



## Application by Green Hill Solar Farm Limited for Green Hill Solar Farm [EN010170]

### The Examining Authority's third written questions and requests for information (ExQ3): Issued on 18 February 2026

#### Responses are due by deadline 6: 24 March 2026

The following table sets out the Examining Authority's (ExA's) third round of written questions and requests for information – ExQ3. This follows the issuing of our first round of written questions (ExQ1) and second round of written questions (ExQ2), responses to which were submitted at deadlines 1 and 3 respectively.

Questions are set out using an issues-based framework derived from the initial assessment of principal issues provided as **annex B** to the Rule 6 Letter dated 23 September 2025. Questions have been added to the framework of issues set out there as they have arisen from representations, hearings and to address the assessment of the application against relevant policies.

Column 2 of the table indicates which interested parties (IPs) and other persons each question is directed to. The ExA would be grateful if all persons named could answer all questions directed to them, providing a substantive response, or indicating that the question is not relevant to them for a reason. This does not prevent an answer being provided to a question by a person to whom it is not directed, should the question be relevant to their interests.

Each question has a unique reference number which starts with 3 (indicating that it is from ExQ3) and then has an issue number and a question number. For example, the first question on general and cross-topic issues is identified as Q3.1.1. When you are answering a question, please start your answer by quoting the unique reference number.

You should respond to the questions by using the **Have your say** function on the [project page of the National Infrastructure website](#) and selecting 'Responses to Examining Authority's Third Written Questions (ExQ3)' when asked.

If you are responding to a small number of questions, you can submit your answers by choosing 'Make a comment' and entering your answers in the 'Your comments' box. If you are answering a larger number of questions you should download a copy of the Microsoft Word version of the document, enter your answers and save the document using an appropriate file name. You can then submit the completed document by selecting 'Upload files'.



Microsoft Word version: <https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN010170-001510-Green%20Hill%20Solar%20-%20ExAs%203rd%20written%20questions%20-%20February%202026%20-%20Word%20Final.docx>



## Abbreviations used:

<b>PA2008</b>	Planning Act 2008	<b>LIR</b>	Local Impact Report
<b>AIA</b>	Arboricultural Impact Assessment	<b>LPA</b>	local planning authority
<b>Art</b>	article	<b>LVIA</b>	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
<b>BESS</b>	Battery Energy Storage System	<b>MKCC</b>	Milton Keynes City Council
<b>BoR</b>	the Book of Reference	<b>NESO</b>	National Energy System Operator
<b>CA</b>	compulsory acquisition	<b>NGET</b>	National Grid Electricity Transmission plc
<b>CRC</b>	cable route corridor	<b>NNC</b>	North Northamptonshire Council
<b>dDCO</b>	the draft Development Consent Order	<b>NPS</b>	National Policy Statement
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment	<b>NSIP</b>	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
<b>EPS</b>	European Protected Species	<b>OAMS</b>	Outline Arboricultural Method Statement
<b>ES</b>	the Environmental Statement	<b>OEPMS</b>	Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy
<b>ExA</b>	Examining Authority	<b>oOEMP</b>	Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan
<b>FLL</b>	functionally linked land	<b>R</b>	requirement
<b>HDD</b>	horizontal directional drilling	<b>SoCG</b>	Statement of common ground
<b>HE</b>	Historic England	<b>SoS</b>	Secretary of state
<b>HRA</b>	Habitats Regulation Assessment	<b>SPEB</b>	Schedule of Protective Ecological Buffers
<b>IP</b>	Interested party	<b>TP</b>	temporary possession
<b>ISH</b>	Issue specific hearing	<b>WNC</b>	West Northamptonshire Council
<b>LEMP</b>	Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan		



## **The Examination Library**

References in these questions set out in square brackets (for example [APP-010]) are to documents catalogued in the Examination Library. The Examination Library can be obtained from the following link: [EN010170-000607-Green Hill Solar Farm Examination Library.pdf](#)

It will be updated as the examination progresses.

## **Citation of questions**

Questions in this table should be cited as follows:

Question reference: issue reference: question number, for example ExQ 3.1.1 – refers to question 1 in this table.



