



# Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Laura van der Merwe  
Ministry of Defence  
Safeguarding Department  
DIO Head Office  
St George's House  
Whittington  
Lichfield  
Staffordshire WS14 9PY

DIO Ref. 10061227

PINS ref: EN010147

Mobile: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]@mod.gov.uk

National Infrastructure Planning  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

4<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Botley West Solar Farm**

Thank you for sending the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Safeguarding team the Rule 8 letter in relation to the above project.

The DIO Safeguarding Team represents the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as a consultee in UK planning and energy consenting systems to ensure that development does not compromise or degrade the operation of defence sites such as aerodromes, explosives storage sites, air weapon ranges, and technical sites or training resources such as the Military Low Flying System.

The Rule 8 letter advises that all Interested Parties are invited to submit Written Representations by Deadline 1. Written representations have already been submitted by the MOD to PINS, dated 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025, however, I write to confirm the overall MOD safeguarding position to this project.

The proposed solar development sites which make up this project, occupy statutory safeguarding zones surrounding RAF Weston on the Green, specifically the aerodrome height and birdstrike

safeguarding zones surrounding the aerodrome, and the aerodrome height safeguarding zone surrounding RAF Brize Norton.

### Glint and Glare

The proposed solar development has the potential to produce glint and/or glare to military aircraft operating within the airspace surrounding RAF Weston on the Green. The introduction of sources of glint and glare beneath this airspace could create a hazard to aircraft by dazzling pilots at critical stages of flight.

In the MOD's response to the Scoping Report dated 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023, we advised that due to the proximity of the solar array to RAF Weston on the Green, a glint and glare assessment will need to be submitted for the MOD to assess. As part of the application, a Glint and Glare assessment has been submitted (*Botley West Solar Farm Environmental Statement – Volume 3 – Appendix 4.4: Glint and Glare Study inc. Technical Aerodrome Safeguarding Report – November 2024*). Whilst RAF Weston on the Green is listed as a relevant aviation receptor in the report, no detailed modelling has been undertaken as the report states no significant impacts are predicted. Due to military aircraft overflying the development sites, and as previously advised in our Scoping response, the MOD does require a glint and glare assessment for RAF Weston on the Green. At present, the MOD has insufficient information to determine if the proposed solar development sites will affect aircraft operating within the airspace surrounding RAF Weston on the Green. Therefore, RAF Weston on the Green detailed modelling does need to be included in the Glint and Glare assessment. We look forward to receiving an updated report to consider.

The MOD agrees with the findings of the glint and glare assessment that there will be no significant impacts on RAF Brize Norton and therefore no detailed modelling is required. The report also considers RAF Abingdon as a relevant aviation receptor, please note this site is now known as Dalton Barracks but also does not need detailed modelling.

### Birdstrike

The proposed solar development sites occupy the statutory birdstrike safeguarding zone surrounding RAF Weston on the Green. Within this zone, the principal concern of the MOD is with the creation of new habitats, such as open bodies of water, landscaping, restoration and aftercare strategies as they may attract and support populations of large and/or flocking birds close to an aerodrome, which could contribute to an increase in birdstrike risk to aircraft operating within the airspace surrounding RAF Weston on the Green. To prevent the development sites becoming an attractant to birds species hazardous to air traffic, the MOD requires that the grass beneath and surrounding the panels be managed as long grass and regularly maintained to prevent weeds from growing as weeds can provide a feeding opportunity to certain bird species.

In summary, the MOD requires RAF Weston on the Green to be considered as a relevant receptor and modelled in a glint and glare assessment for this project. An updated glint and glare assessment which includes RAF Weston on the Green modelling needs to be submitted to the MOD to consider. Subject to the results of this assessment and should no glint and glare impacts be identified, then the MOD raises no objection to this application.

Please note, the comments submitted by RAF Brize Norton dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and recently requested to be amended on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025, should be replaced with the comments in this letter. This response should be taken by The Planning Inspectorate as the MOD's safeguarding position to this proposed solar development.

The applicant has approached DIO Safeguarding about the Statement of Common Ground between the applicant and the MOD. We look forward to receiving the first draft and working with the applicant on this document.

I trust this is clear however should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Laura van der Merwe  
Senior Safeguarding Manager

