



Our reference: 19/00432/PINS

Your reference: EN070005

The Planning Inspectorate  
National Infrastructure Planning  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

Contact John Thorne

Telephone 01252 398791

Email [john.thorne@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:john.thorne@rushmoor.gov.uk)

Date 27<sup>th</sup> July 2019

E-mailed to [SouthamptontoLondonPipeline@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:SouthamptontoLondonPipeline@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

FAO Mr Hefin Jones

Dear Sirs

**Location: Southampton to London Pipeline Project**

**Proposal: Notification from Esso of acceptance of their DCO application (by the Planning Inspectorate) and deadline for registering as a Interested Party**

Following the Planning Inspectorate's acceptance of an application for a Development Consent Order for the Southampton to London Pipeline, Rushmoor Borough Council requests to be registered as an Interested Party at the Examination. Rushmoor Borough Council is a host Borough and also a landowner affected by the development.

## 1. Summary of Concerns

1.1.1 Rushmoor Borough Council notes that the proposed development will provide a significant national benefit in supplying the major airports and other facilities with fuel. However, the project will have impacts, within the Rushmoor district, on internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, Southwood Country Park, a large strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), Queen Elizabeth Park, a natural open space, and the adjoining play space and car park, a cricket ground, two football grounds and a bowling club. Rushmoor Borough Council does not agree with the applicant that the ecological and community impact is minimal and would expect site-specific mitigation and /or compensation to be provided for the impacts on the above sites.

1.1.2 Within the National Planning Policy Framework 2019, paragraph 170d states that planning decisions should provide net gains for biodiversity. Within the government biodiversity net gain consultation, December 2018, it was posited that 10% uplift was being considered. As this project leads to short and medium term impacts on biodiversity, Rushmoor Borough Council would expect the applicant to undertake a biodiversity net gain calculation, using one of the recognized metrics, to calculate the cumulative impacts on biodiversity, and provide details of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures, to evidence that biodiversity net gain has been achieved.

- 1.1.3 The council has worked with the applicants throughout the pre-application process, sharing our concerns regarding the ecological, amenity and community impacts of the project and agreeing a number of mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures to alleviate these impacts. However, the discussions undertaken do not appear to have informed either the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), with the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) only committing to provision of a new play space associated with Queen Elizabeth Park. It is stated that no ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement is required above replacing the sub and top soil, natural regeneration and providing low value scrub planting to replace woodland habitat lost. We can find no evidence that consideration has been given to the disruption caused to the Rushmoor Council's sporting facilities either during construction or with regards to long term management.
- 1.1.4 Within the following section detailed comments are provided regarding the individual and cumulative impacts identified by the council's specialists and suggestions as to how ecological, amenity and community impacts can be avoided, mitigated or compensated and biodiversity net gain achieved.

## **2 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area**

- 2.0.0 Bourley and Long Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Eelmoor Marsh SSSI are within the Rushmoor district. Both these sites are part of the larger Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). It is the council's view that the application documents do not provide adequate information to enable an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken in respect of the magnitude of displacement caused by the impact on the SANGS network. We disagree with the conclusion posited by the applicant that disturbance due to increases in visitor pressure and habitat loss will not have an impact on the nightjar, Dartford warbler and woodlark populations within the SPA.

### **2.1 Increases in visitor pressure due to displacement from the SANG network**

- 2.1.1 The HRA information submitted states that the increase in visitors on the SPA, resulting from the disruption of the SANG network, will be minimal, due to other SANG sites being available in the locality. In the case of Southwood Country Park, it is claimed that displaced visitors can use Southwood Woodlands. This shows a lack of understanding by the applicant regarding the mitigation provided by the SANGS, and the criteria used to identify the amount of SANG capacity required to ensure the recreational impact of new housing is mitigated throughout the Thames Basin Heaths SPA impact zone.
- 2.1.2 When a SANG is designated, the visitor capacity of site is calculated using the formula of 8ha /1000 population increase. SANGS are required to serve a prescribed catchment to ensure that residents can access the Alternative Natural Greenspace easily and so use it in preference to the SPA. The proposed Southwood Country Park SANG is a 57ha site, not a 68.5ha site as detailed within the HRA information. The Country Park has capacity for 712.5 people. The majority of this capacity will be

filled by 2021. Southwood Woodland is already at full capacity being designated in 2008. The SANGs are designed to reflect the peace and tranquility found within the SPA. If Southwood Woodland was forced to accommodate further visitors from the Country Park, the site would become very busy and visitors would be likely to visit the SPA, where tranquility can be assured.

