



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

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Initial Response to Berden Solar Farm

About

This document outlines Essex Fire and Rescue Service's initial response to the consultation for the proposed development.

If further information or clarification on any of the points presented is required to support the developers, please contact the Service via

[REDACTED]

National Fire and Rescue Priorities – Home Office

The priorities for fire and rescue authorities set out in the National Fire and Rescue Framework for England July 2018 are to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse

The Fire and Rescue Plan – Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

The Fire and Rescue Plan sets out the priorities for fire and rescue services in Essex and a series of strong, tangible commitments to how we will help keep our communities safe.

The plan brings together the Service, partners and the public to build safe and secure communities and other efficient and effective prevention, protection and response activity.

The activities in this plan set out a clear direction for development of the Service and how, by working closer together with other emergency services and wider partners, we can deliver a better service while being closer to the communities we serve.

Our priorities are:

- Prevention, protection and response
- Improve safety on our roads
- Help the vulnerable to stay safe
- Promote a positive culture in the workplace
- Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service
- Be transparent, open and accessible
- Collaborate with our partners
- Make best use of our resources

Essex Design Guide

The Essex Design Guide provides high level direction for new developments which we would like to draw your attention to:

- Continuation of road design to ensure safe and timely access and egress to and from new developments.
- Continuation of road design to include turning circle provision plus future consideration to appliance sizes to ensure adequate space to manoeuvre on a development.
- Consideration for installation of an approved suppression system with better safety and more design freedom. Sprinkler considerations would help to isolate fire to the source and to ensure better safety for occupants / emergency services / reduce insurance costs. This may also afford developers more design freedom and scope for capacity in respect of distance from buildings to fire appliance access points.
- Continued consultation with Water Authorities for fire hydrant / water main provisions and consideration to ensure sufficient strategically placed resources are made available for operational firefighting and with appropriate water pressure considerations.
- Ensure new fire hydrant installations are fully operational before permitting residents to occupy dwellings.
- Ensuring new fire hydrants are not installed within private driveways / gardens.
- Continuation of at least 3 forms of fire hydrant asset indication. Hydrant indicator plate / post, painted FH cover and painted adjacent kerb. In the absence of a kerb then a thermoplastic yellow road 'H' applied to the road surface.
- Section 106 agreement at planning application stage to ensure that the developer will bear the costs for any new fire hydrant installations deemed necessary by the Fire Authority where the new development exceeds 10 dwellings.
- Where applicable door sets to carry dual certification ensuring compliance with fire and security regulations. Such recommendations align with both the [REDACTED] in the wake of [REDACTED] and the review and recommendations resulting from the Grenfell Fire tragedy of 2017.
- Fire resistant cladding considerations that may fall outside of Building Control matters.

Initial Response to Consultation Document

Having reviewed the consultation document, at this time Essex County Fire and Rescue Service would ask that the following are considered during the continued development of the Berden Solar Farm:

- Creating a Risk Reduction Strategy to cover the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Solar Farm.

- Installation of an automatic fire and carbon monoxide detection system.
- Installation of an automatic fire suppression system, preferably a water drenching system.
- Installation of adequate ventilation systems.
- Inclusion of redundancy in the design to provide multiple layers of protection.
- Development of an emergency response plan with Essex County Fire & Rescue Service to minimise the impact of an incident during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Solar Farm.
- Consideration for providing an Information Box at access points to provide details of the Site Emergency Response Plan.
- Provision and access to sufficient water supplies for manual firefighting, with a minimum provision of 1,900 l/min for 2 hours.
- Provision of suitably spaced hydrants and where necessary an Emergency Water Supply (EWS).
- Consideration for road widths to be accessible whilst not impeding emergency service vehicle response through safe access routes for fire appliances including room to manoeuvre (such as turning circles).
- A secondary access point for emergency service vehicles should the primary access route be unsuitable due to prevailing wind conditions.
- Adherence to the requirements of the Fire Safety Order and relevant building regulations, especially approved document B.
- Provision of adequate separation between buildings/containers and thermal barriers between switch gear and batteries.
- Installation of smoke alarms and/or sprinkler systems at suitably spaced locations throughout each building.
- Implementation of vision zero principles where there are introductions of or changes to the road network.
- Appropriate planning and mitigations to reduce water risks in identified flood zones.
- Suitable principles in design to avoid deliberate fire setting.
- Implementation of a transport strategy to minimise the impact of construction and prevent an increase in the number of road traffic collisions. Any development should not negatively impact on the Service's ability to respond to an incident in the local area.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service welcomes the opportunity to continue these conversations as the development progresses to ensure opportunities to reduce risk and improve the emergency service provision are realised.

Future Infrastructure Risk Team: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]