Securing the Future of GA

Report v5.0

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Executive Summary

Brookdale Consulting was commissioned by GA Pet Food Partners to highlight GA's progress over the past 33 years, carrying out an independent economic review of GA's continued operations, and long-term economic resilience.

The report seeks to demonstrate the "very special circumstances" for GA's economic and environmental sustainability, particularly the need for the Asland Walks Energy Park, and how it aligns with local, national, and global economic, climate and sustainability goals.

As one of the UK's leading pet food manufacturers and with a 3 fold increase in energy costs 2019 -2024 (£13.9m inc VAT), GA needs to ensure that its future growth can be supported locally, and that its future capital investment programme can be delivered successfully within Lancashire. GA's success is built on a unique, vertically integrated model at its Plocks Farm site, which has evolved over three decades through substantial capital investment.

GA is a major employer and exporter. The workforce has grown from just five in the early 1990s to 678 permanent staff, 87% of whom live within 10 miles of the site. GA supports today an estimated 1,034 jobs locally and over 1,900 across the UK.

GA's net zero strategy requires it to invest in renewable energy. GA accounts for around a quarter of Chorley's industrial emissions but is already reducing its emissions. Asland Walks Energy Park is the cornerstone of this strategy combining wind and solar generation to allow GA to decarbonise production with wind providing more energy in winter and solar more in summer. Multiple feasibility studies have been carried out to assess the suitability of the site and confirm it is the only place suitable for local renewable energy generation and that both wind and solar are required to deliver the necessary resilience. GA will be able to forecast its energy costs, being insulated from forecast price rises and achieving better operational competitiveness.

The Energy Park also provides wider community benefits through provision of cheap renewable electricity (5% of that generated). It includes the creation of 'Asland Walks' – a landscaped walking and cycling route, with interpretation features explaining the energy systems and environmental purpose of the scheme. This will create public access to green space, promote local environmental education, and celebrate the transition to clean manufacturing. In doing so, the Energy Park becomes not just a piece of energy infrastructure, but a locally valued asset and symbol of innovation.

The Asland Walks Energy Park is projected to generate £29 million in GVA, supporting over 422 direct and indirect jobs over the build period and 5 further permanent jobs in maintenance.

GA presents a robust case for Green Belt development based on clear and demonstrable "very special circumstances". These include the unique operational characteristics of the business, the scale of local and national economic contribution,

the strategic role of renewable energy in achieving net zero, the features of the Asland Walks site in terms of wind and solar generation capacity and suitability and the significant local benefits of the Asland Walks proposal. The success of GA's future strategy – and its ability to remain globally competitive while contributing positively to Lancashire's sustainable growth – now depends on the continued support of Chorley Council through proactive planning policy and land allocation decisions.

1. Introduction: Purpose and Strategic Context

Brookdale Consulting was commissioned by GA Pet Food Partners to highlight GA's progress to date, carrying out an independent economic review of GA's continued operations, and long-term economic resilience.

The report seeks to demonstrate the "very special circumstances" for GA's economic and environmental sustainability, particularly the need for the Asland Walks Energy Park, and how it aligns with local, national, and global climate and sustainability goals.

As one of the UK's leading pet food manufacturers GA needs to ensure that its future growth can be supported locally, and that its much needed future capital investment programme can be delivered successfully within Lancashire.

GA has ambitions to continue to premiumise its products, capitalising on consumer demand for quality pet food. It already supplies 33 countries around the world and is an enabler of independent own-label pet food businesses across Europe, providing high quality, fully traceable pet food products on a just in time basis. To continue to remain competitive it needs to invest further in energy resilience to stabilise operating costs, secure long-term viability and justify continued capital investment.

GA also recognises its responsibility and the need to reduce its carbon footprint and head towards net zero. GA has a strategy to achieve net zero which requires additional land for green energy generation, substantial capital investment as well as policy support from the local authority over a prolonged period. The declaration of a climate emergency within the local authority reinforces the need for energy sustainability moving forward.

GA's case for continued development on its current site is supported by the principle of "very special circumstances", as required by national Green Belt policy. Its business model is deeply embedded and inherently non-transferable: the company's vertically integrated operations depend on the unique colocation of advanced production, logistics, and energy infrastructure that has evolved over three decades at Plocks Farm. Significant investment in automated systems, ingredient processing, and distribution facilities makes relocation neither viable nor desirable. Onsite power generation also avoids costly and inefficient grid reliance and supports GA's pathway to net zero by 2050. The inability to expand within the current Green Belt boundary would not only constrain GA's growth but also risk undermining its ability to deliver a low-carbon, locally beneficial, and policy-compliant manufacturing model.

As a company of national significance, GA is an important local employer with all its operations in Chorley. The locations of its 678 permanent staff are shown in Table 1.1 comparing data from 2015, 2020 and 2024. This highlights GA's substantial local impact, plus the effects of COVID which are quantified later in this document.

Over this period, GA has reduced reliance on agency staff and contractors such that all staff are now permanent staff with 87% living in the local area (0-10 miles).

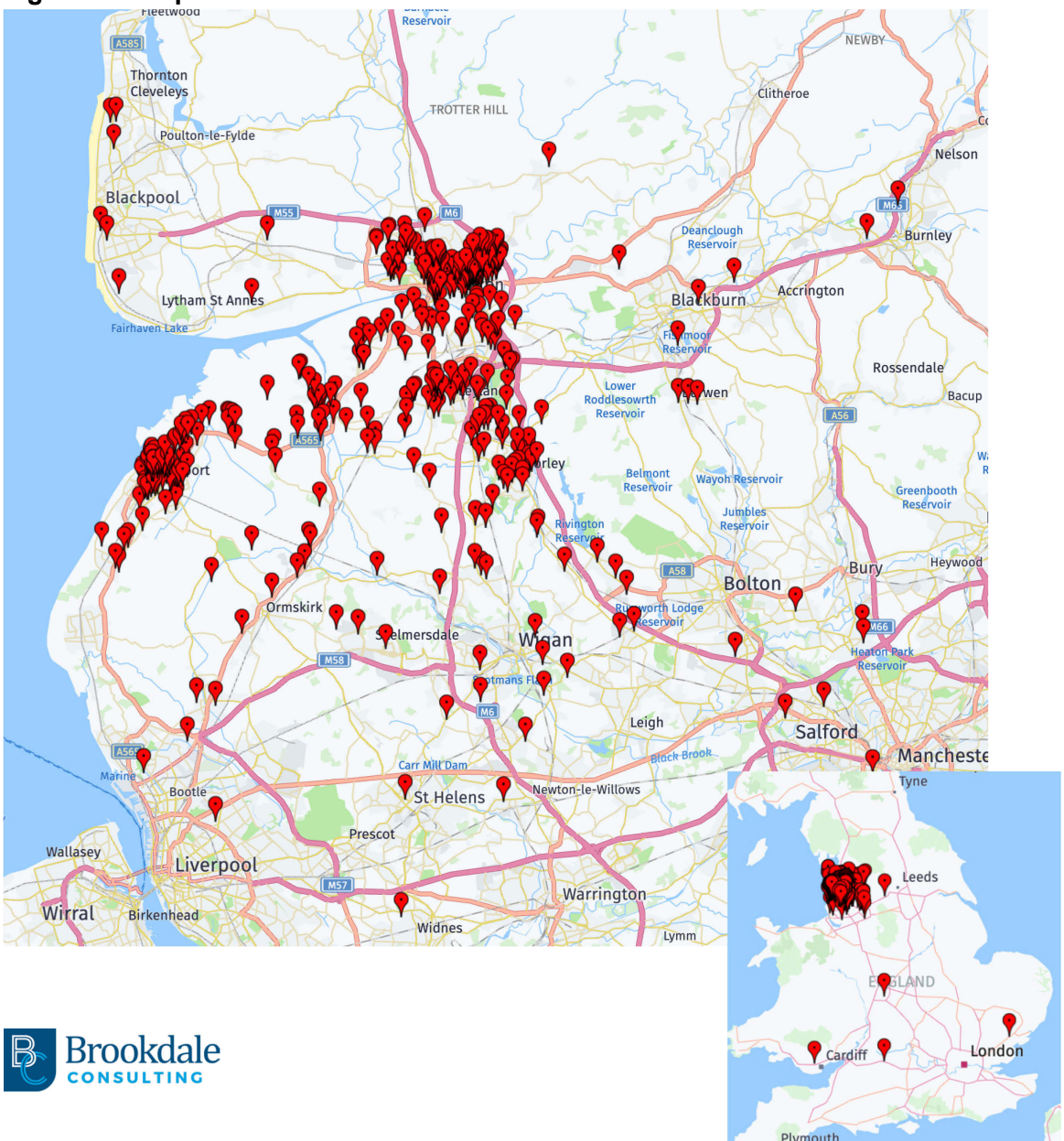
Table 1.1 Numbers and Location of GA permanent staff

