination process, passed on Tuesday 6 October 2020. The previous update identified the various submissions required to be prepared by this date. These included the Councils Local Impact Report (LIR) and our responses to the questions specifically directed at us by the Examining Authority in the first set of released questions (ExQ1). All the Councils submissions can be viewed and read on the application web site. The length of our LIR reflects that we would host sections of the cable route (both road and cross country) and the main Converter Station up at Lovedean. This means we have to cover a significant range of issues. There is a summary document that does cover all the points without the detailed background information.

The applicant has also taken the opportunity to submit additional information and also replacements for some of the existing submissions.

In total 317 documents have been submitted by all existing registered parties at deadline 1. It would appear that further submissions have been made by other parties who had not originally registered and the Planning Inspectorate are considering how to deal with those at the present time (see note on website).

To view the deadline 1 submissions open the general Aquind Interconnector page and you will see a link to them under the *Timeline column.* This is a link to the main page: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/South%20East/AQUIND-Interconnector/

In terms of document management, this where it start to get complicated. As of today (Friday 9th October), the deadline 1 submissions have not been added to the Examination Library. I suspect they will be added over the next day or so. They will be grouped under a deadline 1 heading. As the examination progresses, the best way to locate documents is in the Examination Library which can be found by following these instructions:

- Open the main Aquind page of the planning inspectorate web site using the above link:
- Click on the documents folder.
- Click on the sub folder located just below the first line entitled:

  "View the examination library with reference numbers"

This opens up the library where all the submissions are located. You can see the documents are kept in separate sections and have unique reference numbers. As documents are changed, the old ones will be annotated as superseded. Anyone referencing to a document in the course of the Examination is encouraged to use this referencing system.

Everyone now has the opportunity to see and comment on any other Deadline 1 submission by Deadline 2 which is 20 October 2020. This is the next significant stage in the Examination.

Since the last update I have noted that PINs have added a new section to Advice Note Eight: Overview of the nationally significant infrastructure planning process for members of the public and others.

The new Section 8.6 is entitled Virtual Examination Events and obviously reflects the new circumstances we are all having to work within. You can access it using the following link:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-8-6-virtual-examination-events/

There is nothing in this update that is sensitive or confidential, it is all publicly accessible information. So, if you wish to use or circulate any part of this paper please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

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Newlands Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

Local Contact Group members not listed above

Fick Drummond MP for Meon Valley

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Briefing Note Number 9

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 15 September 2020

Release of Finalised Examination Timetable

The closure of the second instalment of the Preliminary Meeting last Tuesday (8 September 2020) triggered the commencement of the Examination Stage. With a 6 month deadline for the completion of the Examination, this means that this stage has to be completed by 8 March 2020. The following is a link to the Rule 8 letter on the Aquind application web site. This sets out the timetable with associated advice. Open the main application web site, then click on the rule 8 letter to open it.

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/South%20East/AQUIND-Interconnector/

As you will note, the first deadline of 6 October 2020 is rapidly approaching. I have a list of the implications for the council, but for any of the parishes or individuals wishing to participate in the examination there are also some actions you may wish to consider yourselves, or publicising locally to make members of your communities aware of the scheme and allow them to participate, if they wish to do so. The 6 October deadline covers a range of other actions including the following:

- Register as an interested party if not already done so.
- Submit written representations.
- Submit notification to be participant in Open Floor Hearings1 or Open Floor Hearing2.
- Submit notification to participate at Compulsory Acquisition Hearings 1 and 2.
- Submit notification to participate in the Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) on the draft Development Consent Order.
- Submit suggested locations for accompanied site inspections.

The open floor hearings (OFH) offer the opportunity for any group or individual to speak in a less formal atmosphere than the issue specific hearings. The following is a link to the advice note that explains the approach to OFHs

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8-5v3.pdf

The Councils Local Impact Report is one of the documents that has to be submitted by 6 October. It will build on the report considered by Cabinet and will be discussed with the Local Contact Group before submission to ensure it has a strong local flavour.

