

Southampton to London Pipeline: Preferred corridor announcement



Southampton to London
Pipeline Project

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Preferred corridor announcement

In December 2017, Esso Petroleum Company, Limited (Esso) began to talk publicly about our intention to replace 90km of our 105km aviation fuel pipeline that runs from our Fawley Refinery near Southampton, to our West London Terminal storage facility in Hounslow.

Completed in 1972, the pipeline initially carried a type of oil used for large industrial sites and oil-fired power stations. Since the 1980s it has been used to supply aviation fuel to some of the UK's busiest airports. We are now looking to update this key piece of infrastructure to maintain the supply of aviation fuel for years to come.

- Through early conversations with relevant local authorities, parish councils, and environmental bodies and the work of our team of engineering and environmental experts, we identified a number of potential corridors within which the replacement pipeline could be located.
- We consulted on six of these corridors between 19 March and 30 April 2018.
- We were grateful to receive more than 1,000 responses.
- After the close of the consultation on 30 April, an independent consultation expert collated all consultation responses, which have now been analysed. Our technical data, engineering and environmental experts and the in-depth analysis of the consultation responses have helped us select a preferred pipeline corridor to progress.
- **We have identified corridor option G in the south and corridor option J in the north to progress as our preferred corridor. These corridors perform best when measured against the guiding principles we set for the project. The two options selected are those that most closely follow the existing pipeline. When the two selected options are combined they form the single preferred corridor.**



The corridor options consultation

Since the existing pipeline was built in the late 1960s, Hampshire and Surrey have changed dramatically. The South Downs National Park and many other protected sites have been established alongside the existing pipeline. Communities, new homes and businesses have been created and roads such as the M25 have been opened. This means, that in some areas we can't simply install the replacement pipeline alongside the existing one.

We consulted on six corridors - three to the south of Esso's Alton Pumping Station and three to the north of the Alton Pumping Station.

Public Engagement

As part of our initial consultation, we held 11 public exhibitions near the proposed pipeline corridors, where we met with more than 1,900 residents and interested members of the public. We also had just over 14,000 people visit our project website and over 1,000 consultation responses were received.

To publicise the consultation and the series of local exhibitions, we took out advertising in local publications, shared a press release with local editors to encourage news coverage, sent posters and materials to local deposit points and engaged with local authorities. The project was also featured on BBC TV and local radio news programmes.

Our selection considered which corridor option performed best against our objectives and the guiding principles:

Objectives

- to replace the pipeline from Boorley Green to the West London Terminal storage facility via Alton, Hampshire, to connect to our existing pipeline infrastructure;
- to meet all the relevant planning requirements;
- to maintain fuel supply during replacement; and
- to develop and install a safe, buildable, operational and economically viable pipeline.

Guiding Principles

- if possible, benefit from existing equipment (infrastructure) and relationships with landowners;
- are likely to have better environmental outcomes versus the other options considered, especially relating to internationally and nationally important features along the final route;
- will provide social and economic outcomes of greater benefit compared to the other corridors;
- if possible, pass through less complex or built-up areas;
- achieve compliance with National Policy Statements; and
- can be installed in a timely and realistic manner at reasonable cost.

Our technical data, engineering and environmental experts and the analysis of the consultation responses have helped us to select the preferred pipeline corridor to progress.

Southern Corridors: Key engineering and environmental performance

OPTION D (De-selected)

This was one of the shortest corridors within the South Downs National Park, but it performed less favourably due to the corridor's significantly longer length.

This corridor would have passed close to the community of Ropley, with the possibility of causing some short-term disruption.

This corridor would have passed through or very close to a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 south of Lasham, and included part of the Cuckoo Corner Roman site, which is a Scheduled Monument. It would have posed significant engineering challenges to avoid the chalk grasslands, and there was steeper landscape topography.

OPTION F (De-selected)

This corridor diverged from the existing route southwest of Blackhouse Copse, then headed north to pass around Four Marks and Chawton Park Woods. This allowed the corridor to avoid re-entering the South Downs National Park.

However, this corridor would have passed close to the communities of Ropley, Four Marks and Alton, causing disruption to residents.

We were also aware of planned developments and specific installation challenges in Alton that made this corridor unsuitable to progress.

