

Botley West Solar Farm (Ref: EN010147)

The Examining Authority's First Written Questions and Requests for Information (ExQ1)

Joint response from the Host Authorities

1st July 2025



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



**Vale
of White Horse**
District Council



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Application by Photovolt Development Partners on behalf of Solar Five Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Botley West Solar Farm

**Host Authority Response to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions and Requests for Information (ExQ1
Tuesday 1 July 2025**

The responses from the Oxfordshire Host Authorities (OHA) to the ExAs first written questions (ExQ1) are set out in the table below. Questions not applicable to the OHAs are shown in light grey text. The OHA may be able to provide further detail to some of the questions at a later date as work on the scheme extent, impact assessment and mitigation progresses.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)
Cherwell District Council (CDC)
Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC)
Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

List of abbreviations

AADT	Average Annual Daily Traffic	EA	Environment Agency
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification	EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	EM	Explanatory Memorandum
AP	Affected Persons	ES	Environmental Statement
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System	ExA	Examining Authority
BMV	Best and Most Versatile	FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain	FTE	Full Time Equivalent
BoR	Book of Reference	Gd	Grade
CA	Compulsory Acquisition	GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
CA Guidance	Planning Act 2008: guidance related to procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land	GVA	Gross Value Added
CA Regulations	The Infrastructure Planning (Compulsory Acquisition) Regulations 2010	Ha	hectares
CoCP	Code of construction practice	HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment
CROW	The Countryside and Rights of Way Act	HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
dB	Decibel	HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicles
dDCO	Draft Development Consent Order	HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment
DBA	Desk-Based Assessment	IAQM	Institute of Air Quality Management
DL	Deadline	IP	Interested Parties
		ISH	Issue Specific Hearing

km	Kilometre
kV	Kilovolt
LA	Local Authority
LIR	Local Impact Report
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
LRN	Local Road Network
LSE	Likely Significant Effects
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
m	Metre
MRA	Mineral Resource Assessment
MW	Megawatt
NE	Natural England
NGET	National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
NH	National Highways
NHLE	National Heritage List England
NPA2017	Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPS	National Policy Statement
NPS EN	National Policy Statement Energy Suite
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project

OCTMP	Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan
OFH	Open Floor Hearing
OLDP	Outline Layout and Design Principles
OLEMP	Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
OOMP	Outline Operational Management Plan
OSEP	Outline Skills and Employment Plan
OSMP	Outline Soil Management Plan
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
OWSI	Outline Written Scheme of Investigation
PA2008	The Planning Act 2008
PC	Parish Council
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
Project webpage	Project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
R	Requirement in the dDCO
RAF	Royal Air Force
RR	Relevant Representation
RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
s	Section of Parliamentary Legislation
SAC	Special Area of Conservation

SF6	Sulphur Hexafluoride
SM	Scheduled Monument
SOCG	Statement of Common Ground
SoR	Statement of Reasons
SoS	Secretary of State
SPA	Special Protection Area
SRN	Strategic Road Network
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

SU	Statutory Undertaker
SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
tCO2e	Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
TP	Temporary Possession
USI	Unaccompanied Site Inspection
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WHS	World Heritage Site

Examination Library

References in these questions set out in square brackets (e.g. [APP-010]) are to documents catalogued in the [Examination Library](#). The Examination Library will be updated regularly as the Examination progresses.

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Q1.1. General and Cross-topic Questions		
Planning Policy		
1.1.1	Applicant	<p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p> <p>Since the submission of the application, the NPPF has been updated. Please provide an updated assessment of the proposed development against the most recent version of the NPPF.</p>
1.1.2	<p>Applicant</p> <p>All Local Authorities</p> <p>Oxford Aviation Services Limited</p> <p>Civil Aviation Authority</p>	<p>The National Policy Statement for Airports</p> <p>Given the proximity of Oxford Airport and the services offered therefrom, comment on whether the National Policy Statement for Airports has any important and relevant matters for this Examination, and/ or for the Secretary of State (SoS) to be mindful of.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>Oxfordshire Host Authorities (OHA): Observe that the 'Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the South East of England June 2018' "<i>provides the primary basis for decision making on DCOs for a NW Runway at Heathrow and will be an important and relevant consideration in respect of applications for new runway capacity and other airport infrastructure in London and South East of England.</i>"</p> <p>The OHA also note that in paragraph 1.41 it states that: "<i>The Airports NPS does not have effect in relation to an application for development consent for an airport development not comprised in an application relating to the Heathrow Northwest Runway, and proposals for new terminal capacity located between the Northwest Runway at Heathrow Airport and the existing Northern Runway and reconfiguration of terminal facilities between the two existing runways at Heathrow Airport. Nevertheless, <u>the Secretary of State considers that the contents of the Airports NPS will be both important and relevant considerations in the determination of such an application, particularly where it relates to London or the Southeast of England.</u> Among the considerations that will be important and relevant are the findings in the Airports NPS as to the need for new airport capacity and that the preferred scheme is the most appropriate means of meeting that need.</i>" [Underlining added for emphasis].</p> <p>BWSF is not seeking a DCO for airport infrastructure and therefore the Airports NPS is not directly relevant to the consideration of this project. However, the Airports NPS seeks to</p>

Deadline for responses is Deadline 2, 1 July 2025

		<p>increase airport capacity in the South-East of England and therefore any development which might reduce the capacity of airports in this region would contradict the aims of this NPS.</p> <p>According to Oxford Aviation, the operator of London-Oxford Airport, BWSF would result in them having to close to single engine aircraft due to public safety concerns. This would inevitably lead to the displacement of existing aircraft traffic at London-Oxford Airport to other airports in the region thereby reducing runway capacity in the South-East. This would be at odds with the Airport NPS's aim of increasing capacity and therefore could be considered "important and relevant" by the SoS when determining the application (per section 104(2)(d) of the PA2008).</p>
1.1.3	All local authorities	<p>Local Plans</p> <p>Has the Applicant adequately included and summarised all relevant local planning policies? If not, why not?</p> <p>RESPONSE: CDC: No.</p> <p>Firstly, the applicant refers incorrectly to the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2021. This should be the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.</p> <p>The applicant has failed to refer to the following relevant policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (CLP) which are referenced in the OHA Joint Local Impact Report [REP1-072]:</p> <p>PSD1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development of the CLP states that Cherwell will work with applicants to secure developments which improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Permission will be granted for development unless material considerations indicate otherwise; including taking account of any adverse impacts outweighing the benefits of the scheme.</p> <p>SLE4 – Improved Transport Connections of the CLP seeks to secure transport infrastructure necessary to mitigate the impact of new developments whilst encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. Developments which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported.</p>

