APPENDIX 9

Alternative Site Assessment for Birch Solar Farm

Objection to development at
Maggotts End, Manuden
(Pelham Spring Solar Farm)

PINS Reference: S62A/22/0011

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BIRCH SOLAR FARM

LAND NORTH OF HARDY'S GREEN,

COLCHESTER

ALTERNATIVE SITE ASSESSMENT

Date: July 2022
DWD Ref: 15660

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APPENDICES

Revision	Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
1	Final	JM	RB	RB	RB	July 2022
DWD Job Number: 15660						

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

This Alternative Site Assessment ('ASA') has been prepared on behalf of Low Carbon Solar Park 22 Limited ('Low Carbon' or the 'Applicant') in support of a planning application for the development of a solar photovoltaic farm and associated infrastructure.

The proposal is hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'. The project is known as 'Birch Solar Farm'.

Site Summary

The 'Proposed Site' (or 'the Site') comprises approximately 82 hectares ('ha') of agricultural land located in Essex, north of Hardy's Green, to the south of Colchester and north east of Tiptree. The Proposed Development includes a cable route which would connect the Proposed Development into the Abberton Substation (approximately 5km to the east of the Site) as the Point of Connection ('PoC').

The Agricultural Land Classification ('ALC') Report submitted alongside this application confirms that the Site comprises 59% Subgrade 3a (good quality) agricultural land and 35% Subgrade 3b (moderate quality) agricultural land. The remaining 6% of land is "Other" land comprising farm tracks, woodland, ponds and scrub areas. On this basis, the assessment considers alternative sites on Grades 3, 4 and 5 agricultural land.

Low Carbon

Low Carbon is a British-owned investment and asset management company. It has successfully developed over 450 megawatts ('MW') of UK Solar projects and currently manages in excess of 1 gigawatt ('GW') of renewable energy assets across more than 100 sites in the UK. Its 2GW pipeline has the potential to power almost 660,000 homes with clean energy and save in excess of 440,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.

Purpose and Structure of this Report

The assessment set out in this report seeks to identify if there are any potentially more suitable sites situated on:

- previously developed and or/non-agricultural land (hereafter referred to collectively as 'previously development land'); or
- lower or equal grade agricultural land (i.e., Grade 3, 4 and 5).

This assessment is carried out in support of the planning application and seeks to demonstrate that the Applicant has given due consideration to the benefits and constraints associated with the Proposed Site.

Importantly, it should be noted that there is no statutory or defined policy requirement to carry out an 'alternative site assessment' or similar. The Applicant has adopted a policy to carry out alternative site assessments for solar farm proposals when developing on greenfield sites in order to show that the site has been chosen with proper consideration of all relevant factors.

Commercial rooftops are not considered because (i) there are no known rooftops of sufficient size in the local area and (ii) it is considered that assessing the potential for development of multiple rooftops is not comparable to a ground-mounted solar PV farm. Furthermore, paragraph 013 (REF:5-013-20150327) in the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance states that in considering ground-mounted solar farms, the focus should be on the effective use of previously developed land and non-agricultural land. Rooftops are not mentioned.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – key features of the site and the proposed development;
- Section 3 – relevant planning policy;
- Section 4 – the methodology applied to identify and assess alternative sites;
- Section 5 – application of the methodology and assessment of alternative sites; and
- Section 6 – summary and conclusions.

2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Proposed Site

- The Site comprises approximately 82 hectares ('ha') of land (the 'Site') approximately 3 kilometres ('km') to the south west of Colchester and 4.6km north east of Tiptree, Essex. The land is a mixture of Subgrade 3a (good quality) and Subgrade 3b (moderate quality) agricultural land and is currently in arable rotation.
- The immediate surrounding area largely comprises similar agricultural fields and several small isolated patches of woodland with scattered settlements and farmsteads. The village of Hardy's Green is located approximately 250m to the south, Copford Green approximately 600m to the north and Easthorpe approximately 900m to the west.
- Adjacent to the boundaries of the Site are scattered residential properties and farmsteads. There is also a reservoir to the north of the Site Boundary.
- Several ponds/ lakes are situated within the site boundary and in the surrounding area. Woodland corpses are situated within the Site and there are further trees/ vegetation screening the Site Boundaries.
- Industrial uses and quarries are situated approximately 1km to the south of the Site. In addition, two relatively small solar farms are situated approximately 1km to the south.
- A review of Essex County Council's online mapping indicates that the Site is crossed by a Public Right of Way ('PRoW') north/south. County mapping also depicts a Bridleway which travels east/west adjacent to the south boundary. No other PRoWs border the site boundary.

The Proposed Development

- The Proposed Development comprises the construction and operation of a solar PV farm, with battery storage and associated infrastructure. The Proposed Development includes the following equipment (approximate):
  - rows of solar photovoltaic ('PV') panels;
  - batteries within shipping containers (or similar);
  - inverters within shipping containers (or similar);
  - DNO Substation and Customer Switchroom;
  - cable connection;

- internal access tracks;
- perimeter fence; and
- CCTV cameras.

It is estimated that the solar panels would generate approximately 49.9 MW, enough to power approximately 16,581 homes. The indicative layout of the Proposed Development is shown in the Indicative Site Layout Plan (Reference PLE-01) submitted alongside this application.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

The search area is located within the administrative area of Colchester District Council. The planning policy and guidance most relevant to the consideration of alternative sites in the context of this assessment is considered to be comprise the following:

- Colchester Borough Council ('CBC') Core Strategy (adopted 2008 and revised in 2014);
- CBC Site Allocations Development Plan Document ('DPD') (2010);
- CBC Development Policies DPD (adopted 2010 and revised 2014);
- National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2019);
- National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG') (online resource);
- Overarching National Policy Statement ('NPS') for Energy Planning ('EN-1') (2011); and
- Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure.

The Council is also in the process of developing the second part of the Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017 – 2033 (the 'Emerging Local Plan'). This part includes policies and maps for considering planning applications, and site allocations for new development for housing, employment, and infrastructure within Colchester borough. Hearing sessions took place for the Section Two Colchester Local Plan, between 20 and 30 April 2021. The Planning Inspector subsequently confirmed the Main Modifications considered necessary to the Section Two Colchester Local Plan to make it sound. The representations from the public consultation regarding these modifications have been reviewed by the Council, and they have issued a schedule to the Inspector summarising these.

Local Planning Policy

Policy ER1 (Energy, Resources, Waste, Water and Recycling) of the Core Strategy states that *"the Council will encourage the delivery of renewable energy projects, including micro-generation, in the Borough to reduce Colchester's carbon footprint."*

The Site Allocations DPD also forms part of the development plan for the district, however, there are no saved policies considered to be of relevance to site selection for renewable energy developments.

Policy DP25 (Renewable Energy) states the Council will support renewable energy schemes and goes on to state that *"schemes should be located and designed in such a way to minimise increases*

in ambient noise levels and visual impacts should be mitigated through siting, design, layout and landscaping measures."

- Emerging policy OV2 (Countryside) of the Emerging Local Plan acknowledges *that "proposals for… renewable energy generation… may require a countryside location."* Emerging policy DM25 (Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling) states renewable energy schemes with potential for adverse effects on international or nationally designated sites will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the designations objectives for the area will not be comprised and that adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated. It goes on to state *"all applications for renewable energy proposals should be located and designed in such a way to minimise increases in ambient noise levels."*

National Planning Policy Framework

- The NPPF was published in March 2012 and most recently updated in July 2021. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied, including in respect of the development of agricultural land and renewable energy.

- Paragraph 174 states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Furthermore, where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- The policies contained within the NPPF are expanded upon and supported by the NPPG, which was originally published in March 2014 and has been updated periodically since.

- With regards to the location of solar farms, paragraph 013 (Ref: 5-013-20150327) cites the following factors that local planning authorities should consider:

    - encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;
    - where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land.

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy Planning

NPS EN-1 is a material consideration for planning applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and has been included because it is the only policy document that provides any practical guidance in terms of alternative site assessments for energy projects.

The principles set out at paragraph 4.4.3 of EN-1 provide useful guidance, as follows:

- the consideration of alternatives should be carried out in a proportionate manner;
- there should be a realistic prospect of the alternative delivering the same infrastructure capacity (including energy security and climate change benefits) in the same timescale as the proposed development;
- alternative proposals which mean the necessary development could not proceed, for example because the alternative proposals are not commercially viable (e.g. on the market and available), should be excluded on the grounds that they are not important and relevant; and
- alternative proposals which are vague or inchoate can be excluded on the grounds that they are not important and relevant.

The above principles are effective provisions in terms of scoping the assessment; although, as previously stated, it is important to note that there is currently no statutory or specific planning policy requirement to consider alternative sites in relation to the development of best and most versatile (or other) agricultural land in EN-1 or in other planning policy document.

Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure

In September 2021 the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy published and begun consultation on an updated suite of Energy NPS', including a draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).

While the current EN-3 does not contain information relating to solar power, the draft EN-3 contains a section on solar photovoltaic generation, including factors influencing site selection. It lists the factors influencing the key considerations involved in the siting of a solar farm as:

- Irradiance and site topography;
- Proximity of a site to dwellings;
- Capacity of the site;

- Grid connection;
- Agriculture land classification and land type; and
- Accessibility.

The above principles are effective provisions in terms of scoping the assessment; although, as previously stated, it is important to note that there is no statutory or specific planning policy requirement to consider alternative sites in relation to the development of best and most versatile (or other) agricultural land in EN-1 or in other planning policy document.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Overview

This section sets out the qualitative, sequential methodology utilised to carry out the assessment. It should be noted that this type of methodology has been utilised to support many planning applications relating to solar farms in the UK.

The assessment is split into two parts:

1. Previously developed land – to establish whether there are any potential alternative sites located on previously developed land that could be utilised (note: the Proposed Site is not previously developed land); and
2. Lower or equal grade agricultural land – to establish whether there are any potential alternative sites located on lower or equal grade land that could be utilised (note: the Proposed Site is classed as Grade 3 for the purposes of this assessment).