- 2.1.3 The applicant states that 7% of the total area of both SANGS will be impacted, the correct figures are over 8% as the area of the Country Park and Southwood Woodlands were miscalculated. Due to the SANG methodology above, the percentage of impact would need to be calculated within the golf course alone as Southwood Woodlands has reached carrying capacity for visitors. Therefore over 12% of the Country Park would be impacted. This calculation does not take into consideration the far greater impact of the noise and visual intrusion into a site that is meant to be peaceful.
- 2.1.4 The applicant states that the impact of the works will be short term. However within the pre application process, Rushmoor Borough Council was informed that the work on the SANG would take at least two months.
- 2.1.5 This visitor displacement onto the SPA is likely to be exacerbated still further by the cumulative impact from the ESSO pipeline on five SANGS within close proximity, the disruption to natural habitats within the short and medium term, and the indication that the work on the SANGS would be undertaken within the summer months when SPA ground nesting birds are breeding.
- 2.1.6 Within the HRA information it is claimed that visitor impact cannot be quantified due to the lack of visitor data. However, the capacity of all sites can be calculated using the simple formula above. Operational SANGS are required to record car numbers using the car park, although this is likely to be an underestimation of visitor numbers, especially in Rushmoor SANGS, where the majority of the visitors access the SANGS on foot. It is the council's opinion that a relatively accurate calculation of visitor numbers could be undertaken, with mitigation provided for individual and cumulative recreational impacts due to displacement.

## **2.2 Direct habitat loss within the SPA**

- 2.2.1 Rushmoor Borough Council does not agree with the conclusion of the HRA report that direct habitat loss will not cause significant impacts on the SPA in the short and medium term. It is the council's view that direct habitat loss should be assessed within the HRA. Within the order limits, there is 47.6ha of supporting habitat for SPA breeding birds. Although some habitat is being preserved due to trenchless methods, there is no information on the area of SPA supporting habitat that will be lost due to the project. To ensure the determining authority can undertake an accurate assessment, Rushmoor Borough Council recommends that the loss of habitat due to trenching is calculated. It is our view that there is likely to be breeding habitat loss within the SPA that should be mitigated or compensated.

- 2.2.2 The HRA information states that any loss of habitat will only have an impact in the short term. However, the application documents state that it will take at least five years for acid grassland and pioneer heathland to regenerate. In respect of the woodland to be lost, this habitat cannot be replaced within the order limits due to planting restrictions. Consideration should be given to the impact caused by the time taken for the habitats to regenerate and the loss of breeding territories during the first five years. When calculating impact, consideration should also be given to the fact that both Dartford warbler and woodlark prefer to nest in mature heathland.
- 2.2.3 In conclusion, it is Rushmoor Borough Council's view that further information is required to inform a full assessment of the impact on the SPA due to increases in recreational pressure and habitat loss on the designated bird species.

### **2.3 Decommissioning of the current and new pipelines**

- 2.3.1 Within the HRA information there is no assessment of the impact caused by the decommissioning of both pipelines. Without identifying the impacts from decommissioning, the overall project impacts on the SPA cannot be ascertained. We acknowledge that technology may have moved on by the time the pipelines are decommissioned, however it is our view that the impacts should be calculated from current technologies in line with the precautionary principal.

### **2.4 Eelmoor Marsh SSSI**

- 2.4.1 Although not impacting directly on Eelmoor Marsh, the order limit runs in close proximity to the SSSI boundary. The Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will need to include site specific safety measures to ensure no pollution enters the SSSI and hydrological processes are not disrupted within the construction or operational phases.

## **3 Basingstoke Canal SSSI**

- 3.1.1 Rushmoor Borough Council agrees with the EIA conclusion, that there will be no impact on the Basingstoke Canal SSSI.

