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To: The applicant and Rebecca Ruck Keene
on behalf of Trustees of Ecton Estate

Our Ref: EN010170

Date: 31 March 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rule 17 request for further information

Application by Green Hill Solar Farm Limited for an order granting development consent for the Green Hill Solar Farm project

We are writing under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended).

As part of [REP6-069] you note that you had sought to provide the ExA at Deadline 6 with an update regarding discussions with the Trustees of Ecton Estate, but that you were still trying to arrange a meeting and therefore could not provide that update for the ExA at Deadline 7. Could **the applicant** therefore ensure that as part of your Deadline 7 submissions you include an update for the ExA on the position with the Trustees of Ecton Estates as it stands at the close of the examination.

For the **Trustees of Ecton Estate** the ExA had asked you as part of our third set of written questions [PD-017] to expand on the Deadline 4 submission [REP4-048] made by Rebecca Ruck Keene on your behalf, but we did not receive any response by Deadline 6 as requested.

The questions asked by the ExA were as follows:

8. Minerals	
Q3.8.1	<p>Further information on consented minerals development</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</p>

	<p>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>
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At Deadline 5 the applicant responded to the issues you raised in [REP4-048] in their submission [REP5-087] as follows:

“The Applicant has acknowledged and identified that the Scheme affects mineral safeguarded areas allocated in both in the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan. The Minerals Assessment has assessed the impact of the Scheme on the mineral safeguarded areas see Environmental Statement Chapter 11 Minerals [APP-048]. The purpose of identifying mineral safeguarding areas is to protect known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance so they are not unnecessarily sterilised by non-mineral development.

The Scheme will be decommissioned at the end of its operational life and all above ground structures will be removed. Any remaining below ground infrastructure, such as cabling ducts, would be removed as part of any mineral operations.

The construction works do not require deep excavations or foundations. This means that disturbance is limited to the surface layers rather than underlying deposits, and as such any underlying mineral deposit would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date.

As outlined in the Concept Design Parameters and Principles Revision A [REP1-151], where set in opencut trench with no constraints, the minimum depth of the dug cable trench is 1.2m below ground level. Where crossing existing buried utilities or apparatus, the maximum depth of the dug cable trench is 2m below the level of the existing apparatus.

For horizontal directional drilling sections, the maximum depth of the drilled cable tunnel is 25m below ground level. This depth is required to cross the River Nene. Smaller obstacles such as ditches and hedgerows which require HDD would only be drilled to a depth of 5m or less below ground level.

For that reason, the Scheme does not conflict with the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policy 28 which allows for non-mineral related development to be permitted where the incompatible development is of a temporary nature and can be completed with the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed.

The Applicant has identified that the Cable Route Corridor affects two permitted areas of mineral namely Earls Barton Quarry and Earls Barton Spinney Quarry. The Applicant has acknowledged that the installation of cables within these quarry areas could sterilise part of the permitted reserves. As a result, the Cable Route Corridor has been designed to

incorporate flexibility to allow cables to be installed in areas already subject to mineral extraction or routed to avoid remaining permitted mineral reserves. Where the Cable Route Corridor crosses areas of permitted mineral extraction, as far as practicable and in discussion with the quarry operator, the cables will be installed using techniques which do not interfere with the efficient extraction of remaining mineral reserves, in line with Policy 28.”

Do the Trustees of Ecton Estate have any further comments or information that they wish to make available to the ExA prior to the imminent close of this examination on 10 April 2026?

Responses should be submitted by **Deadline 7 (8 April 2026)**.

Yours faithfully

Mark Harrison

Lead Member of the Examining Authority

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