OPTION G (Preferred)

This corridor was developed to follow the existing aviation fuel pipeline where possible to make best use of existing infrastructure and landowner and stakeholder relationships. The corridor avoids ancient woodland and sensitive features above the existing pipeline, although this corridor re-enters the South Downs National Park.

Its proximity to the existing pipeline means that land used for most of its length is already accustomed to the operation of the existing pipeline.

Southern Corridors: Summary of themes from consultation responses

OPTION D (De-selected)

51 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion opposed or strongly opposed this option. 13 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion favoured or strongly favoured this option*. The main concerns were around the potential negative effects on wildlife and trees, closely followed by installation impact concerns. Biodiversity was a key concern for stakeholders responding to the consultation.

Definitions

De-selected – This term is used to describe a corridor that did not perform as well against the project's objectives and guiding principles, and has now been removed for the second consultation.

Preferred – This term is used to describe a corridor that performed well against the project's objectives and guiding principles and will be progressed for the second consultation.

OPTION F (De-selected)

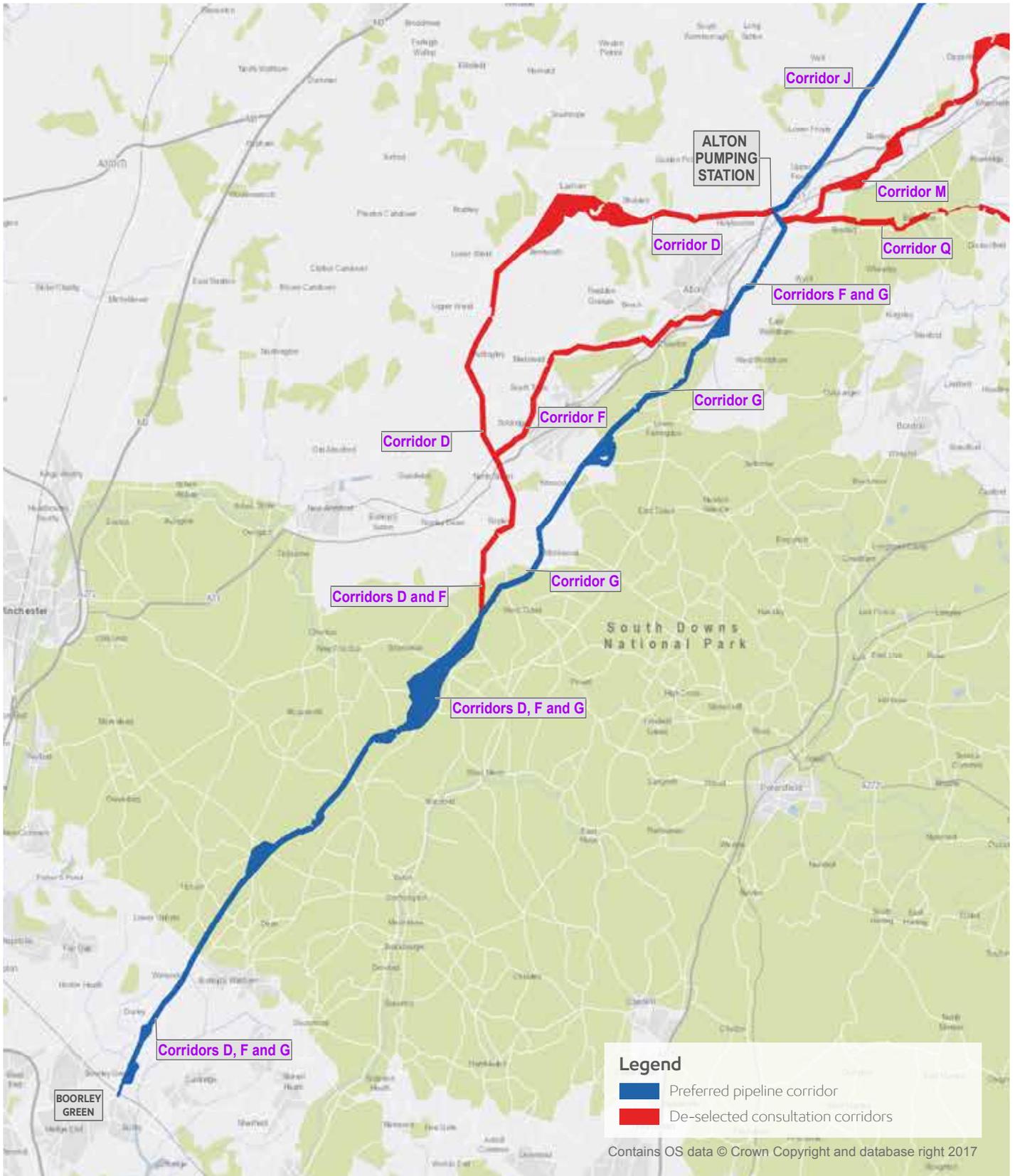
56 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion opposed or strongly opposed this option. 9 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion favoured or strongly favoured this option*. Similar to option D, there were key concerns around potential natural impacts and concerns around installation impacts – particularly given the planned development in this area. People also expressed concern about the landscape and visual impact of the project.