		<p>ESD2 – Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions of the CLP seeks to achieve reductions in carbon emissions through the promotion of an energy hierarchy which includes making use of renewable energy solutions.</p> <p>ESD3 – Sustainable Construction of the CLP states that new developments should seek to use resources more efficiently. Policy ESD3 of CLP requires new development to reduce energy use through sustainable construction methods.</p> <p>ESD6 – Sustainable Flood Risk Management of the CLP seeks to manage and reduce flood risk in Cherwell District.</p> <p>ESD7 – Sustainable Drainage Systems of the CLP requires developments to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off.</p> <p>ES8 – Water Resources of the CLP seeks to maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainable water use.</p> <p>There are also two relevant ‘saved’ policies from the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (CLP 1996) which the applicant has failed to reference:</p> <p>C15 – Prevention of Coalescence of Settlements saved from CLP 1996 seeks to restrict development on areas of open land between settlements to prevent their coalescence.</p> <p>C33 – Protection of Important Gaps of Undeveloped Land saved from CLP 1996 seeks to retain undeveloped gaps important in preserving character of settlements or maintaining settings of listed buildings or preserving views/features of recognised amenity/historical value.</p> <p>The applicant has mistakenly referenced the following ‘saved’ policies of the CLP 1996 which have been superseded and are therefore NOT relevant:</p>
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		<p>GB1 – Development in the Green Belt. C7 – Landscape Conservation. C10 – Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens and Historic Battlefields.</p> <p>There has been no assessment of the emerging Cherwell Local Plan policies (Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042). It is however accepted that such policies currently attract limited weight as the Local Plan examination, whilst at the Regulation 19 stage and well underway, is yet to conclude.</p> <p>VWHDC: No.</p> <p>The applicant has failed to refer to policy CP40: Sustainable Design and Construction and policy DP38: Listed Buildings of the adopted VWHDC Local Plan. Policy CP41: Renewable Energy (excluding wind energy) is also not referenced in the LVIA.</p> <p>Policy CP40 encourages developers to incorporate climate change adaptation and design measures to combat the effects of changing weather patterns in all new development. VWHDC set out in the LIR [REP1-072] concerns about the resilience of the project to climate change and that risks have not been adequately assessed.</p> <p>Policy DP38 states proposals within the setting of a Listed Building must demonstrate that they will respect, preserve or enhance features that contribute to the special interest and significance of the building, including, where relevant, structures and trees, the historic curtilage or context, such as burgage plots, parkland or fields or its value within a group and / or its setting, such as the importance of a street frontage or traditional shopfronts, designed landscapes or historic farmyards. VWHDC set out in the LIR [REP1-072] concerns on setting of heritage assets and the applicant's approach to assessment.</p> <p>Policy CP41 states planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation (excluding wind energy) will be supported provided they do not cause a significantly adverse</p>
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		<p>effect to landscape. VWHDC set out in the LIR [REP1-072] concerns on landscape and the applicant's approach to assessment.</p> <p>There has been no assessment of the emerging VWHDC Joint Local Plan policies. It is however accepted that such policies currently attract limited weight as the Joint Local Plan examination, whilst underway, is yet to conclude.</p> <p>WODC:</p> <p>WODC consider that the applicant has identified the Plans that are relevant to the project area, but there are omissions of relevant policy from the Applicant's Planning Supporting Statement [APP-255] as summarised below;</p> <p>West Oxfordshire Local Plan (WOLP) 2031</p> <p>Policy OS3 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources: All development proposals (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing building stock) will be required to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• making the most efficient use of land and buildings, whilst having regard to the character of the locality• minimising use of non-renewable resources, including land and energy, and maximising opportunities for travel by sustainable means• minimising their impact on the soil resource <p>Policy OS4 – High Quality Design: High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced; and• not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; and
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and the use of water conservation and management measures; and• conserve or enhance areas, buildings and features of historic, architectural and environmental significance, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets and habitats of biodiversity value; and• enhance local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, including the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space commensurate with the scale and type of development, with play space where appropriate. <p>Policy T3 – Public Transport Walking and Cycling - All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.</p> <p>New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles with particular regard to be given to safe and convenient routes to school.</p> <p>Policy EH10 – Conservation Areas: Proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area will be permitted where it can be shown to conserve or enhance the special interest, character, appearance and setting, specifically provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development conserves or enhances the special historic or architectural interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area;• the development conserves or enhances the setting of the Conservation Area and is not detrimental to views within, into or out of the Area; <p>Cassington Neighbourhood Plan CAS2 – Active Travel</p> <p>A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Active and Sustainable Travel Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of supporting active travel in the Parish.</p>
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		<p>B. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should sustain, and where practicable, enhance the multifunctionality of the Network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.</p> <p>C. Proposals that will harm the functioning or connectivity of the Network will not be supported. Proposals which fragment the routes will be resisted, unless this can be replaced in a way that improves the overall Network.</p> <p>D. Development proposals that would make an appropriate contribution to the improvement and/or extension of the network will be supported.</p> <p>Appendix A – The Cassington Green Infrastructure Plan</p> <p>To identify the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible greenspace and rights of way and to plan new features that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.</p> <p>OCC: Yes</p> <p>OCC is content that the Applicant has identified and summarised the correct policies within the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Part 1- Core Strategy. These summaries are contained within the Planning Supporting Statement [APP-225, Appendix 6], ES Chapter 11- Ground Conditions [APP-048, Table 18.3], and ES Chapter 18 Waste and Resources [APP-055, Table 11.4].</p> <p>OCC outlined within the Joint Local Impact Report in section 7.7 [REP1-072] that the proposed development is not in compliance with policy M8 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan due to the sterilisation of Minerals Resources. Please refer to the Joint Local Impact Report [REP1-072] for further consideration on this topic.</p>
1.1.4	Applicant	<p>Oxford and Cambridge Growth Corridor</p> <p>Relevant Representations (RRs) have raised the issue about prejudicing growth between Oxford and Cambridge. What does the Applicant know about the Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor and how do decisions regarding that initiative impact upon the delivery (or other aspects) of the proposed development?</p>

Planning Permissions		
1.1.5	All local authorities	<p>List of cumulative projects</p> <p>The Applicant considered a long list of projects when assessing cumulative effects. Are there any updates or comments regarding any of those applications identified, or have any new applications come to light that are significant enough to require consideration cumulatively with the Proposed Development?</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>CDC:</p> <p><u>Updates on applications/sites included in the applicant's Long List:</u></p> <p>Land south of Perdiswell Farm, Shipton Road (adjacent to the site) ref: 22/01715/OUT for the erection of up to 500 dwellings with associated access, open space and infrastructure was withdrawn in July 2023. However, a new outline application for the same site for the erection of up to 500 dwellings and commercial floorspace (Use Class E) with associated access, open space and infrastructure has recently been submitted under ref: 25/01510/OUT.</p> <p>The outline permission ref: 22/00747/OUT for the development of up to 370 homes, public open space (including play areas and woodland planting), sports pitches and pavilion, drainage and engineering works at Bicester Road, Kidlington (approximately 3km from the site) was approved in September 2024. A reserved matter for this development was submitted in February 2025 under ref: 25/00431/REM.</p> <p><u>New applications/sites not on the list:</u></p> <p>An outline planning application was recently submitted for Part OS Parcel 0006 north of The Moors, Kidlington (approximately 1.3km from the site) for up to 340 dwellings (Use Class C3), land for local community use and pavilion, landscaping, public open space and associated infrastructure under ref: 25/01346/OUT.</p> <p>VWHDC:</p>

