

SMDC Planning Reference –	DOC/2024/0069		
Site Name –	Rownall Road BESS		
Summary of proposals -	Review of Landscape Design Proposals – Materials Management Planning Information		
Consultation Note Subject –	Landscape and Visual Matters		
Planning Case Officer –	Principal Planning Officer		
Landscape comments prepared by –	Ryder Landscape Consultants		
Date(s) of site visit —	2022 & 2024	Date of this response	23/6/25
Number / Purpose of note	No.1 - To consider the submitted Materials Management Planning information and whether it satisfies Conditions 15 of Decision Notice SMD/2022/0444.		
Summary of consultation response	• That the proposal reduces transport and haulage disturbance to Rownall Road to a short stretch of the public highway. • That questions as to the depth of deposition are raised for the area of the receiving location. • That additional queries are raised with regards to land form shape, re-establishment of haulage and stockpile areas and effects to local surface water patterns. • That I do not consider that there is sufficient earthworks modelling and landscape reinstatement information provided to discharge the condition.		

Dear Madam

Cellarhead BESS (Rownall Road side) - Landscape and Visual Consultation on Discharge of SMD/2022/0444 Planning Conditions 15 – Materials Management Planning.

This note considers the single Condition 15 and focusses on the topic of cut and fill on the main Site and the placement of surplus cut material elsewhere on the same land holding. It primarily considers landscape and visual topics but touches upon secondary effects that relate back to the primary cause of excavating a large quantity of earth material to form the main Site's battery yard.

Condition 15 – Materials Management Plan Condition

15. No development shall commence including site stripping and clearance until such time that a Materials Management Plan (MMP) that defines the excavation and bund formation processes and provides detailed drawings of the proposed raised earthworks has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details

Reason:- In the interests of the character and appearance of the area

Sources of materials information

The following sources of information have been consulted as part of the preparation of this note:

- RSK GeoScience – Appendix E Mayer Earthwork Ltd Method Statement
- Beam Consulting – Earthworks Volume Site Layout 244-05-SK019 date 14/3/25.
- RSK GeoScience – Materials Management Plan to WRAP template

The table set below was snipped from the Beam Drawing and indicates the locations of cut material generated by the proposals:

NO	REF	AREA (m2)	RELATIVE DEPTH (m)	CUT (m3)	FILL (m3)
1	O/A SITE -2.5m	25000	2.5	62500	
2	GIS -7.5m	2100	5	10500	
3	GIS BASEMENT -11.5m	200	4	800	
4	TX -8.5m	500	1	500	
5	CABLE PIT -11.5m	60	4	240	
6	RAMP (-2.5m - -5.5m)	350	3	1050	
7	SITE BATTER (EAST & SOUTH)	2300	2	2300 (4600m3 / 2)	
8	O/A SITE +0.5m #	25000	0.5		12500
9	BUNDS SOIL STRIP	17000	0.3	5100	5100
10	BUNDS - 725m LG	25	2		18125
	TOTAL			82990	35725
	# DENOTES ALL NEW MATERIAL IMPORTED FOR FINAL SITE BUILD-UPS AND NOT TO BE USED TO MASS BALANCE				

It indicates that there is a difference between the cut and fill of $82990 - 35725 = 47,665\text{m}^3$.

This figure is actually greater as the fill material includes 12,500 Cu.m of imported material, presumably crushed stone to build up the Operating Area / site by 0.5m.

$$47,665 + 12,500 = 60,165\text{m}^3$$

Other figures in the reports indicate that 50,000m³ is likely needed to be exported.

Major soil excavation works such as these are at times hard to predict so it is safer to think of a range of between 50,000 to 60,000m³ will need carting off site. Using an average 10 Cu.m per wagon this equates to 5,000 to 6,000 lorry movements full which in total doubles up to between 10,000 and 12,000 lorry movements when the return empty journeys are factored in.

The remaining fill – estimated to be 23,225m³ is retained within the red line boundary of the main scheme to form the bunds around the battery yard. The placement of the bunds is considered as agreed across the landscape and site arrangement plans.

Deposition Area

The deposition area is proposed on the same land holding to the north east of Rownall Road approximately 600-800m away from the point of excavation.

If the excavation route following the proposed site access then heads north on Rownall Road there will be a 75m stretch of public highway that the wagons would have to run along before turning right to use an existing farm track to run down to the deposition area.

The access track on the farm will likely have to be reinforced and widened to take the number and frequency of wagon movements. Alternatively, a straight crossing over Rownall Road could be formed to convey the wagons with no running on the public highway other than crossing directly over it.