## **4 Old Ively Road Green Corridor**

- 4.1.1 Old Ively Road has been designated as a green corridor within Rushmoor Borough Council's Local Plan. The Council is pleased to note that the mature trees along Old Ively road are being protected and the pipeline is to be situated in the road. It will be important that safe working practices are formulated within the application process, to ensure no impact on the root zones of the trees, within the green corridor.

## **5 Ball Hill Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC)**

- 5.1.1 Ball Hill SINC is designated predominantly for its acid grassland and heath habitats that support the habitats on the nearby SSSI. Rushmoor Borough Council agrees with the applicant that there will be no direct impact on the SINC due to habitat loss.

The CEMP should provide site specific protection measures to ensure Ball Hill SINC will be protected from indirect impacts such as pollution due to site runoff.

## **6 South of Ively Road SINC**

- 6.1.1 This SINC was deleted in 2013 after a survey showing the interest features are now absent.

## **7 Southwood Country Park SANG**

### **7.1 Direct habitat loss within the SINC**

- 7.1.1 Southwood Country Park SANG, formally Southwood Golf Course will provide mitigation for developments associated with Farnborough and Aldershot Town Center regeneration. The site contains three SINCS, Cove Brook Grazing Area, Cove Brook Southern Grasslands and Southwood Golf Course West. An extension to Cove Brook grazing area was identified within 2017 for grazing marsh habitats and Southwood Golf Course West SINC was identified, within the western section of the SANG, for its wet woodland and remnant grazing marsh habitat. Despite informing the applicants of these new SINC areas impact on these sites have not been assessed within the EIA.
- 7.1.2 The pipeline will sever the buffers that have been established to protect the SINC network and will sever the new SINC extension to Cove Brook Grazing Area, causing direct habitat loss. Although there has been agreement to use the existing path within the older SINCS, the order limits encroach into the SINCS with construction likely to damage further SINC habitat. We note that an environmental mitigation area is marked on Sheet 34 of the works plan, but no details appear to be available within the EIA as to the mitigation proposed. Disruption of any SINC habitats or their buffers within the Country Park should be avoided or mitigation provided.

### **7.2 Impacts on the Ively stream, headwaters and hydrological processes within the Country Park**

- 7.2.1 The EIA states that the Ively stream will be crossed using open trenching. This is likely to have a significant impact on the bank vegetation and river bed habitats. The route will also impact on the headwaters within the site, located adjacent to the stream. Rushmoor Borough Council is working with the Environment Agency on a strategic project to naturalise and enhance the Ively and Marrow streams and Cove Brook, and restore the headwaters and the floodplain throughout the site. This work is due to be undertaken in the summer of 2020. This project is funded by significant financial contributions from developers and funding from the EA. Rushmoor Borough Council is concerned that there will be a significant impact on the newly restored habitats as a result of this project. The Council would advocate a trenchless crossing to preserve the restored habitats and protect the headwaters from hydrological impact

7.2.2 Throughout the golf course, the project should ensure that the hydrological processes are not disrupted in the long term and the river network does not become polluted. Currently I can find no site-specific details, within the application documents, that ensure all impacts will be mitigated.

### **7.3 Impacts on the undesignated habitats within Southwood Country Park**

7.3.1 When the surveys for the EIA were undertaken, Southwood Country Park was still a functioning golf course and therefore heavily mown. The EIA stated that the undesignated habitat was largely amenity improved grassland throughout the site. The site has been closed as a golf course for eight months and Rushmoor Borough Council has relaxed the management on the grassland. Within the west the grassland is generally improved, with pockets of acid grassland, however within the eastern section acid grassland species and orchids are already beginning to colonise the site. The rapid regeneration of the acid grassland is thought to be due to the fact that no fertiliser was used within the golf course. Due to the change in conditions since the flora survey the council feel another botanical survey should be required to document the true value of the site.

### **7.4 Protected species**

7.4.1 Rushmoor Borough Council has undertaken extensive species surveys within the Country Park. Five species of bats forage along the woodland edge and the tree lines, two outlier badgers' setts are present, and a medium population of common lizards and a large population of slow worms were recorded throughout the site. The site supports six notable invertebrate species. Otter spraints were found along Cove Brook during the project surveys. Within the Statement of Common Ground, Rushmoor Borough Council hopes to agree safeguarding measures to ensure no impact on the protected and notable species recorded throughout the Country Park.