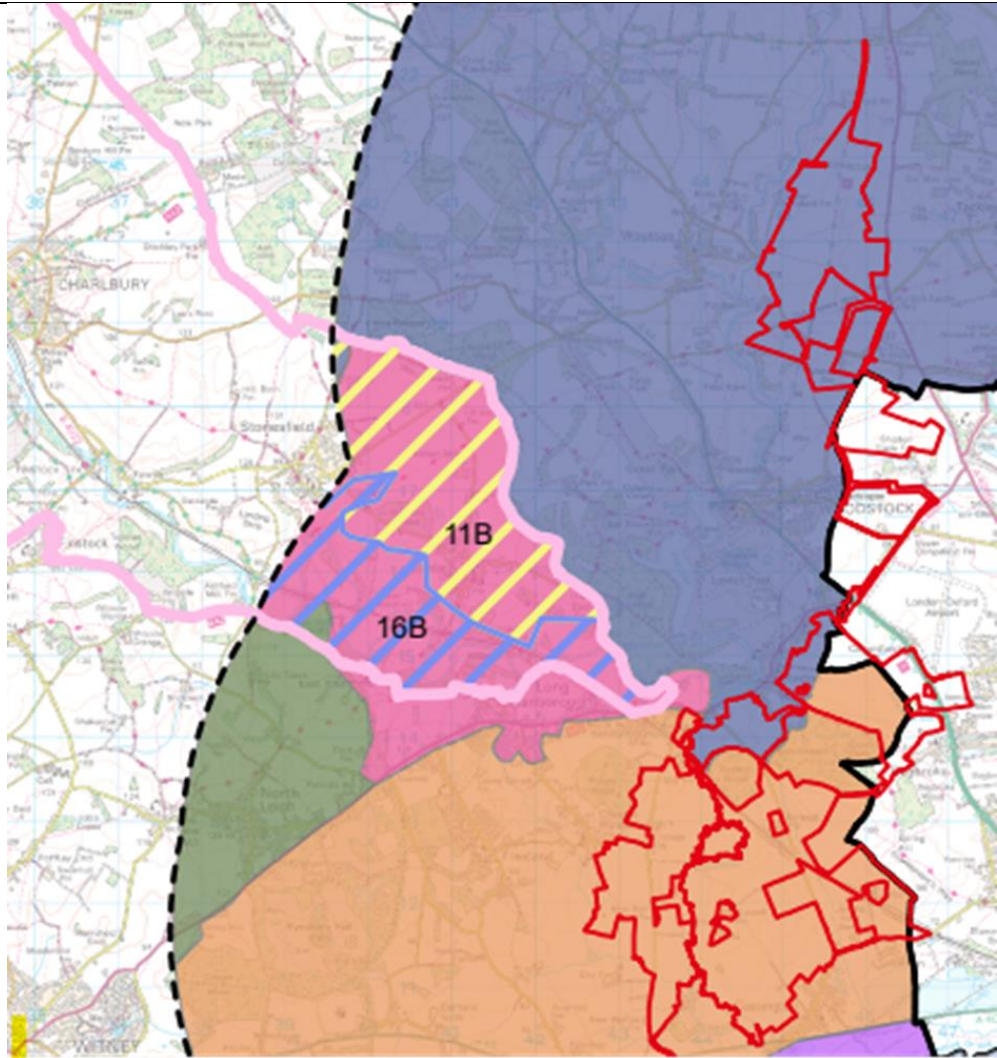
Deadline for responses is Deadline 2, 1 July 2025

		<p>Planning application P24/V2489/FUL, Land to the west of Red House Farm, is adjacent to the southern site and remains under consideration. The application was submitted in December 2024, after the DCO application, and is a resubmission of withdrawn application P23/V2624/FUL (listed as a tier 2 project [APP-224]). A plan showing the location is included in the Cumnor Parish Council Written Representation [REP1-056].</p> <p>WODC:</p> <p>There is one additional planning application, for a site adjacent to the central part of the Project Area - This would be categorised as a Tier 1 scheme, for a submitted application but not yet determined.</p> <p>24/03069/FUL - Goose Eye Farm Eynsham Witney Oxfordshire OX29 4EH (Pending Consideration) Application is adjacent to project area</p> <p>- Construction of a single dwelling house with ancillary buildings comprising pavilion, garage and plant room, workshop and wildlife tower in lieu of the existing farmhouse and buildings together with associated landscape works to include lake extension, siting of solar array and tennis court. Provision of new vehicular access.</p> <p>OCC:</p> <p>There are no additional county planning applications that are significant enough to require consideration cumulatively with the Proposed Development.</p>
Legislative Framework		
1.1.6	<p>Applicant</p> <p>All local authorities</p> <p>Cotswold National Landscape Board</p>	<p>Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW)</p> <p>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?</p>