	2015	2020	2024
	Percentage of employees		
0-10 miles	95%	67%	87%
more than 10 miles	5%	31%	10%
Outside UK	-	2%	3%
Total	**439**	**635**	**678**

Source: GA

As GA has grown, it has had to recruit from a wider area to secure the staff it needs. GA employs almost 600 staff from the immediate area, almost 90 from the wider area as well as brand representatives abroad. Figure 1.1 shows the locations of staff around Lancashire and further afield.

Figure 1.1 Map of GA staff home locations



The remainder of this report has the following structure:

- Economic Story of GA over the last 33 years
- Review of the Regulatory & Strategic Framework
- Local Impact of Global Uncertainty
- Summary and Conclusions

2. Economic Story of GA

GA started as a small business over 33 years ago as a way of adding value to wheat grown on the family farm. With 5 staff and a tractor driven extruder, the initial product was a dry meal suitable for household pets.

From these small beginnings, GA has developed into one of the UK's leading producers of dry pet food. The charts in this section show this growth since 2012.

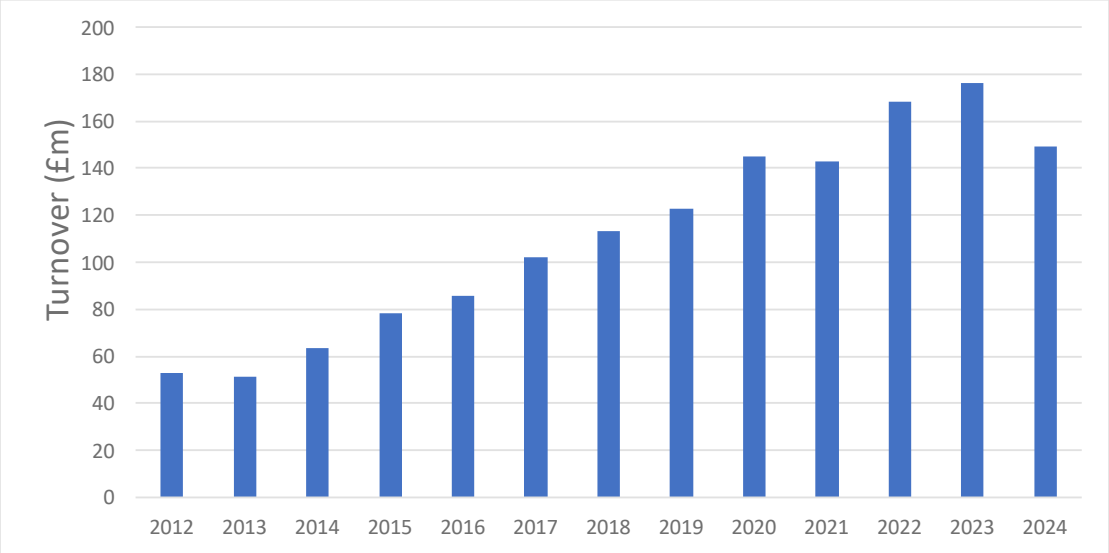
GA exists within the global pet food market. A summary of trends is shown below:

The company now accounts for 73,000 tonnes of pet food production annually with turnover of £150m, 678 staff and direct supplier spend of £110m.

Figure 2.1 shows that GA's turnover grew rapidly between 2014 and 2020, however COVID and the subsequent energy price shocks led the company to lose business in 2021, before increasing prices in 2022 and 2023 which saw a recovery in turnover. However, in 2024 further business was lost as GA passed on the costs of high energy prices to customers making GA uncompetitive in certain markets. Through careful

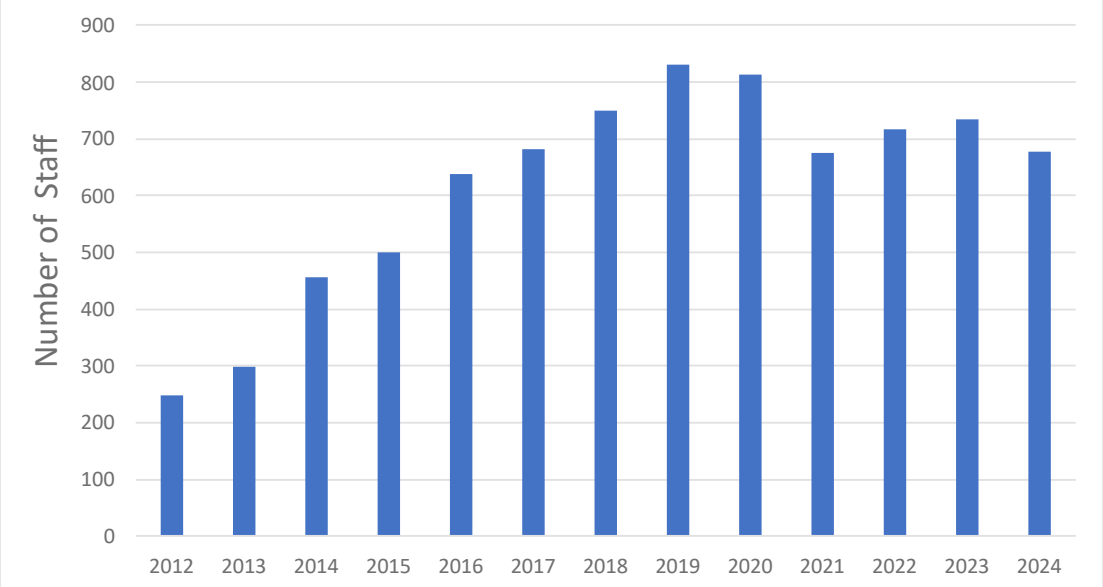
management, the company has been able to stabilise its profitability despite reduced turnover. The number of staff (Figure 2.2) had to be reduced over the same period as GA has sought to improve efficiency through investment in automation. There has been a move to making all staff permanent with any staff reductions being amongst agency and contract workers.