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ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
1. General and cross-topic questions		
Q3.1.1	The applicant	<p><b>Grid connection offer</b></p> <p>With respect to the review of connections that the National Energy System Operator (NESO) has been undertaking with the Government, Ofgem and the generation and transmission industry, as part of NESO’s decision making process was the applicant notified in December 2025 as to whether it continues to have an extant grid connection offer?</p> <p>If you have been notified and an offer has been made, is that offer now a Gate 1 or Gate 2 offer for solar generation and battery energy storage and what, if any, implications does having received a Gate 1 or Gate 2 offer have for the implementation assumptions referred to in the application documentation, for example the commencement of construction in the event of the proposed development receiving consent?</p>
2. Biodiversity, ecology and natural environment		
Q3.2.1	The applicant	<p><b>Ancient woodland</b></p> <p>The main basis on which the assessment of no significant adverse effects on ancient woodland during construction has been reached in Chapter 19: Arboriculture [APP-056] is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ancient woodland buffers are often larger than root protection areas.</li><li>• 15 metres is the minimum ancient woodland buffer size.</li><li>• Construction traffic would not use access tracks with the ancient woodland buffers.</li><li>• All excavation within ancient woodland buffers would be avoided.</li></ul> <p>The Chapter sets out that a 15-metre buffer (since increased to 30 metres, where buffers would be present) has been applied to all ancient woodlands. This is supported by the accompanying Tree Constraints Plans [APP-470 - APP-500], which depict buffers to all areas of ancient woodland.</p> <p>The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Outline Arboricultural Method Statement (OAMS) [APP-171] were also produced on the basis that buffer zones would be applied to all ancient woodland, as they are to be read in conjunction with the Tree Constraints Plans [APP-470 – APP-500] and Tree Impact Plans [APP-501 - APP-530], all of which depict complete ancient woodland buffers. The AIA identifies negligible impacts to ancient woodland during construction. Chapter 19 (Arboriculture) [APP-056] states that “a 15m buffer has been applied to all ancient woodlands” and that no construction phase impacts to ancient woodland are anticipated at the Sites during construction given the embedded mitigation for these features.</p> <p>Chapter 19: Arboriculture, the AIA and the OAMS do not refer to Appendix 9.12: Schedule of Protective Ecological Buffers (SPEB) [APP-095] of Chapter 9 (Rev A) of the Environmental Statement [REP1-033].</p> <p>The Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy (Revision B) (OEPMS) [REP4-010] states that the locations and widths of all buffer zones are illustrated in the SPEB. The SPEB would be secured through implementation of the OEPMS and the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan Revision B [REP3-062], secured by Requirements 8 and 7 of the draft DCO.</p>

**ExQ3: 18 February 2026****Responses due by deadline 6: 24 March 2026**

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
		<p>However, the SPEB does not show ancient woodland buffers at the below locations of proposed development adjacent to ancient woodland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The western edge of Sywell Wood (Cable Route Corridor and construction compound near Site C);</li><li>• The eastern edge of Horn Wood (operational access to Site F); and</li><li>• Barslay Spinney (Cable Route Corridor to the west of Site G).</li></ul> <p>This was questioned at ExQ2 (Q2.7.2) [PD-011] and the response [REP3-074] confirmed that ancient woodland buffers would not be applied at these areas. It was stated that Method Statement 6 of the OEPMS (Rev B) [REP4-010] sets out protective measures specific to the Cable Route Corridor. However, this method statement does not set out methods for the protection of the ancient woodland at these points.</p> <p>In summary, Chapter 19:Arboriculture, the AIA and OAMS and the recent signposting document [REP4-024] were all produced on the basis that buffers would be applied to all ancient woodland. However, ancient woodland buffers are missing from the SPEB in the three areas highlighted in Q2.7.2 of ExQ2 [PD-011]. Their absence from the proposed development is confirmed in the applicant's response to the question in Applicant Responses to ExA Second Written Questions [REP3-074]. These matters result in the following questions:</p> <p>A) As set out above, the assessment of effects on ancient woodland appears to have been made on a different basis from the current proposed development. Thus, is that assessment correct?</p> <p>B) If ancient woodland buffers would be absent from the three areas highlighted in Q2.7.2 of [PD-011], how would direct and indirect effects of development on ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat be mitigated fully during the construction phase at Sywell Wood and Barslay Spinney?</p> <p>An increase of “fewer than one vehicle trip per day per Site for maintenance purposes” is envisaged by the Outline Operational Traffic Management Plan (Revision A) [REP1-157]. How much would such access intensify the vehicular use of the track around Horn Wood during the general operational phase, and how would any direct and indirect effects of this on the ancient woodland be mitigated fully?</p>
Q3.2.2	The applicant	<p><b>Signposting Document clarification</b></p> <p>The Signposting Document for Matters Raised at Issue Specific Hearings [REP4-024] refers to 15 metre and/or 30 metre buffers in respect of Work Nos. 5B/5B(vi)/8B at Sywell Wood, Horn Wood and Barslay Spinney ancient woodland. Please clarify where these buffers are secured, as they are not shown in the Schedule of Protective Ecological Buffers [APP-095] secured (through Requirement 8 of the draft development consent order) at paragraph 3.3.2 of the Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy (Revision B) [REP4-010], as confirmed in the response to Q2.7.2 in the Applicant's Responses to ExA Second Written Questions [REP3-074].</p>
Q3.2.3	The applicant	<p><b>Ancient woodland buffers</b></p> <p>The NPS EN-1 and the National Planning Policy Framework categorise both veteran trees and ancient woodland as irreplaceable habitats. The Outline Arboricultural Method Statement [APP-171] sets out that the Cable Route Corridor has been widened up to 120m adjacent to identified veteran trees to provide sufficient space to allow for open cut trenching around Veteran Tree Buffer Zones, ensuring impacts to veteran trees are avoided (secured in the Works Plan [REP3-008]). Please explain why the same protection is not proposed for ancient woodland adjacent to the Cable Route Corridor, including whether constraints such as the presence of the Sywell Aerodrome runway adjacent to the Sywell Wood ancient woodland are a contributing factor to this absence.</p>