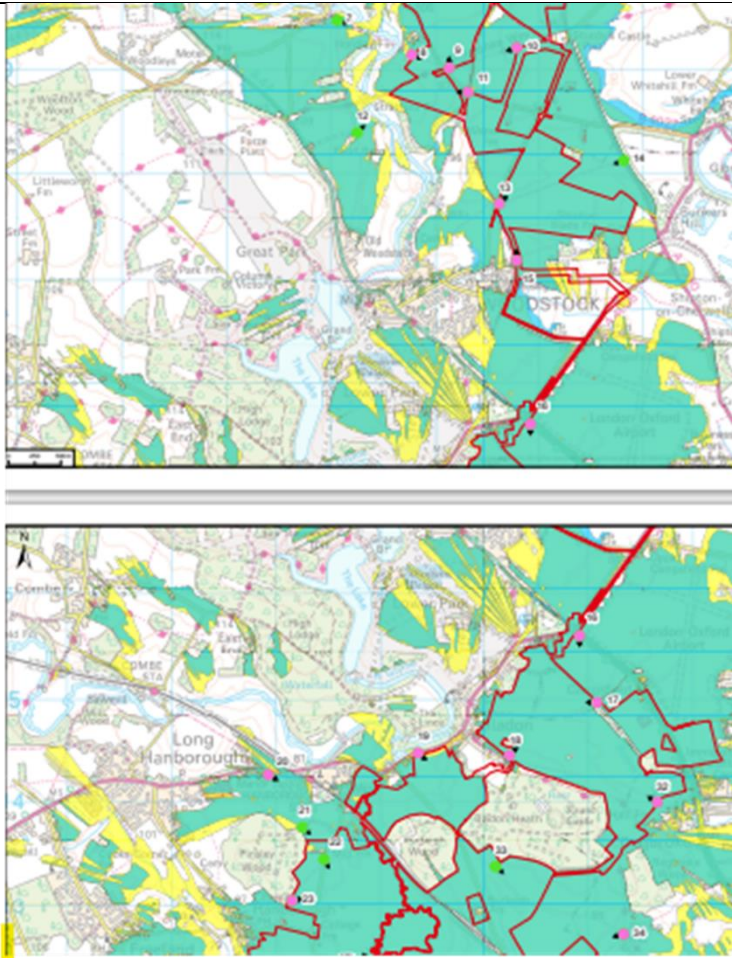
		<p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) places a duty on relevant authorities and decision makers to seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes, of which the Cotswolds National Landscape is one. This means that this is an active duty and not a passive one, which requires amongst other things that, as far as is reasonably practical, relevant authorities should seek to avoid harm and to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, special qualities and key characteristics of Protected Landscapes.</p> <p>The OHA's have identified a potential conflict with the following two purposes of the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan (2025-2030):</p> <p>Purpose 1: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape</p> <p>Purpose 2: To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.</p> <p>The Applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) sets out that the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) lies less than 300m from the site of the proposed development at its closest point. The CNL Landscape Character Assessment indicates that two landscape Character Types are located within 300m of the study area including, LCT 11B Dipslope Farmland (Stonesfield Lowlands) and LCT 16B Broad Floodplain Valley (Lower Evenlode Valley).</p> <p>The LVIA [APP-045] states (page 86):</p> <p><i>"The ZTV, Figures 8.9 to 8.11 [EN010147/APP/6.4] indicates that there would be potential intervisibility to the Project from a very small part of the Cotswolds AONB. There would therefore be an indirect impact potentially arising during the construction phase on the special qualities of a very small part of the Cotswolds AONB in proximity to the Project, to the northwest of Bladon."</i></p> <p>The effect is described as local in extent and temporary in duration during construction.</p>
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		<p>Sensitivity (both susceptibility and value) are considered high by the applicant, although the definitions set out in the Methodology (Table 8.9) indicate that it should potentially be higher. There does not appear to be a detailed assessment of effects however, on the special qualities of the CNL as might typically be expected, but it is stated that effects will be <i>'negligible to minor'</i>.</p> <p>Para 8.14.4 states:</p> <p><i>"No significant effects are predicted during construction, operation and maintenance or decommissioning of the Botley West Project on Nationally designated landscapes, including the Cotswolds National Landscape."</i></p> <p>Table 8.24 summarises the effects as Negligible to Minor adverse (indirect).</p> <p>There does not appear to be a ZTV and viewpoint map shown together with the boundary of the National Landscape, which makes direct comparison difficult. This evidence would be useful to understand how the proposed development could have impacts on the purposes of the CNL and should be provided.</p> <p>It is clear though that there are areas with potential visibility of the proposed development within the National Landscape (for example around Combe and the Wychwood Way), but there are no representative viewpoints to illustrate the effects. This appears to be an omission.</p> <p>The closest viewpoint that can be referred to seems to be VP20, although this is not in the National Landscape. The solar panels will be seen extending across the rising hills to the southeast – shown as black on the images below. Effects are described as <i>negligible</i> during construction, and <i>minor</i> during operation at Year 1 (see LVIA para 8.9.186). However, given the panels will be seen extending across rising ground to the southeast, and that sensitivity will be at least high, the judgement does not seem reliable and should be revisited. Effects from this viewpoint are described as reducing to <i>negligible</i> by Year 15 (para 8.9.187). However, there is no/ very little difference between the extent of panels visible at Year 1 (illustrated in Figure 8.300 below) and Year 15 (illustrated in Figure 8.302 below) and so it is not clear why the level of effect will reduce. In addition, the flat nature of the light and somewhat silhouetted view in the photomontage is unlikely to show a worst-case scenario. For example, a late afternoon view</p>
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		<p>when the panels are lit by the sun shining from the west is likely to make the panels much more apparent.</p> <p>To reduce landscape and visual effects, developers would typically design projects to avoid higher ground with slopes that face towards sensitive areas such as National Landscapes, and which will enable wider visibility from sensitive areas. Removing areas of development from the hillslopes and focussing it into flatter and lower lying areas, across which views are more limited, would usually be explored as an important mitigation measure, and be embedded into the design. It is unclear if this has been explored and if the design has evolved to seek to reduce effects on the National Landscape. Removing development from rising ground that faces the National Landscape should be considered.</p> <p>The more elevated view from the National Landscape to the east of Combe could allow a more open view, but it is unclear if this area has been explored. A photomontage should be provided and an assessment undertaken.</p> <p>The lack of a designation map in combination with a ZTV and viewpoint plan makes deciphering the effects on the National Landscape difficult, as does the lack of a viewpoint or viewpoints within the National Landscape. At present it is considered that there is insufficient information and evidence provided, but the photomontages from Viewpoint 20 indicates that effects may be more significant than are recognised. The effects on the outlook from the National Landscape would be adverse.</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>Mindful of the active duty of Section 85 of CROW, without a full assessment being provided by the applicant, the OHA can only conclude that there is likely to be some adverse impact on the National Landscape.</p>
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CNL Landscape Character Types in proximity to project area



ZTV to northwest of project area within CNL

		<div><p>Proposed illustrative single frame view - Winter Year 1</p><table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>Bulby West Solar Farm EN010147AP016.4</td><td>Date of Photo: 26/01/2023 Lens Type: 50mm</td><td>Distance to site: 733m GD reference: 422628, 214262</td><td>Direction to site: South-east Viewpoint height: 93m AOD</td><td>Horizontal field of view: 39.6° Viewed at: comfortable arms length</td><td>Single frame illustrative Winter Year 1: Viewpoint 20 Figure 6.301</td></tr></table></div>		Bulby West Solar Farm EN010147AP016.4	Date of Photo: 26/01/2023 Lens Type: 50mm	Distance to site: 733m GD reference: 422628, 214262	Direction to site: South-east Viewpoint height: 93m AOD	Horizontal field of view: 39.6° Viewed at: comfortable arms length	Single frame illustrative Winter Year 1: Viewpoint 20 Figure 6.301
	Bulby West Solar Farm EN010147AP016.4	Date of Photo: 26/01/2023 Lens Type: 50mm	Distance to site: 733m GD reference: 422628, 214262	Direction to site: South-east Viewpoint height: 93m AOD	Horizontal field of view: 39.6° Viewed at: comfortable arms length	Single frame illustrative Winter Year 1: Viewpoint 20 Figure 6.301			

Winter Year 1 Photomontage for Viewpoint 20 in proximity to CNL

		<div><p>Proposed illustrative single frame view - Summer Year 15</p><table><tr><td></td><td>Bobby West Solar Farm EN010147APP06.4</td><td>Date of Photo: 14/09/2023 Lens Type: 50mm</td><td>Distance to site: 733m OS reference: 442925, 214252</td><td>Direction to site: South east Viewpoint height: 53m AOD</td><td>Horizontal field of view: 35.6° Viewed at comfortable arms length</td><td>Single frame illustrative Summer Year 15: Viewpoint 20 Figure 8.303</td></tr></table></div> <p>Summer Year 15 Photomontage for Viewpoint 20 in proximity to CNL</p>		Bobby West Solar Farm EN010147APP06.4	Date of Photo: 14/09/2023 Lens Type: 50mm	Distance to site: 733m OS reference: 442925, 214252	Direction to site: South east Viewpoint height: 53m AOD	Horizontal field of view: 35.6° Viewed at comfortable arms length	Single frame illustrative Summer Year 15: Viewpoint 20 Figure 8.303
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Design									
1.1.7	Applicant	<p>Number of Piles and Worst-Case Design Scenario</p> <p>The ExA appreciates that the number of panels likely to be installed is not yet finalised and that this number would ultimately impact the total number of piles. However, it would help the Examining Authority's (ExA's) understanding if the Applicant could provide a plan detailing the number of piles for various design scenarios. The plan should also detail other factors which may have an environmental impact such as pile depth.</p>							

