

Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum  
c/o 135 Lovelace Drive  
Pyrford  
Woking, GU22 8RZ

25 April 2018

Esso Petroleum Company, Ltd

FREEPOST SLP PROJECT

Dear Sirs

**Re:SLP Project Consultation 27 March to 30 April 2018**

I write as Chairman of Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum to register the Forum's view of your current routing corridor proposals in the consultation referred to above and ask that this letter be accepted as the formal response from the Forum to your consultation referred to above.

In summary we write to oppose corridors M and Q, for the new aviation fuel pipeline from Fawley Refinery to Hounslow, preferring that corridor J be adopted because all the issues we foresee for a new route have already been resolved satisfactorily for 50 years. Corridor J already enjoys many planning precedents covering almost all the proposed route and in addition the benefit of relationships with the public and landowners along much of its length, over the same period. Any new route would likely take far longer to agree compared to the existing route J and we would expect the cost would be much greater too.

In more detail we'd like to highlight key concerns under three headings; Landscape and Ecology, Heritage and Built Environment.

**1. LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGY**

**Floodplain** – Corridors M and Q approach Pyrford across the floodplain from Old Woking which in itself is understood to be very sensitive to flooding with a plethora of existing drains, ditches, culverts and defences partially protecting the ancient village. New defences have been proposed and we believe that any pipeline works would prove difficult to achieve and should not be attempted in the acreage which is immediately west adjoining our Forum area. Moving east to our area, there is the historic ancient Woking Palace and we see that the top of the corridor breaches the moat of the palace which would not be viable. Next, along comes the key sewage works in Carters Lane and further east to the foot of Pyrford Escarpment below St Nicholas Church. The vital and extensive south Woking floodplain drains into the Hoe Stream and the River Wey and is thereby connected to the floodplain east of Pyrford Road in our area. Both areas are key parts of the Thames Basin flood management plan representing strategic flood holding areas.

Corridors M and Q require the pipeline to cross many critical drains/ditches that direct water away from the floodplain and into the Hoe Stream and the River Wey. If the risk of damage to the floodplain is high and the pipeline can't be re-directed then the floodplain would need to be re-engineered over a very wide area to drain south away from the Hoe Stream. The cost of floodplain re-engineering on the scale required would be very high.

However, even if the cost of 'moving water' and engineering for a pipeline is affordable and viable there is also the critical change to our historic and protected landscape which would inevitably result from pipeline works. This in itself we suggest makes corridors M and Q not suitable and they should be rejected by you.

**Pyrford Escarpment** – Pyrford Escarpment is officially designated Rising Land of Landscape Importance and is a very popular recreation area for not only Pyrford residents but a great many others from all parts of Woking Borough. It represents the most scenic part of Pyrford and offers unique views of Newark Priory set in the water meadows of the floodplain directly in front of the Escarpment and beyond to the North Downs.

**Ancient Woodland** – The western boundary of corridors M and Q intersect The Hanger. The Hanger is officially designated ancient woodland and any damage to the area would be irreparable. It would be a great loss to the community of Pyrford and the character of the Escarpment.

**Flora and Fauna** - Our area includes a number of nationally important habitats such as wet meadows and ancient woodland which enable the area to support a wide variety of different species of animals and plants. The area supports nationally protected species such as badgers, bats and the Great Crested Newt.

Several Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, a local designation to recognize the wildlife value of a site, are found in the Pyrford Neighbourhood Area and the proposed pipeline through corridors M and Q runs close by.

The sites include Roundbridge Farm SNCI (Grid Reference TQ036576), Pyrford Common SNCI (Grid Ref. TQ030590), Warren Farm Wood and Riverside SNCI (Grid Ref. TQ046575), Wheelers Meadow (south) SNCI (Grid Ref. TQ043579), Wheelers Fields SNCI (Grid Ref. TQ042581), River Wey SNCI (including Pyrford Place Lake TQ051583) and Hoe Stream SNCI (Grid Ref. SU967545 –TQ039581).

**Footpaths and Bridleways** – The floodplain and the escarpment are criss-crossed by many footpaths and bridleways that are constantly used by walkers in the area during the week as well as at weekends. Any loss or damage to such amenities due to laying the pipeline in the area would impact a great many people across the whole of Woking and severely impair recreational areas available to the borough.

## 2. HERITAGE

There are 2 conservation areas and 40 listed buildings in Pyrford - see Attachment 1 for details of all 40. Corridors M and Q encompass the whole of one conservation area, a third of the other and 24 out of 40 listed buildings on its journey across the district. The pipeline surely cannot be allowed to impact more than 50% of the heritage in an area previously unaffected. We would expect the existing pipeline in corridor J, built around 50 years ago to have been 'cleared' locally to a significant extent and there is no indication of any new heritage or other constraints.

