

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 through 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 Hambledon. 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 completed 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 completed by March/April 2021

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

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