

Raywood, Simon

From: Giles Lewis [REDACTED]@opvl.co.uk>
Sent: 07 May 2025 19:26
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Submission: comment by BYG on 8.5 Supplementary Statement of Need submitted by PVDP on 6 May 2025 (Procedural Deadline B). Attn. Simon Raywood.

Dear Simon,

Thank you for the project Update of 6 May with submissions for Deadline B.

I would like to Comment on behalf of the Begbroke & Yarnton Green Belt Campaign (BYG) on submission 8.5, *Supplementary Statement of Need*, submitted by PVDP.

In our Relevant Representation, in *1. Site selection, alternative sites and site definition*, we commented on the Applicant's claim that a site in Oxfordshire was chosen because *National Grid had indicated in discussions* (my italics) that this would be their preference. [We added further information on this claim in my email to you of 9 April, requesting disclosure of any documents evidencing such discussions.]

We pointed out that this claim was puzzling given that a connection to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) transmits power across the whole country. Geographical location is therefore of little importance for large scale solar. National Grid has subsequently confirmed in response to an enquiry by the *Private Eye* magazine (Issue 1647) that they never advise where solar projects should be located.

Subsequently, we submitted evidence in our further comment on this matter in my email to you of 17 April, referencing our *Have Your Say* submission (Ref. 35833) receipt of which you acknowledged on 25 April. [*Vide* our discussion around this, now may be the time to submit this evidence as a Relevant Deadline submission; I am appending the email below this in case it is.]

The Applicant's *Supplementary Statement of Need* includes, in Chapter 3, additional comments on the reasons for siting the project in Oxfordshire and, interestingly, now makes no reference to discussions with National Grid. Instead, there is a complicated treatise on Oxfordshire's wish to see an increase in the use of renewable energy, and on how it will be difficult to connect new generation assets to the existing distribution grid in Oxfordshire for the next six years.

This is simply a further exercise in obfuscation since, as we previously pointed out, Oxfordshire would get no direct benefit from a connection that the Botley West project would make to NETS; the project could be sited anywhere in the country.

The further failure of PVDP to be able to provide any convincing case for the siting of the project in Oxfordshire simply underlines that there was never any case to be made. Chapter 3 of the *Supplementary Statement of Need* is in fact helpful in providing that confirmation.

The Applicant states in para 3.4.4 that were Botley West not to go ahead, '*other schemes may be required to come forwards to deliver the net zero obligation, which may not have been required to come forward if the maximum benefit had been delivered from the Project*'. Our argument on this, of course, is that other schemes would be more likely to benefit from a more thorough and well-founded selection process than has the Botley West scheme.

It is also relevant in this matter that Oxfordshire County Council, in their RR, have not

embraced the scheme but have raised a number of significant issues with it. They have also concluded that they object to the scheme because the proposal is "*contrary to policy M8 of the Core Strategy*".

Warm regards,

Giles (Lewis)
for BYG.

From: Giles Lewis [REDACTED]@opvl.co.uk>

Sent: 17 April 2025 14:05

To: Botley West Solar Farm <BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Subject: For Simon Raywood: re ISSUE, Site Selection

Importance: High

Dear Simon,

It appears that *Private Eye* has also noticed the *Oxford Mail* article which I sent you on 9 April (see email below and article attached again) which was the subject of our first *Have Your Say* submission (Ref. 35833) made with your help two days ago (on 15 April).

The *Eye* published the attached piece in yesterday's edition (Issue 1647).

Significantly, *Private Eye* appear to have spoken to National Grid about the claims made by Mark Owen-Lloyd. National Grid has confirmed to *Private Eye* that it never gives such guidance. This reinforces the importance of having this issue fully investigated during the examination.

It is also worth pointing out that documents submitted to PINS by the Applicant contain the following assertions in respect of discussions held with National Grid:

EIA Scoping Report 5.4.4:

The location of the proposed site was driven by a number of factors. Discussions were held with National Grid to identify where their priorities were to meet demand and manage the UK electricity supply network. As a result, PVDP became aware that National Grid wished to invest in reinforcing and extending the grid network in the Oxfordshire area, partly in response to Oxfordshire's fast-growing economy and the increasing demand for electricity. Following these discussions, a high-level site search exercise was undertaken by PVDP to consider the availability and suitability of land to accommodate a solar farm.

and in **APP-042 Alternatives Considered 5.6.5:**

In 2019, as part of the Applicants general site search exercise, discussions were held with National Grid to identify where their priorities lay in order to meet demand and manage the UK electricity supply network. Following a review of the Transmission Network Usage System (TNUoS), managed by National Grid as the Electricity System Operator (ESO), and regulated by Ofgem, it was clear that the South East remained an area where demand was greatest.

If possible, perhaps you could kindly add this email to our *Have Your Say* submission (Sub Ref. 35833).

Thank you,

Giles.
for BYG.