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		Following on from this plan, for the Environment Statement (ES) chapters where piling is considered to have a potential impact, the Applicant should provide an explanation on which design option they have chosen to represent the worst case.
1.1.8	Applicant	<p>Design Guides</p> <p>Provide a list of all the relevant national and local design guides that are applicable to the proposed development and/ or active within the local authority areas. Set out clearly how the design choices made so far, and the design choices in the future, in respect of all above ground elements of the infrastructure would accord with the principles of good design set out in each of these documents.</p>
1.1.9	Applicant	<p>Design choices and functionality</p> <p>The ExA noted, during the series of unaccompanied site inspections (USI), that a fair proportion of the Order limits consisted of north facing slopes. In the southern site area in particular, these rises were quite pronounced.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Is it the Applicant's intentions to have solar arrays on these north facing slopes? 2) If so, explain how the solar panels would sit on the slopes given the stated commitment to have no part of the panels above 2.3 metres from ground level? 3) In relation to 2) above, the ExA asks this because it would appear, due to the fall of the land, that (assuming panels are south or southwest facing), the back edge of the panel (being no higher than 2.3 metres) could result in a near flat-lying solar panel. 4) Can the Applicant confirm (and subsequently signpost if this measure is secured in one of the management plans) that no earthworks would take place to reshape or reform the land to accommodate the solar panels.
1.1.10	Applicant	<p>Outline Layout and Design Principles document (OLDP)</p> <p>The OLDP [APP-238] omits several details that the ExA request elaboration upon. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) For the National Grid (NGET) substation, the main project substation, the six secondary substations and the 156 PCS units, there are no details of materials or finishes or colours to be applied. Whilst the ExA recognise that such elements may be utilitarian, explanation of the appearance of this infrastructure is requested and, where possible, incorporated within the OLDP. 2) A significant amount of fencing is to be provided during the operational period. The OLDP does not provide any details as to the height, colour or finishes of the fencing and nor is

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		<p>there any rationalisation of the design choices being made in this regard. Explain with reasons and amendments to the OLDP accordingly.</p> <p>3) The OLDP gives optionality for the solar panels either being black, dark blue or grey modules. Explain the implications of these colour choices upon the landscape and upon how receptors perceive the panels.</p> <p>4) The OLDP was amended at Deadline 1 to include revised parameters for the National Grid substation, notably that the height is now 14 metres as opposed to 12 metres. Explain how this height increase is assessed in the ES, if at all.</p>
1.1.11	Applicant	<p>Minimising glint and glare through design</p> <p>What design features would the solar panels have to ensure potential impacts due to glint and glare are at an absolute minimum?</p>
1.1.12	All local authorities	<p>Independent Design Review</p> <p>Do you consider that the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) should make a provision for the final design of the proposed development to be subject to an independent design review?</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OHA:</p> <p>Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Good Design covers challenges in NSIP design and states ‘<i>The details of the NSIP considered during examination are often not the final as built infrastructure because further design input is required ... The Examining Authority (ExA) therefore needs to be satisfied that there is evidence that applicants have engaged in and are committed to a process that can deliver good design outcomes, which are specific and proportionate to the type of infrastructure proposed. These need to be secured by the Development Consent Order (DCO) through requirements, conditions, management plans or other certified documents.</i>’</p> <p>A Design Review Panel (DRP) may be beneficial to achieve good design outcomes where specific issues/concerns have been identified.</p>

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		<p>In this case the OHA have key concerns about landscape and visual and heritage impacts. If an Independent Design Review was to be undertaken, it would need to be a very specialised panel comprised of members with landscape architecture, heritage and sustainability qualifications and experience as well as having knowledge of solar farm developments.</p> <p>DRPs are normally most effective when carried out early in the design process so there is some doubt over the usefulness of this approach at the 'final design' stage. A DRP would only be effective if it is not being presented with a 'fait accompli' and there is a reasonable prospect of any recommendations for change being applied to the design.</p> <p>As the application had limited working groups to discuss the design and layout of the scheme, a Design Review may draw out some of the issues that have been raised with regards to how the scheme has been designed and how analysis, research and response has been used to inform the layout of the scheme.</p> <p>It is noted that the Botley Outline Layout & Design Principles document, is predominately a description of the project and not Design Principles that can be used to inform the design of scheme as per the National Infrastructure Commission document '<i>climate-people-places-value</i>' - <i>Design Principles for National Infrastructure</i>.</p> <p>As outlined in the LIR [REP1-072] it is not clear how the LVIA has informed the extent and design of the development. The OHA therefore encourage the applicant to submit revised and more detailed design information now to address concerns raised in the Joint LIR [REP1-072] (and specifically mitigation) and to enable a full assessment of impacts to be made.</p> <p>With regards to Public Rights of Way, the design of PRoW corridors should include cross-sections as well as the specification of the fencing, surfacing and planting that are location specific.</p> <p>With regards to Ecology the OHA do not believe that ecological information has fed strongly into the design of the proposals. Detail to address this including how the scheme will best reflect local ecology opportunities should be submitted during Examination to be considered by the</p>
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		<p>ExA.</p> <p>It may also be appropriate to undertake a NSIP post-consent review to ensure the design of the built elements are appropriate in form and colouring to integrate into the landscape.</p>
1.1.13	Applicant	<p>Air or Gas Insulated</p> <p>The planning statement [APP-225, paragraph 3.3.67] makes a commitment to secure switchgear that is not insulated with Sulphur Hexafluoride, SF6.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The commitment appears to apply to the National Grid substation only. Why is that the case? 2) The commitment does not appear in the OLDP or any other document binding the Applicant or any successors in implementing. Explain with reasons. 3) National Grid, particularly if providing their substation outside of the Order limits, would not be bound by this commitment. How can the Applicant state with any certainty that SF6 free development would occur and how does this apparent oversight affect the conclusions in respect of greenhouse gas emissions?
1.1.14	Applicant	<p>Design Principles</p> <p>Section 4.6 of NPS EN-1 emphasises the importance of ensuring good design in the development of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, referring also to the 'Design Principles for National Infrastructure developed by the National Infrastructure Commission. The NPPF also advocates good design.</p> <p>Set out the approach taken to good design, and how this element of the Proposed Development has evolved in relation to the following key elements. This should include reference how each element has responded, in terms of form and siting, to functional and aesthetic requirements, including sensitivity to existing landscape character and nature inclusivity. Reference should be made to how emerging technology can or could be accommodated. Please include details for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar panels and associated equipment. • On-site substations and associated equipment and structures. • Boundary Treatments. • Hard and soft landscaping
1.1.15	Applicant	<p>Cable burial</p>