As previously stated, commercial rooftops have not been considered because (i) there are no known rooftops of sufficient size in the area and (ii) it is considered that assessing the potential for development of multiple rooftops is not comparable or realistic when considered relative to a ground-mounted solar farm. Furthermore, as previously stated, the NPPG states that in considering ground-mounted solar farms, the focus should be on the effective use of previously developed and non-agricultural land. Rooftops are not mentioned.

The methodology utilised to carry out the assessment is sequenced as follows:

- definition of a search area;
- analysis of previously developed land;
- analysis of lower or equal grade agricultural land;
- establishment of a long-list;
- long-list filtering to create a short list of sites; and
- assessment of the short-list.

The above are explained in turn in the remainder of this section.

The Search Area

It is important to identify a proportionate and appropriate area of search (hereafter referred to as the 'Search Area') from which potential alternative sites are identified for assessment.

- There is no specific guidance in relevant planning policy documents to determine the geographic area that should be applied. The Search Area for this assessment has therefore been based on the requirement to connect the Proposed Development to the local electricity distribution network (hereafter referred to as the 'Grid') and the parameters associated with this, because any solar farm of this size without a feasible grid connection is not viable.

- As noted previously, the Proposed Development includes a cable run which is to be routed between the Site and Abberton Substation (the PoC). At the approximate half way point of the route, the proposed cable will feed into an existing cable trench associated with the approved Layer Solar Farm (LPA Ref. 202695). The Layer Solar Farm cable trench (as permitted) takes the same route as the final 3km of the proposed cable route for Birch Solar Farm, traveling along Birch Road and Abberton Road before reaching Abberton Substation.

- In view of the above, the Applicant has adopted a linear assessment radius around the existing cable trench area, spanning 4.5km around the final 3km of the proposed cable route (as shown on Figure 1 at Appendix 1). The radius size has been selected following a high-level assessment of connection costs against possible output undertaken by the Applicant, which established that 4.5km would be feasible. It follows that for the purposes of this assessment, the Point of Connection ('PoC') can be taken as any point along the final 3km of proposed cable run (each side of which is marked on Figure 1).

- The Search Area for alternative sites has therefore been defined to include an area of 4.5 km around the middle and end point of the proposed cable run – please refer to Figure 1 at Appendix 1, which illustrates the Search Area. For the purposes of this report, the assessed linear area as described above is known as the 'Consented Cable Connection Route'.

Analysis of Previously Developed Land

- Relevant publicly available data was reviewed to identify previously developed land within the Search Area that could potentially be available for the Proposed Development.

- The data included what are considered to comprise the most up-to-date, relevant adopted and/or emerging Development Plan Documents ('DPD') produced by Colchester District Council. The following types of allocation/sites were added to a 'long-list' of potentially suitable sites;

    - land allocated for renewable energy or other similar development; and
    - land allocated for employment, or another land use potentially compatible with energy development.

To further supplement the DPDs, the following were also reviewed:

- the Estates Gazette website (http://propertylink.estatesgazette.com) where a search for commercial/industrial land can be carried out within a defined search area; and
- the most recent version of the Colchester Borough Council Brownfield land registers which is maintained on the Council's website in accordance with government guidelines.

Analysis of Lower or Equal Grade Agricultural Land

Scope – Agricultural Land Classification grades considered in the assessment

The Agricultural Land Classification ('ALC') system classifies land into five grades (1-5), with Grade 3 subdivided into sub-grades 3a and 3b. The BMV land is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a and is the land which is most flexible, productive, and efficient in response to inputs, and which can best deliver food and non-food crops for future generations.

The nationally available (or 'Provisional') ALC survey data obtained from Natural England does not distinguish between Grade 3a and 3b. There are small areas within the Search Area where the sub-division data is available from Natural England and, where available, this has been applied.

The Proposed Site comprises Subgrade 3a (good quality) and Subgrade 3b (moderate quality) agricultural land. Therefore, the assessment set out in this report focuses on considering whether there are any potential alternative Grade 3, 4 or 5 sites, i.e. lower or equal grade agricultural land than the Proposed Site.

Site Identification Criteria

In order to identify potentially suitable sites, the first stage of the identification process utilised Geographical information Systems ('GIS') to discount constrained sections of land from within the Search Area. The definition of 'constrained' land was determined by reference to the planning policy set out earlier in this report, with particular focus on environmental considerations.

The criteria applied to rule out constrained land are as follows:

- Slope and gradient – sites where the topography is unsuitable (note: small areas of adverse topography can be dealt with via engineering adjustments to the solar arrays);
- Designated sites/assets – land within designated sites/assets avoided (including National Parks; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; World Heritage Coast; Special Protection Areas ('SPA'); Special Areas of Conservation ('SAC'); Ramsar Sites (International Wetlands Designation); Sites of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI'); National Nature Reserves; Local Nature Reserves; Royal

Society for the Protection of Birds Reserves; Important Bird Areas; Listed Buildings; Scheduled Monuments; Registered Battlefields; and Registered Parks and Gardens);

- Flood risk – areas dominated by Zone 2 and 3 discounted (the zones with the highest risk of flooding); and
- PRoW – areas crossed by a significant number of PRoWs avoided, where possible.

The second stage of identification process comprised splitting any remaining 'unconstrained' areas/tracts of land into potential sites for assessment. The sites were defined through the application of professional judgement and having regard to the following:

- irregular areas discounted;
- any urban/built up areas removed;
- clear and continuous area of land (e.g. avoiding woodland);
- avoiding sites split by roads, railway lines and water bodies, where possible; and
- boundaries defined by natural and man-made features (e.g. rivers, woodland, roads and properties).

Any identified sites were then added to the long-list.

Filtering of the Long-List

The long list was then 'filtered' to remove any sites below 82 ha (the approximate area of the Proposed Site). Any sites that did not meet this criterion were filtered out.

Multiple sites equating to a total of 82 ha were not considered in the assessment, because a scheme comprising of multiple sites is not considered to represent a comparable alternative. This is because in comparison to a single, continuous site, multiple sites would have other potentially limiting factors, including, but not limited to, legal agreements with multiple landowners; the complexity of connecting multiple sites to the electricity distribution network; and the potential for intensified disruption associated with the development of multiple sites.

For the above reasons, the consideration of multiple sites is not considered proportionate, realistic or deliverable as an alternative when considering, amongst other things, the principles set out in paragraph 4.4.3 of NPS EN-1.

Assessment of the Short-List

The remaining sites were added to a 'short-list' and assessed against a range of policy, environmental and viability criteria (determined with reference to relevant planning policy), as follows:

- Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?
- Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection on site or further away?
- Are there obstacles between the site and potential point of connection?
- Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?
- Is the land clear and developable?
- Are there any footpaths crossing the site?
- Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 favoured.
- Any other relevant considerations, such as, for example, whether the site benefits from a suitable highway access?

The Applicant is aware that there are aerodromes located in the wider area. The impact of the Proposed Development on the users of those aerodromes is considered in the Glint and Glare Assessment submitted with this application and it is expected that the operator(s) would be consulted by the Council during determination of the planning application. The aerodrome is not considered a constraint for the purposes of this assessment, on the basis that ground-mounted solar panels are low lying and are designed to absorb sunlight.

The assessment of the short-list determined whether there are any potential feasible alternative sites. The assessment utilised professional experience and judgement to draw conclusions.

It should be noted that the consideration of some criteria is repeated at the short-list stage, in order to apply the criteria to sites generated by the search of previously developed land or non-agricultural land, as these sites were not subjected to the GIS exercise utilised by the search for lower-grade agricultural land (where these criteria has previously been applied).

5.0 ASSESSMENT

This section sets out the following parts of this assessment:

- previously development land search;
- lower grade agricultural land search;
- long list and filtering; and
- assessment of sites on the short-list.

Previously Developed Land

The Search Area lies entirely within the administrative area of Colchester Borough Council. Development Plan Documents and supporting evidence base documents (including the latest Strategic Land Availability Assessment June 2017 Update) produced by the Council were reviewed to search for previously developed land for the long-list. The Colchester Borough Council brownfield land register and the Estates Gazette were also reviewed.

96 sites were added to the long-list following analysis of previously developed land.

Lower or Equal Grade Agricultural Land

The GIS criteria set out in Section 6 of this report were applied. The sequential application of the GIS criteria is illustrated in Figures 1-9 Appendix 1 of this report. Figure 9 shows the unconstrained land.

66 sites were added to the long-list following the analysis of lower grade agricultural land.

Long-List and Filtering

The long-list (with application of the filtering criterion) is set out in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Long-list and filtering

Site Reference	Site Address	Approx Area (ha)	Source	Filtering – 97ha or above?
COL04	Catkins Mews, Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester	1.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL09	Irvine Road, Colchester	0.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL13	Oxley Parker Drive, Mill Road, Colchester	1.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL14	Arena Site, Abbey Fields, Colchester	1.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size

COL17	Gosbecks Phase 2, Colchester	6.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL22	Rowhedge Road, Colchester	0.7	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL23	Gosbecks Farm Road, Gosbecks Road, Colchester	1.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL41	Allotments between Maldon Road and Drury Road, Colchester	1.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL43	Open Space between Mersea Road and Holt Drive, Colchester	1.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL45	Woodlands, Distillery Lane, Colchester	0.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL46	Residential caravan park, Whitehall Road, Colchester	1.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL47	Commercial land adjacent River Colne, Haven Quay, Colchester	1.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL57	Allotment, Norman Way, Colchester	3.0	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL58	274 Straight Road and land to the rear, Colchester	0.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL59	Open space fronting Layer Road, Colchester	0.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL60	Open space fronting Messines Road, Colchester	0.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL61	Open space fronting Elmwood Avenue, Colchester	0.7	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL71	Middlewick Ranges, Colchester	63.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL72	Land off King George Road, Colchester	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL73	Land rear of 60 to 68 Blackheath, Colchester	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL74	The Willows shopping parade, Mersea Road, Colchester	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL77	The Laurels, Distillery Lane, Colchester	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL83	Land rear of 74 To 78 Military Road, Colchester	0.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL85	Heath Lodge, Heath Road, Colchester	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size

