



SPELTHORNE JOINT COMMITTEE – 23 March, 2020

AGENDA ITEM 7

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: Mr & Mrs Thorn

Our teenage granddaughter enjoys shopping and going to the cinema and café's but needs access to a changing facility to do so. There is currently a changing place in Marianne's community café in Staines which isn't widely publicised. It is only open Monday to Friday from 10 am to 3 pm. A shopping trip at weekends can't be considered because of lack of a changing facility.

An opportunity was missed by the Borough in the building of the Mobility Centre in Two Rivers Car Park when they completely refused to consider the fitting of the necessary equipment for a changing place.

Our question is:

When is the borough going to install in any of its new projects the provision of a Changing Place and comply with the Equalities Act 2010?

Officer response:

The Borough Council is aware of the Changing Places campaign, and of the great benefit a new facility could bring to those who would otherwise not be in a position to enjoy the retail and leisure offerings in Staines-upon-Thames. Marianne's recently received a grant from the Borough Council which was due in some part in recognising the benefit that it brings to the community through facilities such as this one.

Officers from Spelthorne have previously had discussions with Two Rivers shopping centre (owned by Aberdeen Asset Management) to establish whether they could provide such a facility when they built the Shopmobility unit. Unfortunately they were not able to incorporate this alongside the Shopmobility office and scooters due to the size constraints of the building.

We have also previously had a conversation with representatives of the Elmsleigh Centre, who similarly advised that they did not have sufficient space for such a unit at that time. Having recently acquired the Elmsleigh Centre, the Borough Council will

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be undertaking a thorough review of any under-utilised space to establish whether there is now scope to provide such a facility during the opening hours of the shopping centre.

Question 2- Mr Andrew McLuskey

'Given that the proposed construction by Esso of a new pipeline to Heathrow will cause enormous disruption locally and given too - in relation to their explanation- that the company have been aware of the possibility of the danger of corrosion since the 1980s why have they waited till now to come forward with this proposal, and with a 44% bigger pipeline?'

Officer response:

The following response has been provided by Jacobs, who are implementing this project on behalf of Esso.

Corrosion is a risk to any buried pipeline and we use cathodic protection to reduce corrosion of the pipelines. We regularly inspect the pipelines using Pipeline Inspection Gauges (PIGs) which travel through the pipeline. We also undertake maintenance of the pipelines to ensure that the pipelines remain in good working order, for example replacing short sections. It is not correct to infer that there has been a danger since the 1980s from the existing pipeline, nor is it correct to say that there is a danger from the existing pipeline currently.

The existing pipeline was constructed differently to the other pipelines in our UK network and was originally used to transport a type of oil used by large industrial sites and oil-fired power stations. This type of oil had to be kept above 50°C to enable it to flow through the pipeline. During the 1980s when natural gas became more widely available in the UK, the need for this type of heating fuel dwindled. With the growth of air travel, the pipeline was then used to transport aviation fuel. Because the pipeline was originally used to transport hot fuel it has a shorter design life.

The existing pipeline is working adequately, but the need for inspections and maintenance is increasing. It is just like your car: you reach a point where it makes more sense to replace it. The process to gain permission to replace the pipeline takes around four years with a further two years for construction.

The replacement pipeline will be two inches wider than the existing pipeline. However, the diameter of the first 10 km of the pipeline at the Fawley end of the pipeline, which was replaced in 2001, has a diameter of ten inches and is not being replaced. The diameter of the replacement pipeline is a business decision taken by Esso. Although the increase in diameter from 10" to 12" results in approximately a maximum 44% increase in pipeline volume, it does not mean that the pipeline would transport 44% more fuel. The increased diameter would allow Esso to respond flexibly to both seasonal fluctuations in aviation fuel demand and shorter-term changes in demand, though it is unrelated to the decision on airport expansion in the UK.

Response from Spelthorne Borough Council:

The response on the timeline for the DCO corresponds with our own understanding of how things stand. We are almost at the end of that process and fortunately the public hearings were concluded before gatherings and meetings of that size were cancelled. From Spelthorne's perspective, we have continued to engage in the written elements of the DCO process since the COVID-19 crisis worsened, including responding to further material produced by Esso to meet the Planning Inspectorate's deadlines, providing local authority feedback on the detailed plans for certain elements of the scheme and ensuring the impact on our residents and businesses are mitigated as much as possible.

It is also noted that Spelthorne's MP Kwasi Kwarteng is currently Minister of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. He has been taking a close interest in the project, speaking with those residents who are most likely to be directly affected.

Question 2a (supplementary question requested by the Chairman)

Please can you also advise how the COVID-19 situation is impacting the project and whether revised timelines have been drawn up?

The examination of our application for development consent is a largely written process and as such we are still working to the timeline set out by the Examining Authority. The examination is still due to finish by 9 April, with a decision by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy expected by 9 October 2020. Construction was planned to take place in 2021 and 2022. While we have postponed some utility, environmental and archaeological surveys that were planned to happen in April and May this year, we do not currently anticipate that this will have any significant disruption to our plans longer term.

Response from Spelthorne Borough Council officers:

From Spelthorne's perspective, we have continued to engage in the written elements of the DCO process since the COVID-19 crisis worsened, including responding to further material produced by Esso to meet the Planning Inspectorate's deadlines, providing local authority feedback on the detailed plans for certain elements of the scheme and ensuring the impact on our residents and businesses are mitigated as much as possible.

Question 3: - Mr Andrew McLuskey

In the light of the recent Court of Appeal decision to the effect that Heathrow's expansion plans are unlawful will the Joint Committee press HAL, as a matter of urgency, publicly commit to the immediate withdrawal of its contentious and distressing proposals relating to Stanwell and Stanwell Moor?

Officer response:

At the time of writing, Heathrow Airport Ltd are appealing the judgement and are waiting to hear if their appeal will be fast tracked (9-12 months) or take the usual course (12-18 months). Until then, work has paused on expansion plans. Heathrow Airport Ltd is also considering expansion on a 2-runway basis although that is unlikely to require the same level of land-take as the full expansion proposals.

Whilst both councils are consultees on this proposal, the project itself is one of national significance and its outcome will be determined by central government via its Development Consent Order process as has been outlined in previous responses to questions on this topic.

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, CEMEX confirmed that they would be happy to organise a site visit with the appropriate personnel at CEMEX and this will be reported on in due course once safety restrictions are lifted.