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		The ExA have read in the Deadline 1 (DL1) submissions that the cables would be buried a minimum of 1.5 metres (m) beneath ground level. Where is this secured and what would happen if obstacles prevented that burial depth being achieved?
Miscellaneous		
1.1.16	Applicant	<p>Decommissioning - general</p> <p>Requirement 14 (1) states that decommissioning will commence no later than 37.5 years following the date of final commissioning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If the final commissioning of the project is delayed, would this mean that the lifetime for parts of the project could be substantially longer than 37.5 years? 2) What is the maximum lifetime for any part of the project? 3) How long would decommissioning take? How is this timescale secured? 4) What assurances can the applicant provide that adequate funding would remain available after the operational life of the project has come to an end, to restore the site to an agreed and adequate standard? 5) Although the Applicant stated it was not necessary to include a requirement securing decommissioning bonds, the ExA would request the Applicant provide, on a without prejudice basis, text for such a requirement.
1.1.17	Applicant	<p>Decommissioning – piles and soil stability</p> <p>During Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) and Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) the number and type of piles were discussed, and also that it is proposed that these would generally be left in the ground after decommissioning.</p> <p>What assessments have been made into the safety of doing this, particularly in relation to the leaching of heavy metals or other contaminants into the soil, which is then proposed for a return to agricultural use?</p>
1.1.18	Applicant	<p>Replacement of Panels</p> <p>During the OFH's and ISH1, the probability of replacing the panels throughout the life of the project was discussed; probably at around 25 years.</p> <p>At this time:</p>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Will the frames also require replacement? 2) What guarantees are there that the frames/ panels will be the same size as those being replaced? 3) If there are no guarantees, would this mean that there may be a need for additional piling to be carried out at this time? 4) If the output of the solar farm is restricted to 840MW as per the connection agreement, using more efficient or more productive panels would result in waste. Would the connection agreement have to be reviewed or revised as part of the operational phase planned maintenance? 5) Alternatively, would there be a reduction in number of panels in order to limit the output?
1.1.19		<p>Solar Panel Mounting Mechanism</p> <p>In ES Chapter 6 [APP-043] paragraph 6.4.10 describes the solar module mounting structure as being a metal framework, supported by galvanised steel piles or screws, with a worst-case assumption of two legs at each end.</p> <p>To understand the likely number and distribution of piles and the orientation of these panels in differing gradients, provide an indication of how many individual solar panels will fit onto one section of framework, accompanied by scaled elevations, sections and plans that describe a typical block of panels on varying land gradients.</p>
1.1.20	Applicant	<p>Statement of Commonality – Agricultural land use</p> <p>The Statement of Commonality submitted at Deadline 1 (DL1) states that issues in relation to agricultural land use as being ‘matter not relevant’ regarding all relevant local authorities. However, in the submitted Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) at DL1, agricultural land use is a matter under discussion which is yet to be agreed. Clearly, the Local Impact Reports specify that agricultural land use is an issue.</p> <p>Please explain the variation between the two documents.</p>
1.1.21	Applicant and local authorities	<p>Statement of Common Ground – content</p> <p>Please provide a justification as to why matters relating to socio-economics and health are not included within the draft SoCG submitted at DL1?</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p>

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		The OHA await a response from the applicant on this matter before commenting. The OHA expect all matters and themes of the ES to be covered within SoCGs. The applicant has taken the lead on SoCGs to date and the OHA have not influenced their content in any way.
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Q1.2. Air Quality and Emissions		
Air Quality Management		
1.2.1	Applicant	<p>Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) assurance measures implemented by other developers</p> <p>In para 19.10.3 [APP-056] it states, '<i>on the basis that other proposed developments implement suitable primary and tertiary mitigation, as recommended in the Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction (IAQM, 2024), it is considered that cumulative effects arising during construction are not significant</i>'.</p> <p>What measures will the applicant take to assure residents that, due to other developers implementing the required measures listed in IAQM 2024, cumulative impacts would not be significant?</p>
1.2.2	Applicant	<p>Screening out of operational activities</p> <p>ES Chapter 19 [APP-056] screens out operational and maintenance traffic emissions and fugitive emissions. However, with the solar panels having a usable life of 25 years requiring each panel to be replaced at least once during the 37.5-year lifetime of the proposed development, why have such activities been screened out?</p>
Impacts on human health		
1.2.3	Applicant	<p>Cumulative impacts due to construction overlap</p> <p>Table 12.33 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] lists the project 'Land North of Banbury 21/00217/OUT' as being under construction in 2026 and therefore construction overlap with Botley West is assumed. However, in Table 19.43 of ES Chapter 19 [APP-056], it states that the date of construction is unknown and therefore it is not known whether construction overlap will occur or not. Can you confirm which table is correct and whether cumulative impacts from such projects have been considered?</p>
1.2.4	Applicant	<p>Fire or damage</p> <p>If the solar panels, or indeed any part of the proposed development, caught fire or was damaged, what pollutants or compounds could be released into the air and what would the impact of this pollution be upon human health given the proximity of the population?</p>

Strategic Alternatives		
1.3.1	Applicant	<p>Substation search</p> <p>In ISH1, the Applicant sought to explain the reasons why Cowley had been chosen as the preferred substation for connection. It was then described that, since Cowley was ‘landlocked’ by Thames Water land, a connection point was established further west along the pylon route towards Cowley.</p> <p>When the choice was then made to develop a brand-new substation (in this instance, west of Cowley) as per paragraph 5.6.13 [APP-042], there appears no further consideration of whether an alternative site under the overhead lines, but outside the Green Belt, was ever considered. What is not clear is, when the only pre-requisite of constructing the new substation was proximity to the overheard lines, not proximity to Cowley, why was a substation not considered on land outside the Green Belt?</p>
1.3.2	Applicant	<p>Substation search and underlying choices</p> <p>Paragraph 5.6.4 in ES Chapter 5 [APP-042] sets out the criteria used to guide the project. Curiously, after the suitability of a grid connection, your next main listed influence is voluntary landowner negotiations (not irradiance as per NPS EN-3). Your decision to go with Cowley is explained briefly in 5.6.8, most notably with the statement that there were landowners who were willing to offer land to build a solar farm.</p> <p>At paragraph 5.6.14 you state discussions with Blenheim Palace started in February 2020. By the tone of paragraph 5.6.8, it appears those negotiations started before you began your process of considering alternatives, giving the impression of the agreement with the Blenheim Estate being the principal driver.</p> <p>Could you provide a chronology, and reassurances, to the ExA to demonstrate that the assessment of alternatives was undertaken holistically?</p>
1.3.3	Applicant	<p>Grampian-style requirement</p> <p>In ISH1, it was said that a Grampian requirement, preventing works on the proposed development commencing and/ or the using of compulsory acquisition powers unless and until the National Grid substation was approved, was not necessary.</p>

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		<p>National Grid have suggested that an application for their substation under the Town and Country Planning Act regime would possibly be made in 2026. No exact timetable is provided and, with the prospect of appeals or judicial reviews as a potential delaying factor, the likelihood of the National Grid substation being constructed fully and ready to receive the proposed development is in doubt.</p> <p>The ExA remain concerned and therefore request that the Applicant provide, on a without prejudice basis, wording of such a requirement.</p>
1.3.4	Applicant	<p>Reductions</p> <p>In Table 5.2 of ES Chapter 5 [APP-042], the Applicant dismisses the idea of Bladon Parish Council to consider the alternative of a reduced size solar farm, stating there is no policy limitation on scale. Whilst this is acknowledged, the ExA anticipate there may be sensitive areas, for example near Blenheim Palace or near Oxford Airport, where concessions could have been considered to the size of the solar farm in order to mitigate against potential effects. Why were these reductions not considered?</p>
1.3.5	Applicant National Grid Electricity Transmission	<p>Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)</p> <p>In paragraph 6.4.3 of ES Chapter 6, it states that: "<i>the Project does not incorporate any battery storage. Energy generated by the Project will be stored, as required, by Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) that are connected to the Grid elsewhere, including the EDF 50MW BESS located at Cowley substation.</i>"</p> <p>Questions are as follows –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How much influence in the optioneering process did the availability of battery storage play in the site selection process? 2) Is there equivalent, or better, battery storage at any of the other 18 existing national grid substations reviewed in the ES? 3) The nearest BESS is located at the nearest National Grid substation. As a new substation would be provided in conjunction with the Project, would new BESS, either within or just outside the Order limits be expected? 4) What equipment/ apparatus would constitute a new National Grid substation, and should this list be written into the dDCO? 5) Would National Grid be responsible for developing any battery storage required to meet the potential demand arising from this Project?

