

Ms Frankie Kilby
Clerk, Terling and Fairstead Parish Council
3 Pilgrims Court
Cuckoo Hill
Bures
Essex, CO8 5LF

25 October 2021

Dear Consultee,

Longfield Solar Farm Development Consent Order

Additional statutory pre-application consultation: 26 October 2021 to 23 November 2021

Section 42 Planning Act 2008 (as amended): Duty to consult on a proposed application

The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (“APFP Regulations”)

The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (“EIA Regulations”)

Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd is consulting on changes to the Scheme boundary of the proposed Longfield Solar Farm (the "Scheme") between 26 October 2021 and 23 November 2021. This letter invites you to respond to this additional statutory consultation.

Why we are writing to you

This letter is sent to you as part of a statutory consultation exercise on the Scheme carried out pursuant to section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the “Act”). Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd consulted initially on the Scheme as a whole between 1 June and 13 July 2021.

We are now consulting with you as we have made changes to the Scheme boundary to include additional land (“additional land”). This letter is sent to you pursuant to section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the “Act”). Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd is consulting you in your capacity as a prescribed consultee under section 42(1)(a) of the Act and Schedule 1 to the APFP Regulations and / or as a Local Authority statutory consultee under section 42(1)(b) and section 43 of the Act.

This consultation will last from **26 October 2021 to 23:59 on 23 November 2021**. Following this statutory consultation period, our intention is to finalise the Scheme having had regard to the consultation responses received. We would then submit to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy an application for a Development Consent Order (“DCO”) that would authorise the construction, operation (which includes maintenance) and decommissioning of the Scheme. The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) would administer the process on behalf of the Secretary of State.

The Scheme

The Longfield Solar Farm would comprise the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW), energy storage facility and export connection to the National Grid (“The Scheme”). The Scheme would be located on farmland north east of Chelmsford, and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel, covering an area of approximately 474 hectares (ha) (“the DCO Site”).

The proposed DCO will, amongst other things, authorise:

- construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of ground mounted PV Arrays, Solar Stations and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), along with various underground Distribution Cables;
- associated and/or ancillary works including a new substation, known as the Longfield Substation which will be connected to the PV Arrays and BESS via underground Distribution Cables. The Longfield Substation will then link into the existing Bulls Lodge Substation, operated by National Grid. The Scheme includes an extension to the existing Bulls Lodge Substation. Other works will include primary and secondary access tracks, and ancillary buildings such as offices. There will also be parts of the DCO Site used for landscape works which will include features such as biodiversity improvement measures and fencing;
- highway improvements to facilitate access to the Scheme during the construction period;
- the compulsory acquisition of land and/or rights and the taking of temporary possession of land;
- the overriding of easements and other rights over or affecting land;
- the application and/or disapplication of legislation relating to the Longfield Solar Farm; and,
- such ancillary, incidental and consequential provisions, licences, property rights, permits and consents as are necessary and/or convenient.

The Scheme qualifies as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”) and will require a DCO from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, due to its generating capacity exceeding 50 MW.

The proposed Scheme is also an “EIA development” for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. For the purposes of the statutory consultation undertaken in June – July 2021, we therefore produced a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (“PEI”) Report which contains preliminary information about the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed Scheme, together with a non-technical summary of this information. Further environmental studies and assessments are being undertaken, and a full environmental statement will be produced and submitted with the proposed application.

The changes to the Scheme boundary

We are proposing the following changes to the Scheme boundary:

- **Whealers Hill and Cranham Road:** At the statutory consultation earlier this year, we said that the Scheme would be likely to require off-site highway improvements at Cranham Road. These could involve small scale road widening to accommodate construction traffic, within the existing highway boundary. Following the consultation and further engagement with Essex County Council, we have clarified our understanding of road widening requirements at this location. We have also agreed with Essex County Council to include this work within the Scheme boundary so that consent for the work is obtained as part of the Development Consent Order, rather than relying on additional consents under other regimes. This approach helps minimise delays to the delivery of the Scheme, reflecting its national importance and the urgent national need for renewable energy.

- **Access to Bulls Lodge substation extension:** At the earlier statutory consultation, we explained that access to the Bulls Lodge substation extension would be via Generals Lane and then a private road known as the Bulls Lodge Access Road. The proposal to use the Bulls Lodge Access Road has not changed, however, as it is a private road rather than adopted highway, we are including it within the Scheme boundary to ensure we have the necessary rights to use the road during construction and operation of the Scheme.
- **Grid connection route:** At the statutory consultation we showed an area within which we proposed to locate the grid connection to allow the Longfield Solar Farm to connect into the Bulls Lodge substation. Following the consultation and further design and environmental work, we determined that the best option for routing the grid connection cables would be south of the future quarry works and planned restoration lake. This is because it is more suitable than the other available options. In some places, the grid connection route we have now chosen is outside of the Scheme boundary we previously consulted upon during the statutory consultation, and so that additional land is now being included within the Scheme boundary and some land is being removed.

These are purely changes to the Scheme boundary in order to allow for our preferred grid connection route and to ensure we obtain the appropriate powers for access and to make highway improvements. These changes would not affect the outcomes of the environmental impact assessment we set out in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report during the statutory consultation. As a reminder, the Preliminary Environmental Information Report is available to view at www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads.

The preliminary assessment already accounted for the potential for highway improvements and the use of the private access road to the Bulls Lodge substation. While these do not constitute significant changes to our proposals themselves, we need to include them in the Scheme boundary to ensure we have the appropriate powers to deliver them.

For further information and to see a plan showing the proposed changes to the Scheme boundary, please see the leaflet enclosed with this letter.

Share your views

You can provide your views on the inclusion of the additional land in the Scheme boundary directly to us in writing.

Any responses to this consultation or other representations in respect of the Scheme should be sent to the following:

- **By post:** Longfield Solar Farm Consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUJJ-AGBY, c/o SEC Newgate, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE
- **By email:** info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

Any response or representation in respect of the Scheme must (i) be received by the applicant on or before 23.59 hours on 23 November 2021, (ii) be made in writing, (iii) state the grounds of the response or representation, (iv) indicate who is making the response or representation, and (v) give an address to which correspondence relating to the response or representation may be sent.

Any comments received will be analysed and had regard to by Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd and any of its appointed agents. Copies may be made available in due course to the Secretary of State, the Planning Inspectorate and other relevant statutory authorities so that feedback can be considered as part of the process. Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd will request that any personal details are not placed on public record and will be held securely by Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd and its agents in accordance with the data protection law and will be used solely in connection with the consultation process and subsequent application for the Order and, except as noted above, will not be passed to third parties. Responses will also form the basis of a Consultation Report that will be one of the factors taken into consideration by the Secretary of State when deciding whether the Application can be accepted for examination. Therefore, in providing any comment, it should be borne in mind that the substance of it may also be communicated to others as part of the Consultation Report. **Consultation commences on 26 October 2021. All responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 23.59 hours on 23 November 2021.**

Should you wish to discuss our proposals further, please do not hesitate to contact us on info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk or by calling 08081687925. You can also find out more information about the Scheme by going to our website, www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Pateman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James Pateman
Project Manager