OPTION G (Preferred)

26 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion opposed or strongly opposed this option. 50 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion favoured or strongly favoured this option*. The key concern here was about installation impacts, similar to the other corridors, and concerns over noise, transport and access during installation. A high number of respondents said that the existing landowner relationships made this preferable to the alternative corridors consulted upon compared to the other options.

*Percentage based on those who responded to questions 1a, 2a and 3a within the consultation response form.





Northern Corridors: Key engineering and environmental performance

OPTION J (Preferred)

This is the shortest northern corridor and makes best use of existing infrastructure and relationships with landowners. This corridor has the least streetworks compared to other corridors consulted upon. This corridor avoids the South Downs National Park, although it passes through national and European designated nature conservation sites.

This corridor passes through several residential areas including Farnborough, Frimley, Lightwater, Chertsey and Ashford, and communities lying within or near to the corridor may face short-term disruption during installation.

OPTION M (De-selected)

This corridor was developed to avoid the South Downs National Park, that Option Q passed through.

This corridor avoided many of the residential areas crossed by Option J such as Farnborough, Frimley and Lightwater, but travelled through the north of Farnham. Farnham is a historic market town and presented significant engineering challenges due to the width of the roads and the volume of traffic.

This corridor did not follow the existing pipeline and there may have been a greater risk of disturbing buried archaeological remains.

OPTION Q (De-selected)

This corridor was developed to avoid national and European designated nature conservation sites, as well as to avoid the community of Farnham that Option M passes through. It passed through the communities of Pryford and Byfleet, which would have caused short-term disruption to residents.

However, the corridor passed through both the South Downs National Park and Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It also intersected with a large area of ancient woodland at Alice Holt Forest. This forest is a high value community and environmental asset.

Northern Corridors: Summary of themes from consultation responses

OPTION J (Preferred)

23 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion opposed or strongly opposed this option. 70 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion favoured or strongly favoured this option*. The main concerns cited by respondents were around installation impacts and impacts such as land use, health and noise.

OPTION M (De-selected)

89 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion opposed or strongly opposed it. 8 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion favoured or strongly favoured this option*. The main concerns were around installation and the social and economic impacts.

OPTION Q (De-selected)

83 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion opposed or strongly opposed it. 10 per cent of respondents who expressed an opinion favoured or strongly favoured this option*. Respondents also expressed the same concerns here over installation and social and economic impacts, but also considered that nature and landscape in the area could be damaged.

