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ADDITIONAL FARM DIVERSIFICATION STATEMENT

Land West of Bradmore Road and North of Wysall Road, Land West of Wysall, Wysall

Planning Appeal by Exagen Development Ltd Against the Refusal of a Full Planning Application for the construction, operation and subsequent decommissioning of a renewable energy park comprising ground mounted Solar PV with co located battery energy storage system (BESS) at the point of connection, together with associated infrastructure, access, landscaping and cabling

Planning Application Reference: 24/00161/FUL
Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/P3040/W/25/3375110

Declaration

I am Andrew Mott and I am Head of Planning and Environment at Exagen who are the Appellant.

I have over 20 years' experience within the town planning and environmental assessment sector for renewable energy projects, with experience prior to Exagen in private consultancies. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Reading, a Masters degree from the University of East Anglia and I am a chartered Town Planner with the Royal Town Planning Institute. Since joining Exagen almost 4 years ago, I have overseen the preparation of the planning application (Ref 24/00161/FUL) and the appeal (APP/P3040/W/25/3375110).

The evidence which I have provided is true, to the best of my knowledge, and provided to aid the inspector when considering the appeal. It has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution.

Scope of Evidence

This statement relates to additional details with regards to Farm Diversification and is provided as an Appendix to the Planning Rebuttal Evidence prepared by Mr Cussen. This evidence has been collected from and is a summary of discussions with the two project landowners. It discusses the general cropping patterns over the past circa 5 years and then discusses the reasons why the landowners became involved with the project and their lack of other diversification projects.

The northern parcel land has been cultivated for milling wheat every year except every 5th year when Oil Seed Rape is grown. These crops are used for human consumption. The southern parcel has been cultivated with a rotation of wheat and maize with occasional winter barley and the crops are used solely as animal feed on the farm.

At the time the project was incepted the landowner of the northern parcel was looking to other non-agricultural income streams to sustain their wider farming operations and they have confirmed that this is more so now than when the project started. The landowner of the southern parcel has confirmed that given the challenges facing the agricultural sector it is simply unviable not to diversify such as through hosting the project.

Across the wider land holdings of both landowners the land taken up by the Appeal Site would represent a small proportion, only circa 5-10%. There are no tenants that would be removed from the land, and there would be ample remaining farmland within the wider holding for the wider farming operations to continue. The regular stable income stream received from the project would allow the wider farming operations to continue with a greater degree of security to ensure there is viable business for future generations to be involved with.

2025 has been a particularly difficult year with limited rainfall through the summer yielding little to no grass and the yields for cereal crops have been very poor. From summer 2025 to winter 2026 there was a switch from excessively dry periods to excessively wet periods, which makes for continuous challenges and difficulties for farmers. In addition to environmental and climate factors, the other significant challenge comes from a very volatile commodity market, with prices for fertiliser specifically being cited as extremely high, at the same time, the market is very low for farm goods.

Farmers are continually being advised to diversify and seek other sources of income. One of the landowners specifically mentioned the following advice:

- 19th Dec 2025 – Farming Today programme – Baroness Minette Batters saying it was no time to kick the can down the road over climate change and the war in Europe.
- On the same day the Governor of the Bank of England said there were three main things affecting the country, one of them being climate change.

Both of these comments highlight the importance of building sustainable renewable energy generation capacity in the UK to combat climate change. Climate change itself is seen as a significant risk to long term viability of farming in the UK, and indeed food security¹, and therefore measures that work positively to address climate change should be pursued urgently.