COL86	Land adjacent 7 Heath Road, Colchester	0.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL87	Open space at Camulodunum Way, Colchester	0.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL88	Open space south of 41 Berechurch Road, Colchester	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL89	Land at 300 rear of 284 to 288 Shrub End Road, Colchester	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL95	Melville, Layer Road, Colchester	0.7	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL98	DSG, Flagstaff Road, Colchester	4.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL99	MCTC, Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester	30	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL100	RFCA, Berechurch Road, Colchester	1.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW03	Smythe's Green, Layer Marney	0.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW04	Mill Lane, Birch	0.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW06	Birch Street, Birch	0.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW07	School Lane, Great Wigborough	3.0	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW10	Zoo site, Maldon Road, Colchester	173.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	Yes – added to shortlist
RSW11	Bumblebee Farm, Layer Breton	1.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW12	Stamps Farm, Birch Green	1.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW15	Shatters Road, Layer Breton	0.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW19	Land south of Wyke-cote, Smythes Green	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW20	Land south of White House, Mill Lane, Birch Green	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW22	Smythe's Green, Layer Marney	2.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSW24	Birch Business Centre	1.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size

RSE01	Peldon Road, Abberton	4.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE02	Glebe Lane, Abberton	1.0	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE03	Battlewick Farm, Rowhedge	12.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE04	Mersea Road, Peldon	1.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE05	Lower Road, Peldon	1.1	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE06	Lower Road, Peldon	1.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE07	Malting Green Road, Layer de la Haye	1.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE08	Rowhedge Business Park, Fingringhoe Road, Rowhedge	3.7	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE09	Malting Green, Abberton Road, Layer-de-la-Haye	0.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE10	Peldon Road, Abberton	0.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE11	Ashpark House, Peldon Road, Abberton	0.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE12	Cross House Cottage, Layer-de-la-Haye	0.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE13	The Folley, Layer-de-la-Haye	5.1	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE15	Clay Barn, Abberton Road, Fingringhoe	0.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE16	Kingsland, Abberton Road, Fingringhoe	1.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE18	Black Barn, The Folley, Layer de la Haye	0.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE19	Chestnut Farm, Abberton Road, Layer de la Haye	2.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE21	Lower Road, Peldon	0.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE22	Wigborough Road, Peldon	0.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE24	Hosplant, St Ives Road, Peldon	2.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size

RSE26	Abberton Lodge, Layer Road, Abberton	0.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE28	Harveys Farm, Wigborough Road, Peldon	1.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE30	Land east of Greensleeves, Malting Green, Layer de la Haye	0.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE34	Land north of Birch Road adjacent to Bolls Lane, Layer de la Haye	2.1	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE35	Recreation ground, High Road, Layer de la Haye	1.6	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE36	Rowhedge Wharf, Rowhedge	7.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE39	St Ive's Road, Peldon	1.7	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE40	Nightingale Corner, Layer de la Haye	0.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
RSE44	Kingsford Business Centre, Layer Road, Layer de la Haye	1.0	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN02	Tollgate West, London Road, Stanway	11.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN03	Oldhouse Farm, Stanway	0.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN04	Land east of Tollgate Road, Stanway	1.7	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN05	Lakelands NE2, Stanway	1.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN06	Lakelands NE1, Stanway	8.3	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN07	Land north of Lakelands Country Park & Primary Sch	5.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN08	Land south of Lakelands Phase 1	1.0	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN11	School Road, Copford	2.7	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN17	Green Farmhouse, School Road, Copford	1.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN24	Land between Dyers Road and Warren Lane, Stanway	8.8	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN29	Land off School Road, Copford	1.5	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size

STN30	Land west of School Road, Copford	1.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN36	Open space adjacent Heath School, Winstree Road, Stanway	0.4	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN40	Churchfields Avenue, Stanway	0.2	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
STN41	Fiveways Fruit Farm, Stanway	17.05	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
WST07	Rectory Road, Copford Green	9.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
WST18	Mulberry Green, Copford	0.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
WST20	Easthorpe Road, Easthorpe	5.9	Colchester Strategic Land Availability Assessment	No – insufficient size
COL/07	Former Gym Arena Site, Circular Road East, Colchester CO2 7SZ	1.6	Colchester Brownfield Land Register	No – insufficient size
COL/08	Between Albany Gardens and Distilery Lane, (Part of Gas Works and Timber Dock Land)	1.0	Colchester Brownfield Land Register	No – insufficient size
COL/13	Garage 74 To 78 Military Road and Land to Rear	0.9	Colchester Brownfield Land Register	No – insufficient size
COL/17	Gasworks And Former Timber Dock, Land North and South of Whitehall Road	0.9	Colchester Brownfield Land Register	No – insufficient size
COL/27	Site Rear of The Co-Operative Store, 90 Wimpole Road	0.9	Colchester Brownfield Land Register	No – insufficient size
ALS01	Land north-east of Rowhedge Road	17.1	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS02	Land south-west of Rowhedge Road	11.9	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS03	Land between Furneaux Lane and Roman River	18.8	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS04	Land west of Furneaux Lane	44.2	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS05	Land north of Weir Lane	61.7	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS06	Land south of Weir Lane	23.5	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS07	Land at Ball Lane	20.1	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS08	Land north of South Green Road	58.3	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS09	Land south of High Park Corner	86.9	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS10	Land between Haye Lane and Chapel Road	41.4	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS11	Land between Mersea Road (B1025) and Haye Lane	49.9	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS12	Land west of Mersea Road (B1025)	10.2	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size

ALS13	Land south-west of South Green Road	32.6	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS14	Land north of Lodge Lane	32.6	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS15	Land at Black Bond Hall B&B	4.81	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS16	Land south-east of Lodge Lane	20.7	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS17	Land west of Fingringhoe	10.1	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS18	Land north of Upper Haye Lane	19.0	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS19	Land north east of Rectory Bus Stop, Colchester Road (B1025)	13.5	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS20	Land between Langenhoe Hall Lane and Lodge Lane	46.3	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS21	Land at corner of Colchester Road (B1025) and Langenhoe Hall Lane	12.3	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS22	Land south of Langenhoe Hall Lane	91.9	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS23	Land between Peldon Road and Colchester Road (B1025)	98.3	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS24	Land between Peldon Village and Colchester Road (B1025)	121	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS25	Land between Abberton Reservoir and Abberton Village	78.5	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS26	Land east of Newpost Lane	11.6	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS27	Land south of Lower Road	104	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS28	Land between Peldon Road and Abberton Reservoir	107	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS29	Land north-west of Wigborough Road	100	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS30	Land at corner or Layer Breton Hill and Layer Road	82.7	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS31	Land between Wigborough Road (B1026) and Abberton Reservoir	23.8	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS32	Land between Layer Breton Hill and Wigborough Road (B1026)	106	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS33	Land between Layer Breton, Birch Green and Wigborough Road (B1026)	117	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS34	Land east of Birch Street	26.5	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS35	Land south of Layer de la Haye	85.9	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS36	Land between Malting Green and Abberton Reservoir	49.9	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS37	Land between Abberton Reservoir and Abberton Road	8.9	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS38	Land between Abberton Road and Bounstead Road	5.9	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS39	Land between Roman River and Layer Brook	12	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS40	Land between Mill Lane and Bounstead Road	5.5	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS41	Land between Roman River and Malting Green	13	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS42	Land west of Bounstead Road	48.1	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size

ALS43	Land west of Layer Road	24.6	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS44	Land west of Olivers Lane	22.2	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS45	Land east of Leas Lane	20.5	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS46	Land south of Colchester Zoo	24.8	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS47	Land east of Birch Park Road	30	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS48	Land east of Orpen's Hill	20.1	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS49	Land west of Church Lane	35.4	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS50	Land north of Orchard Close	27.4	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS51	Land west of Aldercar Road	31.1	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS52	Land east of Rectory Road	28.3	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS53	Land west of Copford Green	87.4	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS54	Land east of Well Lane	50.7	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS55	Land north west of Priory Cottages	34.7	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS56	Land west of Blind Lane	97.4	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS57	Land south west of Hardy's Green	94.6	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS58	Land north of Winter's Road	82.4	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS59	Land south west of Lower Road	102	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS60	Land south of Smythe's Green	38.2	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS61	Land west of Layer Marney	64.4	Agricultural Land Search	No – insufficient size
ALS62	Land south of Winter's Road	95	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS63	Land south west of Layer Breton	118	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS64	Land south of Layer Brook	124	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS65	Land west of Layer Breton Hill (B1026)	110	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist
ALS66	Land west of School Lane	86.5	Agricultural Land Search	Yes – added to shortlist

Assessment of the Short-List

22 sites were added to the short-list, as follows:

- RSW10 – Zoo site, Maldon Road, Colchester;
- ALS09 – Land south of High Park Corner;

- ALS22 – Land south of Langenhoe Hall Lane;
- ALS23 – Land between Peldon Road and Colchester Road (B1025);
- ALS24 – Land between Peldon Village and Colchester Road (B1025);
- ALS27 – Land south of Lower Road;
- ALS28 – Land between Peldon Road and Abberton Reservoir;
- ALS29 – Land north-west of Wigborough Road;
- ALS30 – Land at corner or Layer Breton Hill and Layer Road;
- ALS32 – Land between Layer Breton Hill and Wigborough Road (B1026);
- ALS33 – Land between Layer Breton, Birch Green and Wigborough Road (B1026);
- ALS35 – Land south of Layer de la Haye;
- ALS53 – Land west of Copford Green;
- ALS56 – Land west of Blind Lane;
- ALS57 – Land south west of Hardy's Green;
- ALS58 – Land north of Winter's Road;
- ALS59 – Land south west of Lower Road;
- ALS62 – Land south of Winter's Road;
- ALS63 – Land south west of Layer Breton;
- ALS64 – Land south of Layer Brook;
- ALS65 – Land west of Layer Breton Hill (B1026; and
- ALS66 – Land west of School Lane,

Figure 10 at Appendix 2 illustrates the location of the short-listed sites.

