



OXFORDSHIRE HOST AUTHORITIES

BOTLEY WEST SOLAR FARM

**ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 1 | POST-HEARING
SUBMISSION**

DEADLINE 1 | WEDNESDAY 04 JUNE 2025

- Cherwell District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire Host Authorities (“OHAs”)

Botley West Solar Farm (EN01014)

OXFORDSHIRE HOST AUTHORITIES

POST-HEARING SUBMISSIONS

ISH1 | THE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER AND OTHER STRATEGIC MATTERS

The Oxfordshire Host Authorities (the “**OHAs**”) are comprised of the following host authorities who are working collaboratively to represent constituents on key issues during this Examination and assist the Examining Authority (“**ExA**”) with the Examination’s smooth running:

- Cherwell District Council (“**CDC**”)
- Value of White Horse District Council (“**VWHDC**”)
- West Oxfordshire District Council (“**WODC**”)
- Oxfordshire County Council (“**OCC**”)

In these submissions, the Oxfordshire Host Authorities may be referred to variously as the OHAs, the Host Authorities or the Councils.

Purpose of this Post-Hearing Submission

The purpose of this post-hearing submission is to provide a written summary of the OHA’s positions on the agenda items specified below. This includes both a summary of the OHA’s oral representations on each agenda item and, in some cases, further comments of the oral representations made by the Applicant and others during the hearing.

The ExA will note that the OHAs submitted a Joint Local Impact Report (the “**LIR**”) alongside this submission at Deadline 1. To assist the ExA and prevent unnecessary repetition, this post-hearing submission cross-refers to the LIR where the OHA’s views on specific issues can be outlined in greater detail.

ISH1 – POST HEARING SUBMISSION

Agenda Item	Post-Hearing Notes	Lead Officer(s) and Experts
Agenda Item 3		
<p><i>3a The Rochdale Envelope, flexibility and the environmental statement</i></p>	<p>Query on ES clarification report [PDB-015] – point ES3.</p> <p>In para 2.4.2 it states <i>the LVIA assessment has taken account of these project design parameters, including the NGET substation, and it correctly assumes that the height of the NGET substation is between 12m to 12.5m. Para 2.4.3 states References to a height of 15m in the Guide to the Application [AS-002], and Statement of Statutory Nuisance [APP-018], are not accurate. These documents have been updated.</i></p> <p>However, in the statement of statutory nuisance [PDB-004 / 005] at paragraph 1.4.10 it is stated that <i>the area required to be set aside for the NGET substation amounts to an area of up to 3.8ha. Within that area it is assumed that the substation itself will occupy a footprint of approximately 87m by 30m, with a maximum building height of 12m, excluding connecting tower structures. This is secured in the Outline Layout & Design Principles (as submitted alongside this Procedural Deadline B submission). It is understood, from NGET, that the building containing the switchgear will be 14m high, 16m wide and 76m in length, with an annexe building alongside, which will be 3.6m high, 15m wide and 76m in length.</i></p> <p>VWHDC seeks confirmation on whether the switchgear building is part of the DCO application or not.</p> <p>Switchgear buildings do not always need to be separate buildings, but they often are, especially for high-voltage equipment, so such structures need to be included within Rochdale parameters and LVIA tested at 14m should this be a separate building requirement.</p>	<p>SW - VWHDC</p>

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	<p>During Issue Specific Hearing 1, there was a discussion on whether a Grampian condition should be included in the draft DCO preventing the undertaker from (i) exercising compulsory purchase powers and (ii) commencing the authorised development until planning permission has been granted for the proposed National Grid substation. The OHAs consider such a provision would be sensible because it would ensure that infrastructure which is important to the instant application has been consented before the instant works can be commenced.</p>	
<i>3b Strategic alternatives and project choices</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>3c Cultural heritage</i>	<p>Oxfordshire County Council requested that the ExA require the submission of an Archaeological Evaluation Report by the applicant into the examination once this report has been completed by the applicant. The Council will comment on the adequacy of this survey as well as the applicant's assessment of the significance of any identified archaeological remains in a separate written representation once the Evaluation Report has been submitted. Oxfordshire County Council requests that this future written submission by the council be accepted into the examination and given due regard by the ExA once it has been submitted.</p> <p>The OHAs will further expand on the impacts relating to cultural heritage and the historic environment within section 7.2 of the joint Local Impact Report to be submitted at Deadline 1.</p>	WODC – LUC input
<i>3d Green Belt</i>	<p>It is established that the proposed development is inappropriate development in the Oxford Green Belt which, by definition, is harmful and carries substantial weight. National policy is clear that for the DCO application to be successful, there must exist Very Special Circumstances (VSC) to justify the use of Green Belt land.</p>	WODC CDC VWHDC

Agenda Item	Post-Hearing Notes	Lead Officer(s) and Experts
	<p>The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The harm to Green Belt aims in keeping land permanently open and to Green Belt purposes (<i>to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</i>) are not considered to be outweighed by the case for VSC which refers to the harms as being limited, temporary and reversible.</p> <p>OHAs provide more context to this issue in Written Representations and in section 7.1 of the joint LIR.</p>	
3e Aviation safety	The OHAs will elaborate on the issue of aviation safety within section 7.16 of the joint LIR	N/A
3f Development Consent Order	<p>OHA's key areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The broad range of powers to undertake works to the highway without consent of the Highways Authority. • The lack of resourcing for the Host Authorities for post consent work including highways auditing and monitoring and the discharge of requirements. • The lack of time to submit a request for further information for the discharge of requirements as outlined in Schedule 6 (10 days are likely to be insufficient time to consult third parties). • The broad range of powers to remove hedgerows and trees. • The Host Authorities would like to see the protective provisions surrounding drainage consent brought into line with the LDA. • VOWHDC would like to see a requirement to secure protective measures for the Milestone on Oxford Road. <p>OHAs also seek to secure a post consent Planning Performance Agreement via a Requirement in the DCO to ensure the councils are adequately resourced for any discharge of requirements and post consent work.</p>	<div data-bbox="1937 790 2049 853" style="background-color: black; width: 50px; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div data-bbox="1937 853 2049 917" style="background-color: black; width: 50px; height: 40px;"></div>