**ExQ3: 18 February 2026**

**Responses due by deadline 6: 24 March 2026**

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
Q3.2.4	The applicant	<p><b>Ancient woodland buffers</b></p> <p>A temporary haul road would be constructed alongside the Cable Route Corridor (CRC). The Milton Keynes City Council Statement of Common Ground draft (Revision A) [REP4-031] notes that there would be 11 HGV arrivals per day at the CRC access on the A509 near Site G during the haul road construction period. As ancient woodland buffers to Sywell Wood and Barslay Spinney would not be present within the CRC, how would the ancient woodland be protected from issues such as damage or compaction to soil, an increase in air and soil pollution, and increased disturbance to wildlife such as noise from additional people and traffic?</p>
Q3.2.5	The applicant	<p><b>Duration of works adjacent to ancient woodland</b></p> <p>What would be the likely duration of works within the Cable Route Corridor and the use of Construction Compound 1 adjacent to the Sywell Wood, Horn Wood or Barslay Spinney areas of ancient woodland?</p>
Q3.2.6	The applicant	<p><b>Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy</b></p> <p>Should paragraph 5.2.2 of the Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy (Rev B) [REP4-010] be updated to read “..<b>between</b> the months of March and October inclusive”?</p>
Q3.2.7	The applicant	<p><b>Ancient woodland buffers</b></p> <p>The Signposting Document for Matters Raised at Issue Specific Hearings [REP4-024] sets out that, where ancient woodland buffers are present, proposed works within 15 metres of the ancient woodland would be permitted only in exceptional circumstances, and would be restricted to the upgrading of access tracks through the use of a “no-dig” solution and provision of permissive paths that use existing tracks or connect to existing public rights of way within the buffer zone. Please explain where these restrictions are clearly secured.</p>
Q3.2.8	The applicant	<p><b>Ancient woodland buffers</b></p> <p>Please explain the procedure which would be followed if the Ecological Clerk of Works did not authorise proposed unavoidable works within ancient woodland buffers.</p>
Q3.2.9	The applicant	<p><b>Ancient woodland: assessment against NPS EN-1 (2024)</b></p> <p>If the proposed development were considered to result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, please explain whether there would be wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy would exist.</p>
Q3.2.10	Natural England The Forestry Commission	<p><b>Ancient woodland</b></p> <p>It was confirmed at Q2.7.2 of the Applicant’s Responses to ExA Second Written Questions [REP3-074] that 30-metre ancient woodland buffers may not be applied at the following areas of the proposed development where it would border ancient woodland, as impacts at these points are considered to be temporary in nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The western edge of Sywell Wood (Cable Route Corridor and construction compound near Site C)</li><li>• Barslay Spinney (Cable Route Corridor to the west of Site G)</li><li>• The eastern edge of Horn Wood (operational access to Site F).</li></ul> <p>This is supported by plans within Appendix 9.12: Schedule of Protective Ecological Buffers (SPEB) [APP-095] of Chapter 9 (Revision A) of the Environmental Statement [REP1-033] showing no ecological buffers at the above three locations. The SPEB would be secured through</p>



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ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
		<p>implementation of the Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy (Revision B) [REP4-010] and the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Revision B) [REP3-062], secured by Requirements 8 and 7 of the draft development consent order.</p> <p>The Signposting Document for Matters Raised at Issue Specific Hearings [REP4-024] provides further information on ancient woodland matters at Pages 4-27. However, please note that it appears to have been produced on the basis that buffers would apply to all ancient woodland bordering the proposed development, when (as set out above) these would currently be absent in some areas.</p> <p>Please confirm whether you consider that the development would result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland as a result of the absence of buffers at the three locations listed above.</p>
Q3.2.11	Natural England The Forestry Commission	<p><b>Ancient Woodland</b></p> <p>Please explain whether you are satisfied that the proposed development includes measures to mitigate fully any direct and indirect effects of development on ancient woodland during both construction and operational phases.</p>
Q3.2.12	The applicant Milton Keynes City Council	<p><b>Bat surveys</b></p> <p>Given the concerns raised at paragraph 4.15 of Milton Keynes City Council's LIR [REP1-169] regarding the adequacy of bat surveys with particular regard to barbastelle bats, should further surveys be required in order to establish any necessary measures to protect the species?</p>
Q3.2.13	The applicant	<p><b>Effects on bats</b></p> <p>Proposed mitigation for the effects of the proposed development on bats includes ecological buffer zones. However, no ancient woodland buffers are proposed within the Cable Route Corridor and adjacent to Construction Compound 1. Can the applicant explain how effects on bats have been adequately mitigated in the absence of ancient woodland buffers for these elements of the proposed development?</p>
Q3.2.14	The applicant	<p><b>Bat mitigation</b></p> <p>Is there sufficient evidence so that any potential harm to bats is adequately mitigated?</p>
Q3.2.15	Natural England Milton Keynes City Council	<p><b>Effects on barbastelle bat</b></p> <p>Milton Keynes City Council [REP3-085] raise significant concern that the adjacent woodland and linking boundary features at Site G are of high importance to barbastelle bats, an Annex II species typically considered very rare nationally. Static bat detector surveys (Figure 9.6.7 Bat Static Detector Locations (Green Hill G)) in Appendix 9.6 Bat Surveys (Revision A) [REP1-047] recorded high levels of barbastelle bat activity at location SD38 on the western boundary of Site G (as set out in the applicant's response to MKC 4.15 of the Applicant's Responses to Local Impact Report Responses [REP4-018]). Location SD38 is at the end of a small belt of woodland and across the A509 road from the Barslay Spinney ancient woodland and adjoining hedgerow.</p> <p>The Bat Surveys document states that linear features such as hedgerows and small woodland blocks provide bat flight paths and foraging resources. It states that broadleaved woodland offers a high-quality foraging habitat for bats.</p> <p>A tree with a high suitability for roosting bats was recorded (Figure 9.6.14 Bat Ground Level Tree Assessment Results (Green Hill G)) in [REP1-047] in close proximity to location SD38. Trees with moderate suitability for roosting bats were identified in Barslay Spinney and within the Cable Route Corridor (CRC) to the west of the spinney (9.6.19 Bat Ground Level Tree Assessment Results (Cable Route 5 of 5) [REP1-047]. Bat activity surveys were not carried out within the CRC.</p> <p>Work No 5B for the CRC passing west from the A509 road close to location SD38, and adjacent to the Barslay Spinney ancient woodland and a hedgerow to its west, comprises works to lay electrical cables including laying down of access tracks, roads, drainage infrastructure,</p>