A question was asked recently if the contents of this paper could be circulated beyond the contact list. There is nothing in here that is sensitive or confidential, it is all publicly accessible information so if you wish to use or circulate any part of this paper please feel free to do so.

As always, if you need any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

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Newlands Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

Local Contact Group members not listed above

Flick Dummond MP for Meon Valley

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Briefing Note Number 8

Update on the Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Date of Update: 17 August 2020

Login details announced for Preliminary Meeting

The Planning Inspectorate has this afternoon, released the access details for the Preliminary Meeting that will take place

tomorrow starting at 10am. The agenda for this meeting is set out in annex A to the Rule 6 letter dated 3 July 2020. This is the meeting where procedural issues and the general timetable that the Examination process will follow are to be discussed (see annex C to the above letter). The following is a link to the Rule 6 letter on the Aquind application web site:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-001151-20200703%20EN020022%20AQUIND%20-%20Replacement%20Rule%206%20Letter%20and%20A

This is the address of the Aquind application web site where the login instructions are contained to view the meeting. Please clink on: event will be livestreamed

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/?ipcsection=docs

If you do login then you can observe what is taking place but you will not allowed to speak. Those of us (which includes Winchester City Council) who have expressed a desire to speak at the meeting have been given different login instructions which will not be apparent to everyone else.

I will be monitoring my emails whilst the meeting is underway so if you feel the need to contact me, you can reach me via my email address.

The Preliminary Meeting (PM) is being run as a three stage process.

Firstly, the 18th August online meeting.

Secondly, the 1st September deadline for anyone to make written representations about any issue discussed at the online meeting.

Thirdly, a second online meeting to be held on 8th September to allow for any matters not covered adequately at the first

meeting to be discussed. It would be possible for someone who was an observer at the first meeting to speak at this second meeting if the Examining Panel agrees to such a request.

This second meeting will take place even if it is just to note there are no outstanding issues to discuss and to allow the PM to be formally closed. The significance of that action is that the closure of the 8th September online meeting signifies the commencement of the Examination Stage.

Shortly afterwards, the Examination Panel will issue the formal timetable for the next 6 months that sets out the deadlines and hearing dates that the Examination will follow through to its conclusion by 8 March 2021.

I attended a briefing two weeks ago and it seems our online Preliminary Meeting is the first one to be attempted by PINs. Consequently, no one is quite sure how it will go.

Finally, to avoid duplication, I have merged the addresses of those people who make up the Local Contact Group (LCG) to the circulation list for the updates which should avoid some of you getting two versions of the same information. For those of you not familiar with the LCG it meets to discuss the proposal and consists of the following:

- The Cabinet member for the built environment and well being
- The Deputy Leader
- The Denmead Ward Members
- Members from Denmead PC
- The chairman of Hambledon PC
- The chairman of Newlands PC

As always, if you need any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

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Circulation list:

All members within the following wards

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Upper Meon Valley Ward

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Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing

Denmead Parish Council Clerk

Hambledon Parish Council Clerk

Southwick & Widley Parish Council Clerk

Newlands Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

Local Contact Group members not listed above

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Briefing Note Number 7

Update on Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Online preliminary hearing date and details announced:

Date of Update: 3 July 2020

Everyone who has been keeping an eye on the progress of this scheme will know that the original 22 April 2020 date for the Preliminary Meeting was postponed as a result of the lockdown.

The Planning Inspectorate has now issued a new Rule 6 letter which sets out the proposals for getting the process moving again. The intention now is to make progress using online hearings. The following is a link to the letter.

http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/EN020022-001151.

The first set of key dates are:

- New date to register if you wish to speak at the Preliminary Meeting (PM): 28 July 2020

  If you just wish to listen in at the PM, a link will be displayed shortly before the meeting on the PINs application web site.