Figure 2.1 Growth in GA sales turnover 2012-2024



Source: GA Management Accounts

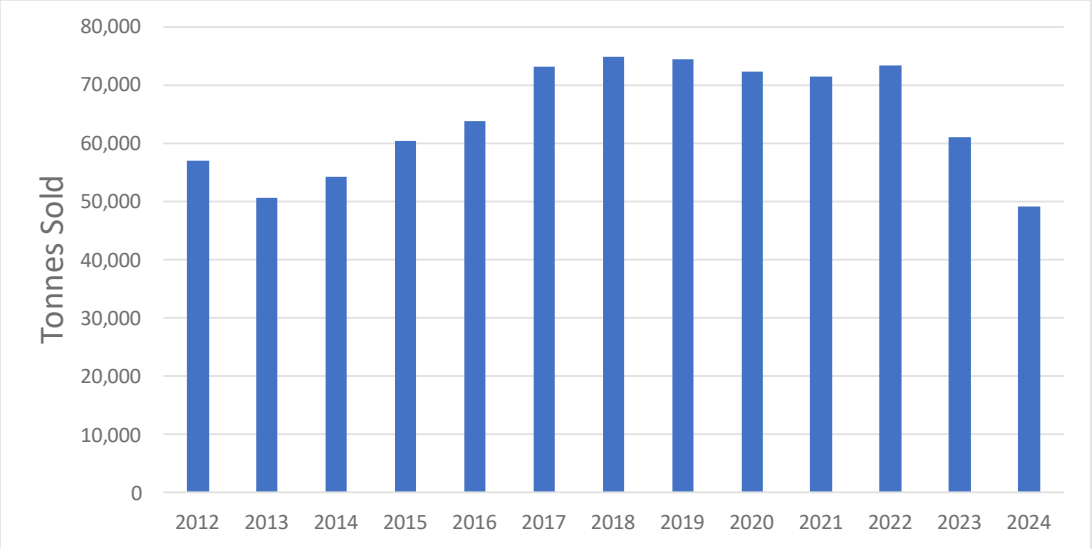
Figure 2.2 Growth in GA Direct staff 2012-2024



Source: GA Management Accounts

Over the same period as above, GA's growth in output (tons of pet food sold) is shown in Figure 2.3. From 2013 there was steady growth till 2017/2018, followed by a plateau and slight dip during COVID. 2023 and 2024 have seen a drop in tonnage sold. However, GA has responded by continuing to add value – moving to more premium products for the more demanding 'pet parent'.

Figure 2.3 Growth in GA tonnage produced and sold 2012-2025



Source: GA Management Accounts

GA has been very successful in adapting to the changing needs of the market in driving up its sales price per tonne and in the financial year to 2024 achieved a record price of £3,031 per tonne, up significantly from £2,004 in 2020 (Figure 2.4). Figure 2.4 includes prices in real terms as well as in nominal values which shows the increase. Change in the product portfolio has been achieved by a careful focus on adding value through product development and customisation in line with customer demands and is a major achievement of GA.

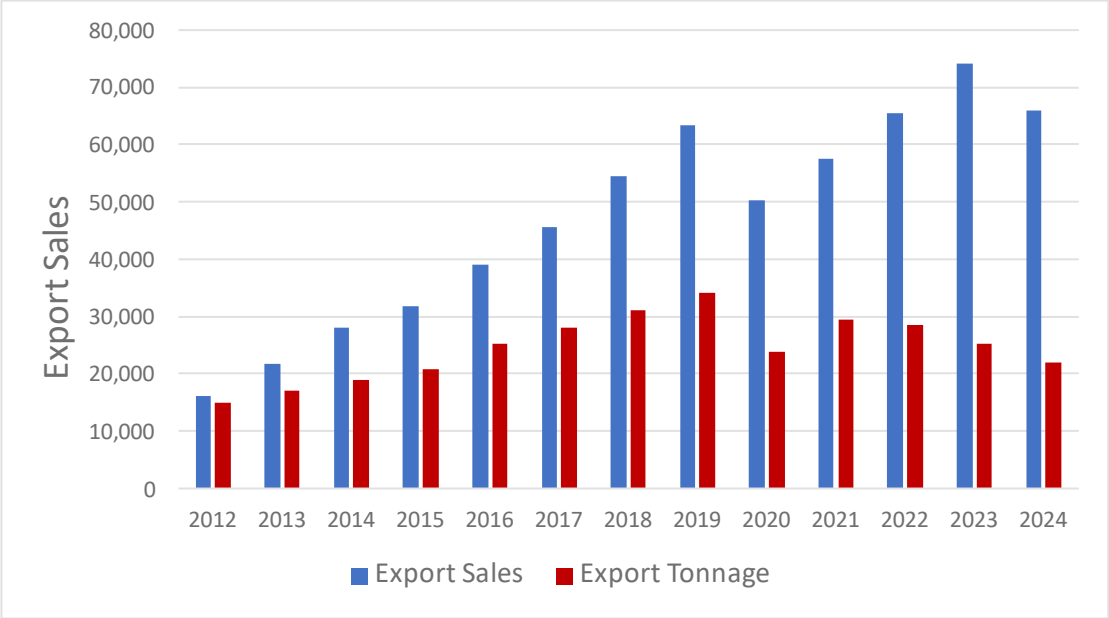
Figure 2.4 Growth in GA selling price per tonne 2012-2024

Source: GA Management Accounts

Figure 2.5 shows that a major part of GA's growth strategy has been through exports and that the growth in value of exports has significantly exceeded the growth in volume due to the transition to higher premium products and service.

Despite a slight drop in export sales, 2024 figures are still 4% higher than they were pre-COVID – the effect of COVID being seen in 2020 data. Exports accounted for 44% of GA's total turnover in 2024 (the latest full year of accounts). This significant export level is making a major contribution to the UK's balance of trade.