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ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
		<p>cable laying, tunnelling, boring and drilling works and temporary construction and decommissioning laydown areas which may include areas of hardstanding, car parking, materials and equipment storage, site and welfare offices and workshops. A temporary haul route would be implemented alongside the cable route (Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy (Revision B)) [REP4-010], Section 3.4, which would require the use of HGVs to construct.</p> <p>The CRC would contain no ecological buffers, as set out in the Schedule of Protective Ecological Buffers [APP-095]. As features such as the ancient woodland and adjoining line of hedgerow and trees across the road from location SD38 may provide flight paths and foraging resources for the barbastelle bat, do you consider that the absence of ecological buffers to these features adjacent to the CRC may result in harm to the protected species and relevant habitat?</p>
Q3.2.16	Natural England	<p><b>Effects on barbastelle bat</b></p> <p>Do you consider that the information supplied is sufficient to determine the effects of the proposed development on populations of barbastelle bat for the purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment?</p>
Q3.2.17	The applicant	<p><b>Cable Route Corridor crossing techniques</b></p> <p>As set out above, concern is raised that linking boundary features at Site G may be of high importance to barbastelle bats, a European Protected Species (EPS), and high levels of barbastelle activity were identified in close proximity to the Cable Route Corridor (CRC) where it passes west from the A509 road. Linear elements such as hedgerow and ditches provide flight paths and foraging resources for bats. Hedgerow HV_SP8955_001 and ditch HV_SP8955_003 within the CRC are proposed in the Crossing Schedule (Revision A) [REP3-068] to be crossed by the open cut method. Given their potential importance to the EPS, would trenchless techniques such as HDD be appropriate at these crossings instead?</p>
Q3.2.18	The applicant	<p><b>Extent of ecological pre-construction site walkover</b></p> <p>The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Revision A) [REP1-131] sets out at Table 3.3 that a pre-construction site walkover would be undertaken in advance of mobilisation/any potential advance works to reconfirm the ecological baseline conditions and to identify any new ecological risks, such as newly constructed badger setts. Would this include all areas of the proposed development, including the Cable Route Corridor?</p>
Q3.2.19	The applicant	<p><b>BESS safety</b></p> <p>Please outline any evidence on the reliability of the self-actuating valves which would control the BESS firewater containment system.</p>
Q3.2.20	The applicant	<p><b>Hedgerow obstacles within sites</b></p> <p>Appendix B (Main Site Obstacles Table) of the Crossing Schedule Revision A [REP3-068] does not contain an entry for Obstacle Description FB61 (hedgerow within Site F). Please update the document as necessary.</p>

