

SMD/2026/0050 - Suggested Landscape Planning Conditions

Rownall Road Agricultural Land Improvement / Soil Deposition Proposal

Below are suggested landscape planning conditions for the Rownall Road agricultural land improvement / soil deposition proposal. These are framed as officer-ready conditions, each with a separate reason referring to the relevant Staffordshire Moorlands landscape and environmental policy context.

It is recognised that some of these Conditions can be addressed in part by the submitted application information but I have included them as part of a precautionary approach to the consent.

1. Approved Plans and Landscape Control

The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans and documents insofar as they relate to landscape, landform, soil deposition, access, tree protection, drainage protection, temporary works, restoration and aftercare, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include the approved deposition areas, temporary access arrangements, PRow crossing/diversion arrangements, watercourse buffer, tree protection measures, restoration seeding and final graded landform.

Reason - To ensure that the development is implemented in a controlled and visually acceptable manner, to safeguard the character and appearance of the rural landscape, and to ensure compliance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3, which seek to secure high-quality sustainable development, protect and enhance landscape character, and ensure that development responds positively to the Churnet Valley landscape context.

2. Final Levels, Sections and Landform Tie-In

No soil deposition or land re-profiling shall take place until detailed existing and proposed levels, contour plans, cross-sections and longitudinal sections of the deposition areas have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The submitted details shall demonstrate:

- a. the final finished ground levels;
- b. the relationship between the proposed landform and adjoining existing land levels;
- c. the gradients of all re-profiled slopes;
- d. the treatment of transitions at the edges of the deposition areas;
- e. the retention and visual legibility of the existing clough/watercourse landform; and
- f. confirmation that no artificial platforms, abrupt bunds, engineered terraces or visually discordant landforms would be created. The development shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure that the final landform assimilates naturally with the surrounding agricultural slopes and valley-side landscape, avoids an engineered or artificial appearance, and protects the local landscape character of the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands / Churnet Valley context, in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

3. Soil Handling, Placement and Decompaction Method Statement

Prior to the commencement of soil stripping, movement, deposition or re-profiling works, a Soil Handling, Placement and Decompaction Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The Method Statement shall include details of:

- a. the source, quantity and type of soil to be deposited;
- b. the sequence of soil stripping, transport, storage, placement and spreading;
- c. measures to prevent compaction, smearing, rutting and erosion;
- d. maximum stockpile heights and stockpile locations;
- e. restrictions on soil handling during unsuitable weather or ground conditions;
- f. decompaction and cultivation of the receiving areas;
- g. treatment of settlement, slumping or erosion; and
- h. supervision and sign-off arrangements.

The works shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement.

Reason - To protect soil structure, ensure successful restoration to pasture, avoid long-term adverse landscape effects from poor establishment, rutting, compaction or erosion, and secure an environmentally responsible form of land improvement in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

4. Watercourse Buffer and Protection of the Clough

No soil deposition, tracking, stockpiling, storage of materials, machinery movement, fuel storage, drainage alteration or ground raising shall take place within 3 metres of the existing watercourse, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Prior to commencement, the 3 metre buffer shall be clearly marked on site and protected for the duration of the works. The watercourse shall be retained in its existing alignment and shall not be culverted, infilled, narrowed, regraded or otherwise altered except in accordance with details first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To protect the natural drainage function, ecological value and landscape character of the clough and associated watercourse, and to avoid adverse effects on the rural valley-side landscape, in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

5. Tree and Hedgerow Protection

No development, including soil movement, temporary access construction, site clearance, storage of materials or machinery movement, shall commence until tree and hedgerow protection measures have been installed in accordance with details first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The protection measures shall include protective fencing, root protection area controls, construction exclusion zones and arrangements for arboricultural supervision where works take place close to retained trees or hedgerows.

The approved tree and hedgerow protection measures shall be retained for the duration of the works and no excavation, soil deposition, level changes, storage, fires, chemicals, plant movement or compaction shall take place within the protected areas.

Reason - To safeguard retained trees and hedgerows that contribute to the landscape structure, visual containment and rural character of the site and its surroundings, in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

6. Temporary Access, Track Mats and Removal of Temporary Works

All temporary access routes, track mats, haul routes, passing places, fencing, signage, welfare areas, stockpile areas and associated temporary works shall be installed only in accordance with details first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The approved details shall include:

- a. the location, width and construction of all temporary access routes;
- b. the form of temporary track matting or surfacing;
- c. protection of pasture, hedgerows, trees and field boundaries;
- d. wheel-washing and mud-control measures;
- e. the period of use; and
- f. reinstatement details following completion.