Figure 2.5 Growth in GA export sales value and volume 2012-2024

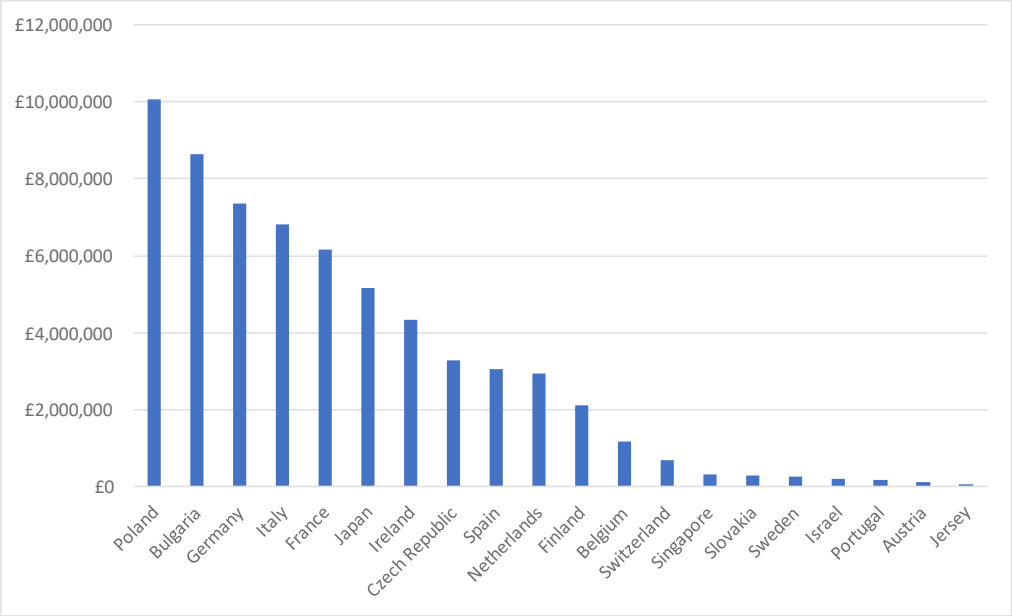


Source: GA Management Accounts

Figure 2.6 shows GA's top 20 export sales by destination. In total, GA exports to 33 countries with Poland being the largest destination at £10m (16% of total exports). Bulgaria is another strong performer which has grown substantially since our last report to £8.6m.

Other top export destinations are Germany (£7.3m), Italy (£6.8m), France (£6.1m) and Japan (£5.1m). This diversification across many different countries is a strength as it provides several platforms for growth, albeit it increases the complexity and cost base of the business.

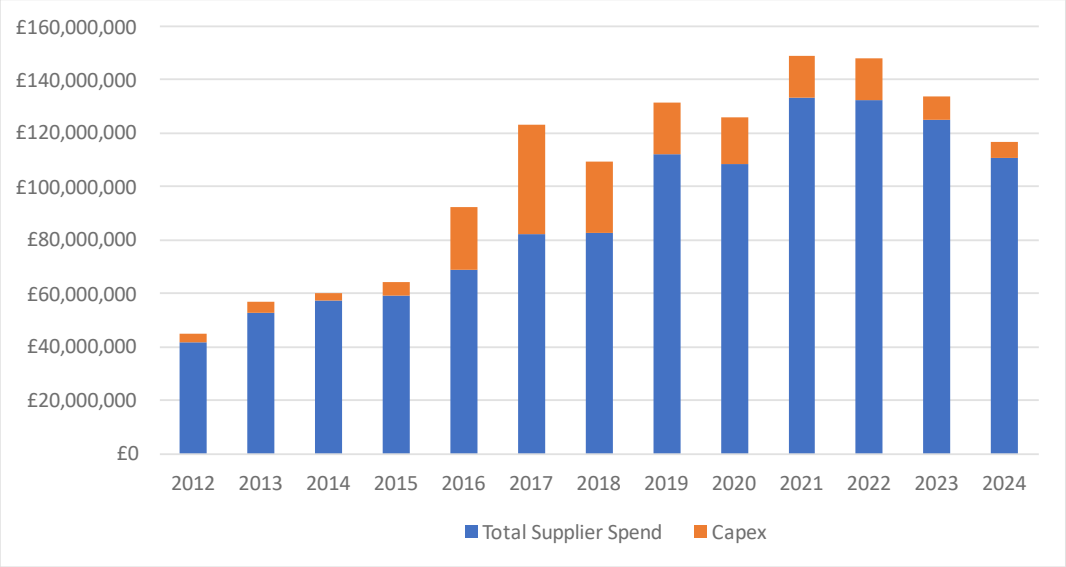
Figure 2.6 GA export sales by destination 2024



Source: GA Management Accounts

Figure 2.7 shows GA's supplier spend (in blue) from 2012 including Capital Expenditure (in orange) for each year. Capital investment increased significantly from 2016-2022, reflecting some of the big infrastructure investments GA has made such as the £75m Ingredients Kitchen. To remain profitable as the business grows, GA has recognised the need to control its operating costs. However, it also needs to continue investing to stay competitive and sustainable amidst rapidly changing global events. GA's capital spend in 2024 was £5.9m with a total of £188.6m invested since 2012, securing its status as a key ally for regional investment and development in Lancashire.

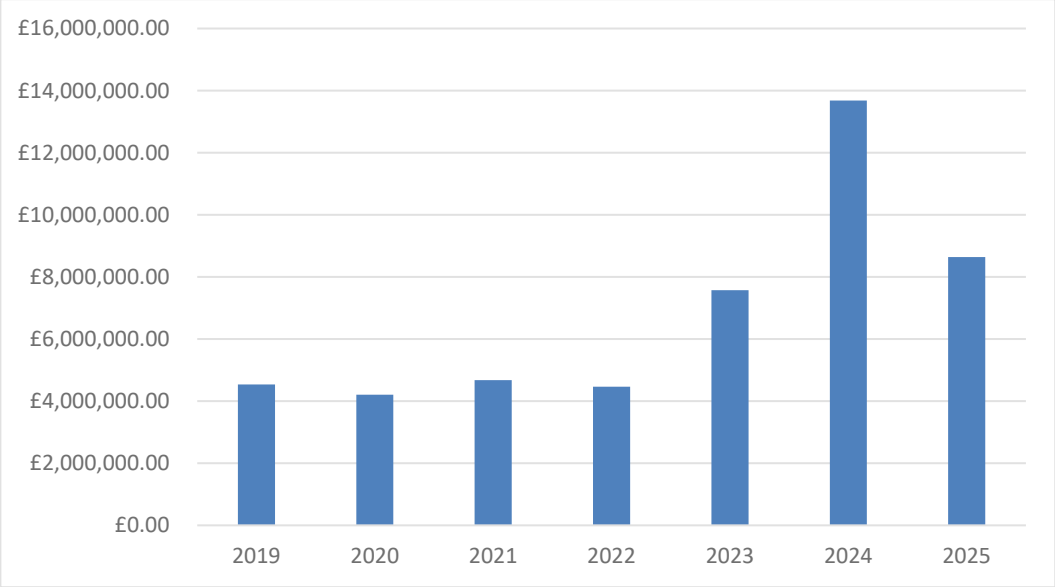
Figure 2.7 GA Supplier Spend including Capex 2012-2024



Source: GA Management Accounts

Figure 2.8 highlights the challenge of energy prices increasing 3 fold between 2019 and 2024 to £13.7m including VAT before falling back to £8.6m in 2025, almost double the 2019 level. GA forecasts that by 2029, electricity costs will be almost double the 2017 level and gas prices up 70%. This level of increase and associated uncertainty will not be sustainable for the business.