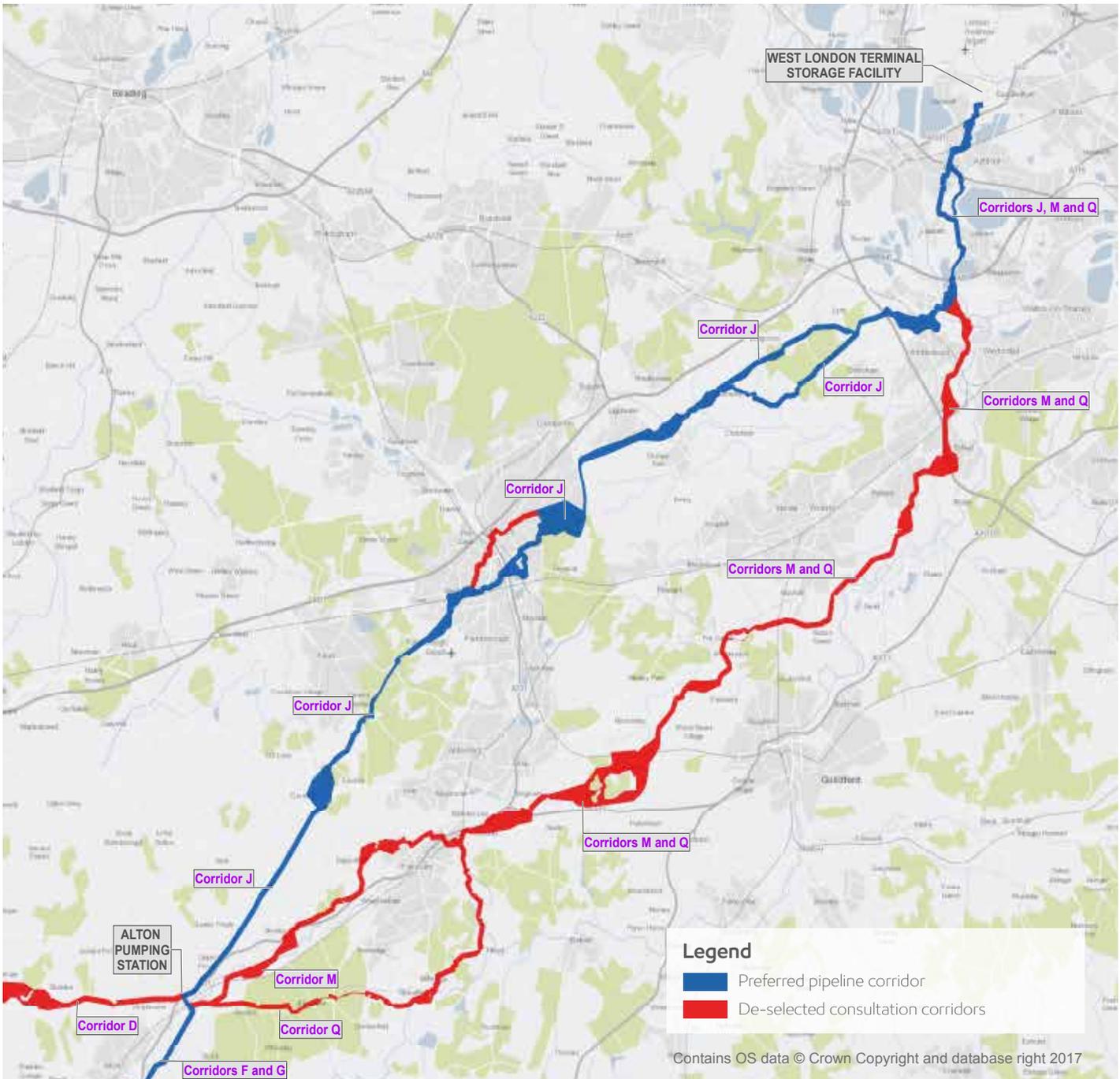
Definitions

De-selected – This term is used to describe a corridor that did not perform as well against the project's objectives and guiding principles, and has now been removed for the second consultation.

Preferred – This term is used to describe a corridor that performed well against the project's objectives and guiding principles and will be progressed for the second consultation.

*Percentage based on those who responded to questions 4a, 5a and 6a within the consultation response form.





How the preferred corridor was selected

The preferred corridor was selected following a detailed and thorough review by the project's senior management team. The team included expert support from our environmental, engineering and planning teams. The team was presented with the independent report on the consultation findings which included comments relating to the selection of a corridor.

Southern Section: Selection of Option G as the preferred corridor between Boorley Green and Alton

All southern corridors within the corridor consultation had different positive and negative points when judged against the project objectives and guiding principles. The first 20km for Options D, F and G, between Boorley Green and West Tisted, are the same. From West Tisted, the three options diverge until they meet again at the Esso Alton Pumping Station. The responses received during the consultation provided helpful insights into the local communities' views, both positive and negative. Corridor G was favoured by a large proportion of respondents, although, the individuals and organisations who took part in the consultation prioritised different elements. We have considered this consultation feedback, along with our technical data and the views of our engineering and environmental experts, to arrive at our decision of Option G as the preferred corridor.