All temporary access materials and associated temporary infrastructure shall be removed from the site within one month of completion of the soil deposition works, and the land shall be restored in accordance with the approved restoration scheme.

Reason - To limit temporary visual harm, prevent unnecessary urbanising features in the rural landscape, protect the condition of agricultural land and field boundaries, and ensure the site is properly restored, in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

7. Public Right of Way Protection and Reinstatement

Condition - Prior to the commencement of works affecting any public right of way, a Public Right of Way Management and Reinstatement Scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme shall include:

- a. the location and duration of any temporary diversion;
- b. details of temporary fencing, surfacing, signage and user safety measures;
- c. arrangements for maintaining safe public access during the works;
- d. crossing-point details;
- e. measures to minimise visual and recreational disruption; and
- f. reinstatement of the definitive route and surrounding ground levels following completion.

The approved scheme shall be implemented in full for the duration of the works and the public right of way shall be reinstated within one month of completion of the relevant works.

Reason - To protect the amenity and safety of users of the public right of way network, particularly where receptors are likely to experience close-range views of the works, and to minimise temporary adverse landscape and visual effects in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

8. Landscape Restoration Scheme

Prior to the commencement of soil deposition works, a detailed Landscape Restoration Scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme shall include:

- a. final cultivation and seedbed preparation;
- b. grass seed mix specification suitable for the restored pasture;
- c. timing and method of seeding;
- d. any tree, hedgerow or native planting required to reinforce local landscape character;
- e. protection of newly seeded or planted areas;
- f. measures to address erosion, settlement or poor establishment;
- g. details of replacement planting where any planting fails; and
- h. a timetable for implementation.

The approved Landscape Restoration Scheme shall be implemented in full during the first suitable planting or seeding season following completion of the soil deposition works.

Reason - To ensure that the site is restored to an appropriate pastoral agricultural character, to mitigate temporary adverse visual effects, and to reinforce the landscape structure and character of the Churnet Valley landscape, in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

9. Landscape Aftercare and Monitoring

Prior to completion of the soil deposition works, a short Landscape Aftercare and Monitoring Plan in the form of a letter shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The letter plan shall cover a minimum period of five years from completion of the restoration works and shall include:

- a. grassland establishment monitoring;
- b. treatment of failed or patchy seeding;
- c. repair of erosion, rutting, compaction, slumping or settlement;
- d. weed control;
- e. replacement of failed trees or hedgerow plants at restored site entrances;
- f. grazing or mowing controls during establishment;
- g. annual monitoring inspections; and
- h. reporting to the Local Planning Authority.

The approved aftercare and monitoring measures shall be implemented in full.

Reason - To ensure the successful long-term restoration of the site, to prevent residual adverse landscape and visual effects arising from poor establishment or landform failure, and to secure a durable environmental outcome in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

10. Completion and Verification Report

Within three months of completion of the soil deposition and restoration works, a Completion and Verification Report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

The report shall include:

- a. confirmation that the approved final levels have been achieved;
- b. photographic evidence of the restored landform;
- c. confirmation that temporary access materials and works have been removed;
- d. confirmation that the watercourse buffer has been retained;
- e. confirmation that public rights of way have been reinstated;
- f. confirmation that tree and hedgerow protection measures have been observed; and
- g. details of any remedial works required.

Any remedial works identified shall be carried out within a timescale first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To provide certainty that the development has been completed in accordance with the approved landscape, restoration and environmental controls, and to ensure that the final scheme preserves rural landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

11. Restriction on Further Soil Importation or Additional Land Raising

No soil, subsoil, clay, spoil, aggregate or other fill material, other than the approved quantity and source of clean natural material identified in the approved application documents, shall be imported to or deposited on the site without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

No further land raising, regrading or engineering operation shall take place outside the approved deposition areas.

Reason - To prevent uncontrolled land raising, avoid additional adverse landscape and visual effects, protect the rural character of the site and ensure that the development remains limited to the assessed agricultural land improvement scheme, in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policies SS1, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3.

Suggested Core Conditions to Prioritise

If the Council wants a shorter condition set, I would prioritise:

1. Final levels and landform tie-in
2. Soil handling and decompaction method statement
3. Watercourse buffer protection
4. Tree and hedgerow protection
5. Temporary access and PRow reinstatement
6. Landscape restoration and five-year aftercare
7. Restriction on further importation or additional land raising

These directly address the main landscape and visual risks: artificial landform, failed restoration, public right of way effects, tree/hedgerow impacts, watercourse/clough character, and creep beyond the assessed scheme.