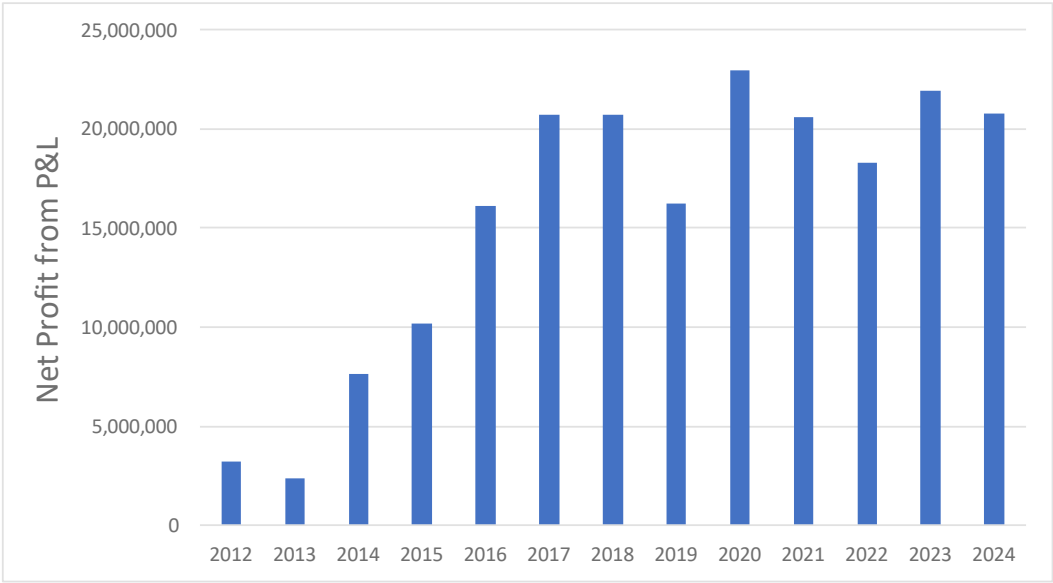
Figure 2.8 Growth in GA Energy Costs (inc VAT)



Source: GA total electricity and gas costs including VAT

Finally, Figure 2.9 shows GA's profit over the period. Profit grew sharply to over £20m for 2017 and 2018, though was down due to the loss of large, branded partners, increased raw material prices, and labour costs. 2022 reflected a rapid increase in energy costs due to the invasion of Ukraine, underscoring the need for energy security. 2024 profit was £20.7m reflecting GA's focus on developing and enhancing added value products and services as laid out above as well as reducing costs where possible.

Figure 2.9 Growth in GA net profit 2012-2024



Source: GA Management Accounts

3. Review of Regulatory and Strategic Framework

This section reviews GA's fit with policy at the national, regional and local levels. This includes the recently published Industrial Strategy, Government Energy Policy, Skills strategy, Regional Strategies and the Economic Regeneration Strategy for Chorley.

Lancashire's population is around 1.2m people with 756,000 being of working age – this is down from 1.5m and 1m of working age. However economy Gross Value Added (GVA) has increased from £30.8bn to £39.6bn. The regional economy continues to have specialisms in manufacturing and agriculture in particular, plus a large public sector workforce.

The policy landscape continues to evolve. The new Government has a growth agenda aiming to be the fastest growing country in the G7. Recent tax increases have raised the burden on businesses as the Government has sought to protect consumers from tax increases. Global uncertainty has increased with potential effects on energy prices, while trading conditions have been affected by tariffs with potentially more insular policies unwinding the trade liberalisation of recent years. As the UK develops its trade policy post-EU exit, there is a focus on being more outward looking, and freedom to negotiate bilateral trade agreements. GA is well placed to benefit from increased trading opportunities in pet food around the world.

3.1 National and Regional Industrial Strategy

The government's **Modern Industrial Strategy 2025** is a 10 year plan targeting high-growth sectors with coordinated policies and investments. It aims to address barriers to growth, such as skills shortages, recruitment challenges, data management, technology adoption, access to finance, competition, regulation, and energy infrastructure.

The strategy prioritises the eight sectors deemed to have the most potential in the UK (IS-8), with advanced manufacturing being one of these. For example, £4.3 billion is committed to advance manufacturing R&D and tech adoption over five years. The goal is to modernise production processes and supply chains, making UK industry more competitive and resilient. Furthermore, the strategy highlights strengthening domestic supply chains and supporting foundational industries to improve resilience. Whilst the strategy is focused on sectors such as chemicals, aerospace, automotive etc, there is real potential for GA to benefit from the trickledown of this strategy which will encourage innovation and investment in new manufacturing technologies.

GA's operations already integrate cutting-edge Industry 4.0 practices such as automated just-in-time production, storage, and distribution systems that can fulfil thousands of custom orders weekly. GA's integrated supply chain model (from sourcing raw ingredients to in-house production and distribution) aligns closely with the UK's national push for smarter manufacturing and supply chain innovation.

The **Lancashire Growth Plan (2025-2035)** aims to position Lancashire as a globally recognised and sustainable economic region. The plan emphasises Lancashire's strengths in advanced engineering, clean energy, digital innovation, and manufacturing, while also addressing socio-economic challenges.

Key initiatives include the creation of innovation hubs, enhanced transport connectivity to make commuting easier, and promoting skills development to support high-value jobs such as those in GA. Significant investment is directed towards key growth sectors such as cybersecurity, nuclear energy, and advanced manufacturing. Major projects include the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone, Warton Altitude Facility, and Blackpool's Silicon Sands, which aim to foster economic resilience and innovation.

The **Lancashire Enterprise Partnership** (LEP) Economic Plan was published in 2014 aiming to halt the long term relative economic decline of Lancashire after identifying failure to attract new occupiers and investors, failure to deliver key strategic sites, constrained transport infrastructure, and lack of strategic marketing as being root causes. Lancashire is one of the UK's strongest export performers led by the likes of BAE systems in aerospace as well as companies like GA.

The LEP prioritises advanced manufacturing, aerospace, automotive, energy, health science, and related sectors for growth. Lancashire's specialisation in agriculture, food, and drink is above GB levels but lacks specific support for manufacturers such as GA due to overlooking agri-tech and advanced manufacturing in food and drink (similar to the national Industrial Strategy. The plan focuses on the 'Arc of Prosperity', which generates 75% of Lancashire's wealth and is the focus of economic and housing growth plans. Lancashire's Growth Deal provides £320m for public infrastructure and innovation but fails to recognise the economic potential of rural sectors and related indigenous advanced manufacturing, viewing them as complementary to growth.

Lancashire's Local Industrial Strategy (Lancashire LIS) is an initiative of the Economic partnership which forecasts that manufacturing will increase its GVA contribution, but from a smaller employment base; in essence becoming more productive. For agriculture, the LIS forecasts that agriculture will decline in employment more than GVA, though the forecasting model used is an urban-based model (The Greater Manchester Forecasting Model) which is not equipped to forecast the agriculture sector. It is much more likely that agri-tech initiatives will support an increase in GVA from the agriculture sector and a move into added value processing, though some of this may be captured in the manufacturing sector through companies like GA.

