

WSCC COUNTY ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER response to planning consultation

Application reference number: WSCC/011/21

Location: Ford Circular Technology Park, Ford Road, Ford BN18 0XL

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and structures and construction and operation of an energy recovery facility and a waste sorting and transfer facility for treatment of municipal, commercial and industrial wastes, including ancillary buildings, structures, parking, hardstanding, and landscape works

District: Arun

Date: 7th May 2021

Summary response: no objection subject to appropriately worded conditions to secure tree protection and a full, detailed landscape specification.

Response: The site benefits from some limited existing planting on the northern and eastern boundaries. Although this is shown outside the red line boundary, opportunities should be explored to supplement and reinforce this planting, especially where gaps exist.

Looking at the site within the context of the wider landscape, opportunities should be explored to improve the linear habitat connectivity by planting up gaps in hedgerows / shelterbelts where possible, e.g. the gap to the north east of the site along the access track from Rodney Crescent, which is also PROW 200_3.

The site is extremely constrained, so there are limited opportunities for '*landform screening, landscape planting and biodiversity improvements*'; hence the need to look beyond the site boundaries for additional landscape enhancements, if possible, to '*integrate the proposal with the adjacent landscape*'. The latter will only be possible if medium and long views at ground level can be screened by existing mature features in the landscape, such as hedgerows, tree belts, woodlands or by supplementing these or creating new planting features but this requires ownership or control of the relevant land to do so. The proposed planting will only screen / soften lower level elements of the building complex and associated activities. Whilst the proposed planting will be a significant improvement on what currently exists on site, biodiversity net gain will be increased if better connectivity can be achieved beyond the site boundaries as mentioned above.

The arboricultural impact assessment (AIA March 2021) states that all the individual trees and groups of trees identified are either offsite or outside the redline boundary, with the exception of group 1 (Leyland cypress) but this also appears to be outside the northern boundary according to the softworks general arrangement drawing. The line of Leyland cypress was undoubtedly planted to screen the existing site. Even with proposed planting along the northern boundary, there is considerable reliance on these conifers, despite their condition, to provide screening, so they should be included in the tree protection plan and supplementary planting considered to strengthen this feature, even though it is not within the application boundary.

Similarly, the AIA has identified Group 10, the poplars along the access road, to have <10 years remaining contribution and categorised them as 'U', so planned replacement of these should be incorporated into future landscape plans to ensure the screening they provide is continued, albeit they are outside the applicant's control.

The possibility of Japanese knotweed has been identified in group 5 – it should be possible to verify this now since it will be actively growing. If it is confirmed it will require specialist removal and disposal. This may involve considerable deep excavation of soils which could effectively remove existing group 5 vegetation.

Compliance with the AIA and recommendations therein is required. Arboricultural supervision and method statements may be required for some elements.

Soft landscaping / LIMP

Bund creation – it is noted that the construction is yet to be finalised, but it is important that it is not so rammed or compacted for the purpose of stability that then effectively prevents root growth.

Smaller tree stock should be used – it is likely to establish more successfully, assuming the maintenance and aftercare is thorough – 10-12cmg or 12-14cmg instead of 20-25cmg. This will also avoid the need for ground anchors, but some low above ground staking will be required.

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) cannot be planted due to the prevalence of ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*).

4.1 of LIMP: Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* Chanticleer) is too ornamental for the site and setting; field maple (*Acer campestre* and cvs) is more appropriate.

Visual screening woodland mix – there is little to be gained by planting feathered stock – transplants (40-60cm or 60-90cm) will establish more quickly and are likely to have a better survival rate all other things being equal, e.g. supplier, quality, handling, maintenance etc.

Woodland mix – errors in the list: Rowan is *Sorbus aucuparia*, not *Quercus robur* and guelder rose is *Viburnum opulus*.

Scrub mix – should include goat willow / sallow (*Salix caprea*) – omit bramble, which will naturally regenerate here over time.

Hedgerow mix – should include field maple (*Acer campestre*) at 10% - reduce % of hawthorn and hazel accordingly.

5.10 'Woodland plants.....at **4m** centres' – is this correct? Species which will ultimately be large at maturity such as *Quercus robur* should be well spaced but others such as *Corylus avellana* could be planted at closer spacing. A typical layout matrix would help to show this.

All plant individual protection should either be fully biodegradable or recovered and recycled as part of the maintenance contract.

6.0 management and maintenance – specify quantity and minimum frequency of watering and the same for the supplementary watering.

6.4 Herbicide is not to be used unless pernicious weeds are present – only then by use of a weed wipe.

Pond construction details – presumably this will incorporate stepped / shelving edges to support marginal vegetation rather than a vertically sided rectangle?

Any maintenance and aftercare plan should be for a minimum of 5 years.

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