



The Planning Inspectorate

The Planning Act 2008

Application for Development Consent for the Southampton to London Pipeline Project

Case Ref: EN070005

The Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection

Background

The Examining Authority ('the ExA') undertook an unaccompanied site inspection (USI) to support the Examination of an Application for development consent for the proposed Southampton to London Pipeline ('the application') on Thursday 19 March 2020. The inspection commenced at 09:10am and finished at approximately 09:55am.

The site inspection had originally been arranged to be an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) [PD-015] for which the itinerary [EV-027] was published on the 13 March 2020. However, in order to comply with most recent government advice regarding social distancing in response to the current Coronavirus-COVID 19 outbreak, the Planning Inspectorate have advised that where possible all ASI should be undertaken on an unaccompanied basis or through arrangements that would allow Inspectors to access the site in a way that avoids or minimises social contact.

As a consequence and with the agreement of the Applicant, the representatives for St James Senior Boys' School and Surrey County Council, all of whom had indicated they would attend the ASI, the ExA carried out the inspection of the site unaccompanied but were escorted by a member of the school staff purely for the purposes of safeguarding. A list of the locations visited is attached in Annex A.

The site inspection was undertaken in order to view the route of the existing pipeline and the proposed scheme, the proposed alternative route suggested by the school and the surrounding area.

Particulars of the Site Visit

The visit was undertaken by Richard Allen and Jo Dowling.

The visit was undertaken by foot. Weather conditions were overcast, with a temperature circa seven degrees centigrade. Weather conditions were at all times adequate to appreciate long range views.



Annex A: List of locations visited on the Unaccompanied Site Inspection

As the site inspection was undertaken on an unaccompanied basis when visiting the site, the ExA used the following documents to understand the location of the existing pipeline, proposed scheme and alternative route proposed by St James Senior Boys' School:

- General Arrangement Plan (sheet 122) [REP4-005];
- Site Specific Plan – St James' School Revision No. 2.0 (March 2020) [REP6-061];
- St James Senior School, Ashford Esso's Southampton to London Pipeline project – Comments on Applicant's and School's alternative pipeline routes prepared for St James School (January 2020) [REP4-082]; and
- Plans provided by IEAL showing the location of the proposed assembly hall, sports hall and hockey pitch.

The USI started at the entrance to the school from Stanwell Road (B378) where the ExA noted the location of Grade II listed railings and gate lodge and the boundary trees.

The ExA then followed the route of the proposed pipeline turning southeast from the entrance, walking along the edge of the front field to the far corner where it abuts the railway line and lake. The ExA noted the railway embankment; the lake; the outdoor gym equipment; a memorial tree; Ashford Railway Station; the location of Clarendon Primary School on the opposite side of the railway line and the proposed stringing out area within the school playing field.

The ExA then continued along the north eastern and western boundaries of the front field following the route of the proposed pipeline noting the location of the existing tennis courts and cricket nets; the proposed location of a new hockey pitch; the small grove of trees in which was located external seating and more outdoor gym equipment and the main school buildings which includes the original school building and the chapel both of which are Grade II listed. The ExA noted the location of the School chapel and the proximity to the boundary and trees.

The ExA then walked along the route of the proposed pipeline as it skirted the school forecourt and went behind a number of what appeared to be prefabricated buildings. The ExA noted the proposed location of the new assembly hall and the location of the water tank. The ExA then emerged into the north field and walked along the eastern boundary noting the existing bund that runs along the boundary.

The ExA then walked the Scenario 1B Route suggested by St James School as an alternative to the proposed route. The route was walked in reverse. The ExA walked along the northern boundary of the north field before turning south to walk along the western boundary of the school noting the location the



The Planning Inspectorate

Applicant's existing pipeline and the presence of a high-pressure gas pipeline; Brooklands College -Ashford Campus and Thomas Knyvett College. They noted the location of the existing all-weather hockey pitch; the location of the proposed sports hall and buildings B, C and D before coming to the southern boundary of the site where it adjoins Stanwell Road and walking back to the school entrance noting the location of the car park.

Following this the ExA took the opportunity to re-visit Ashford Road to note the protected trees, and Woodthorpe Road to note the potential alternative construction access into Fordbridge Park.