

Yorkshire and North East Area

Foss House, King's Pool
1-2 Peasholme Green
York
YO1 7PX

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Area Director
Crispin Thorn

13th August 2021

By email only

Consultation: Middlesbrough Consultation: Stainton & Thornton Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Sir / Madam,

Thank you for seeking the Forestry Commission's advice about the impacts that this application may have on woodland. As a non-statutory consultee, the Forestry Commission is pleased to provide you with the following information that may be helpful when you consider the application.

Please ensure that all felling is clearly outlined in the planning documentation. Any trees subject to felling not identified in the planning documentation could be subject to the need for a [felling licence](#) from the Forestry Commission.

According to a Forestry Commission Land Information search there is an existing Forestry Commission Felling Licenses in place for the following sites in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan:

- Thornton Plantation 022/9/16/17
- Stainton Low Wood 022/1158/2020

There is also within the boundary of Neighbourhood Plan a Forestry Commission approved Woodland management plan in place for the following woodland blocks which form the Ormesby Estate:

- Crow Wood
- Stainton Beck West
- Thornton Plantation
- Seamer Road Wood
- Seves Plantation

Please contact the Forestry Commission for more information on the Woodland Management Plans and the Felling Licenses to find out about the obligations on these areas.

We recognise the Neighborhood plan has identified the following:

- Trees are the lungs of our Parish they improve air quality and make people feel better
- Developing wildlife corridors
- Maintaining and enhancing woodlands and maintain, enhance and where necessary replace trees
- Preserve existing woodland
- Increasing woodland
- Reducing the risk of flooding by maintaining sufficient soak away areas of grass, trees and ponds

There are several priority habitat woodlands within the area which would be good to retain and manage in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-forestry-standard> This guidance sets out the UK government's approach to sustainable forestry, including standards and requirements, regulations and monitoring, and reporting.

We recommend a management plan(see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-a-woodland-management-plan>) is developed for ongoing management of any new woodland sites, and that management is considered in relation to neighbouring or other existing woodland in the local landscape. The Forestry Commission can offer assistance in the production of both creation and management plans.

The Forestry Commission would strongly encourage Middlesbrough Council to consider climate change when developing the site. The predicted changes in temperature along with introduced plant pests and diseases mean that we there is a need to create and manage woodlands that are more resilient to these threats.

Woodland adaption for resilience can be achieved through:

- Planting a wider range of tree species.
- Using seed from a wider range of origins and provenances, including planting native trees outside their natural range.
- Encouraging natural regeneration where it is likely to be successful, to encourage evolutionary adaptation and as the climate changes.
- Protecting from damaging animals.

Further information can be found in the Forestry Commissions guide to “Responding to the climate emergency with new trees and woodlands”.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892714/Responding_to_the_climate_emergency_with_new_trees_and_woodlands.pdf

As a non-statutory consultee, the Forestry Commission is pleased to provide you with the following information that may be helpful when you consider the application:

- Details of Government Policy relating to ancient woodland
- Information on the importance and designation of ancient woodland

Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable. They have great value because they have a long history of woodland cover.

It is Government policy to refuse development that will result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland, unless “*there are wholly exceptional reasons¹ and a suitable compensation strategy exists*” (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 180c).

We also particularly refer you to further technical information set out in Natural England and Forestry Commission’s [Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland](#) – plus supporting [Assessment Guide and Case Decisions](#).

One of the most important features of Ancient woodlands is the quality and inherent biodiversity of the soil; they being relatively undisturbed physically or chemically. This applies both to Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). Direct impacts of development that could result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees include:

- damaging or destroying all or part of them (including their soils, ground flora or fungi)
- damaging roots and understory (all the vegetation under the taller trees)
- damaging or compacting soil around the tree roots
- polluting the ground around them
- changing the water table or drainage of woodland or individual trees
- damaging archaeological features or heritage assets

It is therefore essential that the ancient woodland identified is considered appropriately to avoid the above impacts.

Planning Practice Guidance emphasises: '*Their existing condition is not something that ought to affect the local planning authority's consideration of such proposals (and it should be borne in mind that woodland condition can usually be improved with good management)*'.

We also suggest that you take regard of any points provided by Natural England about the biodiversity of the woodland.

This response assumes that as part of the planning process, the local authority has given due regard as to whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment is needed under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 or the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, as amended. If there is any doubt regarding the need for an Environmental Impact assessment (Forestry), including for forest roads, please contact us.

We hope these comments are helpful to you. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on the email address provided above.

Yours Faithfully,



Jim Smith
Forestry Commission
Yorkshire & North East Area Local Partnership Adviser