Although photographed in the Wharfe Planning and MMP documents the deposition area does not appear large or deep enough to accommodate this quantity of material and still retain reasonable ground levels in the area. For example if the overall deposition area measures 5,000m² then even at the lower threshold of cut an average depth of 10m is required to accommodate the surplus cut.

Such a height of filling would not be acceptable as it would appear artificial and alien within the local landscape.

To indicate how the deposition will occur and whether it is reasonable to class a project of this scale as Permitted Development then a deposition plan is suggested that indicates:

- The overall area of deposition;
- New contours to allow understanding of the planned gradients of the deposited material and to show how they blend into surrounding areas;
- Tree and hedge protection plan to indicate how existing field boundaries and trees are protected during the works and if proposed for removal how they will be reinstated on completion;
- Lay down areas for stockpiling topsoil for capping the final earth form and contingency lay down areas for contaminated materials or other materials not considered suitable for filling.
- Soft Landscape plan / statement for turning the deposition area into viable agricultural pasture similar to the adjacent areas.

If such a plan has been provided, or the information listed above is held on other documents please can it be supplied to me for review.

Landscape Character Effects in the Deposition Area

There are four primary elements that will influence whether the deposition area can assimilate successfully within the surrounding pastoral landscape.

- Gradient – providing shallow enough gradients so the deposition area does not appear artificial in the surroundings, it must not look like a ‘pimple’ or obvious steep sided mound in the landscape;
- Surfacing – it should be put to improved pasture to match adjacent fields and appear as part of the contextual landscape;
- Field boundaries – hedged and treed field boundaries should be used to continue broader field scape patterning to match the adjoining countryside; and
- Land-use – Manage the established pasture in a similar fashion to other parts of the farm for grazing or silage production.

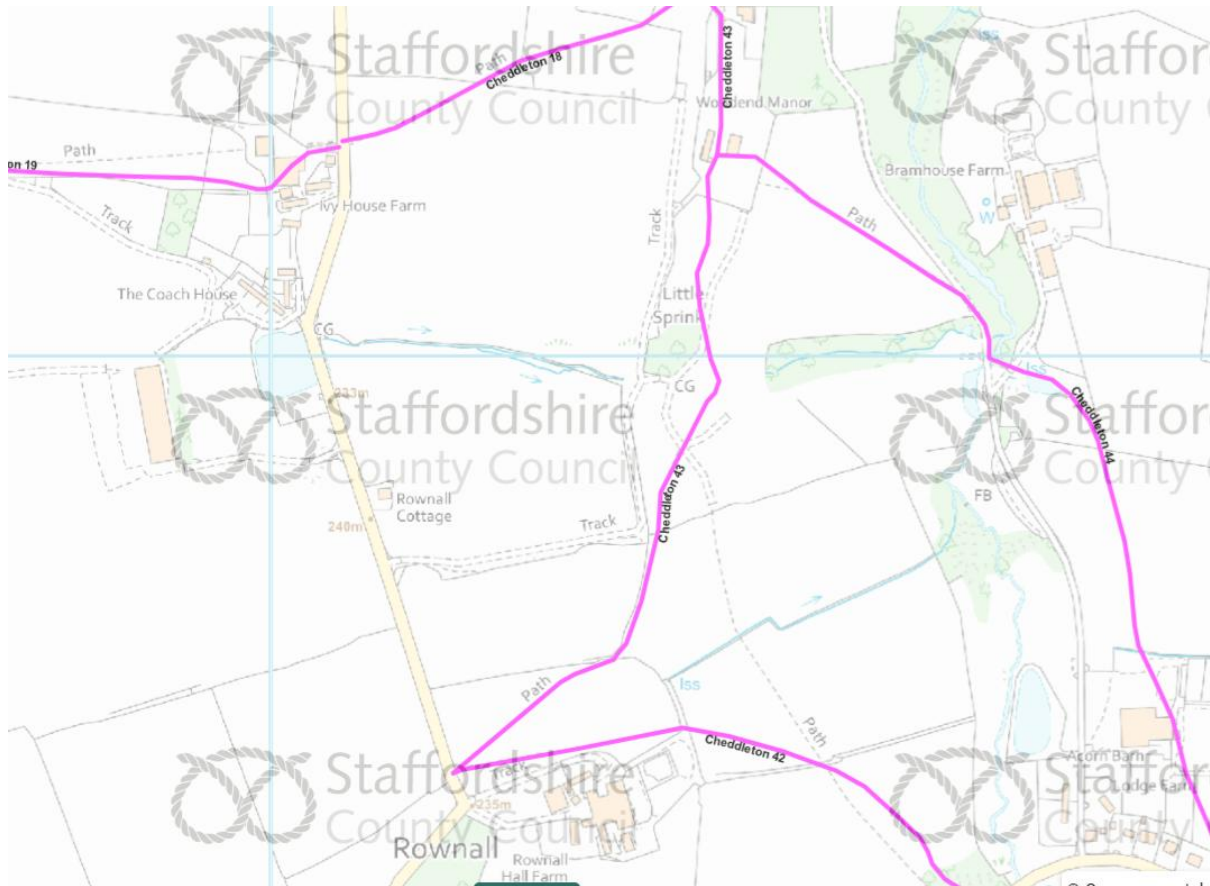
The principle of using it to create, or improve other pasture appears acceptable in landscape terms as long the deposition area’s final appearance is a pasture fields rather than pasture set over a notable mound or stockpile.