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<b>3. Compulsory acquisition, temporary possession and other land or rights considerations</b>		
Q3.3.1	The applicant	<p><b>BoR – Added interests</b></p> <p>The most recent version of the Schedule of Changes to the BoR (Revision B) [REP3-127] includes ‘added interests’ in relation to land included within the Order Limits. Can the applicant please confirm that measures have been taken to ensure that new added interests are fully aware of the proposed development?</p>
Q3.3.2	The applicant	<p><b>BoR – Unknown</b></p> <p>There remain a number of Category 1, 2 and 3 persons identified as ‘unknown’ in the BoR Revision D [REP3-032]. Please can the applicant confirm whether further steps have been/will be taken to identify any of these further before the close of the Examination?</p>
Q3.3.3	The applicant and Anglian Water	<p><b>Unidentified AW assets</b></p> <p>In the Relevant Representations submission dated 6 January 2026 [CR-005], it has been highlighted that not all AWS easements and freehold assets which are affected by the scheme in full have been identified.</p> <p>Could both the applicant and Anglian Water provide an update on this matter and whether all outstanding easements and assets will be identified prior to the close of this Examination.</p>
Q3.3.4	The applicant and National Highways	<p><b>Additional Plot 12-128-b</b></p> <p>In the Relevant Representation [CR-006] in respect of the CA of additional land, National Highways (NH) have raised objections to the compulsory purchase powers over this plot. Are discussions ongoing on this point and please could the applicant address NH’s objections and indicate if they are likely to be resolved prior to the close of this Examination?</p>
Q3.3.5	The applicant	<p><b>Crown Land</b></p> <p>In Section 10.1 of the Statement of Reasons Revision B [REP3-028] it is noted that it has not been possible to determine if the British Railways Board Limited land has been transferred away from the Crown authority but that engagement is ongoing. Please could the applicant provide an update on whether anything further has been clarified and, if required, the relevant consents are being sought from the Crown Estate?</p>
Q3.3.6	The applicant	<p><b>Funding Statement</b></p> <p>Further to matters raised at Open Floor Hearing 2 and noting the applicant’s submissions in [REP3-129] and the provisions of the dDCO, the applicant is requested to consider whether it is able to provide additional information to support the Funding Statement, such as audited accounts or summaries as have been provided for other projects (see Tillbridge Solar Project, Botley West Solar Farm or Gate Burton Energy Park for examples).</p>
Q3.3.7	The applicant	<p><b>Land parcel 08-094-a</b></p> <p>Further to matters raised in relation to the width of part of 08-094-a in proximity to the woodland and pylon (ZA284) and noting the applicant’s submissions in [REP3-129], please could the applicant advise if further discussions have been carried out with the APs in relation to their concerns over this parcel of land? Has the 40m width between the woodland and pylon been confirmed and does this allow for the cable to be accommodated with the necessary woodland buffers and stand-off distances from the pylon?</p>

4. The draft Development Consent Order (DCO)		
Q3.4.1	The applicant and National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET)	<p><b>Protective provisions in favour of NGET</b></p> <p>NGET’s submission at deadline 4 [REP4-041] states that the protective provisions in their favour in Part 3 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [REP3-024] do not contain the necessary future-proofing wording for the protection of the NGET Upgrade Projects (the Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire Project and the Sundon to Grendon Reconductoring Project).</p> <p>Could both parties provide an update on negotiations on this matter, including an indication as to whether you consider a satisfactory resolution will be achieved before the close of the examination.</p>
Q3.4.2	Cadent Gas Limited	<p><b>Protective provisions in favour of Cadent Gas Limited</b></p> <p>Could you confirm whether you are satisfied with the protective provisions as set out in Part 8 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [REP3-024]. If you are not, please provide us with the alternative form of wording that you would prefer.</p>
Q3.4.3	The applicant and Anglian Water	<p><b>Protective provisions in favour of Anglian Water</b></p> <p>The draft SoCG [REP2-064] indicates that bespoke protective provisions have been agreed, and that these will be included in the revised draft DCO at deadline 3. There appear to have been no changes made to Part 5 of Schedule 15 in [REP3-024]. As the wording in the draft SoCG is somewhat ambiguous, could you confirm whether any changes need to be made to Part 5 of Schedule 15 as part of agreeing protective provisions or whether Anglian Water were satisfied with the existing wording of Part 5 of Schedule 15 in the previous iteration of the draft DCO [CR1-014]?</p>
5. Historic environment		
Q3.5.1	North Northamptonshire Council	<p><b>Issues awaiting comment in draft Statement of Common Ground</b></p> <p>The draft SoCG submitted at deadline 4 [REP4-027] indicates that the applicant is awaiting the Council’s comments on a number of cultural heritage matters (CH-03 to CH-08 inclusive). Do you have any concerns that you wish to raise in relation to those matters, which include the heritage assessment, proposed mitigation measures, and archaeological assessment?</p>
Q3.5.2	West Northamptonshire Council	<p><b>Matters still under discussion in draft Statement of Common Ground</b></p> <p>The draft SoCG submitted at deadline 4 [REP4-029] indicates that a number of cultural heritage matters remain under discussion (CH-03 to CH-08 inclusive). Do you have any concerns that you wish to raise in relation to those matters, which include the heritage assessment, proposed mitigation measures, and archaeological assessment?</p>
Q3.5.3	Historic England	<p><b>Any outstanding issues in relation to archaeology</b></p> <p>In your relevant representation [RR-1228] and as part of your contributions to Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) you indicated that further discussions would be taking place between yourselves and the applicant regarding matters relating to archaeology. Could you confirm whether you are now satisfied with the applicant’s approach to matters relating to archaeology or are there any outstanding concerns?</p> <p>If you do have any outstanding concerns, could you explain exactly what they are and what actions would be necessary to address those concerns?</p>