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/South%20East/AQUIND-Interconnector/

- New date for submission of comments on proposed PM agenda and timetable: 28 July 2020
- New date for online Preliminary Meeting: 18 August 2020
- Reserve date if above day not sufficient to get through all items: 8 September 2020

After the PM has closed the draft timetable will be replaced with an new formal set of dates. The Examination will run for 6 months closing on 8 March 2021.

A list of questions from the three inspectors that make up the Examination Panel has been posted. You can find this using the general link to the application web site which is posted above. Fortunately, they seem to be mostly directed towards the applicant.

I think it is fair to say we are in unknown territory in so far as participating in an online examination of this type and duration is concerned. It will have quite a different feel from participating at a conference venue.

During the lockdown discussions have been taking place with Aquind to explore if we can clarify or resolve any of the concerns that we have raised to date. We are making some progress in terms of a better understanding of our relevant positions but to date no changes to the council's views on the scheme have emerged so far. If they do emerge, they will be discussed and agreed beforehand with the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment and Wellbeing. This approach is in accordance with the Cabinet decision when the Aquind proposal was considered at the 11 March 2020 meeting.

I have also attempted to keep in touch with the local contact group that consists of the local Denmead Members and the three local parish councils. Before the Preliminary Meeting takes place I am hoping to hold an online meeting with them. This approach was also part of the Cabinet decision from the March meeting.

If anyone, but particularly the members or parishes from the wider area have any questions I am more than happy to respond.

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

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Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

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Briefing Note Number 6

Update on Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

:Preliminary hearing date and details announced:

5 March 2020

Apologies for those of you who already know this but I thought I would send out a general update to everyone.

The midnight 19 February 2020 deadline to register as an interested party has passed. WCC has obviously set out an intention to participate. At the same time as registering, everyone was asked to give an outline of their views on the scheme. The Planning Inspectorate has now published all the responses. There are 199 entries ranging from local authorities, statutory consultees, interest amenity groups and individual property/land owners.

All the responses can be viewed on the application web site via the following link:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/?ipcsection=relreps

It seems that the Examination Panel members have already made an unaccompanied site inspection. Notes of that visit can be viewed on the application web site.

Today, the Examination Panel has published the Rule 6 letter that sets out the preliminary list of issues to be considered, the provisional timetable and details of the preliminary hearing when the precise details will be discussed. That meeting will take place on 22 April 2020 at The Village Hotel Cosham. Those parties who have registered will automatically be notified. The letter sets out details for people to attend and whether they wish to participate or just observe. This meeting will discussion process rather than the merits of the scheme.

The full notification letter can be viewed via the following link:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020022/EN020022-001100-AQUI%20-%20Final%20Rule%206.pdf

Internally, a paper on the Aquind project has been written and will be considered at the Council Cabinet committee next Wednesday 11 March 2020. The agenda papers for that meeting will shortly go live on the council's web site.

If you have any questions that I can help with please let me know.

Steve Cornwell

Email: scornwell@Winchester.gov.uk

tel. (direct dial) 01962 848485

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Newlands Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

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Briefing Note Number 5

Update on Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

7 January 2020

Happy New Year to everyone. This year should see the Aquind proposal go though the examination process with a final decision issued by the Secretary of State, possibly in the Spring of 2021.

Aquind made the formal submission of their application on 14 November 2019. This was a little later than they had originally anticipated. On 12 December 2019 the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) issued the letter confirming they had accepted the submission as a valid application and it was being accepted for examination. The following is link to the pages on the PINS web site that hold the 533 submitted documents

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/?ipcsection=docs

I have access to some USB sticks which hold the application in a more useable format consisting of 6 groups of documents. If you would like a copy of the stick please let me know.

The acceptance of the application has effectively started the clock on the examination process which follows a series of clearly defined steps. I have set out at the end of this update a new timetable for the proposal, adding in the submission date and how this might then affect the other deadlines.

On 2 January 2020 PINS opened the process for people to register as an interested party. Anyone wishing to register must do so by midnight Wednesday 19 February 2020. The following is a link to the PINS web site which has the registration details:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/February 2020.