In more detail corridors M and Q threaten:

**2\*Conservation Areas** – Arriving at the foot of Pyrford Escarpment, corridors M and Q completely envelop the Pyrford Conservation area covering the 12<sup>th</sup> Century church and graveyard and adjacent buildings of considerable importance. It is hard to see how the pipeline could pass west of St Nicholas Church without causing damage to The Hanger

ancient woodland, the church itself, the Old Vicarage, or disturbing the curtilage defined to protect the setting of these heritage assets.

On the eastern side of the corridor the modern graveyard would need to be negotiated via a longer detour round the nose of the escarpment.

Further north towards the modern part of Pyrford, corridors M and Q cut through the lower half of the second conservation area - Aviary Road Conservation Area.

**Grade I 12<sup>th</sup> century St Nicholas Church** – The church itself has seen regular worship for the last 870 years and is one of the oldest in Surrey, built around 1140. It is special in that it stands as a complete building from a single period in time and is picture post card typical of a small rural English church. Contributing to its great charm are the nearby views of Newark Priory, the floodplain with the River Wey behind and the North Downs in the distance.

**9 \* Grade II Listed Buildings** – The following table lists the 9 GII listed building located within corridor M:

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CLASS
Boltons Lane	Bluegate & Weem Cottage	GII
Church Hill	Church Farmhouse	GII
Church Hill	Barn – NW of Church Farmhouse	GII
Church Hill	Lady Place Cottage	GII
Church Hill	Stone Farm	GII
Pyrford Road	Barn – 90yds South of Lees Farmhouse	GII
Pyrford Road	The Old House	GII
Warren Lane	Wheelers Farm	GII
Warren Lane	Wheelers Farm Barn	GII

Included in this group are three properties where the owners have invested a great deal of time and effort conserving the heritage they are living in. In addition, a major restoration project is under way just outside corridors M and Q in Pyrford Court which occupies a prominent position on Pyrford Escarpment. The park and gardens are Grade II listed but an enormous amount of work has been done to restore the house and regenerate the garden and surrounding park and return things to how they were in 1920's when the property was owned by the Guinness family.

These 4 projects demonstrate the commitment of local people to respect and look after the heritage assets of the area and their determination to see very significant improvements.

In addition to the heritage assets listed above there are a unique granary and a cart barn that also lie within corridors M and Q, are very old and are obvious candidates to be graded in any new heritage appraisal of the area. They were locally listed heritage buildings under the old basis of classification

**10\* Buildings of Architectural Significance** – see table below.

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CLASS
Church Hill	1 & 2 Lady Place Farm Cottages	AH
Pyrford Road	1 – 7 Providence Place	AH
Pyrford Road	Thorley Cottage	AH

These three listings cover 10 homes and reinforce the importance of Pyrford's heritage reflecting a rich and varied set of assets.

**4\*Buildings of Townscape Merit** – Listed locally, 4 homes of this type lie within corridor M

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CLASS
Church Hill	The Vicarage	TM
Pyrford Road	Lees Cottages (1 – 3)	TM

### 3. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

**Homes** - After passing through 2 conservation areas and including 24 listed assets within their boundaries, corridors M and Q then track along Bolton's Lane and Pyrford Road. 13 of the listed assets referred to above are included in this section of the corridor and approximately 300 homes in total lie within it and Esso have alarmed many people with correspondence seeking confirmation of land ownership giving rise to thoughts that compulsory purchase orders might come next.

This process could have been handled more diplomatically and lacked plain English commentary as well as not including a help line facility especially for mature residents. This has led to a significant level of disquiet when the route for the pipeline is still to be decided. It may impact financially on residents living adjacent to or within the pipeline corridor which will blight the value of property for some time to come for those who are contemplating a move for whatever reason and we have already received complaints about their concerns. Such issues will be significantly less if Esso choose to route the new pipeline next to the old, in corridor J because we would assume that housing issues were largely settled 50 years ago.

**Roads** - From the definition of corridors M and Q it would seem that Esso would choose to lay the pipeline actually in Bolton's Lane and Pyrford Road. This would minimise disruption to individual homes but play havoc with traffic.

These roads through Pyrford are exceptionally busy for access to motorways, mainline rail stations for commuters and school children attending Pyrford C of E Primary School.

Coldharbour Road is the other main artery in Pyrford and infamous for congestion in the morning and evening rush hours for commuters and school children. Constricting the main alternative routes to Coldharbour Road by denying or limiting traffic flow on both Bolton's Lane and Pyrford Road will exacerbate this situation and put primary school children in greater danger from traffic.