The criteria set out in section 4 of this report are first applied to the Proposed Site (to provide context) and then to the other short-listed sites. The assessment was desk-based; carried out with reference to amongst other things, available aerial imagery and Figures 1-9 at Appendix 1.

The Proposed Site

The Proposed Site comprises agricultural land located north of Hardy's Green, east of Easthorpe and west of Heckfordbridge covering an area of approximately 82ha.

Table 5.2: Assessment of the Proposed Site

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	The Proposed Site is available to the Applicant, is ready for development and is subject to no other proposed uses or allocations that might be considered incompatible.
Is the topography favourable?	The Proposed Site benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	The Consented Cable Connection Area is located 2.9 km east of the Proposed Site.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Roads, agricultural fields and small areas of woodland lie between the Proposed Site and the PoC. However, connection is to be taken along the highway/verge.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	The Proposed Site is made up of a number of fields considered to be of regular shape for a solar farm.
Is the land clear and developable?	The land is clear of built development and considered to be developable besides a small area of Ancient Woodland within the Site which is not to be developed and will have the appropriate stand-offs incorporated into the design.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	A public footpath runs through a narrow section of the Proposed Site while a bridleway runs along the southern boundary.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	The Proposed Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	In addition to the Ancient Woodland contained within the site there is a further section of Ancient Woodland west of the Proposed Site. There are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings located within the vicinity of the Proposed Site. An ALC survey has found that the site comprises a mixture of Subgrade 3a and Subgrade 3b agricultural land.

Summary and discussion: The Proposed Site is immediately available to the Applicant for the development of a solar farm and is located in an area where the principle of solar farms is already established, without being located directly adjacent or in close proximity to an existing solar farm

and opening up potential for cumulative impacts. The Proposed Site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 and both its shape and topography are suitable. There is Ancient Woodland located within and adjacent to the Site but the Site layout is to incorporate suitable stand-offs. There are a number of heritage assets located in close proximity to the Proposed Site but the layout and mitigation proposed with the application incorporate appropriate stand-offs and screening as necessary.

RSW10 – Zoo Site, Maldon Road, Colchester

The site is comprised of land currently occupied by Colchester Zoo and agricultural fields, which make up the vast majority of the site, covering an area of 173.5 ha.

Table 5.3: Analysis of RSW10

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	RSW10 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	RSW10 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm, aside from insignificant areas of the site to its south west.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	RSW10 is located 2.5 km north west of the POC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	There are two roads and woodland located between RSW10 and POC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	RSW10 consists of agricultural fields and previously developed land that is considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	A significant portion of RSW10 is currently occupied by a working zoo and ancillary development. The agricultural portion of RSW10 is, however, clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	The site is crossed by a number of bridleways and footpaths in all directions.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	RSW10 is largely located in Flood Zone 1. However, a small area of Flood Zone 3 runs north to south through the centre of the site.
Any other relevant considerations?	RSW10 includes and is adjacent to areas of Ancient Woodland. A large portion of the site, particularly to its north, is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Furthermore, there is a Grade II* Listed Building within Colchester Zoo and groupings of Grade II Listed Buildings adjacent to the

	sites east and west. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is largely Grade 2 (Very Good Quality) agricultural land, with a section of Grade 3.

Summary and discussion: RSW10 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is heavily constrained by the fact that it is currently occupied by a working zoo and the much of the agricultural section of the site is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 2 agricultural land. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. For these reasons, the site is not considered a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS09 – Land south of High Park Corner

ALS09 comprises a number of agricultural fields located south of High Park Corner, south east of Fingringhoe and north of South Green covering an area of approximately 86.9 ha.

Table 5.4: Analysis of ALS09

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS09 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS09 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS09 is located approximately 4km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Roads, agricultural fields and large areas of woodland lie between ALS09 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS09 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS09 is largely clear and developable, however, it does contain a large number of ponds and areas of woodland which limit the developable land as well as the potential for access tracks and cable runs.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS09 is crossed through the middle by a footpath while a bridleway runs along its eastern boundary.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 –	ALS09 is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.

favoured.	
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. There are a large number of heritage assets in the area including a Grade I Listed Fingringhoe, Conversation Ara and several Grade II Listed Buildings in Fingringhoe and further Grade II Listed Buildings in High Park Corner. There is also a Grade II Listed Dovecote located within ALS09.

Summary and discussion: ALS09 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is heavily constrained by heritage assets including Conservation Areas, Grade I Listed Buildings and an on-site Grade II Listed Building while its development potential is limited by the large number of ponds and areas of woodland. Additionally, it is much further from the PoC with more obstacles between and is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS09 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS22 – Land south of Langenhoe Hall Lane

ALS22 comprises a number of agricultural fields located to the south of Langenhoe Hall Lane and east of B1025 covering an area of approximately 91.9 ha.

Table 5.5: Analysis of ALS22

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS22 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS22 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS22 is located approximately 3.4km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Agricultural fields, roads and a small number of agricultural buildings and areas of woodland, along with a small part of the Lake, are located between ALS22 and the poC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS22 is considered to comprise a number of agricultural fields of a regular shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS22 is clear and developable.
Are there any	A public footpath runs along part of the northern boundary of ALS22.

PRoWs crossing the site?	
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS22 is largely located in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding, however small parts along its northern and southern boundaries are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is almost entirely Grade 3 with small areas of Grade 4 land. There is an existing solar farm to the east of ALS22. There are two Grade II Listed Buildings located close to ALS22 to its west. ALS22 is adjacent to the heavily protected estuary to its south which is, amongst other things, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site.

[redacted] Summary and discussion: ALS22 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is directly adjacent to an existing solar farm which opens up the potential for serious cumulative impacts. It is also directly adjacent to a protected estuary. Furthermore, it is significantly further from the PoC than the Proposed Site and is not known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS22 is not considered a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS23 – Land between Peldon Road and Colchester Road (B1025)

[redacted] ALS23 comprises a number of agricultural fields between Peldon Road and Colchester Road (B1025), to the south of Abberton and Lagenhoe and north east of Peldon covering an area of approximately 91.9 ha.

Table 5.6: Analysis of ALS23

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS23 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS23 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS23 is located 2.4 km south east of the POC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	A road, Abberton Reservoir and Abberton Village are located between ALS23 and POC.

Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS23 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS23 is largely clear and developable besides some large areas of woodland within its north.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	Two public footpaths cross each other within the north of ALS23.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS23 is located almost entirely in Flood Zone 1. However, very small areas of Flood Zone 3 cross into the site at its boundaries.
Any other relevant considerations?	There are individual Grade II Listed Buildings located adjacent to ALS23's boundary to its south east and south west. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

- Summary and discussion: ALS23 complies with much of the main criteria and is similar to the Proposed Site in a number of respects. However, Abberton Reservoir and Abberton Village could make connection difficult and it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS23 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS24 – Land between Peldon Village and Colchester Road (B1025)

- ALS24 comprises a number of agricultural fields located directly adjacent to Peldon covering an area of approximately 121 ha.

Table 5.7: Analysis of ALS24

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS24 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS24 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS24 is located 2.9 km south of the POC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Abberton Reservoir is located between ALS24 and POC.

Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS24 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS24 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	Two public footpaths cross each other within the west of ALS24.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS24 is located almost entirely in Flood Zone 1. However, very small areas of Flood Zone 3 cross into ALS24 to its south and north east.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS24 is located directly adjacent to a number of residential properties in the village of Peldon. There are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings located adjacent to ALS24's north western, western, southern and eastern boundaries. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

Summary and discussion: ALS24 complies with much of the main criteria. However, Abberton Reservoir is considered to be a significant obstacle between the site and point of connection. Furthermore, the site is located directly adjacent to the village of Peldon and it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS24 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS27 – Land south of Lower Road

ALS27 comprises a number of agricultural fields located south of Lower Road, Peldon and north east of Little Wigborough covering an area of approximately 104 ha.

Table 5.8: Analysis of ALS27

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS27 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS27 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS27 is located 3.9 km south of the POC.
Are there obstacles	Abberton Reservoir is located between ALS27 and POC.

between the site and point of connection?	
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS27 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS27 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS27 is not crossed by any PRoWs.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS27 is located almost entirely in Flood Zone 1. However, a small area of Flood Zone 3 crosses into the site to its east.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS27 is located directly adjacent to a number of residential properties and Grade II Listed Buildings, particularly in Peldon to its north and Little Wigborough to its south west. Furthermore, the site is adjacent to some Ancient Woodland to its south. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

- Summary and discussion: ALS27 complies with the main criteria. However, Abberton Reservoir is considered to be a significant obstacle between ALS27 and point of connection, along with the distance. Furthermore, ALS27 is located directly adjacent to the villages of Peldon and Great Wigborough, and specifically directly adjacent to a number of residential properties and Grade II Listed Buildings in both. ALS27 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS27 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS28 – Land between Peldon Road and Abberton Reservoir

- ALS28 comprises a number of agricultural fields located south east of Abberton Reservoir, to which they are almost directly adjacent, and located between it, Peldon Village and Peldon Road covering an area of approximately 107 ha.

Table 5.9: Analysis of ALS28

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS28 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS28 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is	ALS28 is located 2.3 km south of the POC.

the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Abberton Reservoir is located between ALS28 and POC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS28 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape. However, the site wraps around a number of residential and agricultural properties on Lodge Lane.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS28 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS28 is not crossed by any PRoWs.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS28 is located almost entirely in Flood Zone 1. However, a small area of Flood Zone 3 crosses into the site to its north.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS28 is located adjacent to some Grade II Listed Buildings on Peldon Road and is directly adjacent to Abberton Reservoir which is designated as a Ramsar Site, a Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI') and a Special Protection Area ('SPA'). According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

Summary and discussion: ALS28 complies with the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to Abberton Reservoir which is designated as a Ramsar Site, a SSSI and a SPA and forms a significant obstacle between it and the point of connection, and ALS28 wraps around residential properties on Lodge Lane. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS28 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS29 – Land north-west of Wigborough Road

ALS29 comprises a number of agricultural fields located north west of Wigborough Lane, west of Church Road and the village of Peldon and south east of Abberton Reservoir covering an area of approximately 100 ha.

