



● Our ref: 5474/nl
Your ref: 21/0050/FULEI

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Dear Max

Ref: 21/0050/FULEI - SOLAR FARM APPLICATION AT LAND NORTH OF BUTTERFLY LANE, ALDENHAM

Following a number of public and consultee comments questioning the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) of the site and arguing that the proposal will take good agricultural land out of food production we have been reviewing the previous harvest outcomes at Hilfield Farm and Slades Farm, taking into account yields and looking at where the crop has been sold and thus where it has most likely ended up.

The British Society of Soil Science has produced a guidance note for LPA's to help them spot a good ALC report from a poor one [Microsoft Word - Assessing Agricultural Land Classification \(ALC\) - Final.docx \(soils.org.uk\)](#), which may also be useful for you in reviewing the submitted ALC.

The crop yield is sold on an annual contract basis to be taken off site. If the contract is to a trader, e.g. Cofco or Glencore it is likely that the grain has gone to the port for it to be exported for animal feed. Whereas, if the grain is sold directly to a miller/processor, one can assume that it is not to be exported and used for human consumption.

The strategy at both Hilfield Farm and Slades Farm has been to grow reliable crops with low risk in order to produce a return for the both farmer and contractor.

Hilfield Farm

The agricultural land at Hilfield (Western site parcel) is contracted out to a third party who farm a large amount of land across Hertfordshire. Hilfield has regularly grown Winter Barley, which is a low spec crop and because it is drilled in winter, it usually guarantees a stronger yield than if it were drilled in the spring. This is important when trying to make money on land that is lower quality. Because of the higher yielding nature of Winter Barley, it is commonly grown for animal feed.

The table below shows what was grown at Hilfield for the last 6 years and where the grain was sold (e.g. miller/grain trader).

| Year | Crop | Grain sold | Exported / Imported | Human/Animal consumption |
|------|---------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 2016 | Winter Barley | Glencore | Exported | Animal |
| 2017 | Winter Barley | Cofco | Exported | Animal |
| 2018 | Winter Barley | Cofco | Exported | Animal |
| 2019 | Oilseed Rape | ADM/ERITH | UK Consumption | Human |
| 2020 | Winter Wheat | Heygates | UK Consumption | Human |
| 2021 | Winter Barley | Glencore | Exported | Animal |

The table shows that over the last 6 years only a third of the crops grown at Hilfield have gone for human consumption. We would point out the 2021 data only relates to grain that already been committed under contract but it can be expected that the remaining grain will be sold to a grain trader once the final tonnages are known.

Since 2017, the land agent Savills has been recording the yields of combinable crops for all farms managed in the east of England in order to compare which farms are performing better than others in terms of yield.

We set out below the average yields over the last 4 years of other farms managed by Savills with the yields that have been recorded by Hilfield.

| Year | Crop | Hilfield yield (t/ha)* | Average Eastern region yield (t/ha) |
|------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2017 | Winter Barley | 6.85 | 7.27 |
| 2018 | Winter Barley | 5.06 | 7.01 |
| 2019 | Oilseed Rape | 3.29 | 3.44 |
| 2020 | Winter Wheat | 6.39 | 7.33 |

* 't/ha' is tonnes per hectare

Slades Farm

All of the milling wheat grown at Slades Farm (Eastern parcel of the site) would have gone to Heygates Mill at Tring, the barley went to local Maltsters called French and Jupp's in Stansted Abbots and the Oilseed Rape went to a pressing facility in south London called Erith.

The table below shows what was grown at Slades Farm for the last 6 years and where the grain was sold (e.g. miller/grain trader).

| Year | Crop | Grain sold | Exported / Imported | Human/Animal consumption |
|------|---------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 2016 | Milling Wheat | Heygates Mill, Tring | UK Consumption | Human |
| 2017 | Milling Oats | Data unavailable | Data unavailable | Data unavailable |
| 2018 | Milling Wheat | Heygates Mill, Tring | UK Consumption | Human |
| 2019 | Winter Barley | French and Jupp's, Stansted Abbots | UK Consumption | Human |
| 2020 | Oilseed Rape | Erith, South London | UK Consumption | Human |

We set out below the average yields over the last 4 years of other farms managed by Savills with the yields that have been recorded by Slades Farm.

| Year | Crop | Slades Farm yield (t/ha) | Average Eastern region yield (t/ha) |
|------|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| 2017 | Milling Oats | 6.5 | No data available on actual yields but budget target yields for 2017 for the region were between 6 – 7 t/ha |
| 2018 | Milling Wheat | 8.7 | 8.0 |
| 2019 | Winter Barley | 7.0 | 8.32 |
| 2020 | Oilseed Rape | 3.2 | 2.43 |

Whilst both farms performed well in 2017 and 2020, this yield was still slightly behind other heavy soiled farms in the East reflecting that it is very difficult land (Subgrade 3B) as the ALC report submitted with the application found.

We hope this provides clarity to you and the councillors but if anyone has any questions at all, please contact me.

Yours sincerely



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For Aardvark EM Limited