

Site Selection

Written Representation

from Begbroke & Yarnton Green Belt Campaign (BYG), reference submission 8.5 Supplementary Statement of Need, submitted by Applicant PVDP under Procedural Deadline B.

In our Relevant Representation, in *1. Site selection, alternative sites and site definition*, BYG commented on the Applicant's claim that a site in Oxfordshire was chosen because *National Grid had indicated in discussions* (BYG's italics) that this would be their preference. [We added further information on this claim in our email to PINS 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 our email to PINS of 17 April, referencing our *Have Your Say* submission (Ref. 35833) receipt of which you acknowledged on 25 April.

The Applicant's *Supplementary Statement of Need* submitted pre-examination 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 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 makes things no clearer. 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 inability of PVDP 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, in our opinion, the Botley West scheme.

It is also relevant in this matter that Oxfordshire County Council, in its RR, has

not embraced the scheme but has 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*".