Table 5.10: Analysis of ALS29

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS29 is not currently known to be available.

Is the topography favourable?	ALS29 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS29 is located 3.3 km south of the POC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Abberton Reservoir is located between ALS29 and POC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS29 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS29 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS29 is not crossed by any PRoWs.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS29 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS29 is located adjacent to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings in Peldon and Little Wigborough, including one at Harvey's Farm which it wraps around. ALS29 is also located directly adjacent to a number of residential properties in Peldon and Abberton Reservoir which is designated as a Ramsar Site, a SSSI and a SPA. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

Summary and discussion: ALS29 complies with the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings, including one that it wraps around, and residential properties in Peldon. It is also located directly adjacent to Abberton Reservoir which is designated as a Ramsar Site, a SSSI and a SPA, and forms a significant obstacle between it and the point of connection. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS29 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS30 – Land at corner of Layer Breton Hill and Layer Road

ALS30 comprises a number of agricultural fields located north of Layer Road (B1026), east of Layer Breton Hill and west of Abberton Reservoir covering an area of approximately 82.7 ha.

Table 5.11: Analysis of ALS30

Criteria	Assessment

Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS30 is not currently known to be available.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS30 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS30 is located 3km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Abberton Reservoir and roads are located between ALS30and the POC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS30 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS30 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS30 is not crossed by any PRoW nor are any adjacent.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS30 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. ALS30 is also located adjacent to Abberton Reservoir which is designated as a Ramsar Site, a SSSI and a SPA.

Summary and discussion: ALS30 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to the protected Abberton Reservoir which also forms a significant barrier between it and the PoC. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS32 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS32 – Land between Layer Breton, Birch Green and Wigborough Road (B1026)

ALS32 comprises a number of agricultural fields east of Layer Breton and Layer Breton Hill and west of Wigborough Road (B1026) covering an area of approximately 106 ha.

Table 5.12: Analysis of AS32

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available,	ALS32 is not currently known to be available.

e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	
Is the topography favourable?	ALS32 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS32 is located 1.5km from the POC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	A number of roads are located between ALS32 and the POC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS32 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS32 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS32 is crossed by two public footpaths.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS32 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS32 is directly adjacent to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings and residential properties in Layer Breton, and further Grade II Listed Buildings to the south west. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

- Summary and discussion: ALS32 complies with the main criteria. However, it is located relatively close to the approved Layer Solar Farm, opening the potential for cumulative impacts due to the scale of both solar farms. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS32 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS33 – Land between Layer Breton, Birch Green and Wigborough Road (B1026)

- ALS33 comprises a number of agricultural fields located east of Layer Breton Hill, Layer Breton and Birch Green, west of Wigborough Road (B1026) and south west of the approved Layer Solar Farm covering an area of approximately 117 ha.

Table 5.13: Analysis of ALS33

Criteria	Assessment

Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS33 is not currently known to the available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS33 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS33 is located 340m from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Agricultural fields and a woodland block are located between ALS33 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS33 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS33 is largely clear and developable besides a few small woodland blocks.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS33 is crossed by a number of public footpaths.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS33 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS33 is located directly adjacent to the approved Layer Solar Farm. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. ALS33 is located directly adjacent to a number of residential properties and in close proximity to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings to its west.

- Summary and discussion: ALS33 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to the approved Layer Solar Farm, opening the potential for cumulative impacts, and residential dwellings in layer Breton and Birch Green. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS33 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS35 – Land south of Layer de la Haye

- ALS35 comprises a number of agricultural fields located to the south of Layer de la Haye and Malting Green, east of Church Road (B1026), north of Abberton Reservoir and west of Fields Farm Road covering an area of approximately 85.9 ha.

Table 5.14: Analysis of ALS35

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS35 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS35 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS35 is located about 50m south of the cable run.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Residential properties lie between ALS35 and the PoC but a lane runs between which could be used.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS35 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS35 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS35 is crossed or bordered by a public footpath for much of its eastern and southern boundaries.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS35 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS35 is located adjacent to a number of residential properties to its north in Layer de la Haye and is surrounded on its north, east and west by Grade II Listed Buildings and a Grade I Listed Building. ALS35 is located directly adjacent to the heavily protected Abberton Reservoir. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

Summary and discussion: ALS35 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located relatively close to the approved Layer Solar Farm, opening the potential for cumulative impacts due to the scale of both solar farms, and located directly adjacent to the protected Abberton Reservoir. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS35 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS53 – Land west of Copford Green

ALS53 comprises a number of agricultural fields located west of Copford Green and Rectory Road covering an area of approximately 87.4 ha.

Table 5.15: Analysis of ALS53

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS53 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS53 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS53 is located 4.1km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Agricultural fields and roads are located between ALS53 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS53 consists of a number of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS53 is clear and developable
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS53 is crossed by a number of footpaths and a bridleway.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS53 is located entirely within Flood Zone 1.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS53 is located in close proximity and adjacent to a conservation area and a number of residential dwellings in Copford Green number of Grade II Listed Buildings According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3.

Summary and discussion: ALS53 complies with much of the main criteria and is similar to the Proposed Site. However, it is over 1.2km further away from the PoC than the Proposed Site at its closest point, directly adjacent to a number of residential properties and in close proximity to the Copford Green Conservation Area. Furthermore, it's not currently known to be available to the

Applicant. It follows that ALS53 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS56 – Land west of Blind Lane

ALS56 comprises a number of agricultural fields located west of Blind Lane, east of Well Lane and east of an existing solar farm, covering an area of approximately 97.4 ha.

Table 5.16: Analysis of ALS56

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS56 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS56 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS56 is located 4km from the PoC
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Agricultural fields, roads, lakes, woodland and an existing solar farm lie between ALS56 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS56 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS56 is clear and developable
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS56 is crossed briefly by a public footpath to its north.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS56 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS56 is located directly adjacent to an existing solar farm. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. More recent data showed a large, unbroken area of Grade 3a land directly east of ALS56.

Summary and discussion: ALS56 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to, and wraps around, an existing solar farm which opens up the potential for

cumulative impacts. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that the site is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS57 – Land south west of Hardy's Green

ALS57 comprises a number of agricultural fields located south west of Hardy's Green and Priory Cottages, east of Blind Lane and north of a quarry and existing solar farm covering an area of approximately 94.6 ha.

Table 5.17: Analysis of ALS57

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS57 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant,
Is the topography favourable?	ALS57 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS57 is located 2.6km from the PoC
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Agricultural fields and roads lie between ALS57 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS57 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS57 is clear and developable besides some small woodland blocks.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS57 is not crossed by any public rights of way, nor do any abut it.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS57 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1.
Any other relevant considerations?	ALS57 is located directly adjacent to an existing solar farm. According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey most of the land is Grade 3 but small corners are Grade 2. More recent data showed a large, unbroken area of Grade 3a land directly south of ALS57 as well as an area of Grade 2 and 3a. There are a few Grade II Listed Buildings located directly north of ALS57.

Summary and discussion: ALS57 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to an existing solar farm which starts to open up the potential for cumulative impacts. It is also located directly adjacent to a number of residential properties in the village of Hardy's Green. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS59 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS58 – Land north of Winter's Road

ALS58 comprises a number of agricultural fields located north of Winter's Road, east of Roundbush Road and east of Layer Breton Hill covering an area of approximately 82.4 ha.

Table 5.18: Analysis of ALS58

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS58 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS58 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS58 is located approximately 2.2km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	The village of Birch Green, roads and agricultural fields are located between ALS58 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS58 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS58 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS58 is crossed by two public footpaths which also run along its boundaries.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS58 is located in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. ALS58 is located close to residential properties and Grade II Listed Buildings in the village of Birch Green and further Listed Buildings on Winter's Road and Roundbush Road to the south and west respectively.

Summary and discussion: ALS58 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is likely to be more difficult and disruptive to construct a cable route to the PoC through the village of Birch Green. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS58 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS59 – Land south west of Lower Road

ALS59 comprises a number of agricultural fields located south west of Lower Road, south east of Maldon Road (B1022) and west of Birch, School Hill, Birch Street and Birch Green covering an area of approximately 102 ha.

Table 5.19: Analysis of ALS59

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS59 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS59 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS59 is located approximately 1.6km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Agricultural fields and roads are located between ALS59 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS59 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS59 is largely clear and developable besides some areas of woodland and ponds.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS59 is crossed by a public footpath and a byway.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS59 is located in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3, however, some land north west of ALS59 was found to be mixture of Grades 2, 3a and 3b, with 3a predominating. ALS59 is located directly adjacent to residential properties in the village of Birch Green, many of

	which it wraps around, and in close proximity to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings and Conservation Area in Birch.

Summary and discussion: ALS59 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it wraps around a number of residential properties in Birch Green and is in close proximity to a Conservation Area and dense collection of Grade II Listed Buildings in Birch. ALS59 also has a number of areas of woodland and ponds spread through its middle. Furthermore, it is not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS59 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS62 – Land south of Winter's Road

ALS62 is located south of Winter's Road, south west of Lower Road and east of Roundbush Road and Layer Marney covering an area of approximately 95 ha.

Table 5.20: Analysis of ALS62

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS62 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS62 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS62 is located 2.8km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	The village of Layer Breton, agricultural fields and roads lie between ALS62 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS62 consists of a number of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS62 is clear and developable besides one small area of woodland.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS62 is crossed through the middle by a public footpath.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 –	ALS62 is located in Flood Zone, the area at lowest risk of flooding.

favoured.	
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. ALS62 is located in close proximity to a number of Listed Buildings, particularly to its west, including the Grade I Listed Layer Marney Tower and its related Registered Park or Garden.