- Option D performed less strongly due to its significantly longer length – 22.5km from the point the corridors diverge (Option F being around 19.9km and Option G being around 17.8km). Compared to Options G and F, this corridor had greater engineering and installation challenges, such as the hilly landscape and groundwater Source Protection Zones near Lasham. It also had additional crossings over the Watercress railway line and A31 road. Respondents highlighted these issues, as well as impacts on wildlife and the potential issues of installing in an area where many roads are narrow country lanes.

When compared to Option G, there was less potential to benefit from existing infrastructure and landowner relationships, as once it diverged from the other two corridors it did not follow any existing pipelines. Option D also included part of the Cuckoo Corner Roman site, a scheduled monument.

For these reasons, Option D was de-selected.



- Option F performed less strongly due to the possibility of greater disruption to communities such as Alton and needing additional crossings over the Watercress railway line and A31 road. This option also performed less strongly when compared to Options D and G due to its proximity to areas of woodland, such as Chawton Wood. In addition, during the consultation, we also received new information that identified a priority habitat for hydrology in this area. Concerns were also raised by respondents about maintaining easy access to Alton Community Hospital and the impact on growing local communities during installation of the pipeline.

For these reasons, Option F was de-selected.

- Option G performed more strongly than Options D and F. There was a strong representation from the consultation responses that the replacement pipeline should be located near to the existing pipeline. Key reasons given were the positive existing relationships with landowners and the opportunity to use land and land access routes along the existing pipeline.

Option G is significantly shorter from the point the corridor options diverge and there are fewer engineering challenges in this corridor. It also has a lower risk of disruption to residential areas such as Alton and Ropley, less potential to affect cultural heritage assets and above and below groundwater systems.

Unlike Options D and F, Corridor G does re-enter approximately 5km of the South Downs National Park to the south of Alton. When installation is complete and the land has been reinstated, where possible, to its previous state, we believe there would be no permanent effect on the special qualities of the park, such as the natural

beauty of the landscape and countryside.

We are committed to continue working closely with the South Downs National Park Authority to develop the route. This will include exploring mitigation techniques and looking for opportunities for enhancing the local environment. This will support us in ensuring that short or medium term effects on the special qualities of the park are avoided or reduced.

Option G is preferable to the community-related impacts and engineering challenges associated with Options D and F.

For these reasons, Option G was selected as the preferred corridor.

How the preferred corridor was selected (continued)

Northern Section: Selection of Option J as the preferred corridor between Alton and the West London Terminal storage facility in Hounslow

All northern corridors within the corridor consultation had different positive and negative points when judged against the project objectives and guiding principles. Corridor J was favoured by most respondents. However, the individuals and organisations who took part in the consultation prioritised different elements. We have considered the consultation feedback along with our technical data and the views of our engineering and environmental experts, to arrive at our selection of Option J as the preferred corridor.

- Options M and Q both passed through Pyrford and Byfleet and these areas presented significant engineering and installation challenges. These include crossing the River Wey and the high water table in this area that results in frequent flooding. Consultation responses strongly highlighted the rich cultural and historical heritage in these areas. There was a lower potential for benefiting from existing infrastructure and landowner relationships. Consultation responses showed that many respondents who opposed Options M and Q felt the replacement should, where possible, follow the existing pipeline.
- Option M performed less strongly due to its path through the historic town of Farnham. Many consultation responses highlighted the community, heritage and business impacts of the route passing through Farnham. These themes included the engineering challenges of the narrow roads, archaeology around Farnham Park, the number of listed buildings and the planned redevelopment of the town centre (starting in August 2018). The traffic impact of installation was likely to be greater in Farnham, when compared to other areas, due to the relatively narrow roads and the volume of traffic.

- Option Q performed less strongly due to the potential impact on Alice Holt Forest (part of the South Downs National Park). The forest was highlighted by many in the consultation responses as being an important community and environmental asset. It also crossed about 5.2km of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

For these reasons, Options M and Q were de-selected.

- Option J performed more strongly overall than Options M and Q when considered in the round. There was a strong representation from respondents that the replacement pipeline should be located near to the existing pipeline, due to existing positive relationships with landowners and the opportunity to use land and land access routes along the existing pipeline. Option J was favoured due to its avoidance of Farnham, Alice Holt Forest, the River Wey and high water table in that area. Option J passes through or near more designated nature conservation sites, but the team concluded that careful route development and appropriate design and mitigation measures would reduce the risk of adverse effects on these sites. There was a common theme raised about the impact on communities and traffic during installation, especially around the Farnborough and Frimley areas, but we are working to reduce these potential impacts through careful route design and planning of the installation of the pipeline.

