

The Planning Inspectorate  
Botley West Solar Farm Consultation

Date: 7 June 2025

Our ref: 6630\505789432.1\120382.00025

Your ref:

Direct tel: [REDACTED]

E-mail:

[REDACTED]@gateleylegal.com

Dear Sirs,

**Response to Botley West Solar Farm Development Consent Order (“DCO”) Consultation  
DCO Development: Solar photovoltaic array and connection infrastructure, with a maximum  
intended generation capacity of 840MW  
Client: The Chancellor Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford**

We are instructed by The Chancellor Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford (“the University”).

Mr Mark Juniper, Rural Estates Surveyor for the University attended the Specific Hearing 1 on 15 May 2025 and made representations to the Examiners as per the transcript extract at **Appendix 1**.

We have previously submitted a relevant representation on behalf of the University and the submissions made by Mr Juniper were made in support of that relevant representation.

We understand that Mr Juniper made the following points to the Examiner:

- Cable Routing and Option Choices – the University needs to ensure that its interest and those of its tenants are adequately reflected in the proposed scheme. The University requires assurances as to how the impact on the University’s holdings will be protected when there are multiple options proposed at this stage. It is unclear why further detail or a particular route across the University’s land cannot be narrowed down at this stage.
- Wytham Woods SSSI – this SSSI is circa 1,000 acres of ancient woodland and one of the most researched areas of woodlands in the country. The SSSI is involved in a wide range of research, education and outreach projects. Mr Juniper invited the Examiners to attend the site as part of an ASI in due course.
- SSSI – There is an on-going woodland project that has been implemented at the Wytham Woods SSSI (see paragraphs 2.1-2.8 of the relevant representation for more information).

We appreciate that this has been submitted late in accordance with the timetable but we trust that as it is a summary of the University’s representations at the Hearing that this can be accepted.

1 Forbury Square  
The Forbury  
Reading RG1 3BB  
DX 4014 Reading  
0118 952 0820

gateleylegal.com

Yours faithfully,

*Gateley Legal*

**Gateley Legal**

**APPENDIX 1**  
**TRANSCRIPT OF MARK JUNIPER REPRESENTATIONS (AS PUBLISHED BY THE PLANNING**  
**INSPECTORATE)**

Thank you. Mark Juniper.

01:34:52:25 - 01:35:29:07

Representing the University of Oxford. Um, I just wanted to highlight a few matters that I think fall under this section of the agenda, but they could fall under others. But I think for expediency, I'll try and raise them now because they do relate to cable routing and options choices. Um, so the university are not involved in promoting the promote the proposed scheme, other than they've been approached by the developer, uh, to discuss terms of the installation of a cable route over their land to export power from the southern site near the university is therefore seeking to ensure that its interests and that of its tenants are reflected in the scheme.

01:35:29:09 - 01:36:05:26

Design. The choices that are made, the planning and delivery of all measures to ensure that any disturbance is mitigated and that losses are accounted for. I've got a number of key considerations that I'd like to raise, and the first one is that, um, the university has made a response to the DCA consultation through their legal advisers at gateways, that has been submitted on the 25th of February, 2025. Um, so it sits in the background, but I thought I'd just raised that as part of this communication. The elements that we've raised in that response are not in any particular order, but I've noted them down.

01:36:06:05 - 01:36:50:21

Impact on White and Woods triple SC. The university owns White and Woods, which is a thousand acres of ancient woodland, which is a triple SC and is reputed to be the most research area of woodland in the country. There's been research and education going on there for nearly 100 years. Um, it's species rich and there are all sorts of research and education and outreach projects that go on in that woodland that lies very close to and overlooks the proposed southern site by far more. And I would invite the examiner to come and stand and stare on university land by white and woods and from Hill, and also the Outdoor Education Center, which is also owned by the university but operated by Highland Charity.

01:36:50:27 - 01:37:27:17

I'd invite the examiners to come and stand and stare from there to better understand the impacts, because I know that that is of great concern by a number of local residents, the operators of that outdoor education charity, and also the university itself. So I'd like that to be noted, please. Um, I'd also like to, um, flag that there is impact on a woodland project that is currently underway on university land where there's a large area of new woodland planting that's been implemented, um, and, uh, that is being used to promote education and research linked to the species composition of new woodland planting for climate change purposes.

01:37:27:28 - 01:37:51:20

Uh, that is going to be directly affected by the cable route or one of the cable route options as currently proposed. So again, that is a scheme design matter. And we seek assurances around how that impact is going to be mitigated without that detailed design being available at this stage. Um, there's a significant impact on agricultural use of, uh, of the land. Um, the land that is identified for the cable routing.

01:37:52:03 - 01:37:53:18

Sorry, sir. I'm just going to.

01:37:53:20 - 01:38:05:06

Stop you there. I appreciate the cable routing option from before, but it does sound a bit more sort of generic rather than focusing on the alternatives of the proposed. Do you have a specific point about the alternatives?

01:38:05:19 - 01:38:29:01

I think we have lack of visibility as to alternatives or understanding as to why these cable routing options have been chosen. We we have had engagement through ardent management, suggesting a number of cable routes, but limited information about the whys and wherefores. It just seems to be a sort of fait accompli. So understanding that to mitigate some of the impacts that I've raised, um, would be really helpful.

01:38:29:17 - 01:38:42:17

Okay. Thank thank you very much. And I think I've already asked the applicant at as an action, if you like to, to provide more detail on those routing options throughout the examination so we can narrow those down.

01:38:44:15 - 01:38:52:15

Okay. Thank you. Uh, I believe there's a hand raised online. Apologies. I don't have your name on the screen. I just have the initials H.

01:38:54:02 - 01:39:25:12

Yeah, sorry. It's Alan Hearn representing big Brook and Johnston. Um, so mainly just to draw attention to the fact that our group has done a lot of work on the, um, applicants, uh, site selection, alternative site, site definition, uh, documents. And you find that in our relevant representation number 92, section one, uh, some of which, uh, picks up what you picked up earlier in your questioning. But we also make bigger points.

01:39:25:14 - 01:40:05:26

And I think this is sort of to emphasize that the applicant seems to have given no importance at all to try and find a real alternative, which was not affecting so much. Green belt, not affecting so much best and most versatile land, and not reasonably adjacent to a World Heritage site that just doesn't seem to have featured. And I think it's the case that your organization only has. This is the only DCO for a solar farm, which affects a large area of best and most versatile and green belt, and indeed is obviously adjacent to a World Heritage site.

01:40:05:28 - 01:40:21:20

So we were really quite surprised when we read the documents to see nothing really of substance about why some other site couldn't be found that had less impact on those three major designation types.

01:40:24:06 - 01:40:28:25

Okay. Thank you very much for that. Does the applicant wish to say anything in response.