

SASES
Substation Action Save East Suffolk

27th October 2020

Scottish Power – EA1N and EA2 – Report on Proposed Mitigation Planting

1. Introduction

I have been asked to provide comment on the Scottish Power Renewables Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy.

The document I have reviewed:

Applicant: East Anglia ONE North Limited
Document Reference: 8.7
SPR Reference: EA1N-DWF-ENV-REP-IBR-000389 Rev 01
Pursuant to APFP Regulation: 5(2)(q)
Author: Royal HaskoningDHV
Date: October 2019
Revision: Version 1

2. My background & Expertise

2.1 I will offer detail of my experience and knowledge as background on my ability to comment. I have gained over 40 years direct and hands on experience within the horticultural and landscape industries. All of this has been in Suffolk and the immediate surrounding counties.

2.2 I act for both private and commercial clients in both an advisory and consultative capacity. I have worked for local authorities including Suffolk County Council, Ipswich BC and Suffolk Coastal DC (as was). In the Commercial Sector, I have designed and built schemes for clients including British Sugar and Anglian Water

2.3 I am Managing Director of Botanica Plant Collections Ltd (T/A Botanica Nursery and Arboretum) which has a nationwide reputation for growing rare and unusual trees and shrubs and also growing purely UK grown and UK Provenance native trees and shrubs – we do not import any plant material

2.4 Botanica is Holder of the Plant Heritage National Collection Holder of Santolina and provisional holder of Osmanthus.

2.5 I am also manager of Landscapes by Botanica a specialist landscape contracting company involved in native tree planting and creation of woodland and wildlife habitats as well as construction of lakes and wildlife ponds. We work mainly in Suffolk with some work in the neighbouring counties.

2.6 I can provide testimonials and referees should you feel this necessary.

3. My Findings Para 78

3.1 No reference to soil structure, pH test or EC readings are given to recommend the suitability of these choices other than 'planting reflects the prevailing landscape character and growing conditions'.

3.2 Core Native Woodland (W1, W3, W4)

The selection of alder may be suspect due to the increasing susceptibility and spread of the fungal pathogen 'Phytophthora' affecting *Alnus* species and causing death of the tree.

3.3 Core Native Woodland (W3)

Black Poplar is chosen as a species in the Native Screening Mix. Though a fast growing rare native, it is and was usually found as a solitary or small group specimen often near to farmsteads. I would say that the species would then over dominate and be against the natural order.

3.4 Core Native Woodland (W3)

The choice of *Sorbus* as a "quicker growing native" tree in this region is in my opinion suspect. It generally makes a relatively small tree of poor to medium growth rate.

3.5 No mention has been made to ensure that the stock planted will be UK grown and UK provenance ideally originating from Forestry Commission region 405 or 406.

4. My findings Para 79:

4.1 Species mixes for these areas of woodland are shown in Table 3.2 to Table 3.5 I would comment on the choice of *Prunus padus* as a core mix species. This species requires a moisture retentive soil and drier locations may be unsuitable. The species is not therefore suitable for general planting and would be better suited to the drier fringes of the Native wet woodland (W4)

4.2 Native Edge Woodland Mix: *Salix caprea* is often regarded as a 'Pioneer Species' of very poor planting conditions. Given that it is 10% of the overall mix it will self-seed and may overtime become over dominant.

5. My findings Para 84:

5.1 It is unlikely that all the cell grown plants species listed will be as large as 60cm. They are usually listed by nurseries supplying cell grown stock (such as Alba Trees or Cheviot Trees) as between 20cm to 60cm. My experience is that dependent on species many are often not much more than 40cms.

5.2 The expected growth rates of 30cm per year for the first five years followed by 50cm per year for the ten years following is in my opinion optimistic given the present dry summers experienced in Suffolk. I would say that these growth rates are only possible

given a nursery situation of intensive irrigation and care. I question whether in reality, bearing in mind the size and area of planting, that an embedded best practice maintenance regime, to the high level required, would take place to achieve such excellent predicted growth rates. This would necessitate the installation and continuous use of an extensive irrigation system together with mulching to retain moisture. This is as well as weed and herbage control to maintain weed free areas around the plants. Without this I would anticipate much less than 'the assumed growth rates'. Given the latest predisposed weather conditions of very dry Springs with little if any rain during the critical establishment period and given the types of soils in the area; high losses could be expected. I have seen losses up to 70% - 85% in nearby locations, necessitating a replanting program.

5.3 I have extensive experience of large-scale planting in this geographical area. Observation of schemes locally show poor or minimal growth rates using cell grown stock with inadequate maintenance regimes. As an example, I have seen only 1.2m achieved after 5 years.

5.4 I advise assuming Year 1 to be the establishment year where growth can often be as little as 10 cm on some species. The following and successive years and given dry summers, growth rates can often be 50% or less of what is predicted.

6. My findings Para 89:

6.1 Individual Tree Planting. Reference to proposed hedgerows are supplemented with larger hedgerow trees being planting at a larger size (e.g. 1.6m). This size is not a recognised industry standard size. To be clearer the size could be specified as either 1.5/1.8m feathered tree or 1.8/2.1 feathered tree.

7. Conclusion

I hope you find these comments helpful in your deliberations and I would be happy to expand should you wish. I have not at this stage provided alternative recommendations for planting and aftercare but would be able to do so if required in the future.

Jon Rose