The following is a link to Advice Note 8.2 which sets out the details behind the registration process and the benefits of registration:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8-2v3.pdf

Obviously Winchester City Council will be registering as an interested party.

Aquind are about set off on their consultation round which involves them placing notices in the press and placing site notices in the area. The procedure does not require them to repeat the extensive consultation exercise they undertook last February. They have arranged for access to the application via dedicated facilities at public buildings along the route. There is a facility at Waterlooville library and at Horndean library. Despite encouragement from WCC, Aquind would not accept the benefit of placing the facilities to view the application at Denmead Community Centre.

Looking into the coming months I would envisage meeting up with the local members and Denmead Parish Council again, talking to colleagues in the other affected authorities and of course working up the WCC position with colleagues within the Council. This will prepare the ground for the preparation of the paper to the planning committee that will set out WCCs formal position. To date, the main interest from the Parishes has come from Newlands, Denmead and Hambeldon. This is understandable as they are potentially, the most affected by either the cable laying (in the road) or by the presence of the new interconnector station. For any of the other parishes who so far have taken on the role of a “watching brief,” this is perhaps the time to consider whether to get more involved or not.

REVISED TIMETABLE

Pre-application: No time limit (Applicant develops proposal and carries out pre-application consultation) (We have left this stage of the process)

Submission of Application: (Applicant formally submits application to planning inspectorate who acts as agent/examining authority for government in considering application). This occurred on 14 November 2019.

Acceptance occurred :(Secretary of State has 28 days to review application and decide whether to accept or reject it). Letter issued accepting application for examination dated 12 December 2019.

Pre-examination: 2-3 months (Examining Authority appointed to assess issues and hold preliminary meeting) Estimate this will take place before end of March 2020

Preliminary meeting – procedural decision on how application is to be examined) Estimate late March 2020

Examination: Up to 6 months (6 months to carry out examination). Estimate this will take place from April through to end of September 2020.

Report and recommendation: Up to 3 months (3 months to issue report and recommendation that is passed up to Secretary of State for decision) Estimate this competed by end of December 2020 or early January 2021.

Decision: Up to 3 months (3 months to issue decision and statement of reasons). Estimate this stage competed by March/April 2021

Post decision: 6 weeks (6 week window for legal challenge)

Steve Cornwell

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Briefing Note Number 4

Update on Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

Please note; I am asking for some feedback on three specific questions highlighted in bold type below.

19 November 2019

My purpose in contacting you is to inform you that on 14 November 2019 Aquind formally submitted the application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) seeking approval of the Development Consent Order. You can view the confirmation of this on the following web site: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/aquind-interconnector/

At present you will not see any of the submitted documents. They will be withheld from view pending the formal acceptance of the scheme. This is a validation process taking 28 days to complete. As part of the validation, WCC will be approached and given 14 days to response to the question whether we think that the consultation exercise followed by Aquind has been adequate. **If you have any thoughts on the way that Aquind has engaged with the local community please let me have them asap. If you can see any way that the engagement could have been better, then please let me know.** Whilst we can put these views to PINS, there is no indication of what level of engagement is viewed as "acceptable". The final decision on the acceptability of the consultation exercise rests with PINS.

We are encouraging Aquind to agree to publish the details of the application asap but that is a decision that rests solely with them.

If the application is accepted, the documents will go live and the scheme will then move on to the Examination Stage. You may be notified directly of the submission at that time. Aquind do not need to notify anyone outside those limited registered parties such as the six authorities involved. The extent of the publicity required at this stage is less than that associated with the February to April 2019 consultation. At the Examination Stage Aquind only need to place a notice in the press and display site notices.