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	OHAs will elaborate on these points within chapter 8 of the joint LIR submitted at Deadline 1.	
<i>3g Landscape and Visual Matters</i>	<p>The OHAs confirm that they will expand on the Arboricultural Assessment and Arboricultural Impact Report in section 7.4 of the joint LIR.</p> <p>OHAs confirm there was very little engagement on Landscape and Visual issues throughout the pre-examination period. The Host Authorities were asked to help establish appropriate viewpoints for the LVIA but were otherwise not consulted on the methodology.</p> <p>OHAs elaborate on the engagement with the applicant and the assessment of the significance of effects within section 7.3 of the joint LIR and OHA’s individual responses to action point 17 from ISH1.</p>	ALL
<i>3h Climate Change</i>	<p>The OHAs all acknowledge the positive effect that the production of solar energy will have with regards to combatting climate change.</p> <p>However, the OHAs note that paragraph 4.10.1 of NPS EN-1 states that ‘<i>...If new energy infrastructure is not sufficiently resilient against the possible impacts of climate change, it will not be able to satisfy the energy needs as outlined in Part 3 of this NPS.</i>’ The OHAs also note that the applicants Supplementary Statement of Need [PBD-014] is heavily reliant on the ability of the project to satisfy the energy needs described within EN-1.</p> <p>OHAs expressed concern in ISH1 around the climate resilience of the proposed scheme and noted that the applicant had chosen to scope out climate related risks from the ES (Table 14.6 (issues scoped out of the assessment) of [APP-051]).</p>	<div data-bbox="1937 898 2033 930" style="background-color: black; width: 43px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div data-bbox="1937 930 2033 962" style="background-color: black; 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Agenda Item	Post-Hearing Notes	Lead Officer(s) and Experts
	<p>The OHAs believe that the applicant did not provide a clear scientific justification for excluding potential climate risks from the assessment and invite the applicant to provide further details on how it has considered, and responds to, the OCC Climate Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate a broader understanding of potential future risks that could disrupt the solar farm.</p> <p>Some of the OHA’s specific concerns with regard to Climate Resilience are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of consideration within the design of extreme weather events including storms, flooding and extreme heat. • There is no evidence that the Climate Change chapter of the ES [APP-051] and Outline Operational Management Plan [APP-234] will take climate hazards into account during the maintenance process. • Further consideration is required of the Outline GHG Reduction Strategy [APP-216] which makes no mention of the potential for increased carbon sequestration on the site. There are also opportunities to simultaneously increase carbon sequestration through appropriate planting and land management, which would reduce flood risk and minimise other impacts which could subsequently lead to emission of greenhouse gases, such as soil erosion from runoff. • The GHG emissions from the transport of the panels from their place of manufacture to the application site has not been adequately assessed and considered. <p>The OHAs will elaborate further on the climate resilience of the scheme within section 7.10 of the joint LIR</p>	
3i Noise and Vibration	<p>The OHAs raised concerns around the noise impacts that would result from the piling operations during the construction phase. This impact would be exacerbated by the applicant’s proposed construction hours which would be 7:00-19:00 Monday-Saturday. The standard hours normally expected for construction works by the OHA would be 8:00-18:00 weekdays, 08:00-12:00 on</p>	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div>(WO)</div>

Agenda Item	Post-Hearing Notes	Lead Officer(s) and Experts
	<p>Saturdays. The additional construction hours proposed by the applicant would result in a greater impact on the local residents in terms of noise.</p> <p>The OHAs believe that the applicant’s assessment of the background noise levels needs to be robustly justified by the applicant as these form the baseline for the assessment of significance of noise impacts.</p> <p>The OHAs contend that the applicant will need to employ monitoring of the level of noise generated by the development throughout the operational phase to ensure the noise levels remain within the industry standards outlined by the applicant. If the noise levels exceed the industry standards then the applicant will need to take action to prevent a significant impact.</p> <p>Tranquillity on the PRoW network is intrinsic to how the countryside and the PRoW network is enjoyed by the public. As such the OHA believe that the noise impact on the PRoW network at all phases of the proposed development should be assessed within the applicants ES.</p> <p>The OHA’s will further elaborate on the noise and vibration impacts associated with the scheme at section 7.9 of the joint Local Impact Report.</p>	
3j Traffic and Transport	<p>Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority would welcome amendments to the Outline Operational Management Plan [APP-234] which would make clear the methodologies and timelines proposed for the replacement of panels within the scheme. In particular we would welcome clarity on the potential highways impacts of the operational maintenance of the panels to ensure that any potential impacts can be considered under a Construction Traffic Management Plan or similar document.</p> <p>The OHAs will further expand on the topic of Traffic and Transport (including Public Rights of Way) within section 7.8 of the joint LIR</p>	<p>■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ (OCC)</p>

Oxfordshire Host Authorities (“OHAs”)

Botley West Solar Farm (EN01014)