

Presentation with Q&A Session from Esso and Partners

In respect of the Southampton to London Pipeline Project - 4 April 2018

Conference Room, Worpleston Memorial Hall, Perry Hill, GU3 3RF

Present: Cllr G Adam, Cllr N Bryan, Cllr S Fisk, Cllr J Messinger, Cllr N Mitchell, Cllr S Morgan, Cllr D Snipp, Cllr J Wray, Cllr L Wright, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

Willie Fair (Land Liaison, Esso), Kai Pritchard (Communications and Engagement, Jacobs), Suki Coe (Planning) and Yara Alwazir (Engineering)

Purpose of the meeting: To enable Esso and their partners to present the various pipeline proposals and to allow Councillors and Staff to ask questions which the invited attendees will endeavour to answer.

Briefing Session:

Mr Fair stated that there are currently two Esso pipelines that run from Southampton to West London – the first carries multi-fuel and the second carries aviation fuel. The aviation fuel line was put in during the 1960s and is degrading from the outside in, so it is approaching the end of its useful life.

The Objective is therefore to replace almost the full length of the pipeline. The first 10km of the pipeline from Southampton has already been replaced. The route the replacement pipeline needs to take will involve joining up 3 points:

1. The end of this 10km section outside of Southampton
2. Alton pumping station
3. West London terminal

Due to the nature of the project (a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project - NSIP) rather than seeking Planning Permission, a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be sought.

Since the existing pipeline was installed, there have been a number of significant changes to the pipeline surroundings, i.e. the designation of the South Downs as a National Park, the formation of the Thames Heath Basin, M25 and M3, quarries and landfill sites. These are all factors which influence why it is not as simple as replacing the existing pipeline.

Numerous replacement corridors were considered during initial environmental and technical work in early 2018. These have been narrowed to 3 in the South and 3 in the North. Of the 3 in the North, Route J is close to the current pipeline (and is the favoured corridor), Route M and Route Q travel through our Parish. Route Q also mirrors another existing pipeline in places.

There are different complex challenges with each proposed corridor.

As a company, Esso are open to hearing what we have to say about what is important to the Parish. They are actively encouraging community engagement. At present they are consulting on 200m wide corridors.

The pipe is a 12" diameter pipe (30cm) although an easement of 6m is needed for operational security and maintenance.

Willie explained how the DCO process differs from a Planning Application, in that the Applicant takes sole responsibility for undertaking a comprehensive consultation. The current consultation is non-statutory. In the Autumn 2018, once the corridors have been reduced to 1 in both the North and South, the process will become statutory.

Esso must be able to demonstrate to the Planning Inspectorate that they have taken the communities' comments into consideration.

The DCO application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who will consider the application, and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who will decide whether development consent should be granted for the proposed scheme.

The DCO application process covers several stages. Upon receipt of an application, the Planning Inspectorate has 28 days to decide whether or not to accept it. There is then a period of 6 months for the Planning Inspectorate to examine the application, and 3 months for the Planning Inspectorate to make its recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has a further 3 months in which to issue a decision.

After this, the initial non-statutory consultation, Esso will establish a single preferred corridor and pipeline routes within the corridor, in the summer.

Q. How long will a new pipe last?

A. Current pipe was designed for heating fuel, not aviation fuel, so the expected life of the new pipe would be expected to be in excess of 60 years, and possibly as much as 80 years.

Q. Will the pipeline be connecting the Farnborough for the airport?

A. No. The existing pipeline does not connect there either.

Q. Can pipelines go through gardens without the landowner's consent?

A. The first 10km was done with the full consent of every landowner. Sadly, some gardens will be affected but the aim is to avoid areas i.e. ancient woodland, SPA/SSSI, where practical.

Q. Who has received the mailshot?

A. Most registered landowners within the proposed 200m corridor has had a letter from Fisher German LLP (Land Agents). The purpose of the communication is to establish confirmation of boundaries and interests.

The Clerk explained about the location of the Whitmoor Common SPA/SSSI/Conservation Area/SNCI at Perry Hill and that it has taken 2 years to get a wayleave agreement for Coombe Lane for a new SGN gas main.

Mr Fair replied that this sort of information is valuable evidence and is very helpful. This is why a robust consultation is necessary.

Q. With regard to perceptions of large-scale earthmovers being required for all excavation works, how do Esso mitigate the public's perceptions?