The **Central Lancashire Economic Regeneration Strategy** (to 2026) outlines priorities including increasing productivity, creating new jobs, delivering sustainable transport and communications, promoting energy efficiency in business, and supporting a viable rural economy through diversification and food security. GA's activities align closely with these aims. Its rural location, integrated supply chain, and

advanced manufacturing techniques contribute to local employment, resilience, and export growth. GA's investments in renewables and resource efficiency mirror the strategy's call for greener business practices, while its proposal to formally allocate Plocks Farm as a key employment site supports the strategy's objective of ensuring a long-term attractive supply of industrial land. As a logistics-intensive, tech-driven manufacturer, GA also reinforces ambitions to enhance infrastructure and deliver high-value regional growth in line with Central Lancashire's vision for sustainable economic development.

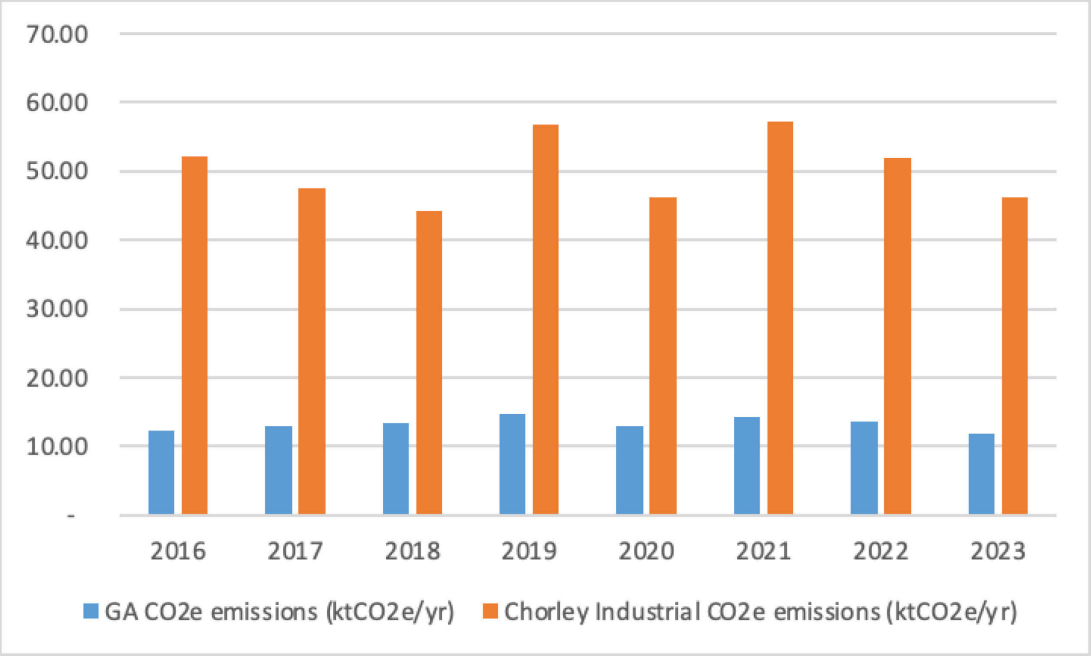
3.2 Net Zero Policy

Delivering **Net Zero** emissions by 2050 is a binding national objective under the UK Climate Change Act. The UK Government has released successive policy packages, including the Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021) and Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan (2023). These strategies promote green innovation, clean energy, and industrial decarbonisation, and frame the shift to net zero as an economic opportunity as well as a climate imperative. In 2024, the new government announced further legislative commitments, including the Great British Energy Bill, which will establish a publicly owned clean power company and accelerate investment in renewables.

Chorley Council echoed this commitment by declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, setting a local ambition for carbon neutrality, targeting net zero by 2030. GA's business strategy has explicitly embraced these goals: the company has pledged to cut its carbon emissions 50% each decade to achieve net zero by 2050, with Asland Walks forming a central part of this strategy.

Figure 3.1 shows GA's CO_2e emissions relative to those of Chorley. GA produces around a quarter of Chorley's industrial emissions and just under 2% of Chorley's total emissions. This highlights the economic importance of GA to Chorley's industrial base. The challenge for the UK as a whole is to maintain its industrial base rather than offshoring carbon emissions to jurisdictions with less regulation. The chart shows that GA is actually reducing its absolute emissions with Asland Walks and important part of its future emissions reduction strategy.

Figure 3.1 GA CO2e emissions as proportion of Chorley's industrial emissions



Source: GA data and UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 2005-2023 produced by Department of Energy Security and Net Zero

The Modern Industrial Strategy is closely aligned with the UK's net zero and sustainability commitments. The strategy prioritises decarbonisation of industry and the circular economy alongside growth. It pledges to boost green manufacturing and leverage industry to deliver energy security and environmental goals. It also provides support for more intensive industrial energy users. For GA, this policy direction reinforces its efforts in emissions reduction through energy efficiency and renewables, with its planned Asland Walks Energy Park for onsite power.

3.3 Local Plan and Economic Vision

Lancashire is in the process of seeking greater devolution of powers and funding (via a "County Deal" or combined authority). The **Greater Lancashire Plan** under development seeks to present a single strategic voice for the county on growth, infrastructure, and skills. In a future with an elected County Mayor or combined authority, large-scale projects like GA's could feature in county-wide economic blueprints. The trend toward levelling-up and devolution means that local and regional bodies will have more say in backing key industries. GA's role as a significant innovator, employer and exporter in a rural part of Lancashire could be recognised in these higher-level economic plans. It speaks to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund priorities (Chorley has £4.2m allocated) of supporting local business growth and skills. By anchoring a high-tech manufacturing and green energy project in Chorley, GA contributes to balanced regional development – a message that local leaders can champion in devolution discussions.

The **Chorley Economic Strategy (2022)** sets a vision by 2030 for "more and better paid jobs" and making Chorley a prime location for sustainable growth and investment, driven by innovation, new technologies and a commitment to net zero. GA's expansion directly supports this vision: it promises creation of high-skilled jobs in a rural area, investment in manufacturing technology, and an onsite green energy supply – a combination of innovation and sustainability that few local projects can match. The strategy also emphasises "unlocking land and assets to enable business growth" and providing fit-for-purpose accommodation for key sectors that is green and sustainable. GA's proposal fits this principle, as it entails making the most of an existing site (Plocks Farm) and enhancing it with sustainable infrastructure (renewables, waste recycling, etc.).

Bretherton Neighbourhood Plan and Community Engagement: At the very local level, the Bretherton area is developing a Neighbourhood Plan. Such plans reflect community aspirations on land use – often prioritising conservation of rural character and gradual, small-scale growth. Understandably, a major facility expanding in the parish might be a community concern. GA has responded by actively engaging with the Bretherton Parish Council and residents. The concept of the Asland Walks Energy Park, for instance, has been presented as a partnership with the community: not only would it reduce GA's emissions, it would also supply cheap green power to Bretherton homes (potentially more than double the village's current annual electricity needs) through an innovative local energy club. It would also improve local biodiversity. GA has indicated willingness to enter into legal agreements to share benefits with the community. By involving residents early and transparently, GA aims to ensure its proposals complement the Bretherton Neighbourhood Plan's goals. This collaborative approach may help alleviate concerns about landscape and noise impacts from the wind turbine, etc., showing that GA's growth can deliver direct community benefits. In effect, GA is positioning itself not just as a local employer, but as a stakeholder in Bretherton's sustainable future – aligning corporate plans with local values.

