

Utilities Report

Client: Equans

LPA: Wokingham Council



Document Control

Date	10/12/2024	Ref	23/027/UtilitiesRep/1.0
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Approved by			
Issue	For issue		
Version			

Introduction

This report is concerned with discharging condition 21 of 211081 by the provision of a report demonstrating that there will be no adverse impact upon the safety or connections of existing infrastructure.

21) Underground infrastructure

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a report demonstrating there will be no adverse impact upon the safety of existing pipelines and other infrastructure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any identified safety recommendations shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details during the construction phase.

Reason: In the interest of safety and uninterrupted connections to workers and local residents.

Methodology

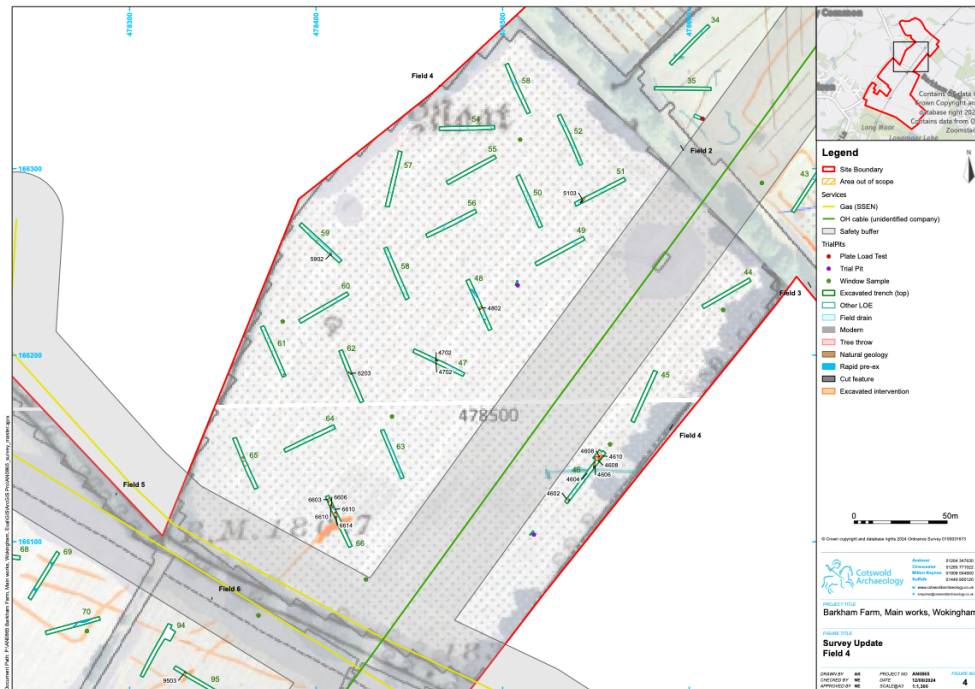
The condition is phrased to seek assurances that there will be no adverse impact to the safety of workers or to the connection of supply to local residents. As it is seeking essentially to 'prove a negative' proposition this is a formal impossibility. Therefore, a reasonable approach has been taken to providing assurances about the positive whereabouts of utility supplies together with a reasonable set of assumptions as to the water supply to Church Cottages, which has been difficult to pinpoint by the utility companies, the resident and interested parties and the Local Authority. Notwithstanding that the identification of existing utility runs is a construction imperative in any event, the provision of such information for a planning condition is not normally required. However, in this case it is understood that the particular concerns about the water supply to Church Cottages is the main driver for the condition.

A comprehensive utility search was undertaken by CATSurveys which included the usual utility record search but also included Ground penetrating radar and electromagnetic locating surveys. The results are shown in the submitted reports. One for the bulk of the solar farm area and the other to cover Barkham Ride. For concision the appendices have not been submitted but are available on request. For the water supply to Church Cottages a report from Thames Water has been provided which shows that the connection from Barkham Ride to the properties is privately owned (or at least not Thames Water's responsibility). The previously submitted assumptions about the location of this water supply remain valid and are repeated here.



Extract from Thames Water Asset Search Report

It has been established that the water supply to Church Cottages runs from a tank positioned off Barkham Ride close to the junction with the public right of way that leads towards the properties (see extract below). However, despite discussions with those suggested, undertaking a comprehensive Underground Utility Search, and a series of archaeological investigations within the suggested paddock, the water pipes have not been found. It is therefore suspected that the pipes run within the public right of way (PROW) rather than within the paddock. This would be a reasonable assumption to make in the absence of contrary evidence because 1) the PROW lies on the shortest route from the tank to the properties, 2) Pipes are less likely to be placed in ploughed land if non-ploughed land is available, 3) The archaeological investigations did not unearth any pipes.



Extract from the archaeological investigation plan



Conclusions and Recommendations

As it has not been possible to positively determine the precise route of the water pipes the following is a reasonable assumption to make - that the pipes run in PROW BR11 which is not a part of the site subject to any development.

In relation to the other utility services, the CATSurveys Report provides sufficient information about the whereabouts of these services and details methods used to determine their locations. As a result of this work the design of the solar farm has been modified throughout the latest design phase of the project to avoid the locations where such services may exist.

While positive locating of services and design for avoidance is the best method to prevent serviced disruption, as with all digging, caution is advised. It is not considered any additional safety recommendations are required above those set out in the CTMP which deal with underground and overground infrastructure. Normally, safety concerns at construction sites are covered by Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations which are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive and it is unusual to have such matters included in a planning condition as planning conditions should not seek to replicate matters covered by other regulations.

Enc.

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