### **7.5 Mitigation**

7.5.1 Due to the ecological impacts on the Country Park, coupled with the disruption of recreational use within the SANG, Rushmoor Borough Council feel that a substantial mitigation, compensation and enhancement package should be provided within the Country Park. We suggest that this needs to cover a far wider area than that identified within the work plans. We are happy to agree mitigation as part of discussions for the Statement of Common Ground.

## **8 Southwood Playing fields**

8.1.1 Southwood playing fields contain the existing pipeline, with the new route running parallel. Historically the council has been unable to manage the area as full size pitches due to ESSO's stipulations regarding management above the existing pipeline. Although Rushmoor Borough Council has no objection to the route, we need to secure the right to manage all pitches appropriately to ensure the amenity uses within these areas are not compromised in the long term.

## **9 Cove Cricket Club**

- 9.1.1 The Cove Cricket Club has a lease with Rushmoor Borough Council until 2038. The club has recently applied to install new practice nets. The members are concerned that the practice nets will be compromised by works relating to the pipeline. We would like to ensure that the cricket ground and practice nets are not compromised with safeguards stipulated within the Statement of Common Ground.
- 9.1.2 Rushmoor Borough Council is concerned that disruption of the cricket grounds will occur within the cricket season. We will require details from the applicant relating to access requirements from Grasmere Road and the length of occupation on the compound adjacent to West Heath Road. When negotiating the Statement of Common Ground, we would like to discuss scheduling works to avoid the cricket season. We will also require suitable reinstatement of any areas impacted.
- 9.1.3 The Council will need a minimum of 12-18 months notice of intent to start work so that we can find a temporary home for all the clubs to be impacted during the works period. Compensation will be required for the time and cost of any relocation.

## **10 Prospect Road allotments**

- 10.1.1 The council requires absolute clarity regarding impact including details of site access and the timing of works. As these are statutory allotments the allotment holders have legal rights of occupation and quiet enjoyment.

## **11 Queen Elizabeth Park and associated playground**

- 11.1.1 Queen Elizabeth Park is a secondary woodland site of a young age. It is well used and loved by the local population, being one of the few natural open spaces within Rushmoor. Adjacent to the site is a playground used by the local children, with schools also using the park to study the natural environment. Rushmoor Borough Council agrees that the woodland requires management and that clearance of *Rhododendron ponticum* will significantly increase the biodiversity value of the site.
- 11.1.2 The playground will be lost due to a compound being required to undertake directional drilling. Rushmoor Borough Council welcomes the commitment to replace the playground. The estimated cost of the replacement playground would be £80k to £100k.
- 11.1.3 The pipeline runs through the woodland and will cause significant damage to the site. A large proportion of the woodland will be permanently lost due to the planting restrictions within the order limits. Due to the severe impact to the woodland within Queen Elizabeth Park, Rushmoor Borough Council is of the view that a comprehensive mitigation and enhancement project is required to compensate for the permanent loss of woodland and the loss of natural open space to the local community.

11.1.4 During the works within the playground and the woodland access will be severely restricted with people unable to use the main pathway for a significant period. The Queen Elizabeth Park Restoration and Enhancement Scheme will provide some compensation for this disruption.

11.1.5 Rushmoor Borough Council are concerned that within a site visit ESSO appeared unwilling to consider providing anything outside the order limits on this site. Within the Statement of Common Ground the Council will be seeking a commitment that ESSO finance the Queen Elizabeth Park Restoration and Enhancement Scheme comprising.

- A full habitat survey
- A 10yr management plan
- A public communications program
- Establishment of alternative habitat such as acidic grassland
- A contribution to the management of the newly created habitats over 10years
- A contribution to clearance the *Rhododendron ponticum*
- Restoration of the car park

11.1.6 The recent biodiversity net gain consultation indicated that the government will expect the Defra matrix to be used to calculate biodiversity gain. Due to the impact on Queen Elizabeth Park it is likely that the matrix will indicate that a significant mitigation package is required.

