

SMDC Planning Reference –	DOC/2025/0055		
Site Name –	Cellarhead BESS (Rownall Roadside)		
Summary of proposals -	Detailed engineering and earthworks proposals for Attenuation Pond		
Consultation Note Subject –	Landscape and Visual Effects / Operational Activities		
Planning Case Officer –	Jane Curley – Principal Planning Officer		
Landscape comments prepared by –	Stuart Ryder of Ryder Landscape Consultants		
Date(s) of site visit —	2022 & 2024	Date of this response	14/10/25
Number / Purpose of note	No.2 to review the proposed engineering form and appearance of the attenuation basin		
Summary of consultation response	The updated proposals are considered acceptable subject to a short series of design queries and comments on ease of maintainability. It is suggested that these matters can be followed up with the Applicant by an exchange of e-mails as required.		

Dear Madam

Cellarhead BESS (Rownall Roadside) - Landscape and Visual Consultation on DOC/2025/0055 for detail design discharge of the proposed surface water attenuation pond

This note addresses the following matters:

1. Purpose of note
2. Design comments
3. Review of previous comments
4. Overall Summary

1. Purpose and methodology of note

To consider the updated engineering drawings that provide construction information on the proposed attenuation basin to the south west of the Site's lower field near to Rownall Road. The comments are based entirely on the two Ameresco badged drawings supplied to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) to illustrate the proposed form of the works.

- 3001816-BMC-CS-XX-DR-CV-0007 Rev 3 - Proposed Pond Drainage Details dated 8/8/25
- 3001816-BMC-CS-XX-DR-CV-0008 Rev 2 Proposed Pond Plan & Sections dated 8/8/25

Some indicative red lines are sketched on the scanned versions of these plans that accompany the note. The red lines show possible modifications or points of query to discuss with the Applicant. They are not design proposals or recommendations and the design liability stays with Ameresco and their design consultants.

These red lines are accompanied by numbered green dots that relate to the design comments below.

2. Design Comments

The following eight observations have been made about the design and management of the attenuation basin. None are fundamental in nature, and they are raised as a way of clarifying the proposals or possibly improving them so they fit better within the immediate field or are easier to maintain. The suggestion is that these design queries can be addressed through a clarification e-mail rather than an immediate modification to the proposals drawing.

1. Angular form of the embankment and cut slopes

Recognising it is easier to draw straight, angular lines in CAD for the embankment and associated maintenance paths these should be formed with rounded edge profiles to make them appear more natural. A drawing note should address this matter.

2. Clay embankment key

Recognising that there is a drawing note saying that the clay embankment is to be 'built off natural ground' has this decision been reached by a Civil or Geotechnical Engineer who has concluded that a 'key' into the existing ground profile is not required?

3. Safety handrails to headwalls

The need for these safety handrails is questioned as galvanized Kee-Clamp or similar fittings will appear uncharacteristic in a rural location. They are provided almost by default but the question has to be asked who is it protecting in this location. If it is a case of preventing slips, trips and falls then a timber post and rail fence set away from the headwalls as indicated by Point 7 on drawing CV-0008 may be appropriate. Before suggesting any change to the railing type and location the Applicant should satisfy themselves through engagement with their Planning Supervisor / Health and Safety Advisor that timber fencing in the locations indicated performs all necessary safety and control functions.

4. Purpose of drain intake

Where is this drain intake originating from? Is it the land drainage from the field to the north? If this is the case why can it not continue discharging to its existing outfall or does the proposed basin affect this?

5. Opportunity to slacken end gradients

There is space at both the east and west ends of the pond to slacken the end gradients. To the east end a bund with a shallower gradient would appear more natural in its setting rather than a standard 1:3 profile. There is space to achieve this without affecting any root protection areas of trees to be retained. Likewise the cut slope to the west could be slackened considerably to vary the edge gradient of the pond to introduce variety of form without affecting BNG or tree protection areas.

6. Exg S1

It is unclear what Exg S1 is or where it goes to but it is presumed to stand for Existing Sewer 1 or similar title that is to receive a design flow rate of up to 17.87 litres/second during discharge periods. Is the designer satisfied that this outflow rate can be accommodated by Exg S1 and can they provide written acceptance from the statutory undertaker of acceptance of this outflow to this particular sewer run? Or is some other discharge management system in place downstream of the pond outflow?

7. Indicative timber fencing alternatives at headwalls

Potential locations of timber fencing near to the basins headwalls (indicated at all three but only numbered at west end) – see Point 3 for context of suggestion.

8. Vehicle maintenance access

There does not appear to be a vehicle access around or into the basin which may be sensible for future plant and desilting activities. Looking to manage such work from the bank top would be difficult with the nearby line of trees restricting vehicles with long reach excavation arms.

3. Review against previous comments

A review against the questions raised in the comments for the NMA Application to relocate the flood basin suggests that two – Questions 7 & 8, remain pertinent. New comments are set in green against the previous points.

Q7: What planting proposals are included for the basin?

A: A series of willows and native grasses are proposed as plants around the basin. It is recommended that the willows are used judiciously as they have the potential to take over such a water body and make it hard to maintain for drainage purposes.

Hydroseeding with a wet meadow mix is indicated on the engineering drawings which is acceptable but this should be updated on the landscape and BNG proposals as well. Plug planting in the basin would assist in establishing a pioneer population of preferable marginal species. The ongoing management of more vigorous species within the basin remains valid.

Q8: What if any design details or changes would you expect to see for a water basin to assimilate into the local agricultural landscape and act as an asset for wildlife and for people walking on FP53.

A: Varied slope gradient into the basin so it doesn't appear as a uniform farm reservoir.

Not achieved with a standard 1:3 trapezoidal form to embankment and face of cut slopes is not a varied gradient which is why point 5 I suggested.

Variety of gradients is useful for different habitats and wildlife value.

Again Point 5 assists with creation of varied gradients.

Reinforce planting to the west end of the basin to assist in screening.

Not included on these Engineering Drawings but needs to be added to the final landscape drawings.

Retain a grass maintenance track around the top of the basin for ease of future access.

One is included but at 1.2m wide this is only suitable for pedestrian and small mower access rather than plant access. If the Applicant plans to maintain the pond by hand or with small machinery this is fine but it should be wider if they intend to use farm machinery.

Minimise tree planting on the north side so that a sunny, south facing slope. The south facing slope benefits insects and herpetofauna. Keep a section of lane side hedge lower to allow views along the basin feature.

These details would need to be shown on the final landscape plans and referenced in the Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan.

4. Overall summary

The proposed basin engineering design appears appropriate subject to answering the design points raised on the scanned comments and in the notes above. As stated, I think this can be done through an exchange of e-mails and subsequent update to the proposals drawing. The larger points that I think the Applicant should consider relates to the form of future maintenance equipment they plan to use at the attenuation pond.

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

Stuart Ryder

Ryder Landscape Consultants

14/10/25