A. The 200m corridor will be narrowed to 30m, and essentially could be as minimal as half a lane of a carriageway.

Q. So will it be medium-sized equipment undertaking the works?

A. It will depend wholly on each of the sites as to which size equipment is utilised. A 25-tonne machine will not be practical in a domestic garden but would be suited to an agricultural field.

Mr Fair explained that there is a lot of information available on the dedicated <http://www.slpproject.co.uk> website. At the consultation event next week, there will even be a piece of the actual pipe which is to allow people to appreciate the dimensions of the pipe. The process is in its early stages and Esso have tried to make sure that they have 'over-consulted' so that there are no nasty surprises for any landowners when the process is nearing completion. The 'bulges' within the corridors are areas of high uncertainty and this is why additional landowners have been consulted.

Q. What is the timescale for the build?

A. Statutory consultation will take place in Autumn 2018, and it is envisaged that the DCO submission will take place in Spring 2019. 7000 letters have been sent out on each potential corridor and all affected postcodes have received a brochure. Given the previously outlined timescales, it is unlikely that a decision will be made prior to 2021. The build time for the pipeline is expected to take 2 years.

Q. Does this DCO application decision coincide with a General Election?

A. Hopefully not, but due to the nature of the application a change of Secretary of State should not detrimentally affect a decision date by a significant amount.

Q. Living in a postcode which is likely to be indirectly affected by the installation of a replacement pipeline, I have not received a leaflet notifying me of the consultation.

A. Encourage everyone to come along to the public consultation meeting and/or leave feedback online.

Q. Does the existing multi-fuel pipeline also need replacing?

A. No.

Q. How will you protect your construction sites from incursions?

A. The entire route will be flown fortnightly. Line patrols will also take place on foot. Esso has a track record of great relationships with landowners. The pipelines are also subject to constant remote monitoring.

Q. But how will the integrity of the sites, particularly Whitmoor Common, be retained during construction?

A. Esso will make the appropriate measures to keep its sites secure. For example, barriers could be erected during the works.

Ms Alwazir explained that the pipes are located at a depth of 1.2m on average. The standard procedure is to apply caution tape, which includes an emergency number, as the excavation is backfilled.

Cllr Adam explained that all DCO sites must be returned to their previous state.

The Clerk reiterated that any incursion deterrent measures require reinstatement once construction is completed.

Mr Fair promised that, where appropriate, 24-hour onsite Security would be provided. Esso are considerate contractors and will even consider issues such as water troughs for livestock when the construction restricts access to usual water facilities. They are used to facing and handling a variety of challenges.

Q. A 6m easement would create a significant open corridor through Whitmoor Common.

Q. What about all the species of ground nesting birds?

A. Esso will ensure that active construction periods will work with its ecology team to mitigate environmental factors as required, i.e. hibernating bats, nesting birds, newt habitats, etc.

The Clerk explained that significant deforestation on Whitmoor Common took place 2 years ago in an area within the flood plain. The resultant damaged caused to the common by the heavy machinery caused significant consternation amongst local residents.

A. Feed all this information back to Esso.

Ms Coe explained that the DCO is a Statutory Instrument of Law and as such, must be obeyed.

The Clerk also explained that Whitmoor Common has sites of ancient field markings and is the location of 2 Bronze Age barrows.

Q. Is there an accurate number of landowners who are likely to be directly affected by the pipeline when it crosses their property?

A. No but it could be determined, however what's currently most important is the engagement.

Mr Fair pointed out that whilst shrubs neighbouring the pipeline are deemed acceptable, trees are not as the roots could damage the pipeline or its coating.

The Clerk highlighted that the most significant issue with the wayleave in Coombe Lane involved trees.

Throughout the DCO process, there are multiple opportunities to engage. Mr Fair suggested that the Parish Council consider liaising with Surrey County Council and piggybacking on their involvement unless we want it to be all encompassing.

He explained that it is not possible to discuss the finer details until the plan is narrowed down to just 1 route and the corridor is narrowed. In London, the space constraints are such that they may end up having to move other services to fit their pipeline in.

Cllr Adam highlighted that there is a perception by the general population that, despite the consultation process, the location of the pipeline is already a 'done deal'. Mr Fair explained that this is an open consultation on all 3 corridors published and encouraged feedback to be submitted.

The Clerk pointed out the areas of flooding within the Parish and the location of the main watercourses.