

I support the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) Written Representation and the Joint Local Impact Report (by the Oxfordshire Host Authorities).

I feel that WODC have articulated my position on the proposed Botley West Solar Farm (BWSF) – that I am not against renewable energy and respect that fact that options need to be looked at for the future of energy in the UK and to tackle climate change. Saying that, the current BWSF is too large, too disparate and does not recognise the importance of ‘protecting and enhancing’ the local environment and communities.

I agree with WODC that a renewable energy scheme, such as BWSF, should be ‘proportionate and sympathetic’ to the location they would be in – and in the current format BWSF does not do this.

In the current format the BWSF proposals will detrimentally impact the area and its historic, built and environmental assets – such as Oxford Green Belt, the historic environment such as Blenheim Palace and the agricultural land.

I agree with WODC that there can still be renewable energy benefits with a solar farm project that is reduced in scale to mitigate the harms that the project brings to the area.

Overall I support WODC in objecting to the BWSF proposal in its current form and that there would be scope to find a workable size of this project. I support the areas that WODC says should be removed from the project to reduce harms that the solar panels would cause in these areas – and the fact a more data led and nuanced approach should be taken (rather than simply trying to maximise the number of panels).

Specifically, for my location (Bladon) I am also aware of 2023 research into a safe distance for solar farms from residential properties: <https://gosolarfloridastate.org/blog/what-is-a-safe-distance-to-live-from-a-solar-farm/> The current BWSF proposals do not give enough of a buffer zone for my home and other residents in Bladon and this is of critical importance in getting this project right and not causing undue harm, not least to prevent future liability on BWSF and those that are in charge of approvals. The WODC proposal would move the boundary further away from Bladon – which I fully support.