Materials Recovery Facility and Ancillary Development

Landscaping Plan

Falconer Road, Haverhill

Prepared Widdington Recycling Limited

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Contents

Appendices

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Status: FINAL

1. Introduction

1.1 Widdington Recycling Ltd is based at their Widdington Pit site, which is located approximately 7 km to the south of saffron Walden, close to the M11. The company operates a sand pit, waste transfer station and composting operation and inert landfill. The waste transfer station operations processes construction and demolition waste and skip waste to produce a range of recycled materials, principally soils and secondary aggregates. The company sells this material along with primary aggregates from the site.

1.2 The company is seeking planning permission to develop a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) waste management facility on an existing waste management site located off Falconer Road, Haverhill.

1.3 This Landscaping Plan has been prepared to set out long-term landscape mitigation and management approaches for the site. Part of the proposed development has been partially completed. This has included the felling of several over-mature trees and the loss of some smaller shrubs along the western boundary. The mitigation proposals are provided to offset these losses.

2. Landscape Objectives

Key Objectives

2.1 The key objective is to provide a scheme that mitigates the loss of the small area of woodland, enhances the current limited planting around the perimeter of the site, and also enhances the biodiversity at the site. The planting to be retained is to be conserved and enhanced through appropriate supplemental planting of a range of native trees and shrubs.

Management

2.2 The management of the planting to be retained, and the new planting covers a period of 5 years aftercare.

3. Existing Planting

3.1 The site is bounded by an area of woodland along its western boundary, which is approximately 100m deep at its greatest extent and averages approximately 40m deep along its entire length. It narrows to approximately 30m in depth to the south of the site.

3.2 Along the north western boundary, there is a relatively narrow band of shrubland approximately 10m in depth.

3.3 To the eastern boundary is a poorly maintained thin strip of shrubland planting, which had been supplemented in the past few years with a double row of Leylandii conifers. These conifers have for the most part now been removed to facilitate the development.

3.4 Preliminary ground clearance works commenced during summer 2023. The works extended close to the boundary of the woodland in the south eastern corner of the site, exposing root systems of several trees, placing them at risk. The woodland was inspected by an arboricultural advisor in August 2023, who advised that the trees were over-mature and well within the process of die back and would not have lasted another 2-3 years. The recommendation was to fell these trees. The woodland area affected by the clearance has now been stabilised through the construction of a concrete retaining wall, but it has resulted in the loss of a small area of woodland extending to 0.06 ha or 0.14 acres.

4. Mitigation Planting

4.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)regulations came into force in April 2024 and require a site to achieve a minimum 10% increase in habitat over a development site. The Haverhill development has been appraised by JBA Consulting who confirmed;

When inputted into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric the baseline habitat units were 1.84, hedgerow units 0.50. Within the current proposal there will be a loss of individual urban trees, with an increase in developed land; sealed surface, and buildings. The result of this is a 12.41% net loss for habitat units and an 8.89% net gain for hedgerow units.

4.2 Due to the nature of the site of an essentially open site which is to be hard surfaced, there is very little scope to provide any additional planting to provide the statutory 10% increase in BNG. Widdington Recycling will therefore be required to consider off-site measures either through the creation of appropriate habitat on an alternative site, or the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits.

4.3 The preferred route is to consider off-site planting, this will also to a degree mitigate the minor loss of woodland at the site.

4.4 The reason why there is an inability to consider any BNG increase at the site, also limits the options for significant mitigating planting at the site. These are limited to improving the shrub belt along the northern boundary and supplemental planting to the eastern boundary.

4.5 Drawing WID-HAV-MRF-12 attached in Appendix 1, confirms the location and extent of additional planting proposed for the site.

4.6 It is proposed to incorporate native woodland and shrub species into the existing shrubland belt along the northern boundary. This includes the provision of several feathered/specimen trees (2-2.5m) of English Oak (*Quercus robur)* and Poplar (*Populus nigra)* to provide immediate height to the planting.

4.7 There is a poorly managed strip of self-set shrubs along the eastern boundary. Large individual shrubs will be kept and supplemented with appropriate native shrub species. This is proposed to also include feathered/specimen trees at locations along the belt to provide height and screening to the planting.

New Tree Planting

4.8 Individual standard trees and standard tree group planting within the open space areas will be maintained as follows.

- During establishment (the first 2 years after planting) the base of trees, circa 500mm radius, must be kept weed and grass free using suitable mechanical or chemical means.
- Water tree during establishment to field capacity if the tree is under stress during dry periods.
- Trees will be supported by double short stakes, or similar, during the establishment period and these can be removed after 2-3 years, unless there is soil or root movement when the tree is rocked. Stakes and ties to be regularly inspected and adjusted or replaced as necessary.
- Plants found to be dead or dying within the first two years post planting to be replaced on a like-for-like basis as soon as possible within the next available planting season.
- Pruning of dead, diseased or damaged branches should be carried out as appropriate to promote healthy growth and natural shape, and to favour a single central leading shoot.

New Shrub Planting

4.9 The following management approach is proposed for new shrub/hedgerow planting:

- Plants to be maintained by suitable means, to prevent competition by weeds and grasses until planting has established.
- Plant protection to be regularly inspected and any damaged protection replaced.
- Plants found to be dead or dying within the first two years post planting to be replaced on a like-for-like basis as soon as possible within the next available planting season.

- Until establishment, formative pruning will be undertaken once annually to keep the hedgerow tidy.
- Allow the shrub planting to establish to a height of 2.5 metres. Then cut 50% of the hedgerow once annually to a height of 2 metres on a rotational basis to allow the hedgerow to fruit and provide food for wildlife.
- Cut during the winter months, following fruiting, during frost free periods. Cutting should not be carried out during the bird nesting season (March-August) unless supervised by a suitably qualified person.
- Following pruning operations, all arisings should be removed from the site.
- Plant protection and any protective fencing will be removed once the shrub/hedgerow is established.

4.10 The management of all planting will take place for a minimum period of 5 years.

5. Ecological Enhancement

5.1 There is an opportunity to improve and enhance the existing woodland through the provision of bat and bird boxes. It is proposed to install a minimum of 5 bat boxes (installed in accordance with guidance issued by the Bat Conservation Society) on suitable trees identified within the woodland.

5.2 A variety of bird boxes will be installed within the woodland and on the MRF building in accordance RSPB guidance. The location of the boxes will be within the existing woodland and also the MRF building to provide suitable nesting boxes for swifts (*Apus apus*) at the apex of the building.

Appendix I - Drawing WID-HAV-MRF-12 – Landscape Planting Plan