For these reasons, Option J was selected as the preferred corridor.





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How the preferred corridor was selected (continued)

Corridor J sub-options

Following the selection of Corridor Option J, we further considered the strong and reasoned feedback from consultees relating to the sub-options in Frimley, Chobham Common and Queen Mary Reservoir.

The corridor consultation gave a clear steer that the sub-options that deviate away from the existing pipeline are all unfavourable to consultees.

In response, our favoured sub-options are those closest to the existing pipeline, and we will prioritise the technical development of route options in these areas.

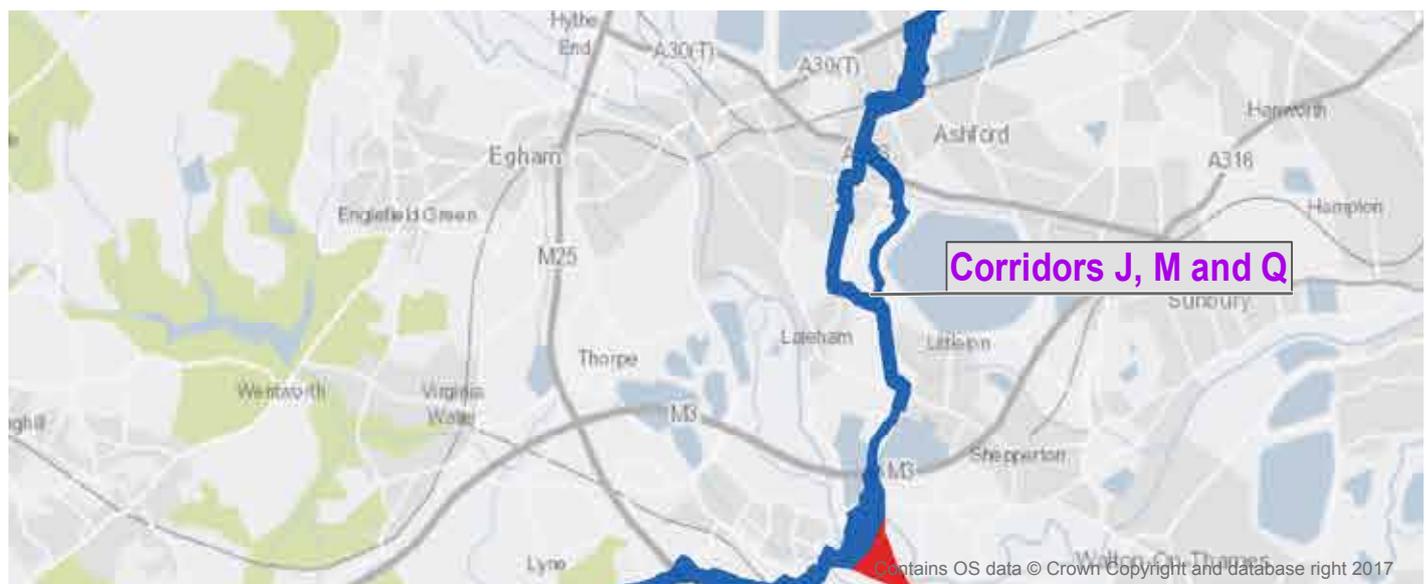
The Frimley Park Hospital sub-option has been de-selected due to the potential impact on the hospital, schools and local roads during installation. Following recent studies, we are confident that the technical challenges of a route passing through, or near to, the Frimley Hatches and Farnborough Station can be managed appropriately.