## **12 Highgate Road, Farnborough Hill School and Farnborough Green**

12.1.1 Rushmoor Borough Council is pleased to note that the pipeline is now avoiding the mature trees around the periphery of Farnborough Hill School, with the pipeline running through the adjacent grassland.

## **13 Ship Lane Cemetery SINC**

13.1.1 This SINC is designated for its semi improved acid and neutral grassland. The pipeline route runs north of the SINC. The CEMP will need secure site specific safeguards to ensure no contamination enters the SINC during construction.

## **14 Farnborough Gate Sports Ground**

14.1.1 The proposed route will lead to disruption to Farnborough Gate Sports Complex with impacts to the car park, football pitch and restriction of use by the Bowling & Football Clubs. Within the Statement of Common Ground the Council would like to agree the timing of works to ensure that the facility is available within the football and bowling seasons and thus minimise disruption.

14.1.2 The council will require the appropriate reinstatement of the pitch and improvements in quality from the original pitch. On-going maintenance of the sports complex as a fully functioning facility must be guaranteed, without the need to follow line-search



protocol. Agreement must be reached to ensure that tractor mounted spiking operations can be undertaken without requiring permission from ESSO.

- 14.1.3 The Council will need a minimum of 12-18 months notice of intent to start work so that we can find a temporary home for all the clubs to be impacted during the works period. Compensation will be required for the time and cost of any relocation.

## **15 Blackwater Valley Frimley Bridge SINC**

- 15.1.1 Rushmoor Borough Council is very concerned to note that open trenching is being considered through this SINC. As the area is a landfill, open trenching could have a deleterious impact on both the SINC and the Blackwater River, with disturbance of the landfill leading to pollution of the SINC and the river.

## **16 Important Hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997**

- 16.1.1 Within the scheme as a whole, 146 hedgerows of importance and 21 hedgerows likely to be important are to be impacted by the project. Other than the planting within the impacted hedgerow network no further compensation or enhancement appears to be proposed. Due to the high number of hedgerows to be impacted across a large geographic area, it is Rushmoor Borough Council's view that additional hedgerow habitats should be created to compensate for the significant habitat fragmentation, the time taken for the hedgerow network to recover and planting to mature and to ensure biodiversity net gain in respect of hedgerow habitat. Within Rushmoor we feel that compensation hedgerow habitat should be delivered to link the areas of woodland within Southwood Country Park.

## **17 Invasive Non Native Species (INNS)**

- 17.1.1 Within the EIA, INNS working methodology, it would appear that soil associated with schedule 9 species is to be stored on site and reused to backfill the trench. This is likely to cause impact over a larger area as rhizomes and seeds within the soil will be spread during the backfilling process. Rushmoor Borough Council's would require contaminated soil be deposited offsite as contaminated waste. We would request that a commitment to appropriate disposal of soil associated with INNS is included within the Statement of Common Ground and an Invasive Non Native Species Strategy is prepared and agreed before works commence.

## **18 Intra Project Cumulative Effects**

- 18.1.1 Rushmoor Borough Council does not agree that there will be no cumulative Intra-Project Effects. The Council has identified that five SANGS within four adjacent Local Authorities will be impacted by the project. It is our view that both the EIA and the information for the HRA should assess the cumulative impact on the SANG network and the effects this will have on displacement of visitors onto the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

## 19 Biodiversity Gain

19.1.1 As noted at the commencement of these representations, the National Planning Policy Statement 2019 Paragraph 170d now requires that planning decisions should ensure a net biodiversity gain. Within the government consultation it was posited that 10% uplift was being considered. As this project leads to short and medium term impacts on biodiversity, Rushmoor Borough Council would request that the applicant is required to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation, using one of the recognized metrics, to calculate the cumulative impacts on biodiversity throughout the scheme and provide details of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures to evidence that 10% Biodiversity Net Gain has been achieved.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss any of the issues raised please contact  
Debbie Salmon Rushmoor Borough Council Ecologist

Email: [debbie.salmon@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.salmon@rushmoor.gov.uk)

Direct Dial: 01252 398731

Working days Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday 08:30 – 19:00

Yours faithfully,

John Thorne

Corporate Planning Manager