

Before Hawkes Bay Regional Council and Hastings District Council

In the matter of the Resource Management Act 1991

And

In the matter of Applications by Hastings District Council and Napier City Council
(**Applicants**) for approvals relating to Area B at Ōmarunui Landfill
(**Landfill**)

Summary of evidence by Shannon Bray (Landscape and Visual Effects)

Dated 28 October 2021

1. I prepared evidence dated 2 September 2021.
2. My evidence details my involvement in the project following the receipt of submissions after notification of the project, and the work I undertook to consider longer term outcomes for the proposed site following its use as a landfill. I have referred to the initial landscape and visual assessment carried out by Evergreen Landscapes Ltd but have provided revised landscape plans for the project.
3. Much of my work has focussed on post closure use and activities. In my experience working on other similar projects, understanding the end use is useful in helping to shape how mitigation of the current operation can best work. My evidence recommends the designation conditions refer to the development of a site as a recreation reserve as part of the Closure and Aftercare Plan (CAP).

Landscape and Visual Effects

4. In regard to landscape effects, I consider that the effects will be low and in character with the anticipated outcomes of what is a highly modified landscape context.
5. In regard to visual effects, I consider that the overall effects will be low. There will be no existing residential properties that will have a view of the proposal, with the only views being from surrounding elevated farmland which are in the context of the

existing landfill operation. I therefore also conclude that there is no requirement to undertake any visual mitigation planting.

Concerns of Mr Bearsley

6. However, I am aware of the concerns of Mr Bearsley. In addition to reading Mr Bearsley's submission and evidence, I have also met him on-site on two occasions to discuss what outcomes he would like. I understand from these discussions that he is keen for planting to be undertaken, particularly along the boundary of the site adjacent to his property. I therefore prepared a landscape plan that provides this outcome (Sheet 04 of my graphic attachment), and my understanding is that Mr Bearsley is supportive of this plan.
7. Mr Bearsley's evidence raises a concern that, since the presentation of my landscape plan, an access track has been created through the area outlined for planting.
8. Principally the track provides access to some monitoring stations within the landfill site, however it will also be of use for undertaking and maintaining the proposed planting. Nevertheless, I agree with Mr Bearsley that this track would have been better located further from his boundary. My second meeting on-site with Mr Bearsley, which was prior to the date of his evidence, was specifically arranged to discuss this track, and we agreed that it will be shifted at least 4m from the boundary to allow for a reasonable planted buffer between the track and the boundary. My understanding from Mr Doolan is that this relocation has now occurred.
9. I consider that planting either side of the track will allow for a closed canopy to be achieved, this likely to take in the region of 5-8 years. When this happens, the track will be difficult to see from Mr Bearsley's property.
10. In regard to the completion of planting, I have been instructed to commence preparation of a detailed planting plan, together with a preparation and maintenance plan. I confirm I have started this work.
11. Additionally, as part of this process, I have engaged a production forestry expert to assist me in the development of the productive totara forestry regime. It is our intention to have plans completed in time to arrange planting of the "*Area B Planting Area (3.5Ha)*" (as outlined on Sheet 04 of my graphic attachment) in the next planting season, May/June 2022.

12. It is our intention to invite Mr Bearsley to input into these plans as they are developed over the next few months. We recognise his experience in managing the particular conditions of this locality, particularly in regard to the establishment of certain plant species and the control of weeds.

Debris Fences

13. I make a note in my statement of evidence in regard to debris fences, addressing a point raised by Mr McKay, and provide a plan showing the indicative location of such fences on Sheet 04 of my graphic attachment.

Stockpiles

14. I also understand that the Commissioners raised a query regarding the potential effects of the stockpiles. I have had confirmation from Mr Bryce that the stockpiles will not exceed the height of the surrounding ridgelines. Therefore, I am of the opinion that they will not be visible from any public viewpoints or any existing private residences. There will be views of the stockpiles from surrounding rural land, including from Mr Bearsley's property, but I consider that the visual effects will be low and in the context of the existing operational landfill.
15. In addition, the proposed planting (outlined above) that will be undertaken in 2022 will grow to further screen the stockpiles from Mr Bearsley's property in the next 5 to 7 years.

Conclusions

16. I have recommended three conditions of designation, detailed in paragraphs 68 to 70 of my statement of evidence. These provide for the end of use plan, the planting outlined above, and the location of debris fences. Since my evidence was completed, Mr McKay has confirmed agreement with the conditions, with an additional reference to the planting being in indigenous species, which I agree with. With these conditions in place, I consider that the landscape and visual effects of the proposal will be less than minor.

Shannon Bray
28 October 2021