PINS first action will be to hold what is referred to as a Preliminary Hearing. This will take place in early 2020 at a venue yet to be decided. It is likely to last for half a day at most. At this meeting, the examining panel (which will consist of a small number of inspectors) will set out the provisional programme for dealing with the application. We can comment on the proposed timetable but the final decision on how the application is to precede rests with the examining panel. It could be confined to the submission and assessment of written statements. The Inspectors, who make up the panel, have the option of holding hearings to consider particular aspects of the scheme. Hearings can be open floor sessions where people can comment on a range of matters or focus on one specific topic. If there have been any objections to the proposal to include a compulsory purchase power as part of the DCO then a hearing may be head to discuss those concerns.

The Planning Inspectorate arranges the venues for any hearings but it is open to us to put forward suggestions. If any hearings are to take place relating to the Lovedean site and the northern end of the cable

route, we would like the Panel to consider a venue or venues in the Denmead and Waterlooville area. I suspect that the planning inspectorates have criteria that any venue must satisfy so I cannot guarantee success, but it is worth putting several names forward. If you have ever been to a planning appeal Public Inquiry that is the sort of accommodation they would look for. **If you can think of any suitable venues in the Denmead or Waterlooville area then please let me have their details**

Shortly after the Preliminary hearing is held, what is referred to as a Rule 8 letter will be issued. This letter sets out the final examination programme. It will set out the various deadlines for actions.

Early on in the process, we are also expected to write and submit what is referred to as a Local Impact Report (LIR). Part of this report is outlining the impacts on the local community if the project went ahead. **If you have any observations on how the project will impact the local community please let me have them so I can include them into the LIR that we will produce.**

Whilst the first point of contact should be Aquind or the NSIP web site, if there are any points that you think I can help you out with, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Circulation list:

All members within the following wards

Denmead Ward

Central Meon Valley Ward

Upper Meon Valley Ward

Southwickk & Wickham Ward

Council Leader

Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing

Denmead Parish Council Clerk

Hambledon Parish Council Clerk

Southwark & Widley Parish Council Clerk

Newlands Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

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Briefing Note Number 3

Update on Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

10 September 2019

It is some time since I last sent out an update and so this seems an appropriate time to update you on what has occurred since February 2019.

The last time an update was circulated; Aquind had just started their consultation exercise on the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). This set out all the detail that Aquind had accumulated at the time. A report was prepared and presented as agenda item 12 to the WCC Planning Committee at their meeting on 11 April 2019. The report can be viewed via the following link:

http://modgov1-wcc.wcc.winchester.gov.uk/documents/g200/Public%20reports%20pack%2011th-Apr-2019%2009.30%20Planning%20Committee.pdf?T=10

At that meeting members agreed to delegate to the officers and the portfolio holder the task of dealing with day to day matters relating to Aquind but with the clear understanding that once the formal application

is submitted, the council's response will be considered by members before it is submitted.

A response to the PEIR was agreed with the Portfolio holder and submitted to Aquind. A copy of that response is attached.

Whilst raising a number of questions over the level of detail that was available to view, officers did raise two fundamental points of principle. These where:

- Why the option of laying the cables up through the open countryside west of the A3 was not considered.
- Whether Aquind had misled people in the presentation of data relating to the anticipated delays that will result from cable laying in the roads. The figures used in the consultation booklet where inconsistent and quite often needed to be doubled to get the full implications of the delays resulting from cable laying operations.

Aquind have subsequently indicated that they consider they can justify the approach they have taken on both issues. The matters remain open for WCC to raise at a later date if we wish to do so.

Since February 2019, officers have continued to meet with Aquind. These discussions have focused on the design and landscape issues associated with the proposed Interconnector Station to be locate to the west of the existing sub station. Colleagues from East Hampshire and the South Downs National Park authority continue to attend those meetings. The technical requirements associated with dealing with high voltages apparatus appear to be the primary issue that is influencing the building layout and design.

Some of the features (hedgerows and trees) that Aquind have been relying on to screen the building are located outside the red lined application site. At meetings and in the PEIR response, Officers had questioned how these features would be secured and retained. In response, Aquind has recently added a number of these features to the red lined application site. Several locations relate to positions where new hedges will be planted. The relevant landowners have been sent letters informing them of these additions.