ALS62 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located in close proximity to a number of heritage assets including the Grade I Listed Layer Marney Tower and its related Registered Park or Garden. Furthermore, Layer Breton forms an obstacle between it and the PoC. It is also not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS62 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS63 – Land south west of Layer Breton

ALS63 comprises a number of agricultural fields located south west of Layer Breton, west of Layer Breton Hill, north west of Abberton Reservoir and east of Layer Marney covering an area of approximately 118 ha.

Table 5.21: Analysis of ALS63

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS63 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS63 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS63 is located approximately 2.5km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Agricultural fields and roads are located between ALS63 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS63 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS63 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing	ALS63 is not crossed by any PRoWs nor do any abut it.

the site?	
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS63 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. ALS63 is located directly adjacent to the heavily protected Abberton Reservoir. ALS63 is located in close proximity to a number of Listed Buildings, particularly to its west, including the Grade I Listed Layer Marney Tower and its related Registered Park or Garden.

- Summary and discussion: ALS63 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to the heavily protected Abberton Reservoir and in close proximity to a number of heritage assets including the Grade I Listed Layer Marney Tower and its related Registered Park or Garden. Furthermore, it is also not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS63 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS64 – Land south of Layer Brook

- ALS64 comprises a number of agricultural fields located south of Layer Brook and south east of Layer Marney covering an area of approximately 124 ha.

Table 5.22: Analysis of ALS64

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS64 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS64 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	AS64 is located approximately 4km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	The village of Layer Breton, agricultural fields and roads lie between ALS64 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS64 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS64 is clear and developable.

Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS64 is not crossed by any PRoWs nor do any abut it.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS64 is located almost entirely in Flood Zone 1 besides some small areas to its north and west.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. AS64 is located approximately 4km from the PoC. ALS63 is located in close proximity to the Grade I Listed Layer Marney Tower and its related Registered Park or Garden and a Grade II Listed Building to its south west.

Summary and discussion: ALS64 complies with much of the criteria. However, it is a considerable distance from the Point of Connection with Layer Breton forming an obstacle. It is also located in close proximity to the Layer Marney Tower Registered Park or Garden. Furthermore, it is also not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS64 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS65 – Land west of Layer Breton Hill (B1026)

ALS65 comprises a number of agricultural fields located west of Layer Breton Hill (B1026) and south of Abberton Reservoir covering an area of approximately 110 ha.

Table 5.23: Analysis of ALS65

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS65 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS65 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	ALS65 is located approximately 3.8km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Abberton Reservoir and agricultural fields are located between ALS65 and the PoC.
Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS65 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.

Is the land clear and developable?	ALS65 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS65 is not crossed by any PRoWs nor do any abut it.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS65 is located almost entirely in Flood Zone 1 besides some small areas to its north.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. ALS65 is located directly adjacent to the heavily protected Abberton Reservoir.

[redacted] Summary and discussion: ALS65 complies with much of the main criteria. However, it is located directly adjacent to the protected Abberton Reservoir which forms a barrier between ALS65 and the PoC which is already located a significant distance away. Furthermore, it is also not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS65 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

ALS66 – Land west of School Land

[redacted] ALS66 comprises a number of agricultural fields located west of School Lane and Great Wigborough, south of Layer Road (B1026), east of Colchester Road (B1026) and north of Maldon Road covering an area of approximately 86.5 ha.

Table 5.24: Analysis of ALS66

Criteria	Assessment
Is the land likely to be available, e.g. on the market or proposed for another use?	ALS66 is not currently known to be available to the Applicant.
Is the topography favourable?	ALS66 benefits from favourable topography for the purposes of a solar farm.
Distance from the potential point of connection – is the potential point of connection onsite or further away?	AlS66 is located 3.9km from the PoC.
Are there obstacles between the site and point of connection?	Abberton Reservoir and agricultural fields lie between ALS66 and the PoC.

Shape of the site – is it regular/irregular?	ALS66 consists of agricultural fields that are considered to be regular in shape.
Is the land clear and developable?	ALS66 is clear and developable.
Are there any PRoWs crossing the site?	ALS66 is crossed by a bridleway and a number of footpaths.
Flood risk areas – Flood Zone 1 – favoured.	ALS66 is located entirely in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding.
Any other relevant considerations?	According to the nationally available Provisional ALC survey the land is Grade 3. ALS66 is located in close proximity to some residential properties in Great Wigborough. ALS66 is located is close proximity to the heavily protected Abberton Reservoir.

Summary and discussion: ALS66 complies with much of the criteria. However, it is located in close proximity to the heavily protected Abberton Reservoir which forms a significant barrier between ALS66 and the PoC. Furthermore, it is also not currently known to be available to the Applicant. It follows that ALS66 is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site.

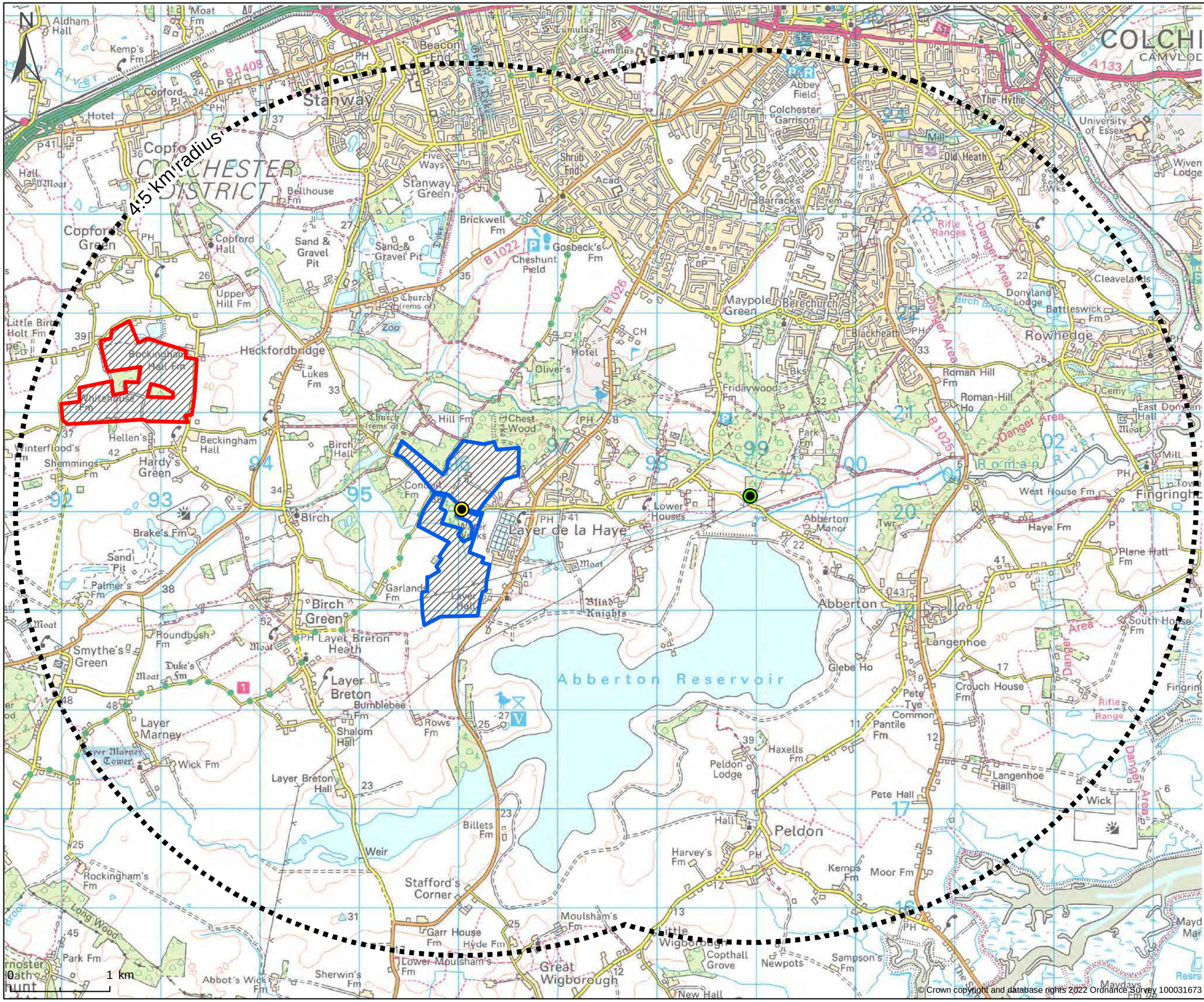
6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- The Search Area covers an area of approximately 4.5km around the eastern section of the proposed cable route to Abberton Substation, where an existing cable trench is proposed to be utilised. The Search Area takes in a large area of countryside as well as the significant urban area of Colchester. With regards to lower or equal grade agricultural land, the vast majority of agricultural land within the Search Area was found to be unconstrained meaning a large number of sites were identified by this means. From these sites and those identified on previously developed land a total of 22 sites were added to the short-list for assessment as they were in excess of 82ha, a full list can be found at paragraph 5.7.

- As outlined above in Section 5, many of the short-listed sites were similar to the Proposed Site in a number of ways and complied with much of the main criteria. However, due to various constraints including nearby residential properties and obstacles between the short-listed sites and the PoC, none of them were considered to comprise a more feasible alternative to the Proposed Site. Furthermore, none of them were known to be available to the Applicant.

- It is therefore concluded that none of the abovementioned sites comprise a more feasible alternative.

