

Osmond, Gary

From: Griffin, Tim
Sent: 15 April 2024 22:41
To: Osmond, Gary
Cc: Dyer, Tim; Ellison, Mark
Subject: RM/24/97106 Land north and east of Winchester Street, Eastleigh, SO30 2AA - Reserved Matters for the delivery of the biodiversity enhancement phase of Outline Planning Approval O/18/83698

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi Gary,

Thanks for the clarification on this application earlier today.

It is a slightly curious RM application as it only covers an isolated, slender section of the site along the north side of the Botley Bypass. It would have been useful to have landscape details of the remainder of the site, especially close to this Biodiversity Enhancement Zone (BEZ), to set the proposals in context.

According to Arups submission letter dated 21st March 2024 uploaded on Salesforce, the information is submitted in line with Condition 2 of the Outline application. This letter also mentions two separate discharge of Conditions applications (PP-12887539 & PP -12835541) associated with the BEZ. I am not clear how these PP references are relevant, so for now I have only reviewed information uploaded for the RM/24/97106 application.

I have reviewed the DAS submitted as part of the Outline application and this area is described on the illustrative landscape masterplan as '*Semi-natural area featuring native plant species, scrub & secondary woodland habitat....This is a biodiversity enhancement opportunity zone with no public access*'.

I have downloaded the following information uploaded to Salesforce:

Botley Fields Biodiversity Enhancement Zone - Planning Design and Access Statement
Landscape General Arrangement - sheet 1 of 2 0001
Landscape General Arrangement - sheet 2 of 2 0002
Planting schedule 0003
Landscape sections 0004
Axonometric visual
Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

By way of background, this is my first look at this development, and I have not had the opportunity to visit the site. The proposals include a significant number of special ecological elements and I would defer to comments by the EBC Ecology team on matters such as detailed species mixes for the scrapes and areas of wildflower seeding.

My landscape comments follow:

General comments across all plans

1/ In order to assess how the proposals sit in the wider context, further detail is required of areas that run alongside the BEZ. To the north, please add the species of existing trees along the railway embankment. A broad indication where the areas of existing scrub along the railway occur would help identify gaps in the vegetation cover and allow on site planting to be located for best effect.

The new bypass lies immediately to the south of the BEZ. At present, some notional planting is indicated alongside the bypass on the submitted plans. We require further detail on this planting to ensure the BEZ planting and bypass planting work well together. This can be sourced from the bypass planting plans, which presumably have been submitted and approved?

2/ Please add the width of the easement along the Portsmouth Water utility pipe to the plans. This will help ensure any adjustments to proposed tree positions are kept outside the easement.

3/ I note one access gate for maintenance at the far NW end of the BEZ but could not locate an access to the SE end. Please indicate all maintenance access points on plan.

4/ Is the existing/proposed post & wire fencing sufficiently robust to enclose the BEZ, especially in areas where there is more likely to be activity? Is a stockproof fence required to prevent access by dogs?

5/ Please increase the number of log piles and add locations for grass cuttings piles on plan.

Landscape General Arrangement - sheet 1 of 2 0001 & Landscape General Arrangement - sheet 2 of 2 0002

a/ I welcome the inclusion of scrapes and swales, although there is scope to ensure all scrapes have a natural, flowing form/shape (one or two are rather geometric for this informal, naturalistic space). Swales should link into the scrapes and the slopes of swales should have more variation to avoid an engineered effect. Marginal plug species PM2 - please indicate the locations of PM2 assuming they are not continuously introduced in the scrapes and swales.

b/ The numbers of proposed trees along the BEZ is too low (28 no. in total). The notional tree symbols used indicate sizes after roughly 10-15 years. These should be replaced symbols more representative of 'as planted' sizes (max. 3m diameter) and sufficient numbers of trees should be included to allow for some failures.

c/ The 10m zone adjacent the proposed fenceline to allow access - without knowing the detail of the landscape proposals along the bypass it is impossible to tell if the proposed strong grass mixture PM5 will be in keeping with the wider setting. Will this strong grass mixture be mown regularly? If it is going to be kept regularly cut/strimmed, will this look too formal for the BEZ which should have a more informal character?