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<b>6. Land use, agriculture and soils</b>		
Q3.6.1	North Northamptonshire Council	<p><b>Issues awaiting comment in draft Statement of Common Ground</b></p> <p>The draft SoCG submitted at deadline 4 [REP4-027] indicates that the applicant is awaiting the Council's comments on a number of agricultural matters (ALC-03 to ALC-05 inclusive). Do you have any concerns that you wish to raise in relation to those matters, which include impacts to ALC graded land and soil quality, proposed mitigation measures, and residual effects?</p>
<b>7. Landscape and visual, including glint and glare</b>		
Q3.7.1	Applicant and SGHS	<p><b>LVIA Methodology</b></p> <p>In the SGHS response Comments on responses to ExQ2 (Q2.13.8) [REP4-044] there still appears to be some dispute over the LVIA methodology. Has any discussion or progress been made in respect of this to narrow the areas of dispute or do the parties' stances remain as per the Applicant's Response to Stop Green Hill Solar SGHS-011 in [REP4-021]?</p>
Q3.7.2	North Northamptonshire Council	<p><b>Glint and Glare Addendum</b></p> <p>At Deadline 4, the applicant submitted an addendum to the Glint and Glare assessments to consider the impacts on local roads within NNC's jurisdiction [REP4-026]. Are NNC satisfied that all relevant local roads have now been included and are there any comments on the submitted report?</p>
Q3.7.3	Applicant	<p><b>Fields GF9 and GF13</b></p> <p>Following the Applicant's Comments on Responses to ExA Second Written Questions [REP4-019] reference LPC-001 Q2.13.5, has there been any progress on the Applicant's submission to the Local Plan consultation, noting that the consultation period was due to expire 16 February 2026.</p>
Q3.7.4	Applicant and MKCC	<p><b>Statement of Common Ground</b></p> <p>In the latest SoCG, Revision A [REP4-031] all Landscape and Visual matters appear to still be 'under discussion' with the position stated as 'the applicant awaits the Council's comments'. Please can you provide an update on the progress of discussions and indicate if it is likely that these will be resolved prior to the close of the Examination.</p>
<b>8. Minerals</b>		
Q3.8.1	Ecton Estate	<p><b>Further information on consented minerals development</b></p> <p>Further to your Deadline 4 submission [REP4-048] could you assist the ExA by explaining exactly which section of the applicant's proposed cable route would sterilise an area of consented minerals development (ideally including a plan showing the extent of the area of minerals to be worked).</p> <p>Could you also provide details of the consented minerals development to which you refer, including the planning application reference, date of permission, nature of minerals to be extracted, expected timescales for working at the site, and any other information that you consider it would be helpful for the ExA to know.</p> <p>Finally, could you set out what changes you would be seeking the applicant to make to their proposed cable route to address your concerns.</p>

9. Socio-economic effects		
Q2.15.1	The applicant	<p><b>Assessment of socio-economic impacts against local planning policies</b></p> <p>NPS EN-1 sets out that applicants should refer to how the development’s socio-economic impacts correlate with local planning policies. Is this information provided anywhere?</p>
Q3.9.1	The applicant	<p><b>Effects on long-distance routes</b></p> <p>The Northamptonshire Boundary Walk would pass between fencing and new/reinforced hedgerow and planting in Site F, sections of the Three Shires Way would pass fencing and new hedgerow in Site G, and the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk would pass between fencing and new planting in Site G (sources: Environmental Statement Figure 17.3 Long-Distance Recreational Routes [APP-466], Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plans [REP1-113] and [APP-219] and Works Plan Revision D [REP3-008]). Would these long-distance routes feel less safe to some users at these points, with a resulting harmful effect?</p>
Q3.9.2	The applicant	<p><b>Effects on public rights of way</b></p> <p>REP3-109 submits that paths that are enclosed by hedgerows on either side tend to get muddy in the winter months. Does the applicant consider that harm to the accessibility of public rights of way could result from boggier surfaces caused by the enclosure of paths on either side by new or reinforced hedgerow or planting as a result of the proposed development?</p>
Q3.9.3	The applicant	<p><b>Effects on Glebe Farm/The Meadows business</b></p> <p>The applicant states at ELD-004 of their Responses to Written Representations at Deadline 1 document [REP2-048] that any road closures of Doddington Road, Earls Barton would be solely between Glebe Farm and the A45 junction, and that these would be “prioritised for nighttime works”. Where are these two matters secured?</p>
Q3.9.4	The applicant	<p><b>Village Hopper bus service</b></p> <p>Would the proposed development avoid potential disruption to the Village Hopper bus service, raised by Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council in [REP4-037]? If not, how would such disruption be mitigated?</p>
Q3.9.5	Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council	<p><b>Village Hopper bus service route map request</b></p> <p>Please provide a full route map for the Village Hopper bus service referred to in your representation [REP4-037].</p>
Q3.9.6	Trescella and Ben Elderton	<p><b>Effects on Glebe Farm/The Meadows business</b></p> <p>Please explain any evidence which supports the assertions regarding the proposed development’s potential effect on the viability of both the agricultural and farm shop elements of the Glebe Farm/The Meadows business.</p>
10. Transportation and traffic		
Q3.10.1	The applicant	<p><b>Effects of traffic management measures</b></p> <p>Has an assessment been made of the potential effects of traffic management measures on surrounding highways? For example, the Order would permit street works, alteration of layout, temporary closure and traffic regulation measures on Kettering Road (Walgrave) up to its junction with the A43 and Doddington Road, Earls Barton close to the A45. Could traffic management measures associated with the proposed development affect congestion and safety on other routes, including the Strategic Road Network?</p>

