

From: [GOVE, Michael](#)
To: [Southampton to London Pipeline Project](#)
Subject: Esso Pipeline
Date: 31 July 2019 18:42:58

Dear Planning Inspector,

As the MP for Surrey Heath, I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed route running alongside Colville Gardens and Herons Court on Turf Hill in Lightwater. This is based on discussions with my local Parish, Borough and County Councillors who represent Lightwater, and a subsequent meeting with the Esso Project Team.

My concerns relate to what residents clearly feel has been an inadequate consultation with the local community in Lightwater, resulting in what they believe is a the less than ideal land selection for this portion of the pipeline. It appears that the land selected, whilst adhering to a Natural England directional report, simply swaps one environmental concern for another.

The current proposed land forming part of the application runs through ancient woodland, and represents a potentially significant root disruption, loss of trees, and habitat, which could have far-reaching consequences on the local environment and the safety of approximately 30 residents' homes. Quite understandably, those residents are extremely concerned at the possibility of flooding in an already flood-prone area, ground movement, noise pollution and disturbance to bat dwellings.

Whilst I understand Natural England has provided its report in good faith, and is consistent with its standard viewpoints as an aid to Esso and its pipeline land location decision-making process, it would appear that residents were not given the opportunity to question Natural England's report, or for them to provide Esso with local knowledge on the land selection.

To summarise:

- The preferred route along the existing pipeline in Lightwater has been set aside due to Natural England's report;
- Land on the right-hand side of the existing pipeline location only became designated as a special area years after its installation. This land is currently a protected area for ground-nesting birds during certain months of the year, meaning works can only be undertaken during other months of the year;
- Land on the left-hand side of the existing pipeline apparently became notable when it had a sand lizard release some years ago. I am told that this species has since flourished and spread throughout the heathland, so is no longer restricted to the release area; and the immediate land adjacent to the pipeline has also become

compacted by dog walking, and is therefore not the ideal habitat for sand lizards.

I understand that were it not for these points above, the existing pipeline route (the preferred route) would have been selected, and would not lead to the loss of trees or give rise to residents' concerns.

I would be most grateful if the Planning Inspectorate team can carefully examine all the correspondence submitted by my constituents, the various local community groups, the Parish Council and local Tree Wardens regarding this highly sensitive project.

I also request that the Planning Inspectorate team visits the area in question with representatives from the Parish, Borough and County Councils, together with local residents, the Esso project team and representatives of Natural England.

You will see that this is an extremely important matter, and I would greatly appreciate it if you can keep me fully informed.

With every good wish,

Michael

Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP
Member of Parliament for Surrey Heath

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