

Yorkshire and North East Area

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Area Director

Mark Child

By email only

Date: 5th May 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ref: EN010148 – Tween Bridge Solar Farm

Thank you for seeking the Forestry Commission's advice about this proposal. The Forestry Commission is the forestry regulator in England and the government department responsible for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands. We are the enforcing authority for activities governed by the Forestry Act 1967 and the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.

As a Non-Ministerial Government Department, the Forestry Commission does not provide an opinion supporting or objecting to applications. Our role is to provide technical advice within our remit.

Woodland retention and creation

The Forestry Commission welcomes the proposed protection of existing woodland and the inclusion of new woodland planting comprising a range of native species.

We also note the proposed removal of 49 linear metres of hedgerow and approximately 8 metres of tree groups (4 semi-mature, low-quality trees), as set out in Environmental Statement Chapter 3 (Document Reference 6.1.3, Section 3.2.27).

Quantification of woodland and tree planting

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Environmental Improvement Plan target to increase canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% by 2050, and Biodiversity Net Gain principles, the Forestry Commission considers that the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEMP) [Document Reference 7.6] should clearly quantify:

- The total area of woodland creation (hectares) proposed
- Species composition and planting density
- The number, species and specification of trees outside of woodland (ToW)

This level of detail is necessary to enable proper assessment of the scheme's contribution to national canopy cover targets and biodiversity objectives, and to ensure that proposed mitigation and enhancement measures are clearly defined and deliverable.

Soil management and protection

Soil condition is a fundamental determinant of successful tree and woodland establishment, and can be adversely affected by construction activities associated with development, including vehicle movements, excavation, cable trenching and changes to drainage.

The Forestry Commission considers that the OLEMP, or associated construction and soil management documents, should:

- Demonstrate how soil structure will be protected during construction, including measures to avoid compaction (e.g. defined access routes, ground protection where necessary, appropriate timing of works) and/or reinstated following construction
- Ensure that soils used for woodland creation are suitable for the intended species and planting design
- Address how any soil degradation will be remediated prior to planting

Without appropriate soil management, there is a significant risk that woodland creation proposals will fail to establish or achieve their intended ecological function.

Tree and woodland establishment

Trees and woodland creation proposals are subject to a range of establishment risks, including browsing pressure (e.g. deer), drought stress, competition and potential impacts from livestock.

The Forestry Commission considers that the OLEMP should therefore include:

- A clear assessment of establishment risks
- Proposed mitigation measures (e.g. fencing, guards, deer culling)
- A defined establishment and maintenance period
- A commitment to achieving the proposed area/number of trees at the end of any maintenance period either through replacement planting/beating up, and/or planting a greater number of trees initially to allow for some failures.

This should ensure that the number of trees and woodland areas proposed are successfully established in practice, rather than only at the point of planting.

Alignment with the UK Forestry Standard

The Forestry Commission considers that woodland creation proposals should be designed and implemented in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard and its supporting guidelines.

In particular, this includes:

- Appropriate species selection in relation to site conditions and future climate resilience
- Consideration of biosecurity, tree health and provenance
- Design that reflects long-term management objectives and structural diversity

Alignment with the UK Forestry Standard will help ensure that woodland creation delivers sustainable, resilient and multifunctional outcomes over the long term.

Woodland connectivity and landscape integration

The Forestry Commission encourages the design of woodland creation proposals that contribute to landscape-scale ecological networks.

In the context of a solar farm development, there is an opportunity to ensure that new woodland and tree planting:

- Enhances connectivity between existing woodland, hedgerows and semi-natural habitats
- Avoids the creation of isolated or fragmented planting blocks
- Contributes to wider green infrastructure and biodiversity networks

Well-designed woodland planting can provide multiple benefits, including improved habitat connectivity, increased biodiversity and enhanced landscape integration/screening of the development.

Securing delivery

To ensure that woodland creation and tree planting proposals are effective, the Forestry Commission considers that:

- The Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEMP) and associated tree planting, woodland creation and management commitments should be secured and made enforceable through appropriate wording within the Development Consent Order
- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms should be included to demonstrate successful establishment
- Clear success criteria should be defined (e.g. survival rates at year 5)

Without these mechanisms, there is a risk that proposed woodland creation and tree planting may not deliver the intended environmental benefits over the long term.

The Forestry Commission would welcome the opportunity to continue to engage with the Applicant, the Examining Authority and other relevant parties as the Examination progresses, and would be pleased to provide further advice within its remit where this would assist.

Yours faithfully,



Dan Brown, Local Partnership Advisor
Yorkshire and North East Team