APPENDIX 1: FIGURES 1 – 9 (GIS FIGURES)



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PROJECT NAME:

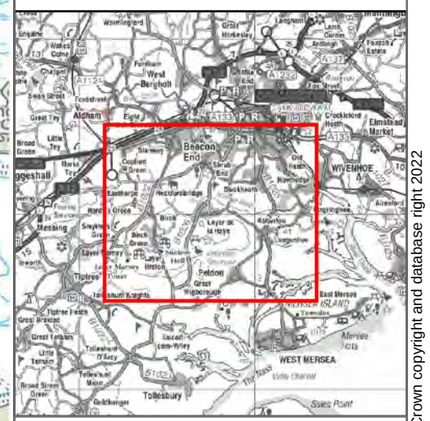
Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)

Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm



TITLE:

Figure 1
Search Area

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SIZE: A3	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

N

4.5 km radius

0 1 km

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PROJECT NAME:

Birch Farm Solar Farm

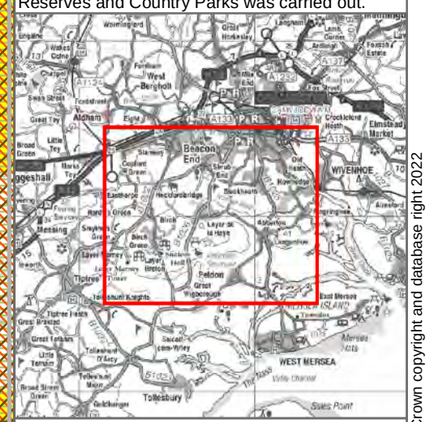
KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)

Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Important Bird Area
- Special Protection Area
- Ramsar Site
- Special Area of Conservation
- Local Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland

A search for IBAs, NNRs, Ramsar Sites, RSPB Reserves, SACs, SPAs AONBs, greenbelt land, AONBs, SSSIs, Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserves and Country Parks was carried out.



TITLE:

Figure 2
Environmental Designations

DATE: 05/07/2022	DRAWN BY: CH
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SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

PROJECT NAME:

Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation

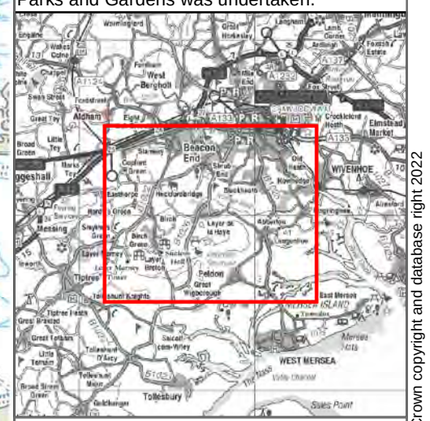
Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Park and Garden

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

A search for WHS, Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Parks and Gardens was undertaken.



TITLE:

Figure 3
Archaeology and Built Heritage

DATE: 05/07/2022	DRAWN BY: CH
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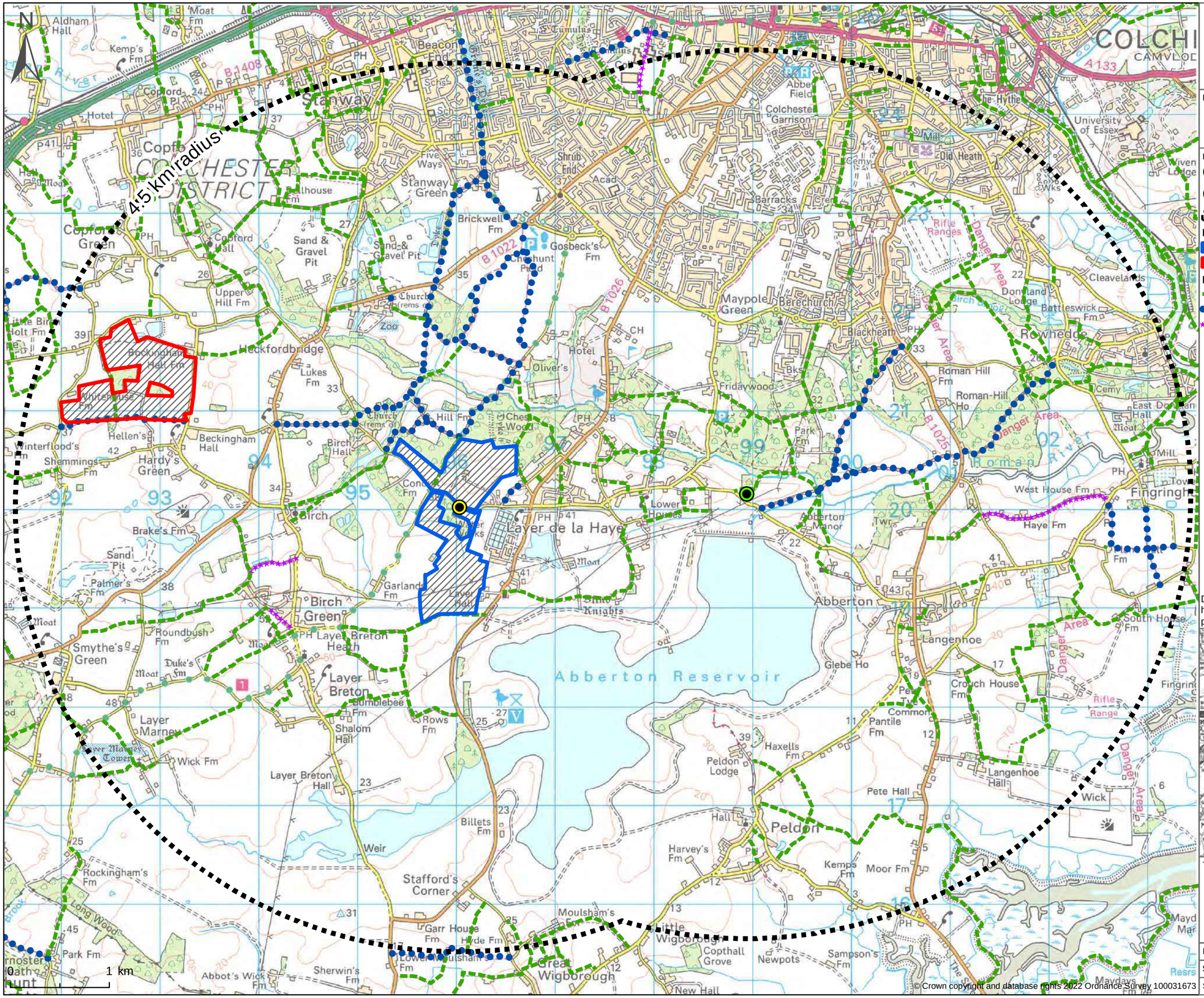

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PROJECT NAME:

Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)

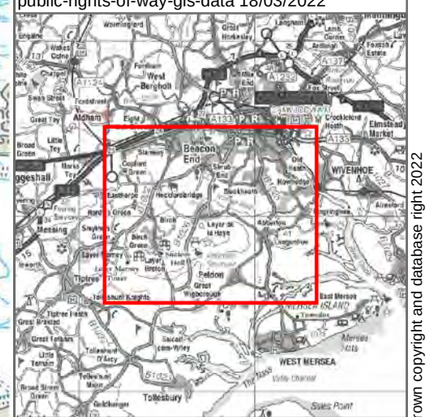
Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm

Public Right of Way

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway and Restricted Byway

Data sourced from https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/em40y/public-rights-of-way-gis-data 18/03/2022



TITLE:

Figure 4
Public Rights of Way

DATE: 05/07/2022	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A3	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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PROJECT NAME:

Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation

Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)
- Slope > 10%

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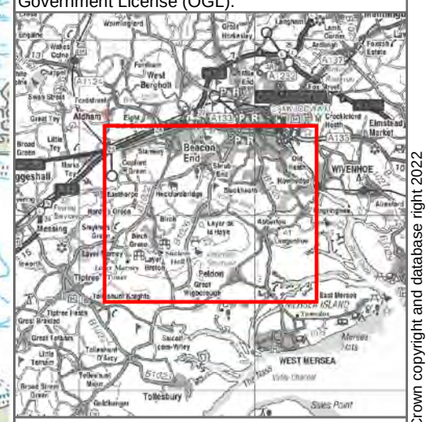

TITLE:

Figure 5
Slope Analysis

DATE: 05/07/2022	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A3	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

N

4.5 km radius

0 1 km

PROJECT NAME:

Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)

Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm

ALC Grade - Post 1988:

- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3a
- Grade 3b
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Not Surveyed
- Other

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 1 - Excellent Quality
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Grade 3 - Good to Moderate Quality
- Grade 4 - Poor Quality
- Grade 5 - Very Poor Quality
- Non Agricultural
- Urban

Note: A Soil and Agricultural Land Quality Survey was undertaken for the Proposed Site which was found to be a mix of Grade 3a and 3b agricultural quality.

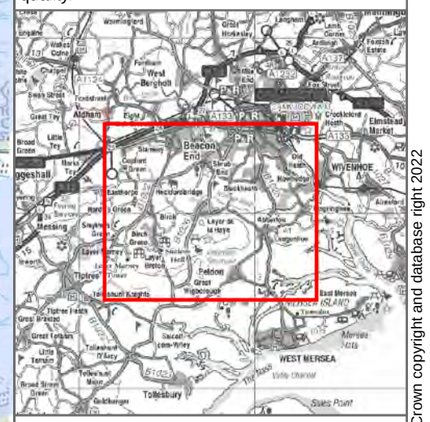

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Figure 6
Agricultural Land Classification