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		6) If BESS is provided elsewhere 'including' the Cowley substation, what other destinations are anticipated to be used for electricity storage?
Project Alternatives		
1.3.6	Applicant National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc	<p>National Grid substation</p> <p>If the new National Grid substation is being provided outside the Order limits, the Applicant has no control over the timing of submission of a planning application nor any control over the construction of the substation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What assurances can the ExA have that the National Grid substation would actually be constructed in time for the connection agreement in October 2028 to be honoured? 2) It is understood National Grid are seeking to submit an application in 2026. Please provide a more detailed timetable from submission through to construction and to completion.
1.3.7	Applicant	<p>Other substations and PCS units</p> <p>The ES reports that there would be 6no. Secondary substations within the Proposed Development as well as up to 156 PCS units. There is no detail in ES Chapter 5 [APP-042] regarding what criteria or thought processes were applied to locating or developing this infrastructure, or the factors taken into account when determining effects upon receptors (noise, landscape, living conditions etc). Provide the necessary information.</p>
1.3.8	Applicant	<p>Substations versus Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (BMV)</p> <p>In paragraph 3.3.86 of the planning statement [APP-225], the Applicant states the majority of the BMV land lost to the proposed development is because of the construction of the National Grid substation. With National Grid looking to locate the substation outside of the Order limits, it would be logical that the BMV land would then not be lost. However, the Applicant is proposing to extend the solar farm on top of the area that would have been occupied by the National Grid substation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) On that 3.8 hectares of land vacated by the substation, how many panels could be placed and what energy yield would be realised from those additional panels? 2) A balancing exercise needs to be undertaken comparing and contrasting the benefits of that additional yield (as identified in question 1 above) versus the harmful loss of BMV. Provide the assessment and outcomes accordingly.

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1.3.9	Tim Palmer	<p>Yield from solar panels</p> <p>In your relevant representation [RR-1067], you refer to Perovskites PV Panels. Please explain what is known about these Perovskites PV panels.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is the comparative output? 2) Under the terms of the Order and the flexibility sought by the Applicant, do you consider there would be any impediment to the Applicant using the most up-to-date technology to enhance the electricity yield from the solar farm?
1.3.10	Applicant	<p>Flexibility of Order limits</p> <p>The dDCO, Works Plans and Land Plans allow for flexibility in cable routing options in a number of locations in the Order limits. These are further explained in paragraphs 3.12.4 and 3.12.5 in the Statement of Reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Is the Applicant any closer to narrowing down the scope of those options? 2) Is the Applicant likely to submit a change request any time soon seeking the removal of some optionality from the project?
1.3.11	Applicant	<p>Mineral and waste resources</p> <p>The ExA notes that, in respect of sensitive archaeology deposits, the Applicant has chosen to avoid or exclude the relevant land from Order limits, or to provide protective fencing around the relevant land, thus demonstrating a proactive choice for the location of the development. It does not appear that equal levels of consideration have been given to mineral safeguarding areas or waste disposal sites. This has attracted objections from Oxfordshire County Council as per the Local Impact Report. In light of this objection, notwithstanding the applicant will provide a separate response, the ExA requests detailed answers on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How large, in hectares, is the extent of the mineral safeguarding area impacted upon by the proposed development? 2) Why wasn't this land area, or at least more critical parts of this land area to any future mineral working, avoided when designing and locating the proposed development? 3) What options exist for underground cabling in proximity to the Hensington Railway cutting landfill site (and other old pits or quarries), and could these areas be avoided altogether from disturbance by careful micro-siting of the cable route?

General Considerations for Alternatives		
1.3.12	Applicant	Field margins In OFH1 the issue of buffer zones was raised, with dimensions ranging from 25 metres to 500 metres cited. Provide the rationale and scientific reasoning as to why you have chosen the buffer zones you have between solar panels and private residences and set out whether the greater distances requested by IPs would be disadvantageous to the project.
1.3.13	Applicant	Field reductions A number of IPs have submitted requests for the solar farm area to be reduced or panels to be removed from 'x' or 'y' field. It would be useful, for visualisation purposes, if these reductions (whether you consider them valid or not) could be shown illustratively on a plan. Provide this plan.
1.3.14	Applicant National Grid Electricity Transmissions	Farmoor Reservoir Provide, within as reasonable an estimate as possible, dimensions of the distances between the proposed new substations and the embankment for Farmoor Reservoir.

Q1.4. Climate Change		
Assessments and Calculations		
1.4.1	Applicant	Life cycle analysis When calculating the benefit in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the proposed development, can the applicant confirm whether or not they took into consideration the GHG emissions due to manufacture, transport and disposal of the solar panels, as part of a life cycle analysis assessment.
1.4.2	Applicant	Individual panel efficiency during operation What process and procedures will the applicant have to continually assess the performance of individual panels and then to ensure they are performing at the optimal level?
1.4.3	Applicant	Maintenance activities across the farms <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Has the applicant considered rainwater harvesting systems in an attempt to reduce the potable water demand of the proposed development? 2) How will contaminated water generated through cleaning activities, be contained and disposed of?
1.4.4	Applicant	Recycling Strategy Does the applicant have a recycling plan for damaged and inefficient panels. If so, does this plan include containment and safe disposal of potentially harmful substances?
1.4.5	Applicant	Miscalculation In Table 14.16 [APP-051], should the figure for decommissioning be a '+' factor and not a '-' factor as shown? If the figure for GHG emissions is indeed '-' during decommissioning, provide a breakdown of how this figure was reached.
1.4.6	Applicant	Clarification on calculations In Table 14.11, in respect of operational emissions, do the figures include the emissions generated through the complete overhaul / replacement of solar arrays at the stage of 25 years into the 37.5-year life span?

Impacts of Climate Change		
1.4.7	Applicant	<p>Microclimate</p> <p>In both OFH1 and ISH1, Interested Parties (IPs) spoke about microclimates and their impacts (reflection or absorption of heat, air thermals, increased light, dryness, wind etc) on aviation safety and ancient woodland.</p> <p>Has the applicant assessed the potential creation of microclimates and their impact on the surroundings?</p> <p>If such an assessment has been carried out, provide justification and evidence of any conclusions reached.</p>

Q1.5. Compulsory Acquisition		
Overarching Case		
1.5.1	Applicant	<p>Compulsory Acquisition (CA) Schedule</p> <p>Please provide updates of the CA Schedule and the Land Rights Tracker concerning the position of ongoing negotiations for acquisition by agreement and include the total number of plots for which agreement has been reached. The Applicant is requested to provide regular updates throughout the Examination as the Examination Timetable.</p>
1.5.2	Applicant	<p>Compliance with Department for Communities and Local Government Guidance</p> <p>Please advise whether the Book of Reference (BoR) [AS-028] (updated at DL1) is fully compliant with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Guidance¹ (CA Guidance). If not, please amend as necessary.</p>
1.5.3	Applicant	<p>Diligent Enquiry into Land Interests</p> <p>The content of the Land Rights Tracker [AS-013] (updated at DL1) is noted by the ExA. In respect of unregistered land, set out what further steps you will be taking to investigate any unknown ownership and rights during the Examination?</p>
1.5.4	Applicant	<p>Diligent Enquiry into Land Interests</p> <p>Do you envisage any changes to the application which might engage The Infrastructure Planning (Compulsory Acquisition) Regulations 2010?</p>
1.5.5	Applicant	<p>Reasonable Alternatives to Compulsory Acquisition</p> <p>In the light of the CA Guidance, in particular paragraph 8:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How the ExA can be assured that all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition (CA) (including modifications to the scheme) have been explored? 2) Set out in summary form, with document references where appropriate, what assessment/ comparison has been made of the alternatives to the proposed acquisition of land or interests in each case.

