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Reference: Examination Authority's Further Written Questions – Woodland Trust response

Dear Sir/Madam,

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:

QE.2.10 – Potential Loss of Veteran Trees: Section 4.1 of the submission of the NUQEP at D3 [REP3-059] addresses tree loss in QEP. Appendix A of the submission lists notable and veteran trees.

Comment on the matters made by NUQEP in relation to veteran tree loss.

The Trust concurs with the conclusions raised by NUQEP in relation to construction works within the boundary of the veteran trees on site. The trees in question are:

- 197352 (Veteran Common Beech at grid reference: SU8675356087)
- 197341 (Veteran Common Beech at grid reference: SU8681356177)
- 198037 (Veteran Willow at grid reference: SU8644155990)

Queen Elizabeth Park contains a significant number of notable trees on site that, given time, are likely to develop veteran characteristics. These trees should be afforded a root protection area (RPA) of 12 times the stem diameter, in line with BS 5837:2012. Unless afforded the appropriate RPA, the Trust agrees that any works within Queen Elizabeth Park will have a detrimental impact on the surrounding population of notable trees, many of which may potentially provide habitat for a variety of rare and important species.

With reference to 4.1.2, the Trust would also support the use of a RPA of 15 times the stem diameter, in line with Natural England's Standing Advice in this case. There should be no construction works taking place within the RPA and only hand digging if absolutely necessary to ensure the avoidance of larger roots; whilst due care may be intended, it is possible to damage the roots and affect the longevity of these trees.

The Trust would like to draw the Examining Authority's attention to 7.4 (Permanent hard surfacing within the RPA) of the BS 5837:2012 document. Whilst we acknowledge that the advice is in relation to hardstanding, the pertinent point we wish to raise is the following:
*"This subclause [7.4] does not apply to veteran trees, where it is recommended that **no construction**, including the installation of new hard surfacing, **occurs within the RPA.**"*

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