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

11th October 2019

Dear Mr Cullingford,

Reference: M42 Junction 6 Improvements - The Examining Authority's third written questions and requests for information (ExQ3)

The Woodland Trust would like to take the opportunity to respond to the question posed by the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the M42 Junction 6 Improvements Development Consent Order application.

ExQ3.5.5: Mitigation and monitoring: Ancient Woodland - The ExA would welcome comments from Natural England, The Woodland Trust and SMBC on the Applicant's Soil Survey Report [REP4-007] submitted at Deadline 4.

The Woodland Trust's comments on the Soil Survey Report submitted by the applicant are as follows:

Section 4 (Soil suitability and resources): The Trust acknowledges the applicant's attempt to replicate the soil qualities of the donor and receptor sites. However, we hold concerns with regards to the nutrient content of the receptor site, as this is likely to encourage the growth of more ruderal species that are likely to out-compete the more sensitive, ancient woodland flora.

Section 5 (Soil Management): With reference to the soil removal method, the Trust is not clear on whether the soil will be scraped from the surface or removed as tulves. The process of scraping is likely to significantly disturb the soil profile of the ancient woodland soil, as the method often creates bare areas of ground that are more suitable to the establishment of ruderal species[1]. The Trust also recommends that the soil is translocated in autumn/winter to limit disturbance.

If you have any questions regarding the Woodland Trust's answers to the above, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Nicole Hillier
Campaigner – Woods under Threat

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[1] L Ryan, 2013: Translocation and Ancient Woodland. The Woodland Trust – pg. 6.