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Q3.10.2	The applicant	<p><b>Access to Glebe Farm shop</b></p> <p>Assuming that the Cable Route Corridor on Doddington Road, Earls Barton would form part of the northern interconnection works, the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [REP3-064] (at Page 12) shows an indicative construction period of approximately 17 months at this location. Whilst it is appreciated that not all elements of the Cable Route Corridor would be constructed concurrently, what assurances can be given that traffic management measures on Doddington Road would not deter customers of the Glebe Farm shop, with a harmful effect on the business?</p>
Q3.10.3	The applicant	<p><b>Status of permissive paths in Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan keys</b></p> <p>Cyclists are not listed where the Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan (LEMP) keys depict permissive paths for pedestrians and equestrians, although the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan (Revision B) [REP3-066] states that cyclists would be able to access these paths. Please update the LEMP as necessary.</p>
Q3.10.4	The applicant	<p><b>Permissive path through Site D</b></p> <p>Please explain why the permissive path parallel with and close to Public Footpath NN/TN/3 is proposed. Please also confirm whether the permissive path would meet the highway at its northern terminus.</p>
Q3.10.5	The applicant	<p><b>Access between permissive path and public footpath, Site E</b></p> <p>The Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan E Sheet 2 (Revision B) [REP3-050] does not show a gap in the planting along the western boundary of Field EF33, opposite the termination point of Footpath NN/TN/2 on the west side of Earls Barton Road. Such a gap would ensure that the public could pass between the permissive path and the public footpath with minimal roadside walking. Would a gap be provided?</p>
Q3.10.6	The applicant	<p><b>Status of proposed permissive path, Site E</b></p> <p>The Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables (Revision A) [REP1-079] refer at Page 54 to “onwards permissive/informal routes directly impacted by Green Hill E”. Is the proposed permissive path between Mears Ashby Byway Open to All Traffic TN/010 and Earls Barton currently a permissive path, or does a permissive path exist near to it?</p>
Q3.10.7	The applicant	<p><b>Connection of permissive path to highway, Site E</b></p> <p>The southern terminus of the permissive path between Mears Ashby Byway Open to All Traffic TN/010 and Earls Barton is not shown to meet the A4500 road on the Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan E Sheet 2 (Revision B) [REP3-050]. Please confirm that the path would connect two highways and amend any necessary documents.</p>
Q3.10.8	The applicant	<p><b>Design of permissive path, Site E</b></p> <p>The majority of the permissive path between Mears Ashby and Earls Barton would be adjacent to grassland or wildflower meadow, to at least one side, as shown on the Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan E Sheet 2 (Revision B) [REP3-050]. However, much of the path would be enclosed by proposed hedgerow or tree planting, with hedgerow being maintained to an optimum height of 4-4.5m tall [REP3-062]. In parts (for example, where the path would pass fields EF22 and EF21) the proposed path is shown on REP3-050 as a relatively narrow feature (minimum width 3.0 metres as set out in REP1-151) between potentially tall planting on both sides. The resulting sense of enclosure may cause some path users to have personal safety concerns. Could the design of the permissive path be altered so that the openness of much of the surrounding areas of the development could support the confidence of all users to use the path?</p>

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Q3.10.9	The applicant	<p><b>Utility of some permissive paths, Site F</b></p> <p>The proposed permissive paths throughs Field FF6 and Field FF11 would reduce journey time between public rights of way by a modest degree for some path users, depending on their destination, by removing the need to walk a “dog leg” formed by paths in the vicinity. However, given the similar distances between the existing and proposed routes, the time saving would be minimal. How beneficial would the proposed permissive paths be?</p>
Q3.10.10	The applicant	<p><b>Utility of permissive path, Site F</b></p> <p>The eastern terminus of the permissive path through Field FF33 would be onto a section of the A509 road. Access between the path and Bozeat, the nearest village, would be via the A509 and London Road. The A509 is subject to high traffic flows, as set out in Chapter 3 of the Environmental Statement [REP1-029]. There is an absence of public rights of way which would offer an alternative to walking on the highway in the vicinity, and no footways are indicated along the roads referred to. How beneficial would the proposed permissive path be, given that these considerations may deter public access to the path?</p>
Q3.10.11	The applicant	<p><b>Utility of permissive path, Site F</b></p> <p>Would the main benefits of the permissive bridleway from Easton Lane and through Field FF26 be to patrons of the Low Farm equestrian business, as the route exits onto Easton Lane which appears to be subject to a national speed limit with an absence of footways, and so may not be attractive to pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists?</p>
Q3.10.12	The applicant	<p><b>Utility of permissive path, Site G</b></p> <p>The proposed permissive path between Fields GF6 and GF9 would reduce journey time between public rights of way by a modest degree for some path users, depending on their destination, by removing the need to walk a “dog leg” formed by paths in the vicinity. However, given the similar distances between the existing and proposed routes, the time saving would be minimal. How beneficial would the proposed permissive path be?</p>
Q3.10.13	The applicant	<p><b>Photomontage request: Site G</b></p> <p>Please provide a photomontage showing all post-construction views from Viewpoint 51 adjacent to Threeshire Wood [APP-313 and APP-384]. This should be a fully verifiable (Type 4), fully rendered (AVR Level 3) visualisation in accordance with the Landscape Institute TGN 06/19, as will be the case for the additional photomontages from other parts of the site (MS-008 in [REP4-022]).</p>
Q3.10.14	The applicant	<p><b>Duration of any public rights of way diversions</b></p> <p>The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan Revision B [REP3-066] states (at 3.3.2) that it is not anticipated that any long-term public right of way diversions or diversions of more than a day would be required. The oOEMP Revision B [REP4-008] appears (in Table 3.7) to envisage “no diversions or closures”, but also states that “any public right of way temporarily diverted during the construction phase will be reinstated during the operational phase”, suggesting a longer period than the single day referred to in the first plan. Please clarify how long any public right of way diversions are envisaged to last.</p>
Q3.10.15	The applicant	<p><b>Offset of the proposed development from public rights of way</b></p> <p>The Concept Design Parameters and Principles (Revision A) [REP1-151] set out that solar panels would be offset from the centreline of public rights of way by 15 metres. Would public rights of way which pass between panels on both sides therefore pass through an area between panels of a total width of 30 metres (excluding any fencing, hedgerow etc within this)?</p>



