

230073 – RGC 17 Kidmore End Road - Landscaping

We do not have great expertise on these issues, but the detailed drawings seem to us to show a well thought-out approach, with suitable density and choice of planting and care in accommodating wildlife. Within that supportive view, we have some detailed comments.

1. The Landscape Masterplan

The key appears to be mis-labelled, which makes the plan difficult to follow:

- The 'proposed evergreen hedge planting' legend appears to show free-standing trees. We conjecture that it should actually show the solid green lines between the footway and the spine road and elsewhere.
- The 'Proposed decorative shrub planting to plot frontages' legend shows specimen trees, which are scattered through the site, so is clearly wrong.
- 'Structural street tree planting' clearly isn't, and the legend it shows does not appear anywhere in the plan
- 'Proposed open space tree planting' seems instead to show the key for 'decorative planting to plot frontages'

So the ability to follow and comment on this plan is limited, though cross-reference to the 1:200 drawings removes this problem.

2. The additional LEAP meets a previous request from CADRA and is very welcome. However, the revised juxtaposition of **the original, central LEAP** and the adjoining swale greatly reduces the natural overlooking of the LEAP from nearby houses. This poses risks of safeguarding and vandalism and we suggest it be reconsidered

3. We note the **evergreen hedge planting**: broadly escallonia in the north and privet in the south, with some scattered hornbeam hedges. While this helps build separate identities for these sub-areas, we understand that privet can be an invasive species (laurel, as another example, is causing problems in local woodland). Replacement with native beech or hornbeam hedging would remove this problem and be much more characteristic of the area, retaining leaves in winter and giving an attractive seasonal colour variation. We suggest its substitution for the privet and possibly escallonia. The 'species rich hedgerow planting' proposed for the north-west boundary sounds better-judged.

4. We do not have expertise on **street lighting**, but assume that it will be designed to minimise light pollution within and beyond the site, which is important especially from the countryside area to the north.

5. We like the hedgehog routes within the individual development blocks but wonder if any provision can be made for them to cross the estate roads with less risk.

6. Turning to the Officers' report, section 6.4 comments on the site in relation to the **Chilterns AONB**. We point out that Natural England are currently reviewing the AONB boundary and that all the land between the site and the current boundary falls within their area of search.