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**Area Director**  
Craig Harrison

## **VIA EMAIL ONLY**

Your Ref: EN070005  
Our Ref: 23/NSIP Southampton to London Pipeline  
Date: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Dear Planning Inspectorate

### **NSIP: Southampton to London Pipeline Project by Esso Petroleum Company**

The Forestry Commission is the Government expert on forestry & woodland and a statutory consultee (as defined by Schedule 1 of The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms And Procedures) Regulations 2009) for major infrastructure (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)) that are likely to affect the protection or expansion of forests and woodlands (Planning Act 2008) . The Forestry Commission neither supports nor objects to development applications. Our role is to provide factual advice on forestry and woodland matters.

The purpose of this representation is to provide an update on matters outstanding with our discussions with the applicant's representatives.

Following a meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 an approach was agreed to produce a Statement Of Common Ground for the project. This process has started and it is hoped that this will be concluded in advance of the Examination.

There are two main issues that need to be concluded.

#### **Work within 15m of ancient woodland:**

Clarification is required on the methodology for work within the tree root zone of the ancient woodland boundary. This occurs in a number of locations along the route of the pipeline. Whilst the pipe will be outside the Ancient woodland clarity is needed on the proposals as the standing advice from the Forestry Commission and Natural England is that there should be a 15m buffer to protect roots to ensure no loss or deterioration of the ancient woodland. The Forestry Commission will undertake further conversations with the applicant and Natural England on this matter and what methodology would be used.

#### **Veteran Trees:**

Veteran and Ancient trees can be singular or in groups and have the potential to be

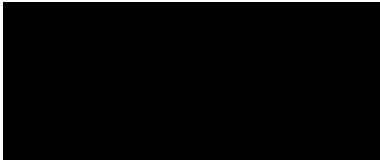
within hedgerows as well as within fields and woodland.

Clarification is required on the surveying and methodology for work within the tree root zones of these trees. The standing advice from the Forestry Commission and Natural England is that 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.

The Forestry Commission would appreciate further conversations with the applicant and Natural England on this matter and what methodology would be used.

We hope to have them finalised through the Statement of Common Ground before commencement of the Examination.

Yours sincerely



Richard Pearce  
Forestry Commission