

During my relevant representation I focused my concerns around three core elements of the proposal: 1) its size; 2) its location; and 3) the adequacy of the consultation process. In this written representation I expand on these three points. This written representation is not exhaustive, that is, it does not cover every issue I have with the development and any omission should not be taken as support.

The views expressed below are based on my understanding of the proposal set forth by PDVP. Due to the poor format, indexing and structure of the materials put forward by the Developer it has been extremely difficult and time consuming to form these views.

I am an interested party as I am a local resident, living on Lower Road in the Central site of the PVP proposed facility.

Size:

The Developer has failed to outline a clear rationale for the size of the proposed solar facility. They have made the following assertions:

1. That the size of facility is essential for the UK net zero strategy – yet they do not provide a coherent and unbiased argument as to why the government cannot rely on multiple smaller solar facilities, or use alternatives such as wind power.
2. That they have a contract with National Grid to supply 840MW of power – yet their agreement with National Grid is not for a minimum of 840MW, but is in fact for a maximum of 840MW. The Developer has actively misled the public over this fact.
3. That the size of the facility is essential to support Oxfordshire's net zero strategy – yet the power generated will be connected to the national grid and not ringfenced for local use, and does not take into consideration the large volume of either operational or planning-approved solar facilities in the county.
4. That they will provide new public rights of way – yet residents have responded saying they will travel outside of the 11.5 mile solar facility in order to access footpaths and connect with nature, confirming that they have no desire for more footpaths between solar panels, and increasing automotive journeys by residents.

At no point has the Developer entertained the idea of a smaller facility. By their own account, if the facility isn't providing 840MW then they can't fulfil their agreement with National Grid. The Developer has failed to provide a reason as to why 840MW is the target size – interested parties remain in the dark as to the rationale and can only assume it is based on the maximum available land that would be leased to them.

Location:

The Developer has failed to outline a clear rationale for the location of the proposed solar facility. They have made the following assertions:

1. That the location of the proposed solar facility is the only option available – yet 75% of the proposed facility is in green belt land and on farmland that is in many areas rated as BMV. It would be irresponsible to take this land out of food production, especially as the UK imports a large amount of food already. Building this facility on green belt land would industrially connect many Oxfordshire villages, from Cumnor to Eynsham to Hanborough to Woodstock.
2. That the Very Special Circumstances for building on the green belt are satisfied – yet the arguments made by the developer are weak - they state that the only other potential site was in Cowley, also on Green Belt land. It is my belief that they have intentionally conducted a poor search of other suitable sites to mislead the public on available options. To only have one other available option demonstrates that they have not made a concerted effort here. To anyone in Oxfordshire, the most obvious site for a solar farm is the now closed Didcot Power Station, a 300 acre brownfield site that already has the necessary grid connections.
3. That the installation is temporary - yet a planned 42-year time horizon is not a fair-use of the phrase temporary. This is misleading to the community and misleading to the planning inspectorate. There is also no guarantee to ensure that any approval does not result in further development on the green belt land.
4. That the installation conforms with the latest planning guidance – yet significant portions of the site would be best used for food production as it is classed as grade 1, 2 or 3a land. Government guidance clearly sets out that this should be protected from development and that brownfield sites should be prioritised.
5. That the proposed site has no impact on heritage assets such as Blenheim Palace or Sansoms Platt – yet the UNESCO World Heritage Site Committee specifically points to the unique setting of Blenheim Palace within the wider countryside and the developer's report does not include letters of support from all Trustees of Blenheim Palace (not Blenheim Estates) or a letter of support from UNESCO, confirming that there is no impact on the World Heritage site whatsoever.

Adequacy:

Finally, the consultations have not been adequate. Huge volumes of information have been shared that appear to be designed to make it intentionally difficult to navigate and the developer has not materially considered the views of local consultees. By their own admission, the vast majority of respondents are not supportive of their proposal, yet they have not made a concerted effort to engage the community and adapt their design to be more reasonable.

1. The community consultation has not been an adequate or fair process
 - a) As a working resident, it was extremely difficult to attend an in-person consultation event. An afternoon session on a Wednesday can only be assumed to be designed to have low attendance for the Hanborough Parish.
 - b) The main consultations were run over Christmas – the busiest time of year for many individuals with prior commitments preventing their full engagement in the proposals.

- c) Consultation events were not attended by experts in their field and representatives of the Developer could not answer basic questions.
 - d) Maps and displays at the consultations events were poorly presented and few in number, making it difficult for all attendees to properly engage.
 - e) The PEIR is a 70,000-page document that was not indexed. It was impossible for residents to read it in the time provided and respond appropriately.
2. The number of photos at proposed sites to show the impact is woefully inadequate
- a) For an installation that is 11.5 miles long and 3.5 miles wide, there should be hundreds of photos submitted, with visualisations, not ~50. These photos should be taken at midday during Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. This is crucial so that the impact of foliage and a lack of foliage is clear throughout the year. As this hasn't been provided, the negative impact on amenity is understated.
 - b) There is strong Developer bias in the proposal as not all photos were selected to show visualisations of the panels. Those selected were clearly chosen to give the perception that the impact would be minimal. Photos were also taken when the sun was low, increasing shadows from hedges etc and therefore giving the false perception that the impact would be low.
3. There is no plan for decommissioning
- a) The proposal should set out a detailed plan outlining the finance arrangements to appropriately decommission the site. As the company is asking for a "temporary" licence of ~40 years, there should also be a legal obligation to return the site to agricultural use immediately afterwards. The Developer should outline an adequate plan for this in their application. This adequate plan is missing from the application.

Finally, there isn't a single local authority, parish council or MP supportive of this proposal. It does not have the backing of the community in any form, yet residents are extremely supportive of other policies relevant to net zero or climate change. If the developer had put forward a reasonable proposal and engaged the community in a meaningful way, then they could have had the support of us all. Instead, they have ignored the concerns of residents and pushed ahead in the pursuit of maximum profits. As such, the proposal as outlined should be rejected outright.

R Tucker

3 June 2025