Longfield Solar Farm

Ecology Appraisal of Boreham Road Temporary Access for Abnormal Indivisible Loads

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Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
[redacted]			NT
Associate, Ecologist MCIEEM	MCIEEM	Technical Director, Ecology FCIEEM	Project Director

Prepared for:

Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited

Table of Contents

1 Background

1.1.1 Appendix M of the revised **Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) [Appendix 13C of the ES]** for Deadline 4, dated November 2022, presents an Abnormal Load Route Survey by Pell Frischmann. This report is based on larger vehicles than had been previously assumed in the Environmental Statement.

1.1.2 The Abnormal Load Route Survey by Pell Frischmann concludes that minor vegetation pruning of overhanging branches may be needed within the highways to provide height clearance for the Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs), although the need for this would be determined following final equipment selection. Vegetation removal is required to create a temporary access for AILs opposite the Cranham Road junction onto Boreham Road, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Source: Pell & Frishman Longfield Solar Farm Abnormal Load Route Survey).

1.1.3 This technical note provides an ecological appraisal of the area of vegetation removal needed along Boreham Road, opposite Cranham Road.

2 Assessment

1.1.4 This area of vegetation loss shown on Figure 1 was surveyed on 17th May 2022 as part of the **Wheeler's Hill and Cranham Road Ecology Survey [EN010118/EX/8.8].**

1.1.5 The habitats comprise bare ground (i.e. the road) and species poor semi-improved grassland on the small central reservation and a bank to the north-east of Boreham Road, a dry ditch at the base on the bank and then an arable field to the north-east (See Plate 1 and Figure 2). The grassland on the central reservation bank and dry ditch is species poor and mown in places for visibility. Species include false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), soft brome (*Bromus hordeaceus subspecies hordeaceus*), perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), common couch (*Elymus repens*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale aggregate*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).

Plate 1. AIL access point looking north-east (17th May 2022)

1.1.6 During temporary clearance there is a risk of ground nesting birds being present in the arable field and margins (March to August inclusive).

1.1.7 There are no other habitat or species constraints identified at this location.

1.1.8 General precautions would be taken to avoid disturbance to ground nesting birds, which is secured by the **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010118/APP/7.10(C)].** Table 3-3 of the oCEMP commits to:

"Avoidance of the nesting bird period i.e. March to August (inclusive) for vegetation clearance where reasonably practicable. Any vegetation clearance proposed within the nesting bird period will be checked for the presence of any nests by a suitably qualified ornithologist, prior to vegetation removal, and if active nests are found, then appropriate buffer zones would be put in place and the area monitored until the young birds have fledged."

1.1.9 The oCEMP also commits (Table 3-3) to:

"Pre-construction surveys will be undertaken to validate and, where necessary, update the baseline survey findings. The purpose of the pre-construction surveys is to ensure mitigation during the construction phase is based on the latest protected species information. This will also be required for any protected species licensing.

Pre-construction surveys will be undertaken to provide an update on the presence and location of any invasive species, the findings of which will inform the implementation of measures to prevent their spread into the wild. This will include production of a Biosecurity Management Plan which will set out procedures to ensure that no invasive species are brought onto the Site (e.g. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 9 species). In the event that any future infestations of invasive non-native species are identified prior to and or during the development process, exclusion zones will be established around them and the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) contacted for advice, as required."

1.1.10 It is considered that the temporary access to the Solar Farm Site for AILs would not lead to any new environmental impacts, or change the conclusions of the Environmental Statement Chapter 8: Ecology [APP-040]. It is also considered that the oCEMP and **Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010118/APP/7.13(B)]** are adequate and do not need amending to reflect the temporary access.

Figure 1. AIL access point

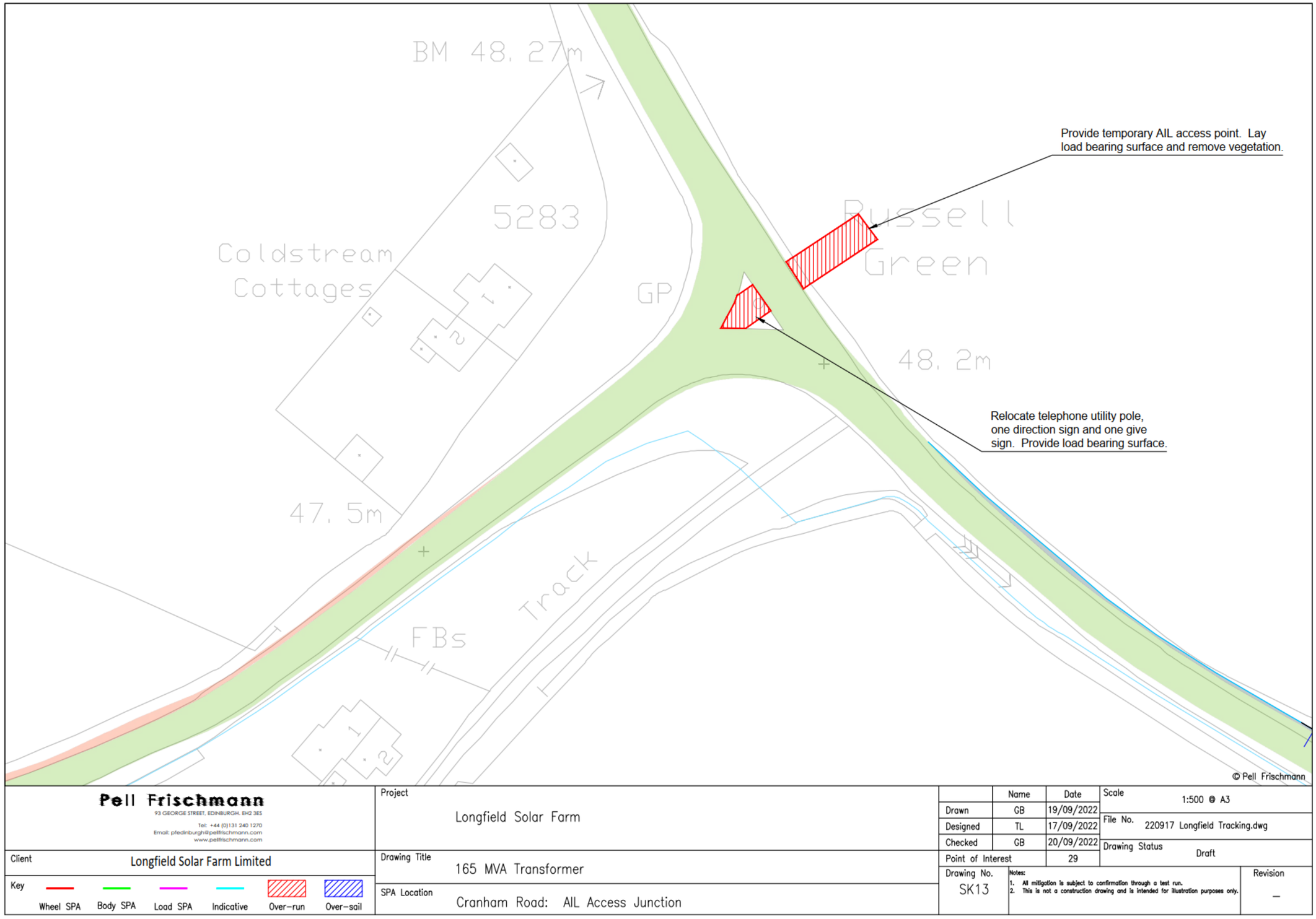

Figure 2. Phase 1 habitat survey map