

WSCC TREE OFFICER response to planning consultation

Application reference number: WSCC/004/20

Location: Evergreen Farm, West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4NE

Proposal: Restoration of the former Standen Landfill site with a woodland and pasture landfill cap system

District: Mid Sussex

Date: 17th February 2020

Summary response: further information / clarification required

Response: My comments in response to WSCC/061/19 are still valid.

The LVIA appears to confirm that boundary vegetation to the north adjoining Beechcroft / Beachcroft House will remain. Since this is a particularly sensitive receptor and closest to the proposal, is there likely to be an adverse impact on T49, for example? Half the RPA is within the site. There is no tree removal plan as such, but the whole of G50 does not appear on the tree protection plan [TPP]. If the intention is to retain a visual screen, the existing vegetation on or near the northern boundary should be supplemented with appropriate species. A shaw / rew / shelterbelt – a wide hedgerow in other words – characteristic of the area, could be planted in this location.

My previous comments requested that the landscape proposals should reflect the landscape character of the area through planting of hedgerows and shelterbelts. The proposed woodland planting on the southern slope is welcome, but more linear features connecting these or larger joined up woodland areas and hedgerows providing N-S connections across the site would better reflect local landscape character and replace hedgerows which have to be removed.

The landscape plan should ideally indicate numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted. BS5837:2012 is not particularly relevant to the planting specification; BS8545:2014 is relevant, as is BS8601:2013 and BS3882:2015. The latter two relate to subsoil and topsoil specification. They may be referred to in other documents but are relevant to the landscape specification. The previous edition of BS3882 – 2007 – is referred to on the plan, not the current one.

The landscape plan is adequate but does not include any reference to protection. The planting schedules indicate all tree sizes are transplants but the planting specification describes measures for feathered and standard trees. If the trees and shrubs are all transplants, I would expect details about tree shelters – biodegradable ones – and the stakes / battens required for those. How is weed control to be carried out? Will any mulch be applied?

Transplant stock is unlikely to require such large planting pits, especially if cell-grown stock is used. It would be particularly difficult to achieve some of the planting pit dimensions described when the maximum soil depth is proposed as 750mm overall.

It appears that some cutting and pasting may have occurred from some other plan as reference is made to 'golf course grass' and its maintenance, rather than being a plan for this specific site.

Forest Research [referenced in my previous comments] states that '*sustainable growth for trees over at least a decade require **at least** 1m of soil cover; in droughty areas or in soils with low moisture-holding capacity, deeper soil cover is necessary*' and '*research concluded that 1.5m of soil or soil-forming material over a mineral cap will ensure that trees can be established on landfills without posing a significant threat to cap integrity for at least 16 years.*'

The cross-sections of the capping layer indicate just 150mm of topsoil and 600mm of subsoil [wrong BS is quoted] = 750mm. It is not clear whether the protection layer [general fill class 1 or 2] is considered to be '*soil-forming material*' that would meet the requirements for successful tree and shrub establishment.

As compaction is required for all but the topsoil layer to ensure stability, could this result in an impermeable layer, restricting air and water availability to tree roots? Given the steep slopes, could slippage be possible of the subsoils and topsoils if water cannot penetrate the protection layer?

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