



North Warwickshire  
Borough Council

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This matter is being dealt with by  
:  
Direct Dial : (01827)  
Your ref :  
Our ref : PRE/2025/0106  
  
Date : 29 July 2026

Dear Sirs

**2017 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations  
Request for a Screening Opinion  
Underground Water Pipeline – Oldbury to Meriden**

I refer to your email of 25 July being a request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 (1) of the above Regulations in respect of the above development proposal. I can confirm that I have sufficient information as attached to that email, for an Opinion to be made without recourse to Regulation 6 (5).

The proposal is not covered by Schedule One of the Regulations, but I agree that it could well be taken to be within Category 10 (I) of Schedule 2, given that the area covered by the proposal is over the threshold set out in that Category. As such it is necessary to assess whether there are likely to be significant environmental effects arising from the proposal. In making this assessment, I am drawn to Schedule 3 of the Regulations as well as to the relevant paragraphs of the Planning Practice Guidance.

In respect of the characteristics of the development, whilst I note that the length of the pipeline is significant, the “working” width either side of the proposed route is far more limited in extent. So, although the proposal would affect several parts of the Borough, the actual impact would be far more limited. You note a similar project – known as the Grand Union Canal Transfer – which is also proposed for the Borough, but this is not geographically linked or operationally connected to your proposal and thus there would be no need to assess any cumulative impacts arising from the combination of these two projects. Clearly this is an engineering operation and thus the ground and soil will be disturbed, but your proposal is to reinstate the land and soils and not to remove surplus material wherever possible. As such disturbance to agricultural land is likely to be local in extent and impacts to on-going activity, land drainage and bio-diversity would appear to be localised. However where the pipeline is not under agricultural land, the impacts are likely to be more significant. Contaminated land may well be discovered in the process, but recognised and identified procedures and precautions should be able to manage any matters arising. Given the location of the route and the land through which it is to run, there is unlikely to be a risk of significant pollution or nuisance. In the event that there is, then that is likely to be local or site-specific, rather than affecting the whole project and as above, recognised procedures should be able to be undertaken. Given this background, the characteristics of the proposal are unlikely to give rise to major accidents and the risks to human health are considered to be low.

In respect of the location of the development, the route is substantially through agricultural land and as already indicated, that land can be re-instated. Where not, then appropriate mitigation measures can be implemented with appropriate preliminary survey work needed to establish a base-line. Of particular interest will be the impact on Ancient Woodlands at Birchley Hays Wood and Seven Foot Wood. These are local impacts rather than affecting the whole route, but given the designations, bespoke Assessments will need to be undertaken in consultation with both Natural England and the Woodlands Trust. Alternative routes and the impact of these on the whole route should also be considered. The proposed route may well affect extant or future planning permissions, but any conflicts will need to be resolved between the relevant parties. Given the rural nature of the route, there will also be an impact on wildlife throughout the construction period. Appropriate mitigation measures will be needed – particularly in respect of any re-location proposals, temporary measures for mammal and reptile movements and retention of “green” and “blue” corridors. It is noted that the construction periods are likely to be short and this will be of benefit. The route is understood to have considerable archaeological interest, and thus stand-alone assessments will be needed for those areas in which there will be an interest. Early investigation and evaluation should enable alternatives for any route diversions to be considered.

In respect of the characteristics of potential impacts, then there are unlikely to be significant issues in respect of the resident population given its route avoids built-up areas. Any impacts are likely to be temporary and confined to the construction period, infrequent and not lasting for long periods. They are also likely to be ones that are understood, with recognised procedures in place to mitigate, or to remove the impact.

In drawing all of these matters together, it is considered that the proposal would not be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects and that it would not therefore comprise EIA development for the purposes of the 2017 Regulations. Any effects are likely to be local in extent and “bespoke” in nature. As such, individual standalone assessments are strongly recommended to accompany any forthcoming planning application. This letter can therefore be taken to be the Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 (6) of the 2017 Regulations.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Brown'.

Jeff Brown  
Head of Development Control