

Green Hill Solar Farm
Responses to ExQ3 (Deadline 6)
Trading as FC & CC Elderton

Re: Land at Glebe Farm, Great Doddington, Earls Barton and The Meadows, Earls Barton

1. Background

- 1.1 We are instructed on behalf of Trescella and Ben Elderton, trading as FC & CC Elderton of Glebe Farm, Great Doddington, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire, to respond to the Examining Authority's Third Written Questions (ExQ3).
- 1.2 These responses are made without prejudice to the submission of further representations, whether for different reasons or in amplification of the matters set out below.

2. Response to ExQ3 – Q3.9.6 (Socio-Economic Effects)

Introduction

- 2.1 Glebe Farm, operated by FC & CC Elderton, comprises a diversified rural enterprise including arable production, horticultural and vegetable growing, and a direct-to-consumer farm shop and greengrocery business. The enterprise operates as an integrated rural undertaking in which the retail element provides a critical market for horticultural produce and underpins the financial viability of the wider agricultural operation. In turn, agricultural and horticultural activities rely upon shared infrastructure, machinery and labour resources which are sustained by the stability of retail income. The farm shop is a critical component in ensuring overall business sustainability.
- 2.2 This representation addresses potential impacts arising from:
 - Construction traffic and associated traffic management measures
 - Temporary land occupation, including the proposed construction compound
 - Cable route works and associated disruption
 - Loss of customer accessibility and passing trade

Business Structure and Economic Role

- 2.3 The business supports multiple employees, two farming households reliant on business income, and a weekly customer base of approximately **350–400** local households.
- 2.4 The farm shop element represents approximately **60%** of total business turnover and provides the most stable income stream, mitigating volatility inherent in primary agricultural production.
- 2.5 The business therefore constitutes a local rural employer, a provider of local food resilience and short supply chains, and a diversified agricultural enterprise aligned with national rural policy objectives.

Access-Related Viability Impacts

- 2.6 A substantial proportion, estimated to be approximately **two-thirds (66%)** of customers currently access the farm shop via the B573 corridor from the East, including from Wilby, Great Doddington, Wellingborough and Wollaston.

- 2.7 Disruption to this route during construction (potentially up to **3-years**) has the potential to:
- Increase journey times and inconvenience for customers
 - Reduce impulse and passing trade
 - Create a perception of inaccessibility or congestion
 - Result in permanent loss of established customer patterns
- 2.8 Despite requests, no detailed or quantified traffic management programme has been provided to FC & CC Elderton. This information was last requested at a meeting with the Applicant and their representatives on 8 January 2026 and followed up by email on 9 January 2026. The absence of this information prevents a robust assessment of:
- Duration of disruption
 - Severity of access constraints
 - Peak construction traffic intensity
 - Effectiveness of signage or mitigation measures
- 2.9 In the absence of such clarity, the business faces material uncertainty regarding trading continuity for potentially up to **3-years** (being the construction period). At the aforementioned meeting, the Applicant's representative suggested vehicle movements would be limited, with an indication of approximately **10** vehicles per day. However, this appears inconsistent with earlier information provided to FC & CC Elderton suggesting up to **30** articulated HGV movements per day, in addition to approximately **100** work vans and other site traffic.

Economic Evidence and Viability Methodology

- 2.10 In assessing the potential effect of the Proposed Development on the viability of the business, a structured rural enterprise viability approach has been applied.
- 2.11 The enterprise functions as an integrated diversified operation, where agricultural production underpins retail activity and the farm shop provides income stability to support ongoing farming. Labour, machinery and overhead costs are shared across the undertaking.
- 2.12 Diversified rural enterprises typically operate on relatively narrow margins with a high proportion of fixed costs and limited short-term flexibility to absorb sustained reductions in income. They also depend heavily on established customer patterns and efficient land management. The business exhibits these characteristics and is therefore sensitive to prolonged reductions in trade and operational disruption during the construction period.
- 2.13 The farm shop is particularly sensitive to route convenience, perceived accessibility (especially for older and less able clientele) and established customer travel patterns, as well as passing trade linked to strategic road connections. Experience within rural retailing indicates that disruption to established access routes can lead to disproportionate reductions in customer visits and may result in longer-term loss of trade.
- 2.14 On an indicative sensitivity basis, a sustained reduction in farm shop turnover in the order of approximately:
- 5% would materially reduce retained profitability
 - 10% would significantly constrain normal business viability
 - 15% or greater would be capable of eliminating normal annual surplus

Such reductions may reasonably arise where customer access patterns are disrupted over an extended construction period.

- 2.15 Temporary land occupation and cable works introduce direct loss of productive area, fragmentation of operational land blocks, increased management complexity and potential residual impacts on soil condition and yield performance.
- 2.16 During the aforementioned meeting, we requested that the section of cable crossing the B573 is directional drilled rather than open-cut to avoid further disruption. That request was acknowledged. We reiterate that request.
- 2.17 The combined effect of construction traffic, traffic management measures, and compound activity must be considered together, as these may affect both agricultural efficiency and customer accessibility.
- 2.18 In the absence of detailed construction methodology, confirmed traffic volumes, and agricultural mitigation proposals, a precautionary professional assessment indicates a credible risk to the ongoing viability of the enterprise during construction.

3. Route Alignment

- 3.1 The Applicant has previously been requested to align the proposed cable route, so far as reasonably practicable, with the existing overhead electricity corridor. Such an approach would materially reduce the extent of land sterilised. This remains a key mitigation measure and is therefore formally reiterated.
- 3.2 The Applicant is aware that FC & CC Elderton have an interest in land with consent for gravel extraction which is affected by the Proposed Development. The definitive route across this land has not yet been finalised. Prior to finalisation, it is requested that the Applicant engages with FC & CC Elderton and gives proper consideration to reasonable mitigation measures to minimise the impact of the Proposed Development.

4. Professional Viability Conclusion

- 4.1 In my professional opinion, based on the structure and operating characteristics of the enterprise, the proposed development introduces a credible and material risk to the ongoing viability of both the agricultural and retail components of the business.
- 4.2 The farm shop forms the principal income stream within the diversified farming business. Sustained disruption to customer accessibility during the construction phase represents a realistic threat to the business leading to reduced turnover. Given the relatively high proportion of fixed operational costs typical of such enterprises, even moderate reductions in retail income have the potential to disproportionately affect retained profitability.
- 4.3 In parallel, temporary land occupation, cable installation works and associated operational disruption are likely to affect the efficiency and productivity of the agricultural enterprise. While individual impacts may be capable of mitigation or compensation in isolation, the cumulative effect on a relatively small-scale rural business must be considered in the context of overall enterprise sustainability.
- 4.4 The evidence presented demonstrates that the business operates on margins where sustained disruption to either trading conditions or agricultural productivity may materially affect its long-term viability.
- 4.5 It is concluded that, without appropriate mitigation, and protection of customer access, the proposed development gives rise to a reasonable prospect of material adverse effect on the viability of this established rural business.

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