This strip seems to be very wide (typically 10m) for maintenance access. A narrower 3-4m strip would be sufficient for vehicular/machinery access. The edge of this strip is linear which seems out of keeping with the informal nature of this area. Perhaps a sinuous line is more appropriate with short stub posts marking the delineation to aid maintenance teams working out the different management regimes for each planting type.

d/ The areas of shrub mix SM1 do seem sporadic and limited in size. I would welcome the EBC Ecology team input as to whether larger areas of shrub mix planting would be desirable to provide increased wildlife cover. My own view would be that fewer but larger areas would be more practical in terms of establishment. If smaller 'island' areas are planted, how would these be protected/demarcated?

e/ PM 3 & PM 4 over existing grassland - I am not convinced this is realistic given the difficulties of over seeding existing grassland. Further specification details of how this can be achieved would be appreciated.

f/ The thorny mix of HR1 is acceptable. The existing PROW will be a sensitive section of the site, so I suggest at least a few native trees are included (where outside water easement) to frame the route of the path. These trees can either be within the hedge mix or just to the rear. I also suggest that the existing post and wire fence here will not be sufficient to keep dogs out of the BEZ, so please allow for a stockproof mesh fence to be attached to the repaired existing post and wire fence to control dogs.

g/ Field Gate - please add replacement native hedge planting either side of gate and provide details of gate.

h/ Although the planting schedule provides some of the required specification information, the numbers per area of planting types should to be indicated by area on plan to help implementation, maintenance and enforcement.

Planting schedule 0003

j/ The tree species indicated are generally acceptable, although overall the numbers of trees needs to be increased significantly. *Salix caprea* can be invasive and should be replaced with alternative native *Salix* species. Is there any reason why no native Oaks have been included? We would prefer to see at least some Oaks in the mix. *Corylus avellana* generally come as multistem specimens not feathered stock. Details of tree pits, staking etc required. A landscape specification should be provided detailing these elements. All trees in grass areas to have strimmer guards fitted.

k/ HR1 native hedgerow mix - *Ilex* spp. generally specified as pot grown. The hedgerow should be planted as double staggered row at 6 plants per lin. m. Indicate numbers of plants by areas on plan.

l/ SM1 shrub mix - species mix could be enriched slightly for added habitat value. The density at 1 plant per sq. m is too low. Please increase to min. 2 plants per sq. m. to allow for failures. Specification details required of planting, protection, mulching etc. How will these areas be demarcated to help maintenance?

m/ Marginal plug species PM2 - as mentioned earlier, please indicate on plan the locations of this planting as I assume PM2 will occur in a sporadic, natural 'clumps'.

n/ Planting mixes 1 - 5. These are specialised mixes (mainly wildflower) and I would appreciate the EBC Ecology team taking the lead on commenting on these.

Landscape sections 0004

It would be useful to indicate the kind of planting associated with the bypass on these sections to set the proposals in context.

Axonometric visual

This birds eye view demonstrates the difficulty of assessing the scheme in context with a complete lack of detail of planting along the bypass. Ideally the bypass landscape and the BEZ planting should naturally merge. We would want to avoid an abrupt junction between the two areas because they have a different landscape character.

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

This document is incomplete and consists mainly of management prescriptions in a tabular form. Detailed specification information is missing, and I will comment in more detail once we have received a complete document.

As regards monitoring wildflower grassland areas, I notice Mark has recently been suggesting that monitoring of species using quadrats is something that is required. A method statement of how the ongoing species richness of the wildflower areas is to be measured should be included in the LEMP. This should include frequency, number and distribution of quadrat surveys. This information would then need to be submitted to the council at 3 years after sowing. Please consult with the EBC Ecology team for more details on this.

Our comments above require significant changes/further information, so I look forward to receiving revised/additional documents in due course.

I hope the above comments are helpful but do get in touch should you require any clarification.

FYI, I am now on leave until the 26th April 2024.

KR Tim

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