

Question 2.13.8 in full - to Applicant and All Interested Parties

2.13.8 Landscape mitigation and decommissioning

In the applicant's response to the Rule 17 letter [REP2-029], the applicant states "the proposed landscape mitigation would be retained after the removal of the infrastructure elements and will continue to provide a positive long-term contribution to and reinforcement of the character of the landscape, in line with the management guidelines for the area. Should the proposed landscape mitigation be considered

detrimental to landscape character at decommissioning, then it could be removed. However, as it follows the current management guidelines this is unlikely to be recommended."

To the applicant

- 1) When a number of interested parties (IP) have expressed that the landscape character, at present, is defined by long sweeping views across undulating countryside from higher vantage points, how do you justify your position that the landscape mitigation (including lining footpaths with 3m high hedgerows, thus removing or blocking a proportion of these views) would reinforce landscape character?
- 2) Is the landscape mitigation (i.e. such as additional hedgerows along footpaths) being relied upon for biodiversity net gain calculations or are these deemed as separate biodiversity enhancements?
- 3) There is no mention of future hedgerow management in the outline Decommissioning Plan (ODP) and no mention of whose responsibility this would be. Add this maintenance responsibility information to the ODP along with a proposed appropriate height for future maintenance to ensure the wider landscape views would not be affected.

To all IP [Interested Parties]

4) The ExA recognises that the proposal would have visual impacts on the landscape, and several IP's have expressed concerns as to how adverse they would be. The ExA nonetheless is considering all stages of the development and is considering the future condition of the landscape post-decommissioning. What would your reaction be if, at this stage, areas of landscape mitigation (for instance example, planting hedgerows along public footpaths) were excluded from the applicant's plans and not implemented?*** This would of course result in un-mitigated visual effects being endured during operation but, at decommissioning stage, the original landscape character could be restored closer to that presented, enjoyed and described in the book by Forever Fields [REP1-101].

** Please note the ExA is not necessarily advocating this or pursuing this as a possibility but simply seeking to consider detail of operational and decommissioning phases of the development, taking into account paragraph 2.10.151 of NPS EN-3