Officers have continued to press Aquind to bring to a conclusion the studies and discussions that will decide what route the cables will take from the Hambledon Road to Anmore and beyond up to Lovedean. The issue evolves around the potential impact on the

ecological value of the Kings Pond Meadow. Unless there is an overriding reason to protect the meadow, Officers have expressed a preference to avoid running the cables up Mill Road and Martin Avenue. A final decision on the options is still awaited.

Officers are also pressing Aquind to consider what legacy benefits the local community might gain from the proposal. These discussions are still ongoing.

In terms of future actions Aquind have indicated their desire to make a formal submission by the end of October 2019. If they do keep to that timetable, then we will enter the next stage of the NSIP procedure which is the Examination Stage. To give you some idea of the subsequent actions and how long they might take I have copied the following from the guidance note and made some additions:

TIMETABLE

Pre-application: No time limit (Applicant develops proposal and carries out pre-application consultation) (*This is where we are now*)

Submission of Application: (Applicant formally submits application to planning inspectorate who acts as agent/examining authority for government in considering application)

Acceptance: Up to 28 days (Secretary of State has 28 days to review application and decide whether to accept or reject it)

Pre-examination: 2-3 months (Examining Authority appointed to assess issues and hold preliminary meeting)

Preliminary meeting – procedural decision on how application is to be examined)

Examination: Up to 6 months (6 months to carry out examination)

Report and recommendation: Up to 3 months (3 months to issue report and recommendation that is passed up to Secretary of State for decision)

Decision: Up to 3 months (3 months to issue decision and statement of reasons)

Post decision: 6 weeks (6 week window for legal challenge)

Assuming Aquind submit by the end of October 2019 and allowing the procedure to take the full time allocated to each action listed above, then a decision on whether to issue the Development Consent Order (DCO) should emerge by the end of February 2021. Obviously this timetable is subject to some variations.

Certain bodies such as the local authorities and the parish councils where the development would take place are formally registered as "interested parties" and will be notified when the application is submitted for examination. However, for clarity, it appears that the last consultation exercise that took place from late February through to late April represented the maximum outreach that the applicant is required to undertake to engage with the public. Those people, groups or anyone else who engaged with the applicant and submitted a consultation response at that time will not be automatically notified at the next formal submission stage. Those people must rely on the public notices and press notices to become aware of the scheme. WCC has used the Zone of Theoretical Visibility to identify parish councils that have been included in the circulation list for this note. When the formal application is submitted and becomes "live" we will send out another briefing note so you can make the decision yourselves if you wish to engage in the process.

Whilst the first point of contact should be Aquind or the NSIP web site if there are any points that you think I can help you out with, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

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Briefing Note Number 2

Update on Aquind Interconnector Proposal at Lovedean

28 February 2019

Since the first briefing note was circulated, there have been a number of meetings and teleconferences between Aquind and the five interested authorities. (Portsmouth, Havant, East Hampshire, Winchester & South Downs National Park). There has also been a small number of meeting focusing on the issue of the design of the proposed interconnector building. These have been attended by East Hampshire, SDNP and WCC. The restricted attendance reflects the more limited interest in this issue to those of us at the northern end of the project.

In terms of general trends, there have been a number of themes we have raised at the meetings. These are:

- we have consistently sought greater clarity on the proposals.
- we have sought to broaden the range of community groups that will be consulted and the number of locations where details of the project can be viewed.
- we have sought clarification on the design approach that Aquind has adopted and proposed that they use the forthcoming Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) to sound out the community on options for the design approach.
- we have raised the issue with Aquind of creating a fund to support environmental improvement work beyond the red lined application site but within the wider area potentially affected by the proposal.

Aquind have now published their Preliminary Environmental Impact (PEI) Report. Also referred to as the PEIR document.

This new consultation exercise runs for an eight week period from Wednesday 27 February 2019 until Monday 29 April 2019.

