



The Woodland Trust  
Kempton Way  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
NG31 6LL

Telephone  
01476 581111

Facsimile  
01476 590808

Website  
woodlandtrust.org.uk

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

25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Reference: The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ3)**

Dear Mr Gleeson,

The Woodland Trust would like to take the opportunity to respond to the question posed by the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Ellingham consent order application. The Trust's response is as follows:

**GEN.3.10: The revised outline CEMP [REP6-025] has introduced a new measure ExA:S-L101 concerning potential veteran trees. Further detail about the compensation and mitigation for veteran trees is provided in Appendix A – Impacts to Ancient and Veteran Trees [REP6-045].**

**IPs, especially those named, are asked for their views on Appendix A and measure ExA:S-L101.**

We have reviewed the measures proposed in ExA:S-L101, and we note that the applicants have outlined protection for veteran trees in line with the BS 5837:2012. However, any veteran specimens within influence of the scheme should be afforded an un-encroached Root Protection Area (RPA) of 15 times the stem diameter or 5 metres beyond the canopy (if that's greater) in line with Natural England's Standing Advice<sup>1</sup>.

**REP6-045 - Applicant's Written summaries of Oral Submissions to Hearings - Appendix A Impacts to Ancient and Veteran Trees**

We welcome the retention of T91, T494, T682 and T690, four veteran trees previously outlined for removal (paragraph 1.3.8), but we would like to maintain our concerns with regards to the loss of T688. We refer to our position above on the protection of veteran trees during construction of the proposals. We also note the applicant's revision of G21 as non-veteran specimens (paragraph 1.3.8), but would ask that any trees within the group displaying veteran characteristics are retained and protected as outlined above.

**1.4 Compensation and mitigation for veteran trees**

As highlighted within our Deadline 5 Submission [REP5-050], the Woodland Trust advocates a compensatory replanting ratio of 30:1 to account for the loss of irreplaceable habitats,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

including veteran trees. Whilst we acknowledge that there is no set ratio for the loss of ancient woods and trees (paragraph 1.4.2), Natural England released a statement in February 2020 detailing its position on ancient woodland and HS2 Phase 2a and stated the following in respect of compensation ratios:

*“In Natural England’s 2016 review of HS2’s methodology for calculating no net loss of biodiversity, we advised that for HS2, where ancient woodland is to be replaced by new woods, an area based ratio of 30:1 is appropriate. If that is legally impracticable to implement for Phase 1, it should be implemented for Phase 2. Natural England strongly believes that the level of compensation needs to be commensurate with the irreplaceable nature of the habitat and with the high standards expected from any government-led scheme that has a significant environmental footprint.”*

While we note that the above statement refers to ancient woodland specifically, Natural England outlines that compensation needs to be commensurate to the irreplaceable nature of the habitat and therefore we consider that the appropriate compensatory replanting ratio for veteran trees should be 30:1.

With regards to translocation of veteran trees, our position is that this process should be considered as a last resort solution to save trees which are otherwise approved to be felled. This method should not be considered as a viable alternative to the protection, management and retention of veteran trees in their original location. The translocation of veteran trees is a highly risky method that has a very low chance of ensuring the continued survival of such trees – it is a process much more suited to young trees.

We also note the applicant’s assertion that there will be no net loss of biodiversity (paragraph 1.4.6). Where a proposal results in the loss of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woods and trees, biodiversity net gain is impossible to achieve.

#### 1.5 – Compliance with the NPSNN and NPPF

The Woodland Trust acknowledges that the proposed scheme falls within the definition of wholly exceptional as defined within footnote 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework. However, as an environmental charity which advocates for the protection of ancient woods and trees, we maintain an objection to all developments which result in the loss and deterioration of irreplaceable habitats.

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