4. Local impact of global uncertainty

Recent energy price volatility and the need to respond to the climate emergency present existential risks to GA's business which it must respond to if it is to remain competitive.

GA has explored the options available to it through a detailed options appraisal process. Its preferred option is to create a new energy park to guarantee its energy costs, secure a sustainable business model, deliver towards its net zero commitments and to support the local community. A 'Wind Feasibility Study' was carried out by Renewables First for the Asland Walks site which established that it is able to deliver high and consistent wind speeds for energy generation. These findings were reinforced by a further study by Enercon. Solar South West were also commissioned to assess solar generation at the site. No other site has been found locally to meet GA's energy requirements.

This section summarises the current socio-economic impact of GA's business, the impact of its proposed investment in Asland Walks Energy Park and the issues facing GA around its future viability.

4.1 Socio-Economic Impact of the GA business today

GA employs 678 staff today with 87% living within 10 miles of the site and a further 10% more than 10 miles (see Section 1). GA's staffing costs were £24.4m in the latest year. Its supplier spend was a further £111m including almost £6m of capital expenditure. Its local presence means that a high proportion of staff wages are spent locally supporting local services and businesses while its supplier spend also has a ripple effect in the local, regional and national economy.

We estimate that on top of its directly employed staff, GA supports a further 915 jobs nationally with 411 being in the local area. This means that in total, GA supports 1,593 jobs nationally and 1,069 locally.

4.2 Socio-Economic Impact of the Asland Walks Energy Park

In addition to GA's on-going socio-economic impacts, it proposes to create a new renewable energy park known as Asland Walks. The park will provide a mix of renewable energy, diversified to suit GA's requirements – a wind turbine will offer year round electricity with a relatively short payback. Meanwhile solar will offer more generation in summer and a stable base load during sunny conditions without wind albeit the payback period is double that of wind.

We estimate the impacts associated with the construction and operation of this energy park below.

4.2.1 Construction Impacts

GA estimates a capital cost of £27m to create Asland Walks Energy Park. As shown in Table 4.1 the expenditure will create 427 direct and indirect jobs during construction with Gross Value Added (GVA)[1] of £27.9m. We estimate 229 of these jobs and £15.1m of GVA in the local area.

Table 4.1 Economic Impact of GA's net zero investment

Calculation of Energy Investment Jobs	Energy Investment
Construction Expenditure (a)	£27m
Number of jobs per £1m of expenditure (b)	5.8
Number of direct construction job years (c) = (a)*(b)	156.8
Employment multiplier for construction (d)	2.7
Number of indirect construction job years (e) = (c)*(d)	266.2
Total Number of direct and indirect job years (f) = (c)+(e)	**422.9**
GVA per head for construction in North West	£66,006
Total GVA £m	**£27.9m**

Source: Brookdale Consulting using ONS data on GVA and turnover per job as well as multipliers from the UK Additionality Guide.

Construction expenditure is planned to be phased over multiple years as shown in Table 4.2, with the final phase being in 2034. Applying a present value to the GVA impacts means that in today's terms they reduce to £24.9m.

Table 4.2 Phased Construction GVA

Year	Total	2026	2028	2030	2032	2034
Total GVA	£27.9m	£3.1m	£5.2m	£2.3m	£11.9m	£3.9m
GVA discounted to present value	£24.9m					
Jobs	422.9	47	78.3	57.9	180	59.5
Construction phase		Piller Gridgate	Wind turbine	IK Solar PV, AW 5 MWH BESS	AW Solar PV	AW Solar PV Phasing

Source: Brookdale Consulting

4.2.2 Operational Impacts

GA has undertaken detailed analysis to predict the operational costs of the Asland Walks energy park. Each aspect of the park will have maintenance costs associated with it. Table 4.3 shows the build-up of annual maintenance costs by year starting with

[1] The Government's preferred method of economic activity.

the wind turbine installation, then installation of the different solar arrays. The local jobs associated with these maintenance costs are also shown building up from 0.4 in year one to an annual total of 3 jobs by 2034, this continuing until 2040, the planned life of the Energy Park. The GVA associated with these jobs will be £2.2m over the period to 2040 with a present value of £1.53m.

Table 4.3 Operational Costs and Jobs Build up

Energy Source	2026	2028	2030	2032	2034 - 2040
Piller Gridgate					
IK Solar PV	£48,000	£48,000	£48,000	£48,000	£48,000
Wind Turbine		£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000
AW 5 MWH BESS			£24,000	£24,000	£24,000
AW Solar PV (3 phases)			£72,000	£144,000	£216,000
Total Annual Cost	**£48,000**	**£108,000**	**£204,000**	**£276,000**	**£348,000**
Estimated direct and indirect jobs supported per year	0.4	0.9	1.8	2.4	3.0

Source: Brookdale Consulting and GA estimated maintenance costs

4.2.3 Environmental Impacts

As part of GA's commitment to move towards net zero it is vital to measure the carbon reduction impacts of the Asland Walks Energy Park.

GA has estimated the kilowatt hours to be produced from Asland Walks as shown in Table 4.4. Using official Government carbon modelling methodology[2], the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) emissions saved relative to purchasing electricity through the grid can be estimated[3]. Asland Walks is able to deliver both wind and solar energy.

Table 4.4 highlights that an estimated 13,500 tonnes of CO2e will be saved with a carbon value of £3.76m in today's prices.

Table 4.4 Calculation of Carbon Savings from Renewable Energy

Energy Source	2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031	2032-2033	2034-2040
kW of renewable electricity produced	1.46m	16.15m	20.52m	24.9m	29.9m
Emissions factor	0.184-0.163	0.140-0.116	0.090-0.069	0.053-0.041	0.031-0.006
Tonnes of CO_2e saved	13,518				
Value of carbon saving	£4.68m (present value £3.76m)				

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-of-energy-use-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions-for-appraisal

[3] It is anticipated that grid emissions will reduce annually so the Government provides a forecasted emissions factor for each year as well as a carbon price to allow the emissions saved to be calculated in tonnes as well as monetised in £.

4.2.4 Financial Impacts

Were GA to buy this renewable energy from its grid supplier at today's prices it would cost £66.2m. However, deducting the construction and operation costs expected to 2040 of £32m, the net saving to GA of Asland Walks Energy Park will be £34.1m. Whilst not inclusive of inflation, interest costs or cost overruns during construction, this analysis highlights a significant financial saving for GA's investment in renewable energy which will support GA in investing in other parts of the business. More importantly, however, the investment in Asland Walks will provide GA with cost certainty on its energy costs allowing it to plan more effectively.

