

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Longfield Solar Farm](#)
Subject: EN010118 - Longfield Solar Farm
Date: 29 November 2022 10:06:37

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for seeking the Forestry Commission's advice about the impacts that this application may have. As a non-statutory consultee, the Forestry Commission is pleased to provide you with the information below, which may be helpful when you consider the application. The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report has seven ancient woodlands within of immediately adjacent to the study area that are of particular concern to the Forestry Commission. They are;

Brickhouse Wood, Hookley Wood, Sandy Wood, Scarlett's Wood, Ringer's Wood, Porters Wood, which is adjacent to Toppinghoehall Wood (north), and Toppinghoehall Wood (south).

Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable. They have great value because they have a long history of woodland cover, great biodiversity and often many heritage features that remain undisturbed. This applies equally to Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

It is Government policy to refuse development that will result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland, unless "*there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists*" (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 175).

We refer you to further technical information set out in Natural England and Forestry Commission's [Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland](#) – plus supporting [Assessment Guide and Case Decisions](#).

Please note that the Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland on GOV.UK includes the recommendation of the incorporation of buffer zones around ancient woodlands to avoid direct or indirect damage to the woodland. The Standing Advice states ;

'Use of buffer zones

A buffer zone's purpose is to protect ancient woodland and individual ancient or veteran trees. The size and type of buffer zone should vary depending on the scale, type, and impact of the development.

For ancient woodlands, you should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage. Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, you are likely to need a larger buffer zone. For example, the effect of air pollution from development that results in a significant increase in traffic.

A buffer zone around an ancient or veteran tree should be at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree. The buffer zone should be 5m from the edge of the tree's canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree's diameter.

Where possible, a buffer zone should:

- contribute to wider ecological networks
- be part of the green infrastructure of the area

It should consist of semi-natural habitats such as:

- woodland
- a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland planting

You should plant buffer zones with local and appropriate native species.

You should consider if access is appropriate and can allow access to buffer zones if the habitat is not harmed by trampling.

You should avoid including gardens in buffer zones.

You should avoid sustainable drainage schemes unless:

- they respect root protection areas
- any change to the water table does not adversely affect ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees'

With regard to on-site cabling, both below and above ground, it is recommended that its installation avoids tunneling under or crossing through any of the ancient woodland. Similarly, we would recommend that access to sites avoids the ancient woodlands and their buffer zones. As a Non-Ministerial Government Department, we provide no opinion supporting or objecting to an application. Rather we are including information on the potential impact that the proposed development would have on the ancient woodland.

These comments are based upon information available to us through a desk study of the case, including the [Ancient Woodland Inventory](#) (maintained by Natural England), which can be viewed on the [MAGIC Map Browser](#), and our general local knowledge of the area. If the planning authority takes the decision to approve this application, we may be able to give further support in developing appropriate conditions in relation to woodland management mitigation or compensation measures. Please note however that the Standing Advice states that "*Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees are irreplaceable. Consequently, you should not consider proposed compensation measures as part of your assessment of the merits of the development proposal.*"

We hope these comments are helpful to you. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Local Partnership Advisor
East & East Midlands



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