In 2025 Baroness Minette Batters undertook the Farming Profitability Review² where one of the main take aways was that farm profitability is under severe pressure, largely due to rising costs from energy and wages to machinery and labour. The review specifically didn't cover farm diversification because *"to my mind that would have distorted the importance of trying to resolve the urgent need for farm businesses to be profitable from farming income alone."*

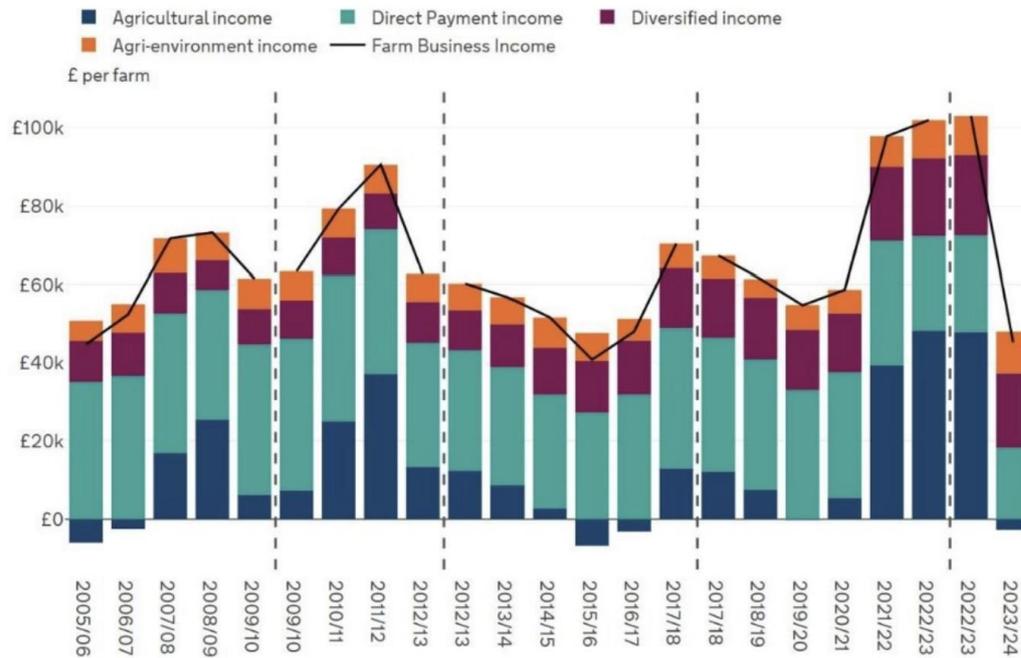
However it is clear from the review that whether a farm makes a profit on its agricultural activities depends on the often very small difference between the input prices farmers must pay (e.g. energy, seeds, feed, fertiliser), their other business costs (labour, debt interest, depreciation, maintenance) and the prices received for their products. Both input and output prices have risen considerably since autumn 2021, reflecting the combined impact of post-COVID19 supply shortages and the impact of conflict in Ukraine on global markets. This leaves little margin for farmers to profit directly from their agricultural activities and making them reliant on other sources of income to bolster their profits. This is illustrated by Figure 2 on page 20 of the report, replicated on the following page. The contribution of diversified income to the overall farm business income

¹ A UK Government Food Strategy for England, Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs, July 2025. Available online: [A UK government food strategy for England, considering the wider UK food system - GOV.UK](#) [Accessed 24/2/2026]

² Farming Profitability Review, Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (led by Baroness Minette Batters), December 2025. Available online: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/694293989273c48f554cf4e5/farming-profitability-review.pdf> [Accessed 24/2/2026]

has increased steadily and in recent years ends up making a substantial contribution to the average farms overall income.

Figure 2. Average farm business income (£ per farm) in England, by income source (2005/06 - 2023/24) (Source: Farm Business Survey, excludes very small farms <£21k of output)



Both landowners have confirmed that there are no other farm diversification initiatives in which they are involved. They do not have camping, glamping or other accommodation or tourism facilities and they do not take part in any Sustainable Farming Initiatives (SFI). The project therefore provides their only option for farm diversification. In addition to the rental income generated by hosting the project on their land significant contributions of renewable energy will be generated by the project and at the same time the project would also deliver significant landscape and biodiversity improvements through new planting and habitat creation.