4.2.5 Community Benefits

As part of the Asland Walks Energy Park, 5% of all electricity generated by the new wind turbine and solar panels will be supplied directly to Bretherton through a dedicated cable to the village's substations, ensuring local homes and businesses benefit from clean, locally produced energy. A battery system will balance this renewable supply with the village's demand, maintaining reliable service and meeting grid regulations.

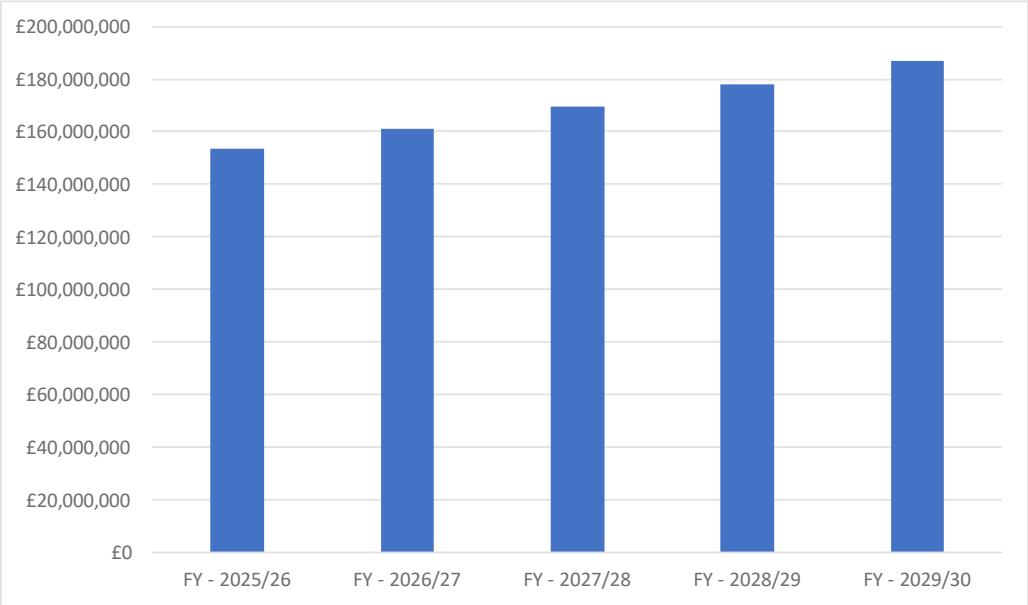
Any of this dedicated 5% that isn't immediately used will be sold to GA or the National Grid, with the income reinvested into local community projects, creating a valuable funding stream to support Bretherton's future initiatives. This contributes to local energy security, reduces dependence on fossil fuels, and helps cushion the community against volatile global energy markets.

As part of the Energy Park, GA plans to create "Asland Walks"- a circular trail for walking, running and cycling along the banks of the canal and River Douglas. This will open up new green spaces for residents, families and schools.

4.3 Future Economic Viability of GA

Figure 41 shows GA's projections for sales growth of the business which expect to see turnover rise to £186m by 2030 – an increase of £33m or 25%.

Figure 4.1 Turnover Projections for GA to 2030



Source: GA projections

Around half of GA's sales growth since 2012 has been in exports. The Brexit trade deal means that the UK can continue to trade with the EU without tariffs, though additional export certification is required. Sales prices per tonne have increased ahead of tonnage produced as GA has moved towards a premium business model.

Within the UK market, continued growth in pet keeping and the 'humanisation trend' discussed in Section 2 suggest that growth in both volume and value will be possible. GA's position in the independent sector, providing bespoke own label branding and direct delivery will provide opportunities to rise up the value chain.

Part of GA's value proposition is to prove that it is environmentally sustainable and serious about the climate emergency with ambitions to invest towards net zero. Having a substantial supply of green energy is vital to maintaining sustainable jobs in Chorley.

Without Asland Walks energy park, GA faces rising costs and potential erosion of its competitive edge. The energy park allows for:

- Energy resilience - stabilised operating costs to bolster long-term viability and justify continued capital investment.
- Forecasted growth in direct and indirect employment, exports, and partner brand reach.

- Ability to sustain GA's differentiator—bespoke, high-quality, low carbon, ethical products for independent pet specialists—which cannot be replicated by multinational competitors.

Special consideration is needed under Green Belt planning guidelines due to:

- The integrated nature of the Asland Walks Energy Park with GA's operations.
- The lack of suitable alternative sites.
- The sustainability and educational benefits provided to the broader community.

5. Summary and Conclusions

Over 33 years GA Pet Food Partners has grown to produce almost 73,000 tonnes of pet food annually with turnover of £150m, 678 staff employed and supplier spend (including CAPEX) of £110m in the latest year alone. Most staff live within 10 miles of its Plocks Farm site.

GA is aligned with Government, regional and local strategies. It is well-positioned to contribute to high-value jobs within Chorley and the wider Lancashire region as it seeks devolution.

The company's commitment to carbon neutrality, exemplified by the Asland Walks Energy Park demonstrates a proactive approach to sustainable growth and environmental responsibility that fits with the Government's Net Zero Strategy. GA accounts for around a quarter of Chorley's industrial emissions but is already reducing its emissions. The mix of renewable energy proposed (wind and solar) will help ensure generation of electricity in most conditions. A detailed feasibility exercise has shown that Asland Walks is the only site capable of delivering both wind and solar energy requirements with hard wiring back to Plocks Farm. Solar on its own will not provide the energy required, neither will wind on its own. Both are required to provide the resilience necessary.

We estimate that the GA business today supports 1,069 jobs locally and 1,593 jobs nationally.

The Asland Walks Energy Park will save an estimated 13,500 tonnes of CO_2e with a carbon value of £3.76m. It will create 427 jobs during construction with Gross Value Added of £27.9m. Of these, 229 jobs and £15.1m GVA will be in the local area. Annual maintenance will rise to support 5 jobs per year with GVA of £3m over the period to 2040. Energy cost savings will be £34.1m in today's prices, capital that can be redeployed into the business.

As part of the Asland Walks Energy Park, 5% of electricity will be supplied to Bretherton, benefiting local homes and businesses with clean, locally produced energy. GA will also create a circular trail for walking, running, and cycling along the canal and River Douglas, opening new green spaces for residents, families, and schools.

GA's location in the Green Belt is essential to its non-transferable, embedded business model, and the relationship between its operations and planned renewable energy infrastructure constitutes the "very special circumstances" necessary to justify the limited development proposed at Asland Walks.

By investing in this infrastructure, GA aims to secure energy independence, reduce the risks of price shocks, and maintain its competitive edge as a green ethical manufacturer in the pet food industry. GA's energy costs peaked at £13.7m inc VAT in 2024, triple the costs of 2019, before falling back to £8.6m in 2024. GA forecasts that by 2029,

electricity costs will be almost double the 2017 level and gas prices up 70%. This level of increase and the associated uncertainty will not be sustainable for the business, underlining the need for GA to deliver energy independence.

Collectively, GA represents a regionally significant asset delivering against the UK's industrial, environmental, and economic goals and working out the pathway towards net zero.

The economic impact of this investment will be felt within Chorley over the 15 year local plan period with the potential for substantial local economic benefits.