

Re:	WSSC COUNTY ARBORICULTURIST response to planning consultation 29/02/2024
Planning reference number:	WSSC/007/24
Location	Staplefield Wastewater Treatment Works, Cuckfield Road, Staplefield, West Sussex, RH17 6ES
Proposal:	Installation of Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW) and associated infrastructure at land adjacent to Staplefield Wastewater Treatment Works
District:	Mid Sussex
Date:	06/03/2024

We refer to the below Request for further information:

Tree Provision: A Landscape Plan (rev.C02, ref.752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-DR-EN-00007) has been submitted proposing numerous specimen and shrub trees, in addition to a new hedgerow to the south of the site. The Landscape Plan contains planting specifications and a management plan which addresses most landscaping considerations relating to new tree planting. Additional planting specification information is required to ensure appropriate measures are in place for effective planting, this includes:

cross-section planting drawings or descriptive planting techniques appropriate for all stock types; use and specification of supports, guards, or other protective measures required; and, use and specification of mulches or other sundries to aid successful plant establishment.

Specification details are supplied in Section 2.3 Trees, Shrubs and Hedgerows of the Landscape management plan (document number :752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-EV-EN-00001).

Landscape management plan has been updated to include further specifications in relation to tree planting.

A full young tree maintenance programme must be included, addressing all maintenance activities required for a minimum of five years post planting which demonstrates independent establishment in the landscape is achievable.

Landscape management plan (document number :752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-EV-EN-00001).

Section 1: Introduction

All planting and maintenance shall be carried out as per 'Good Horticultural Practice' and 'British Standard' with particular reference to:

- BS 3998: Recommendations for tree work.
- BS 8545: Trees from Nursery to independence in landscape.
- BS 4428: Code of practice for general landscape operations
- BS 7370: Grounds maintenance.

Additional reference to planting and maintenance specific to young trees has been updated in Section '2.3 Trees, Shrubs and Hedgerows', 'Section 3.3.1 Trees and shrubs' and '3.3.5 Replacement of damaged/dead plants'.

Ground preparation works appropriate for the site conditions should be prescribed to improve soil profiles, unless demonstrated that suitable soil conditions are present, and will be post construction activity (consideration must be made for protection of existing tree roots for such works). Given the current and historic use of the site as agricultural fields on clay, sub-soils are likely to be heavily compacted which may result in poor soil structure restricting root growth of new trees. Soil compaction can also affect soil water status, causing waterlogging during wetter periods and drought conditions during drier periods which may limit root development. Additional construction activity may lead to further compaction unless appropriate ground protection is utilised (not mentioned within the AIA or AMS).

Landscape management plan (document number :752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-EV-EN-00001).

'Section 2.3 Trees, Shrubs and Hedgerows' describes soil preparation guidelines, including description of on site soils, suitable for proposed planting.

*Proposed tree planting should include species more adaptable to waterlogging given their location adjacent the flood mitigation area, such as: *Alnus glutinosa*, *Salix sp.*, *Betula pubescens*, *Rhamnus Frangula*, or *Populus nigra subsp. Betulifolia*. The species proposed as specimen trees are not considered tolerable of such conditions.*

Landscape management plan (document number :752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-EV-EN-00001).

Section 2.3 Trees, Shrubs and Hedgerows. The proposed tree planting locations are not within the flood mitigation zone and as such will not be considered waterlogged. The proposed tree species list has been updated to include the above-mentioned species. However, we have not included the addition of *Salix spp.* at this time, due to its potential maintenance and management requirements in relation to Integrated Constructed Wetlands. *Salix spp.* will likely naturally colonise over time and there is opportunity to propose more appropriate tree species at this stage.

There is an opportunity to enhance the hedgerow aligning the northern and eastern boundaries of the site (ref. H3 within the arboricultural report). This could include planting up gaps with

diverse species, selecting individual existing trees within the hedge to grow as standard trees, and by providing longer-term management prescriptions to allow the hedge and marginal growth to thicken by reducing mown areas of vegetation directly adjacent the hedgerow. If carried out in advance, this may aid in screening construction activity and permanent site changes visible from Cuckfield Road (B2114) where gaps exist, as demonstrated by viewpoint VP08 of the Landscape Visual Assessment (noting that VP08 does not show a majority of the site which is visible from the roadside).

Landscape management plan (document number :752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-EV-EN-00001).

Section 3.3.6 Existing hedgerows. This section has been added to the document. It relates to the existing hedgerow which surrounds the site, which is outside the design boundary. Set back distances are in place for construction. We have recommended that these areas be included in operational stage landscaping programme as part of the whole site to provide enhancement of existing features and we provide methods in which to do so.