

Supporting Information to the Planting Scheme – South West Bicester Sports Village

STRI

Cherwell District Council

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Introduction

The following report provides additional supporting information to bolster the initial planting scheme documentation submitted to Cherwell District Council in April 2011.

Supporting Information

General comments / recommendations

1. A 1m wide mown strip, between the path and the proposed new hedgerow on the northern boundary (to reduce overgrowing of branches onto the path) has been included on accompanying revised drawing (Appendix 1).
2. In order to ensure no damage is incurred to mature tree specimens around the perimeter of the development site all trees within close proximity of the development footprint have tree protection zones indicated on the accompanying revised drawing (Appendix 1). These will be enforced in accordance with BS5837:2005 *Trees in Relation to Construction* using chestnut paling fencing around the rootzone of each tree. Where possible, the cycle track route has been amended to avoid the tree protection zones. Where this has not been possible, it is proposed that trial digs are undertaken in the area to determine root depth (required excavation depths would not exceed 300mm). Should roots be found at a depth of less than 300mm, the cycle track will be built up to ensure tree roots are protected. Root protection will be provided before commencement of any works and if fencing is removed for grading works i.e. within the vicinity of the tall oak then on-site supervision will be provided by the retained Ecologist and CDC's Landscape Arboricultural Officer will be informed. Any grading work will remain at least 7 m from the trunk of any tree. The aim of the root protection fencing as well as to reduce compaction will be to prevent inadvertent damage of aerial branches by heavier equipment.
3. The compound /storage area has been defined on the accompanying drawing (Appendix 2). The ground will be decontaminated i.e all building materials and diesel/oil spillages removed off site. Stripped topsoil deposited graded and cultivated on topsoil and subsoil that has been deep ripped to alleviate compaction, improve drainage etc.
4. Whilst it may be perceived that Woodland W1 (see Appendix 1), located at the end of the Rugby pitch, will provide an obstacle for viewing the game its purpose is for health and safety reasons, with a view to keeping the public away from the degenerate oak specimen here which has been observed shedding significantly sized pieces of debris and looks set to continue to do so in the future. The planting here will be managed at low level if necessary to reduce the visual impact however there is a need to retain this planting.

5. The gap identified on the initial landscaping drawing within the hedgerow to the south western corner of the site has been amended within the accompanying revised drawing (Appendix 1).
 6. Woodland species will be planted in species drifts/grouping to improve visual impact and reduce competition between vigorous and less vigorous species. The oak groups will require more shelter to establish. The more vigorous species like ash can achieve this.
 7. Regular maintenance visits by landscape contractor to eradicate weeds and water during periods of drought will be carried out to ensure the survival and establishment of the plants. Biodegradable mulch mats will be fixed in position of each plant to conserve soil moisture and restrict weed growth. Plants will be checked for wind rock or frost heave and firmed in if necessary.
- Post and wire fencing will be erected to protect newly planted hedgerows.

8. Regarding Grassland Establishment in addition to the recommendations made in the initial report, guidance is taken from the Natural England publication, Seed Sources for Grassland Restoration and Re-creation in Environmental Stewardship, attached as Appendix 3.

Planting Specification

All plants will be purchased in accordance with BS3936 (Specification for Forestry Trees) and BS5236 (Recommendations for Cultivation and Planting of Standard Trees). All trees will be of local guaranteed provenance and on delivery will either be planted with immediate effect or healed in using straw and soil and adequately watered until such times as their planting can be accommodated. Whilst we acknowledge the request for the use of standard trees we would suggest there is little benefit from this to the development. Aside from the clear significant financial implications associated with standard trees, given that the site is not to be used for around 2 years, and the frequent tendency for standard trees to suffer from transplant shock in the early stages of establishment, I see the use of standard trees as a high risk, high cost strategy, that may result in the creation of woodland blocks that have a quite artificial appearance, because of the potential inflexibilities surrounding planting and management regimes. All trees over the site will be purchased as 1+1 45-60 cm forestry transplants. The hedge will be planted using trees identified in the planting schedule, these to be introduced in a double staggered row at close 45 cm spacings, both along and between rows. All trees will be planted in single species groupings (multiples of three i.e 3, 6, 12 etc) to ensure naturalness and to avoid unnecessary competition. Hawthorn will form the dominant species within the hedge.

The forestry transplants will be notch planted (the preferred method for forestry transplants) with no fertiliser added to the rootzone. Prior to planting the ground will be ripped (rotovated to reduce the weed content) and the trees will be planted to the height of the root collars. The ground to be firmed with a foot thereafter.

Forestry transplants will be utilised through all wooded areas utilising trees as indicated in the planting schedule (see drawing).

The three larger woodland blocks (W1, W2 and W3) will be planted with 45-60 cm 1+1 forestry transplants at maximum 2 m spacings in single species groupings (multiples of three) with each tree being root dipped into a proven mycorrhizal suspension to provide a boost to early establishment. Indeed mycorrhizal suspension such as that available through Symbio have proven to be extremely effective wherever used, often accelerating growth by 50-75% within the first year.

Site Protection

The hedgerows will be protected using 0.5 m spiral guards and post and chicken wire fencing along the entire run. The woodlands will be protected using 1 m high tree cubes with cane and tie wrap with each area demarcated using post and chicken wire fencing to reduce inadvertent trespass and rabbit grazing.

Tree Numbers

Woodland 1 – Approx. 120 field maple specimens planted at maximum 2 m spacing.

Woodland 2 - Approx. 920 oak, ash, small leaved lime, whitebeam, birch, alder and field at 2 m spacings.

Woodland 3 – Approx. 360 oak, ash, small leaved lime, whitebeam, birch, alder and field at 2 m spacings

Protection During the Grown In/Establishment Phase

All trees will be monitored on an annual basis (first three years only) whereupon a full beat up will be applied. An annual check of all trees will be made between August and the end of September for any signs of weakness or for any damaged, dead or dying trees. The check will provide an opportunity for all trees to be re-straightened, re-firmed or repositioned following any inadvertent damage that may have arisen.

Glyphosate will be considered (first two years only) to reduce weed ingress around the trees. Glyphosate will be used to control weed growth this to be applied in strict accordance with the label and statutory recommendations using a lance with shield on a spot basis. Treatment will be given to 300 mm radius around the base of any tree.

The hedgerows will be excluded from any glyphosate treatment given the length and potential for run-off and damage to adjacent trees.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'R. Stuttard'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Stuttard
Ecology & Environment