

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

The Woodland Trust  
Kempton Way  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
NG31 6LL

**Telephone**

01476 581111

**Facsimile**

01476 590808

**Website**

woodlandtrust.org.uk

14<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Reference: Rule 8 letter for the Southampton to London Pipeline Project – Woodland Trust Examination Questions**

Dear Mr Allen,

The Woodland Trust would like to take the opportunity to respond to the questions posed by the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the Southampton to London Pipeline Project consent order application. The Trust's responses are as follows:

**BIO.1.19: The Woodland Trust in its RR [RR-287] states that two trees recognised as veteran on the Ancient Tree Inventory could be affected by the Proposed Development.**

**Provide details of where and what these trees are and how best they could be protected.**

The two veteran trees referred to within the Trust's relevant representation are recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory as 193108 (a veteran oak at grid reference: TQ0571369906) and 193090 (a veteran ash at grid reference: TQ0592670359). Since our relevant representation was submitted, a further two veteran beech trees have been recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory as 197352 (grid reference: SU8675356087) and 197341 (grid reference: SU8681356177). The two veteran beech trees are likely to be directly affected by the proposed pipeline.

In order to protect the veteran trees present within the application boundary, the specimens should be afforded a Root Protection Area (RPA) of 15 times the diameter (or 5 metres beyond the canopy if that's greater) in line with Natural England's Standing Advice<sup>1</sup>.

**BIO.1.20: The respective RRs [RR-287] and [AS-030] refer to the need for a buffer when working near Ancient Woodland. However, the size of the suggested buffer differs.**

**Confirm the correct size and on what basis/guidance this size is calculated.**

**N.B – There is an overlap between this question and questions BIO.1.18 and LV.1.23 you may therefore wish to provide a combined response to these questions.**

The Woodland Trust acknowledges that the standing advice states that "*For ancient woodlands, you should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage.*"

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

However, the standing advice goes on to state: *“Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, **you’re likely to need a larger buffer zone.**”* Due to the nature of the proposed construction works, the Trust is of the opinion that a larger buffer zone of 20m or greater is required to account for the potential impact to the root systems of the trees forming the boundary to the ancient woodland, and also from the effects of noise and dust pollution to the woodlands.

When adjacent land use is intensified such as in this situation – even temporarily - plant and animal populations are exposed to environmental impacts from the outside of the woodland. These effects impact cumulatively on ancient woodland and are much more damaging than individual effects.

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