

Initial Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) – BMV Agricultural Land and Cumulative Assessment

Project: Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park

Applicant: Elements Green

PINS Reference: EN010162

Date: 10th December 2025

Parties:

- Nottinghamshire County Councillor – Sherwood Forest Division (“the Councillor”)
- Elements Green (“the Applicant”)

1. Background and Purpose

Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land is a material planning consideration under NPPF paragraphs 174–175. Accurate assessment is essential to evaluate impacts on local agriculture, the economy, and planning policy compliance.

This SoCG identifies areas of agreement and disagreement regarding BMV land calculations in the Environmental Statement (ES), the cumulative assessment, and implications for local agriculture, including impacts on the Newark Sugar Factory supply area. Its purpose is to clarify factual positions, highlight unresolved matters, and assist the Examining Authority in understanding issues requiring further examination.

2. Matters Agreed Between the Parties

AG1 – Errors in ES Table 17.21

- The Applicant acknowledged at the Issue Specific Hearing (27 November) that ES Table 17.21 contains numerical errors, including the omission of 211 hectares of BMV land at Beacon Fen.
- *Applicant quote:* “There’s an extra 211 hectares of best and most versatile... I’ve not included. I took the wrong figure.”

AG2 – Omission of the One Earth NSIP

- The Applicant acknowledged that the One Earth solar NSIP was not included in the cumulative BMV assessment.
- *Applicant quote:* “I haven’t included One Earth, which is obviously the closest.”

AG3 – Resulting Increase in Cumulative BMV Land

- It is agreed that including the corrected Beacon Fen figures and One Earth NSIP increases the cumulative BMV total from 2,350 ha to 3,222 ha (an increase of 872 ha, or 37%).
- *NSDC summary:* “...an 872-hectare increase... which is a 37% increase.”

AG4 – Importance of Accurate Data for Policy Assessment

- Both parties agree that accurate BMV calculations are essential for:
 - NPPF compliance
 - Safeguarding agricultural land
 - Assessment of cumulative significant effects
 - Local planning policy considerations

3. Matters Not Agreed Between the Parties

NAG1 – Significance of Corrected BMV Total

- The Councillor considers that 3,222 ha represents a significant adverse cumulative effect, particularly in Newark & Sherwood District.
- The Applicant maintains that the cumulative effect remains “not significant.”

NAG2 – Weight Given to Local Agricultural Impacts

- The Councillor considers that BMV land loss will have direct impacts on the Newark Sugar Factory beet supply chain, which relies on local high-quality land.
- The Applicant considers agricultural impacts to be national rather than localised.

NAG3 – Adequacy of the Cumulative Assessment Methodology

- The Councillor considers that the omission of One Earth and errors at Beacon Fen undermine confidence in the cumulative assessment.
- The Applicant maintains that the methodology remains appropriate once corrected data are applied.

4. Matters Requiring Further Information

FI1 – Corrected ES Table 17.21

- A fully corrected cumulative table including:
 - One Earth NSIP
 - Corrected Beacon Fen figures
 - All NSIPs within the relevant radius
 - Updated total BMV calculations
 - Revised interpretation of significance

FI2 – Revised Cumulative Significance Assessment

- Reflecting the corrected cumulative BMV total of 3,222 ha

FI3 – Local Agricultural Impact Assessment

- Impacts on the Newark Sugar Factory supply area
- Cropping displacement and haulage/logistics impacts
- Local economic impacts of BMV loss

FI4 – QA and Verification Processes

- Explanation of how errors occurred
- Verification steps undertaken
- Measures to prevent future inaccuracies

5. Summary Table

Issue	Agreed	Not Agreed	Further Information Required
Omission of One Earth NSIP	✓		
Omission of 211 ha BMV at Beacon Fen	✓		
Correct cumulative BMV = 3,222 ha	✓		
872 ha (37%) error materially affects conclusions		✓	
Significance of cumulative BMV loss		✓	

Local agricultural impact incl. Newark Sugar Factory		✓	✓
Methodology robustness after errors		✓	
Provision of corrected Table 17.21			✓
Revised cumulative significance assessment			✓
QA and verification processes			✓

6. Conclusion

This Statement of Common Ground demonstrates:

- Substantial agreement that the Applicant's BMV calculations were inaccurate,
- Material omissions and numerical errors that affect the cumulative assessment,
- Continuing disagreement regarding the significance of these impacts, particularly for the local agricultural economy, and
- The need for further corrected information before the Examining Authority can rely on the ES conclusions.

Request: The Councillor respectfully requests that the Examining Authority require the Applicant to submit revised information addressing the matters identified above.

Signed for and on behalf of the Nottinghamshire County Councillor – Sherwood Forest Division:

Name; James Gamble

Position; County Councillor – Sherwood Forest Division

Date; 10th December 2025



James Gamble MSc. Biodiversity Conservation