**Utilities** – When MacFarlanes laid the new 33kv electricity grid cable down Pyrford Road last year it took significantly longer than expected because of other services (gas, water, electricity and fibreoptic cable) that were largely unmapped but all using the same stretch of road. It would be anticipated that the problems would be even worse when trying to add another line carrying aviation fuel close to power cables and gas mains.

The location of utility supply in Pyrford has been a source of concern for many years because it seems no reliable location maps are available.

Due to Pyrford's long history and development gradually over many years, infrastructure development has been haphazard and varies greatly from one part to the next. When a

major gas main replacement occurred 2 years ago this proved to be a much more difficult and lengthier task than expected due to lack of location maps in many roads.

Using these roads would therefore seem a high risk strategy that could impact adversely a great many more residents than just in the 300 homes included by the definition of corridors M and Q.

We feel it is necessary for us to briefly mention our adjoining Borough areas West Byfleet and Byfleet where there are also constraints which seem to render routes M and Q non viable.

## **CONCLUSION**

Routing the new pipeline along either corridor M or Q through communities not impacted by the original pipeline and in which there are massive constraints is not acceptable. It would appear to be far better to follow the existing route taking advantage of relationships already established rather than disrupt many other communities on an alternative route which we respectfully maintain is one which we would have thought should not have progressed from the drawing board

We re-iterate that we were dismayed at the lack of notice of your intentions and arranging a presentation in Byfleet giving only a few days notice. Please ensure that you now communicate with us as a key stakeholder.

Please note that should the information available change we reserve the right to write again outside the consultation period to register our views whether they be under the headings above or relate to other topics such as safety or engineering.

Yours faithfully

*Geoff Geaves*

**Geoff Geaves – Chairman, Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum**

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**CC:**

**Jonathan Lord - MP**

**Ray Morgan – CEO, Woking Borough Council**

**Cllr Bittleston – Leader of WBC Council**

**Cllr Graham Chrystie – Pyrford**

**Cllr Ashley Bowes – Pyrford**

**Cllr Rashid Mohammed – Pyrford**

## Attachment 1 – Listed Buildings in Pyrford Neighbourhood

No.	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CLASS
1	Blackdown Avenue	Westerton	AH
2	Boltons Lane	Bluegate & Weem Cottage	GII
3	Broomcroft Drive	Melbury House	AH
4	Church Hill	Church of St Nicholas	GI
5	Church Hill	Church Farmhouse	GII
6	Church Hill	Barn – NW of Church Farmhouse	GII
7	Church Hill	Lady Place Cottage	GII
8	Church Hill	Stone Farm	GII
9	Church Hill	The Vicarage	TM
10	Church Hill	1 & 2 Lady Place Farm Cottages	AH
11	Coldharbour Road	Cold Arbour	AH
12	Engliff Lane	Former Pyrford First School	TM
13	Forest Road	Malmo	TM
14	Hollybank Road	The Thatch	AH
15	Oakcroft Road	The Thatched House	AH
16	Oakcroft Road	Holly Lodge	TM
17	Oakcroft Road	Lee Place	TM
18	Oakcroft Road	Rothbury East	TM
19	Oakcroft Road	The Wickham	TM
20	Oakcroft Road	Pyrford End	TM
21	Oakcroft Road	Green Farm	TM
22	Pyrford Common Road	Pyrford Court Park & Gardens	GII
23	Pyrford Common Road	The Bothy	GII
24	Pyrford Road	Barn – 90yds South of Lees Farmhouse	GII
25	Pyrford Road	The Old House	GII
26	Pyrford Road	Grove Cottage	GII
27	Pyrford Road	Henry VII Cottage	GII
28	Pyrford Road	East Cottage	GII
29	Pyrford Road	Glebe Cottage	GII
30	Pyrford Road	The Garden House	GII
31	Pyrford Road	Abbey Cottage	GII
32	Pyrford Road	1 – 7 Providence Place	AH
33	Pyrford Road	Thorley Cottage	AH
34	Pyrford Road	Lees Cottages (1 – 3)	TM
35	Pyrford Road	Rosebriar	TM
36	Pyrford Road	Elm Cottage	TM
37	Pyrford Road	Toss & Hawthorn Cottage	AH
38	Pyrford Road	Pendennis	TM
39	Warren Lane	Wheelers Farm	GII
40	Warren Lane	Wheelers Farm Barn	GII

Key: GI = Grade I; GII = Grade II; AH = Building of Architectural Significance;  
TM = Building of Townscape Merit (Locally Listed)