OBJECTION TO PROPOSED LOCATION OF SOUTHERN WATER COMPOUND

There are many reasons to object to the plans by Southern Water (SW) to locate a large compound in Highbridge Road, Colden Common. The 'consultation' process was derisory and misleading (it didn't even mention that there would be two compounds in the village). They have not, for example, made public their environmental assessment of the impact the project would have on the River Itchen. Together with SW's unwillingness to share all but very vague information about its choices or the evidence behind them, it creates the suspicion of a rushed process being forced through.

We would, however, like to concentrate on the human aspect. We do so as residents who live sufficiently distant from the proposed compound that we would not be directly affected by it, apart from the traffic implications.

The site is adjacent or near to approximately twenty five homes, where young families and retired people live. SW have discounted without adequate explanation other potential locations in the vicinity that would have significantly less impact on where people live. Have SW considered how their choice might affect the residents concerned, and does it even worry them? We very much doubt it since SW have indicated that they will not even discuss financial compensation until the work is completed, probably after five years or more.

These households will have to endure living near an industrial site for five years, if not longer since these projects tend to overrun. They face the prospect of noise from months of heavy drilling, sometimes through the night seven days a week. There would be light pollution and heavy lorry traffic, sometimes as many as 277 return journeys (i.e. 544 traffic movements) in twenty four hours. No one knows whether this will affect the foundations of these properties. But we do know that their homes would be unsellable at anything like the prices they would previously have expected, and several would therefore have negative equity.

It does not take an expert to realise that this disruption could have enormous mental health implications, overshadowing every aspect of residents' existence. It would put a big strain on everyone concerned, making normal family life virtually impossible. And it is worth noting that for some their homes are also their offices.

It defies belief that SW have so far been unwilling to sit down with the affected householders to discuss their needs, the compensation that they could expect and ways to mitigate the extreme nuisance that would be caused by the proposed compound. Not that anything could make up for the disruption that this work would cause our local community. Above all, we do not believe this to be the optimal location.

We would like SW to respond to these observations.

Mark and Sally Baylis, [redacted]