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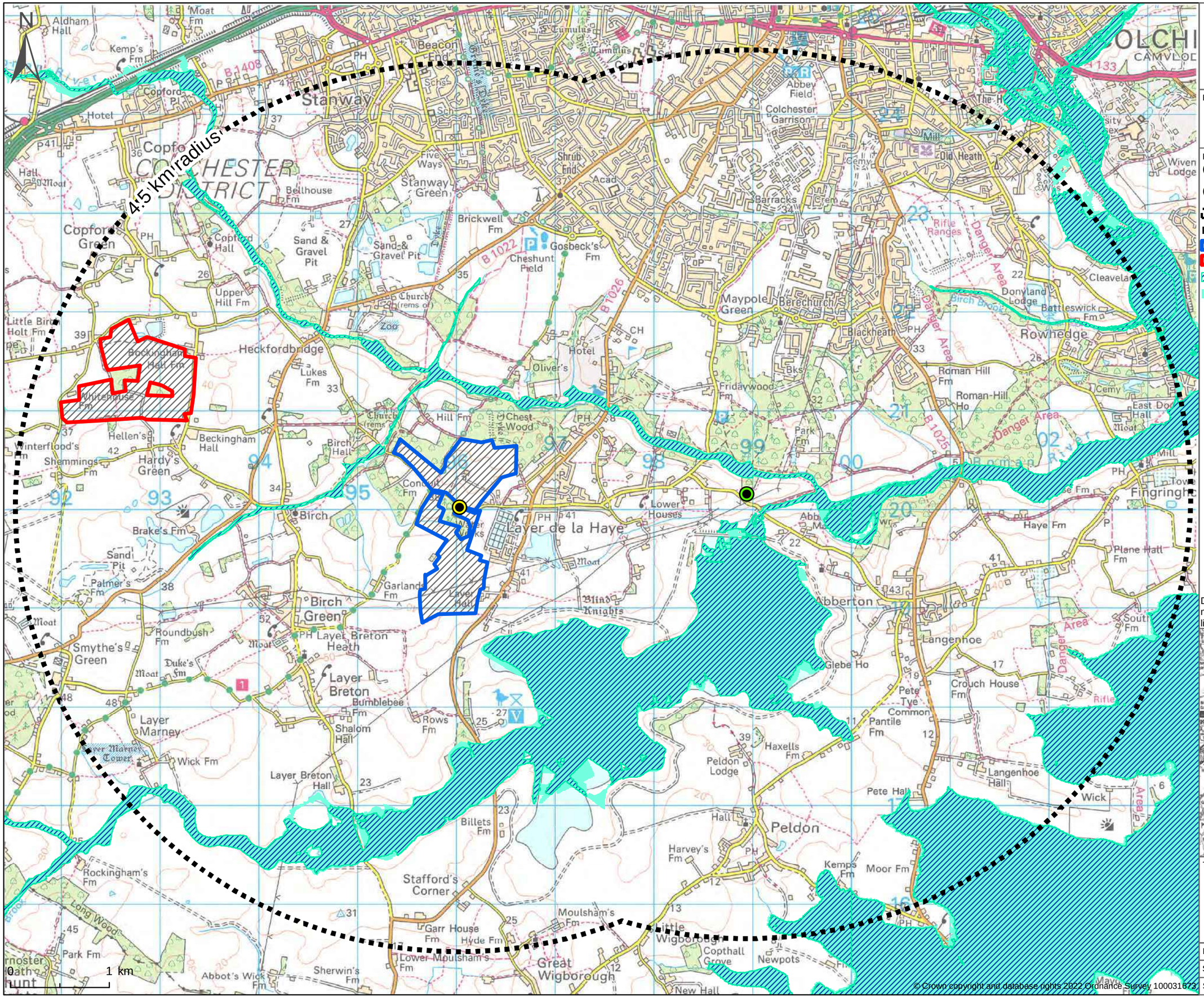
SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG



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PROJECT NAME:

Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)

Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2

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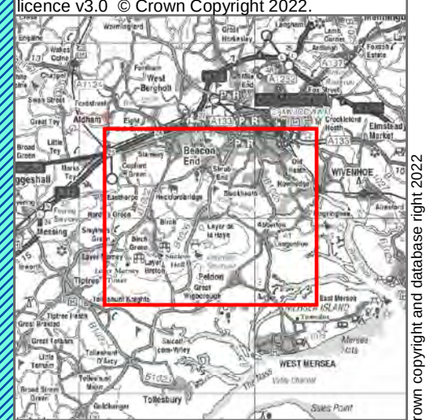

TITLE:

Figure 7
Flood Risk Zones

DATE: 05/07/2022	DRAWN BY: CH
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SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

N

4.5 km radius

0 1 km

PROJECT NAME:

Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)

Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Important Bird Area
- Special Protection Area
- Ramsar Site
- Special Area of Conservation
- Local Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland
- Slope > 10%
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2
- Buildings (25m buffer)
- Park and Garden
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Ancient Monument

Listed Building

- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

Public Right of Way

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway and Restricted Byway

ALC Grade - Provisional*

- Grade 1 - Excellent Quality
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality

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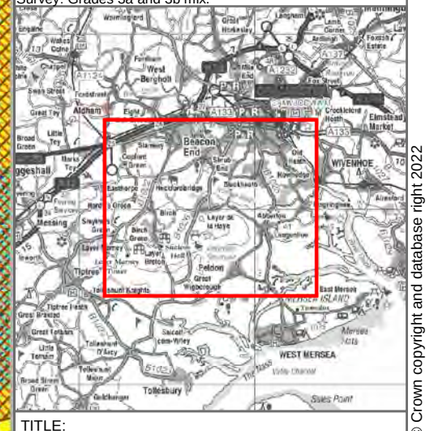

TITLE:

Figure 8
Combined Constraints

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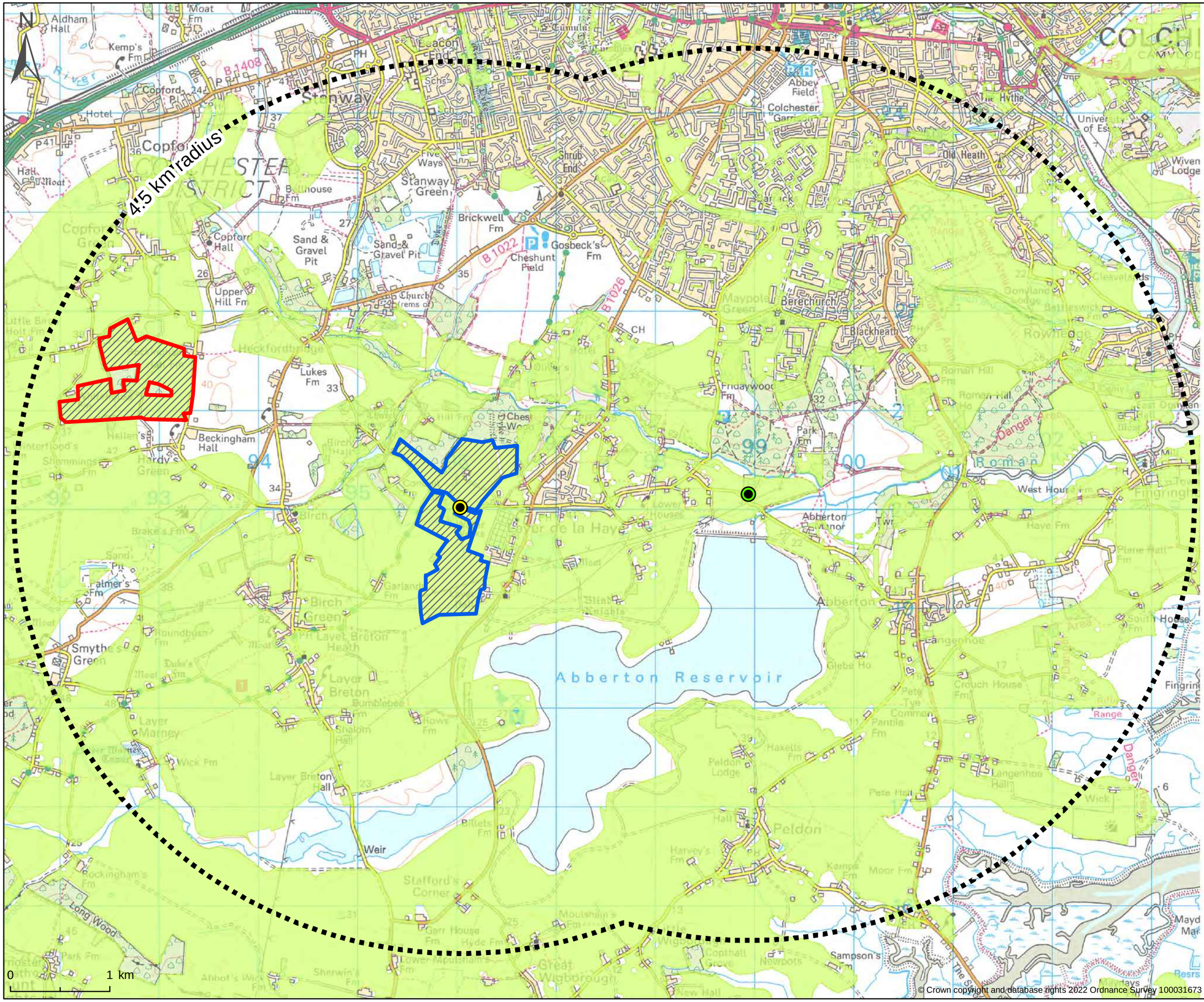
SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG



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PROJECT NAME:

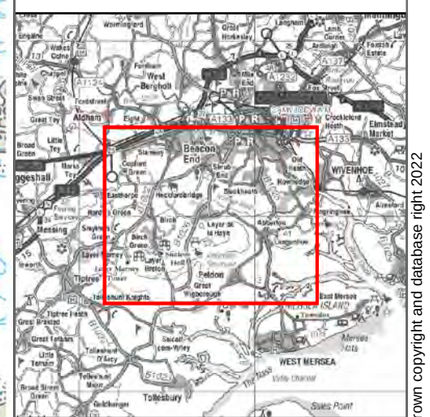
Birch Farm Solar Farm

KEY:

- Abberton Substation Point of Connection
- Layer Solar Farm Substation
- Search Area Boundary (4.5 km radius)

Planning Application Boundary

- Layer Solar Farm
- Birch Solar Farm
- Unconstrained Land



TITLE:

Figure 9
Unconstrained Land

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SCALE: 1:35,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

APPENDIX 2: FIGURE 10 (SHORT-LISTED SITES)


ALS53
RSW10
ALS58
ALS33
ALS56
ALS57
Layer Solar Farm Substation
ALS59
Abberton Substation Point of Connection
ALS32
ALS09
ALS2
ALS63
ALS35
ALS62
ALS28
ALS30
3
ALS22
ALS29
ALS24
ALS64
ALS65
ALS27
ALS66
Google Earth
4 km
N