At this stage, we know there are potential technical challenges in Chobham Common and Queen Mary Reservoir that require further work, such as surveys and conversations with landowners, which we need more time to complete. Summaries of the issues for each are set out below.:

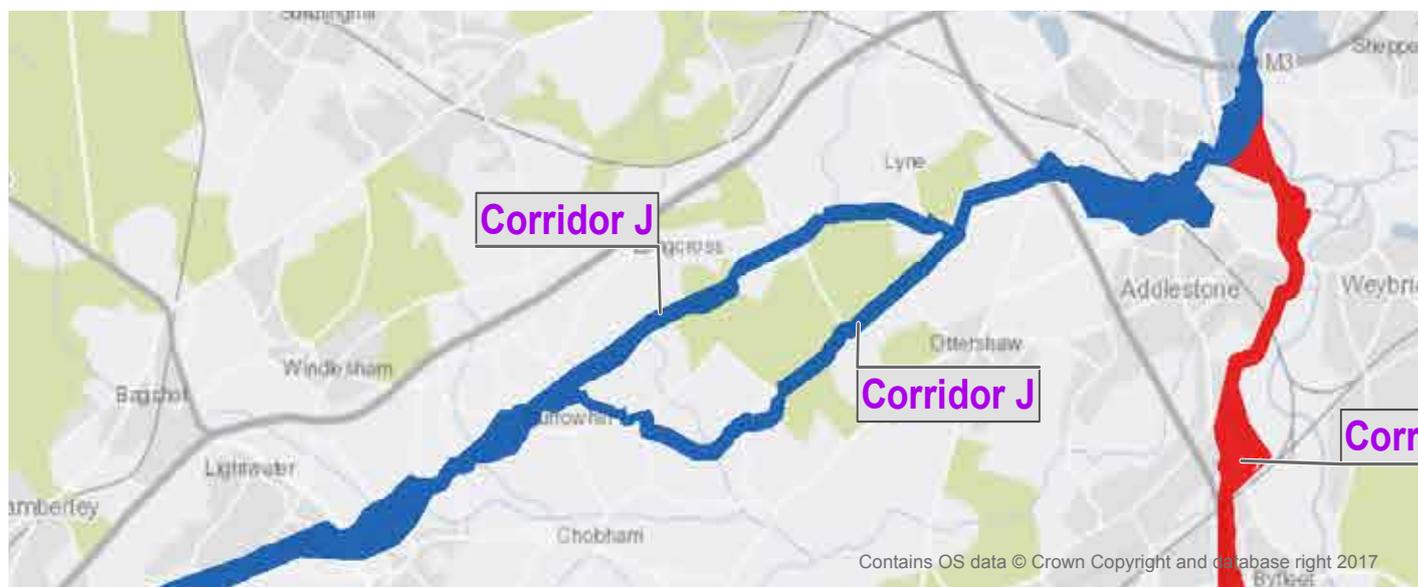
- Chobham Common. Extra care is needed in assessing the underground water system in this area, which supplies several sensitive habitats. We wish to carry out further investigation to gain greater confidence that an acceptable route exists through the Common before de-selecting the sub-option that passes around the Common.
- Queen Mary Reservoir. The pipeline currently passes between the reservoir and the Queen Mary Quarry. Now that we have selected a preferred corridor, we can undertake more detailed work to understand the technical challenges of installing a pipeline near the reservoir's walls and an active quarry. We also need to speak with a local gas company who maintain a high-pressure gas main in this area. Once we are able to confirm that there is an acceptable route in this area, we hope to de-select the Laleham sub-option that passes through residential communities.

We will continue to prioritise the technical work on these two sub-options and will be providing an update this summer, via our website and newsletter, when we release an initial working route for the pipeline.

