

Our ref: Oaklands Solar Farm

The Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol, BS1 6PN

SUBMITTED ONLINE ONLY

30 September 2024

Dear Sir,

Application by Oaklands Farm Solar Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for Oaklands Farm Solar Park

Interested Party Reference Number 20047645

Thank you for giving the National Forest Company (NFC) the opportunity to respond to the Examining Authority's second written questions, asking whether the NFC has remaining concerns and how these might be addressed.

The NFC has remaining concerns with the proposal relating to the lack of woodland planting and landscaping and the impact of the development on habitat connectivity. For a development of over 10hectares, the NFC would be anticipating at least 30% of the site to be woodland planting and landscaping to contribute to the creation of the Forest. This National Forest planting would be in addition to any mitigation planting for lost trees/woodlands. The illustrative landscape strategy shows significantly less woodland planting and landscaping than this. Additionally, the scale of the development will form a barrier to habitat connectivity.

Our concerns were detailed in our response dated 6 August 2024, and we would ask you to continue to consider this response. It remains our opinion that a development of this scale should recognise and acknowledge the site's location by making a significant contribution to the creation of the National Forest. To do this and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework, The National Forest Strategy and Policy INF8 of the Local Plan, the illustrative landscape strategy should be amended to deliver significantly more woodland planting and ensure that any barrier to habitat

connectivity is minimised. Tree planting should be allowed to realise its potential rather than being restricted by the conflict between shading and the solar panels and should be located in areas where the planting offers the highest benefits to both nature and people as shown on a map appended to our previous response.

Yours faithfully



Eilish Gardner
Green Infrastructure and Planning Officer
Email: planning@nationalforest.org