



**Cotswolds  
National  
Landscape**

Submitted via the email to [BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

25 June 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

**PINS REFERENCE NO:** EN010147

**DESCRIPTION:** Development consent to construct, operate, maintain and decommission a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility with a capacity of 840 megawatts (MW) and export connection to the National Grid

**LOCATION:** Botley West Solar Farm, Oxfordshire

**The Examining Authority's first written questions and requests for information (ExQ1): Cotswolds National Landscape Board Response**

Thank you for consulting the Cotswolds National Landscape Board ('the Board') regarding the Examining Authority's first written questions and requests for information in connection with the Development Consent Order examination for the above proposed development, part of which is located within the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape ('the CNL').

Having reviewed the list of questions, the Board wishes to respond to one question, namely question reference Q1.1.6.

***Q1.1.6 Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW)***

***Would the proposed development have any impact, beneficial or adverse, upon the purposes of the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or represent an impediment to the relevant authority's duties to further those purposes set out in s85 of the CROW?***

The Board's previous responses to consultations relating to this proposal, the most recent of which is dated 24 February 2025, have outlined both the purpose of CNL designation, that being the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty as well as our standing advice relating to relevant authorities' duty to further this purpose as set out in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. We hope these representations have been of assistance to both the Examining Authority and the Applicant.

We note the comments relating to the CNL made by Cherwell District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council in their Joint Local Impact Report, dated June 2025 including the LVIA Review by Land Use Consultants.

The Board has made repeated recommendations to the Applicant to include the re-orientation of viewpoints to allow assessment of impact upon the views to and from the National Landscape and the addition of at least one viewpoint within the National Landscape within their assessment of the proposal. We previously suggested locating a viewpoint on the footpath 173/1/20 between Boltons Farm and East End, north of Long Hanborough.

It is disappointing that despite our recommendations as a Statutory Consultee, the Applicant's DCO submission does not reflect this advice, however, in the interests of assisting the Secretary of State and the Examining Authority in expediting the DCO examination, the Board's officers provided an assessment of the proposal in our response dated 24 February 2025. This assessment was restricted to the potential impacts of the proposal on the CNL and its setting as opposed to the wider site area and was informed by visits to the site and surrounding area, most recently in February 2025.

**Cotswolds Conservation Board**

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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

[cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

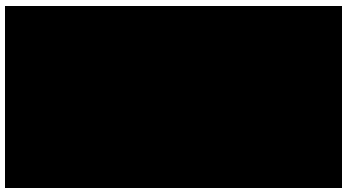
Chairman:  
**Brendan McCarthy**  
  
Vice Chair:  
**Rebecca Charley**

Having reviewed the applicant's DCO submission and visited the site and surrounding area, the Board concluded in our response dated 24 February 2025 that the proposed solar farm would have, at worst, a temporary negligible to minor adverse significance of effect at all stages of the project (i.e. construction, operation and decommissioning) on the landscape character and special qualities of the CNL and a temporary negligible adverse effect on views to and from the CNL. Our response dated 24 February 2025 provides further details on the relationship between the site and the CNL and, in particular, an assessment of the potential effects of the development on views from within, and back towards, the CNL.

The Board also considers that the 'new planting/areas for enhancement' on land between the solar PV arrays and the CNL have the potential to provide landscape enhancements which could be considered to contribute to furthering the purpose of CNL designation and should be secured as part of the Development Consent Order should, without prejudice, the Secretary of State be minded to grant such an order. As such the Board considers that the impacts of the proposal would not represent an impediment in respect of relevant authorities' adequate discharge of the s.85 CROW Act duty.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this response further.

Yours sincerely,



**Planning Officer**

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