I attach a link that leads to the documents

http://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=6600&d=8pn33Druep9n2xm-TFFruGnnMXM933iDrJUFrsrgnw&s=658&u=http%3a%2f%2faquindconsultation%2eco%2euk%2fconsultation-materials%2f

Aquind are publicising the existence of the PEIR document and you may already have received information. Aquind have been asked to notify you and offer you the chance to engage in this consultation. **It would be of assistance if you could email me and let me know whether you have been sent any information so I can record how extensive the consultation net has been cast and how effective the lobbying for wider consultation has been.**

We are holding a paper copy of the consultation documents in our reception area at the WCC offices as one of the listed locations where people can view the proposals.

I am aware that a public exhibition is proposed to take place at Denmead War Memorial; Hall on Friday 5 April 2019 between 1600 and 2000 hours.

Any comments on the PIER should be addressed to Aquind and not to the council.

The PEIR is a consultation document and its description of the scheme should make it clear what aspects are open to change and can be influenced by the consultation. Accordingly, this is not the time to register any definitive view on whether the proposal is considered to be acceptable or not. Responses should focus on whether

the content and coverage of the issues is adequate for the project to move on to the next stage, which is the build up to the formal submission. The Aquind web site indicated this will take place in the summer of 2019.

WCC has been formally consulted and views from various internal colleagues will be collated and put together in a response.

Whilst Aquind should be the first point of contact, if you wish to clarify any aspect relating to the proposal, I am more than happy to help clarify any point if you contact me.

Finally, the circulation list below is a live list and has been enhanced in stages to reflect the elected members and parish councils that fall within the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV). This is the area within which it may be possibly to view the interconnector building. The ZTV plan has been generated using a computer programme by feeding into it the ground level of the site at Lovedean and the height of the proposed building. The programme then identifies the surrounding ground from where a line of sight back to the building is theoretically possible. However it does not make any allowance for buildings, features or vegetation that may obstruct the line of sight.

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Briefing Note No.1

Date: 10 January 2019

The Aquind interconnector project that will see the creation of a cross channel electricity link is developing a momentum that is likely to conclude with the submission of a detailed application later this year. This will then be considered by the Planning Inspectorate. This is the mechanism through which it is hope to gain approval and obtain the Development Consent Order (DCO) that would enable the link to be built and operated. A sign on how the project is advancing is the very recent decision to choose a preferred site for the interconnector station.

This scheme seeks to create a 2 Megawatt capacity electricity connection between England and France through which energy can be imported or exported. Whilst the landfall for the undersea cables will be Eastney on Portsea Island, the cables will continue underground for a distance of some 18km as they run northward towards the Lovedean sub station which lies west of Horndean and north of Denmead. This sub station complex which is located on the western side of Broadway Lane has been identified as the point where a connection can be to the national grid. A new facility will be built in close proximity to the existing sub station. The new facility will convert the electricity current from AC to DC depending on whether the power is being imported or exported. The facility will require a compound that is indicated as between 200m by 200m and 300m to 300m in size. Within this area will be a number of buildings but the largest will be the two converter halls each approximately 70m by 50m by 22m high. Further equipment will be located in the remaining open area. At the present time, the precise details on the exact land take and the building size is unknown.

When the first details of the project where shared with the council and with the public, the plans showed two alternative locations for the interconnector compound. One option was on land south of the existing sub station and this became known as option A. The other location was on land west of the sub station and this is known as option B. Attached with this note is a copy of a plan that shows the overall application site for the general cable route and the two option sites for the interconnector station. Option A is the blue square and option B the green square. The fact the application area which is outlined in red on the plan is larger at the northern end does not mean all that land will be developed in some form. It is to allow scope for alterative cable routes (depending on which site is finally chosen), the creation of an access, to accommodate any temporary compound area and finally to allow for any landscaping around the chosen site. The inset plan shows the two options in more detail. The boundary between Winchester and East Hampshire runs through this area and means that option A is within the East Hampshire District area whilst option B lies within the Winchester City Council area. Further details on the background to the project can be viewed on the Aquind web site which can be found by following the link below:

http://aquind.co.uk/

Aquind have engaged with all the local planning authorities that lie along the proposed cable route from Eastney up to Lovedean. These are Portsmouth & Havant at the southern end, together with the two authorities covering the two options for the converter station which are East Hampshire and ourselves. This approach would have required individual applications to be submitted and considered by each authority for that part of the project that fell within their administrative area. Given the proximity of both of the option sites to the national park boundary, the South Downs National Park Authority where also approached.