However the proposed deposition Site falls within the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Area and specifically in Sub Area 5a – Wetley Rocks Ancient Slope & Valley Farmlands. The boundary to the Churnet Valley is Rownall Road and the land form in and around the deposition area falls more to the east offering longer views in that direction. The Churnet Valley as an area is highly attractive in parts and some is worthy of valued landscape status as per NPPF 187 a) meaning of the term. However I consider it unlikely that this area will be deemed a valued landscape but have not seen any assessments with the submitted material to confirm it is not.

Visual Effects in the Deposition Area

Without attending Site I cannot categorically confirm a definitive list of visual receptors but from looking at online mapping the following groups are likely to receive adverse visual effects:

- Users of Rownall Road during the construction period as wagoins are moved – temporary effect;
- Users of PRow Footpath Cheddleton 43 as it descends to the north and will require temporary stopping up or control as the haulage route would pass over it;
- Possibly users of PRow Cheddleton 44 depending on how far east the deposition area stretches, this footpath would not require stopping up;
- Residents at Coach House cottages and possibly at Woodend Manor.



Extract courtesy of Staffs CC PRow online map - [RightsOfWay Cadcorp SIS WebMap 9.1](#) accessed 23/6/25

Potential secondary effects

- Ensuring there are no protected habitats or species affected by the works.
- Burrowing of archaeological remains at the deposition site, typically this should preserve such assets unless they are subject to loading pressures.
- Adequate benching and keying into the receiving site to prevent slippage and slumpage.
- Sedimentation and pollution entering the local surface water drainage system during the construction period, particularly after heavy precipitation or snowmelt.
- Changes to localised surface water routes would become permanent on completion of the fill material. This is likely to be the responsibility of the landowner as the riparian owner but could affect any main rivers if there are any in the area.
- Road cleaning during the works will be critical to retain highway safety on Rownall Road.
- Is this material to be re-used at the end of the BESS' operational life to re-fill the battery compound?

Overall summary

At this stage I do not consider that Condition 15 can be discharged primarily due to lack of information about the proposed deposition area, I am also uncertain as to the Permitted Development nature of the works given the potential scale of the earth moving between different parts of the farm holding.

The matters that I believe are relevant in your decision making process are:

- That the principle of retaining surplus excavations in the near vicinity of the main Site is a sound one and better than trying to modify the field near to Rownall Road
- That the closer to the main site it is the more sustainable it is in terms of carbon expended, highway disturbance and wider disturbance to local people;
- The effects on the access route, both highway and down the farm lane need to be considered in terms of what impact a large earth moving campaign of over 10,000 lorry movements will have;
- Whether there is sufficient space at the receiving site to accept the material and allow it to be graded so that it assimilates in to the adjacent countryside and this is my primary concern;
- Confirmation that the deposition Site is not a valued landscape as per NPPF 187a meaning of the term;
- What other space is required for materials management purposes – basically keeping the topsoil away from the subsoil so it can be put back in the receiving site in the correct order , and handling contaminated materials or stone if they are found;
- What hydrological impacts (if any) at the receiving Site with the new soil changing natural levels and potential surface water flow paths?
- The effects on PRow in the area and how Footpath Cheddleton 43 will cross the haul route; and
- There are no specific landscape mitigation drawings for the receiving Site that would define seeding and planting works e.g. hedgerow restoration, hedgerow trees, field corner copses.

Please contact me should you wish to discuss these points further.

Ryder Landscape Consultants

23/6/25