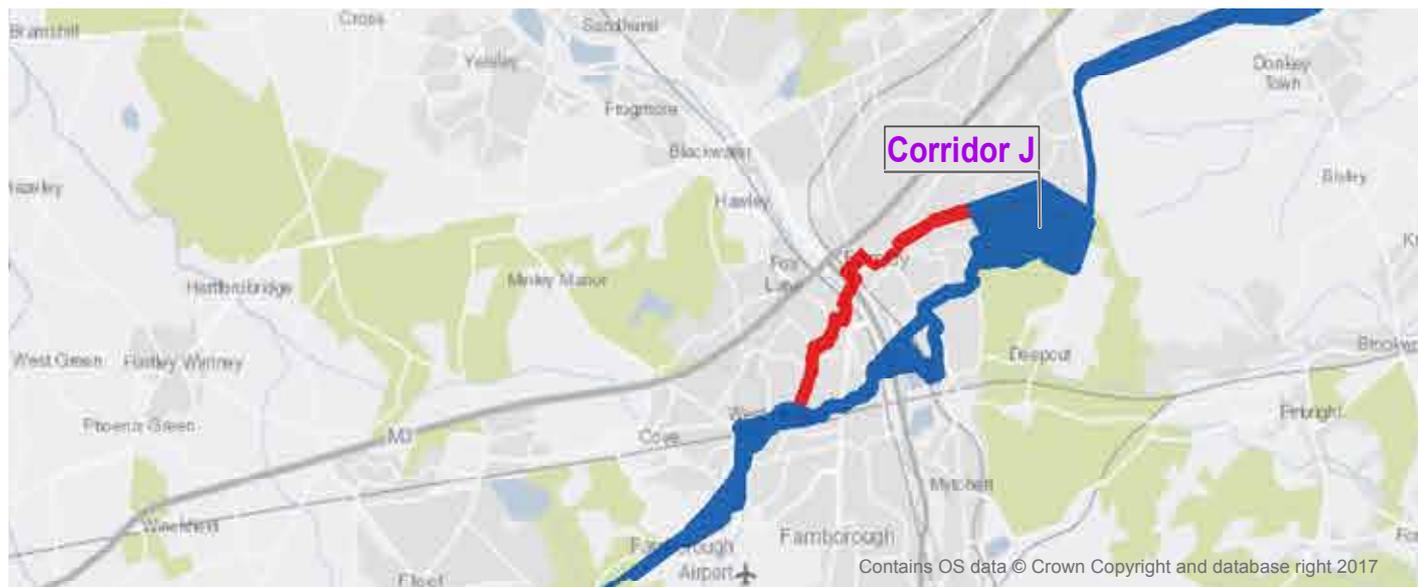
Queen Mary Reservoir sub-options



Chobham Common sub-options



Frimley sub-options



Key themes raised in the consultation responses

The aim of the initial consultation was to receive views from communities and stakeholders on which corridor to progress. However, we also received information relevant to routes within the potential corridors. Now we have a preferred corridor, we wanted to incorporate some of the early route feedback now.

What you said	What we did
Frimley Park Hospital sub-option	We will be removing this sub-option that passes the hospital at this stage due to concerns around traffic management in this busy area and obstructing access to emergency services.
Chobham Common sub-option	We have noted the feedback from the corridor options consultation about this sub-option. Respondents were concerned about the potential effect on Chobham residents and properties. More technical work needs to be completed before we can remove this sub-option.
Reservoir sub-option	We have noted the feedback from the corridor options consultation about this sub-option. Respondents were concerned about traffic management in Laleham and a limited number of feasible routes in this area. More technical work needs to be completed before we can remove this sub-option.
Working within designated areas and South Downs National Park	We are working with statutory and expert environmental organisations to develop our assessment and potential mitigation in these areas. Our aim is to carefully design the pipeline to avoid or reduce environmental impacts.
Noise and air quality in residential areas	Once we have developed an initial working route we will start assessing the potential impacts of noise and on air quality during installation. This work is just starting and the results will be made available to everyone during the second consultation in autumn 2018.
The impact on communities due to installation causing traffic disruption	Traffic management will be put in place during installation, and we will be consulting with local communities in autumn 2018 to understand local impacts.
Archaeological sites may be disturbed where the route does not follow the existing alignment	We will be undertaking archaeological investigations before and during installation. More information on our approach to protecting archaeological remains will be available in autumn 2018.
The reinstatement of land following installation	Once the pipeline installation is complete, the land will, where possible, be reinstated to its former state.



Next steps

We recognise the importance of individuals, communities, representatives and organisations contributing to the development of our proposals. This is why we committed to undertaking two consultations and we are grateful for all the responses we have received during the first consultation to select a preferred corridor.

Now that we have selected a preferred corridor, we will develop the route for the pipeline and aim to release an initial working route in summer 2018.

Over the summer of 2018, we will further refine the initial working route into the preferred route.

In autumn 2018, we will publish and consult on the preferred route. This will provide an opportunity for anyone who wishes to take part to comment on the project.

Following this second consultation, we will then submit our formal application for permission to install the replacement pipeline. The permission is called a Development Consent Order (often referred to as a 'DCO').



Contact us

info@slpproject.co.uk

07925 068 905

ESSO Petroleum Company, Limited Registered in England No. 26538 Registered Office: Ermyn House, Ermyn Way, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8UX

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