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Q3.10.16	The applicant	<b>Provision for existing public rights of way on the sites</b>  The Non-Technical Summary (Part 1) [APP-543] and Chapter 17 (Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation) [APP-054] state that “The Scheme also features provision for enhancement to existing public rights of ways on the Sites, through repairing, upgrading and replacing existing public rights of way furniture, such as signs, gates, and re-establishing hedgerows gaps”. Please signpost where this provision is set out.
Q3.10.17	The applicant	<b>Site G access track</b>  An access to site G through the hedgerow located along the western boundary of Field GF9 is referred to at Q2.7.3 of the Applicant Responses to ExA Second Written Questions [REP3-074]. How would this access track affect the Three Shires Way, any other public rights of way in the vicinity, or the permissive footpath? Could the access track be depicted on the Works Plan, for clarity?
Q3.10.18	The applicant	<b>Funding of public rights of way upgrades</b>  If potential upgrades to public rights of way infrastructure within the scheme would be funded by the separate community benefit fund (as suggested at Table 17.2, Page 15 of Chapter 17 Socio-Economics Tourism and Recreation [APP-054]), would these be benefits of the scheme?
Q3.10.19	The applicant	<b>Referencing of public footpath in Management Plan</b>  Paragraph 4.2.16 of the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan Revision B [REP3-066] appears to incorrectly refer to footpath Lavendon/FP1. Please update to Lavendon/FP5 if required.
Q3.10.20	The applicant	<b>Permissive path missing from plan, Site F</b>  A permissive path is shown within Field FF33 along the south east boundary of Horn Wood on the Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan F Sheet 3 Revision C [REP3-054]. The path is not set out in the permissive paths section at 4.2 of the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan Revision B [REP3-066]. Please update the document as necessary.
Q3.10.21	The applicant	<b>Referencing of field number in Management Plan</b>  Paragraph 4.2.9 of the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan Revision B [REP3-066] appears to incorrectly refer to field numbers EF33 and EF33. Please update to EF33 and EF34 if required.
Q3.10.22	The applicant	<b>Referencing of public bridleway in Management Plan</b>  Paragraph 4.2.5 of the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan Revision B [REP3-066] appears to incorrectly refer to bridleway WN/CT/3. Please update to NN/CT/3 if necessary.
Q3.10.23	The applicant	<b>Spelling of Waendel Walk</b>  Please correct the spelling of Waendel Walk in paragraph 4.2.15 of the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan Revision B [REP3-066].
Q3.10.24	Mears Ashby Parish Council	<b>North Northamptonshire Greenway</b>  Please confirm the location of the North Northamptonshire Greenway and how connection between the proposed development and the Greenway is proposed.

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11. Water environment		
Q3.11.1	The applicant	<p><b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan provisions</b></p> <p>The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Revision A) [REP1-131] (OCEMP) sets out at Table 3.4 that construction buffers of 10 metres should be preserved adjacent to “all receptors”. Does this refer to water environment receptors only? If so, could this be specified both in the OCEMP and in any other relevant documents, such as paragraph 10.9.18 of Chapter 10: Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage (Revision A) [REP1-023], in the interests of clarity (as there are various different buffers applicable throughout the scheme)?</p>
Q3.11.2	The applicant	<p><b>UK Climate Projections</b></p> <p>Have the latest UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) been taken into account to ensure that appropriate mitigation or adaptation measures are identified?</p>
Q3.11.3	The applicant	<p><b>Climate change</b></p> <p>Could there be features of the proposed development’s design which are critical to its operation and could be seriously affected by more radical changes to the climate beyond that projected in the latest set of UK climate projections, taking account of the latest credible scientific evidence? If so, could necessary action be taken to ensure the operation of the infrastructure over its estimated lifetime?</p>
Q3.11.4	The applicant	<p><b>Maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)</b></p> <p>Would the most appropriate body be given responsibility for maintaining any SuDS, for example the landowner, relevant lead local flood authority or water and sewerage company?</p>
Q3.11.5	Stop Green Hill Solar	<p><b>Emergency access to proposed BESS</b></p> <p>The Schedule of Flooding Incidents on Station Road, Grendon indicates that these generally occurred at or near to White Mills Marina, off the northern section of Station Road. Alternative routes to the proposed BESS via Cogenhoe or Grendon would appear to be available. Could these be used by the emergency services when responding to an incident at the BESS if necessary?</p>