

Green Hill Solar Farm

EN010170

Response to Rule 17 Request for Further Information

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The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Rules 8(1)(b)



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Issue Sheet

Report Prepared for: Green Hill Solar Farm

Examination Deadline 7

Response to Rule 17 Request for Further Information

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1 Response to Rule 17 Request for Further Information

1.1.1 This document responds to the request made by the Examining Authority (ExA) for further information pertaining to the Examination, issued by way of a Rule 17 letter on 27 March 2026 **[PD-019]** and 31 March 2026 (no Examination Library reference available as not added to Examination Library at time of Deadline 7 submission).

1.2 Rule 17 Request for Further Information- 27 March 2026

1.2.1 The Applicant has updated the Natural England Statement of Common Ground **[EX7/GH8.3.6_C]** in line with the requests made in **[PD-019]** to include:

- its position on the scope of bird surveys used to determine impacts on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA);
- its position on the suitability of the proposed SPA functionally linked land (FLL) mitigation areas as set out in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Revision B) **[REP5-079]** and the Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy (Revision E) (OEPMS) **[EX7/GH7.5_E]**, including in respect of the timing of mitigation area provision;
- Natural England's final FLL mitigation requirements (as reflected in its response to Report on the Implications for European Sites question RQ9 in document REP5-129) where necessary (for example, in the OEPMS); and

1.2.2 Natural England has confirmed its agreement to the matters outlined above as set out in the updated Statement of Common Ground under matters ECO-4, ECO-15 and ECO-16 submitted at Deadline 7 **[EX7/GH8.3.6_C]**.

1.2.3 The final and signed Statement of Common Ground with North Northamptonshire Council includes further detail on the Council's disagreement regarding FLL under matter EB-05 in line with item 3 set out in **[PD-019]**.

1.3 Rule 17 Request for Further Information - 31 March 2026

1.3.1 The Applicant has contacted the Ecton Estate's land agent to offer a meeting and awaits a response. The Applicant held a meeting on 1st April with Storefield Aggregates Limited, the minerals operator responsible for the planned extraction of Earls Barton Spinney Quarry, being the mines and minerals interest held by Ecton Estates. The two fields that are both within the Scheme's Order Limits, as shown in ES Figure 11.4 Mineral Resources Green Hill F and BESS **[APP-404]**, and within phase 2 of Earls Barton Spinney Quarry are owned by the Elderton family. The Ecton Estate retain a mineral interest in this land, with Storefield holding the operational minerals licence to work the minerals.

1.3.2 The Applicant and Storefield discussed the possible coordination of extraction and construction programmes, quarry restoration works and possible engineering solutions to avoid mineral sterilisation.

1.3.3 Based on this discussion the Applicant confirms that it is possible the minerals will be extracted before cable construction is required which would avoid mineral



sterilisation. The Applicant is also exploring engineering solutions to drill underneath the mineral reserves as a possible solution to avoid mineral sterilisation if cable construction is required ahead of mineral extraction. There is also flexibility within the Order Limits to avoid the mineral extraction area. The final cable route will be informed by further survey work at the detailed design stage.

- 1.3.4 The Applicant intends to work collaboratively with Storefield and landowners to find a cable route solution that avoids mineral sterilisation as far as practicable which is secured in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan **[EX7/GH7.1_D]**. Parts 2 and 3 of the mineral code are incorporated into the draft DCO by article 23. This ensures that mines and minerals rights will not be sterilised by the exercise of compulsory acquisition powers or the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Scheme. In the unlikely event that it is not possible to avoid interfering with Storefield's working of the minerals such that some mineral sterilisation is unavoidable, compensation will be payable for this in accordance with the mineral code.