In mid 2018 it became evident that Aquind where seeking to utilise the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) procedure to obtain an approval. This procedure was introduced following concerns relating to the long delays in getting major development proposals through the planning system. The Planning Act 2008 has created a new procedure for dealing with this type of development. It also took the final decision for dealing with these schemes away from the local planning authorities and gave it to the Secretary of State. Schemes that fall into a certain category of development such as new harbours, roads, power generating stations (including offshore wind farms) and electricity

transmission lines are now dealt with by a section within The Planning Inspectorate who act as the agent for government. If the projects are supported, they receive what is referred to as ‘development consent’ under procedures governed by the Planning Act 2008. Development consent, where granted, is made in the form of a Development Consent Order (DCO).

The following is a link to the NSIP home page on the web site:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/

It was announced in July 2018 that as the scheme had similar characteristics to a power generation plant and it involved multiple authority consents, the Aquind project would be accepted as an NSIP. The consequence of that decision means that the status of WCC has changed. Previously, we would determine an application for any part of the project that fell within our area, but now we have become just one of the host authorities and a consultee. This means we can comment of the project when the application is submitted and the consultation window opens. The decision whether to grant or reject the application will now rests with the Secretary of State.

An application for approval under the NSIP procedure goes through a six stage process. If you open the folder headed “Application process” on the NSIP web site and then click on “The process” there is a short but useful video that explains the six stages. As the scheme has only recently been accepted as falling within the NSIP procedure, it is still within the first ’pre application' stage. The onus is mainly on the applicant to initiate actions at this time which includes identifying interested parties, affected property owners and engaging with both local authorities and the local community. Officers from WCC are attending meetings and participating in teleconferences seeking to provide both local knowledge and influence the form that the project takes prior to its submission. The NSIP procedure does not allow for a scheme to be revised after it is formally submitted, so it is important to exert what influence we can at this time. There are a series of guidance and advice notes on the roles and responsibilities of relevant parties involved in the NSIP process. These are available to view on the planning inspectorate web site through the link above in the “Legislation and Advice” folder. The local planning

authority is expected to engage with Aquind in a positive manner without prejudice to its final position.

As referred to above, when Aquind outlined it original ideas, they indicated that two possible locations had been identified for the converter station. Option A and option B. On 8 January 2019 during a teleconference update, officers where informed that Aquind had completed their assessment of both of these sites and decided to move forward with option B (sometimes called the western option). This is the location that lies within our administrative boundary. As the scheme is now under the NSIP procedure this decision does not have the same implication as it might once have had. Given the scale of the proposal and the close proximity of both option sites, it is likely we would have maintained a close interest in the scheme whichever option was chosen. Aquind have confirmed today that their agents have approached the landowners associated with the option B site. They will post an update on their web site about the choice of the option B by tomorrow.

This is the first update we have sent out. It is proposed to circulate further editions as the project moves from one stage to the next or if some significant matter arises. If you need any information at any time please do not hesitate to get in touch. Regarding the circulation of this note, we do not know at present the full “zone” within which the buildings would be seen. Consequently, I may be erring on the side of caution at this time. However, if you think there is someone who we should send this to and is not listed below please let me know.

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Newlands Shadow Parish Council Clerk

Soberton Parish Council Clerk

Boarhunt Parish Council Clerk

10 January 2019

22 January 2019 (additions to contact list shown in blue)

29 January 2019 (further additions to contact list shown in green)

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