¹ Planning Act 2008, Guidance related to procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land, DCLG, September 2013

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1.5.6	Applicant	<p>Reasonable Alternatives to Compulsory Acquisition</p> <p>Paragraph 25 of the CA Guidance states that applicants should seek to acquire land by negotiation wherever practicable. As a general rule, authority to acquire land compulsorily should only be sought as part of an order granting development consent if attempts to acquire by agreement fail.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please demonstrate the Applicant's compliance with this aspect of the CA Guidance. 2) Has the Applicant offered full access to alternative dispute resolution techniques for those with concerns about the CA of their land or considered other means of involving those affected?
1.5.7	Applicant	<p>Accuracy of the Book of Reference, Land Plans and Points of Clarification</p> <p>What assurance and evidence can the Applicant provide of the accuracy of the land interests identified as submitted? Indicate whether there are likely to be any changes to the land interests, including the identification of further owners/ interests or monitoring and update of changes in interests?</p>
1.5.8	Affected Persons IPs	<p>Accuracy of the Book of Reference, Land Plans and Points of Clarification</p> <p>Are any Affected Persons or IPs aware of any inaccuracies in the BoR [AS-028] (updated at DL1), Statement of Reasons (SoR) [APP-021] or Land Plans [AS-006]? If so, please set out what these are and provide the correct details.</p>
1.5.9	Applicant	<p>Scope and Purpose of Compulsory Acquisition Powers</p> <p>Section 5 of the SoR [APP-021] considers the source and scope of the powers set out in the dDCO [AS-009], (updated at DL1). It is stated that land within the Order Limits will be subject to a statutory authority to override easements and other rights, and to extinguish private rights of way upon the appropriation of the land for the purposes of the DCO.</p> <p>Please explain in further detail:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The need to seek such a wide-ranging power and why all such rights and easements cannot be specifically identified. 2) Why it is necessary to include powers of CA as a means of overriding existing rights and interests in or over land, as well as creating new rights over land, and granting the right to take temporary possession (TP) of land? 3) The nature and extent of any delay to the project that might otherwise result.

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		4) What alternatives to this approach have been explored?
1.5.10	Applicant	<p>Scope and Purpose of Compulsory Acquisition Powers</p> <p>The SoR, section 3.12 [AS-015], states that the Order Limits have been defined to allow sufficient flexibility to enable the final detailed design of the Proposed Development to be optimal.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, please set out and justify the extent of the flexibility that the submitted scheme would allow in terms of Limits of Works and parameters providing dimensions where relevant.</p> <p>How would it be ensured that powers of CA would not be exercised in respect of land not ultimately required as a result of the detailed design process?</p>
1.5.11	Applicant	<p>Whether a Compelling Case in the Public Interest Exists</p> <p>The SoR, sections 7 and 8 [AS-015], set out the Applicant's compelling case in the public interest for the proposed CA. Paragraphs 6.5 and 7.4.5 assert that the public benefits of the scheme would outweigh the adverse impacts on the interests of those who would be affected by the proposed use of CA powers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What assessment, if any, has been made of the effect upon individual Affected Persons and their private loss that would result from the exercise of CA powers in each case? 2) What is the clear evidence that the public benefit would outweigh the private loss and how has that balancing exercise between public benefit and private loss been carried out?
1.5.12	Applicant	<p>Whether a Compelling Case in the Public Interest Exists</p> <p>The SoR, section 8.4 and paragraphs 7.4.3 and 7.8.2 [AS-015], states that the Applicant has taken steps to engage with these persons through formal consultation to understand the direct and indirect impacts on them. Section 8.4 explains that the Applicant has engaged directly with individual landowners and those with an interest in the affected land.</p> <p>Please provide further details, with examples where available:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How has such engagement helped to shape the proposals and enabled the Applicant to make changes to designs to minimise the private loss? 2) How has the direct engagement with individual landowners given the Applicant a better understanding of the direct and indirect impacts on them?

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		3) Please provide detail, where available, of the direct and indirect impacts thereby identified.
1.5.13	Applicant	<p>Whether a Compelling Case in the Public Interest Exists</p> <p>What weight has the Applicant attached to the compensation that would be available to those entitled to claim it under the relevant provisions of the National Compensation Code in its assessment of private loss?</p>
1.5.14	Applicant	<p>Justification for Interfering with Human Rights of those with an Interest in the Land Affected</p> <p>What degree of importance has been attributed to the existing uses of the land proposed to be acquired in assessing whether any interference would be justified, and why?</p>
1.5.15	Applicant	<p>Justification for Interfering with the Human Rights of those with an Interest in the Land Affected</p> <p>In relation to the Applicant's duties under section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please explain how the Applicant has had regard to its public sector equality duty in relation to the powers of CA sought and where this can be identified within the Application. 2) Have any Affected Persons been identified as having protected characteristics?
1.5.16	Applicant	<p>Justification for Interfering with the Human Rights of those with an Interest in the Land Affected</p> <p>Paragraph 9.5 of the SoR [AS-015] states that SolarFive Ltd has considered the balance to be struck between individual rights and the wider public interest.</p> <p>Explain more precisely the factors which have been placed in the balance (including references to any paragraphs of any relevant National Policy Statement (NPS) and Government Guidance), the weight attributed to those factors and how this exercise has been undertaken?</p>
1.5.17	Applicant	<p>Justification for Interfering with the Human Rights of those with an Interest in the Land Affected</p> <p>Paragraph 9.4 of the SoR [AS-015] states that to the extent that the DCO would affect individuals' rights, the proposed interference with those rights would be in accordance with law, proportionate and justified in the public interest.</p>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How has the proportionality test been undertaken? 2) Explain further the proportionate approach which has been taken in relation to each plot?
1.5.18	Applicant	<p>Scope and Purpose of the Compulsory Acquisition Powers</p> <p>The SoR, paragraph 5.9.3(g) [AS-015], states that Article 18 (authority to survey and investigate the land) would authorise SolarFive Ltd to enter onto any land within the Order limits or which may be affected by the authorised development (whether or not that land is within the Order limits) to undertake various survey and investigative works, including trial holes. Article 18(2) provides for a 14-day notice period to be given to the owner/ occupier of the land.</p> <p>Provide justification for a 14-day notice period and consider whether this is unreasonably short and should be extended to 28 days?</p>
1.5.19	Applicant	<p>Scope and Purpose of the Compulsory Acquisition Powers</p> <p>Paragraph 5.9.1 of the SoR [AS-015] explains that Article 22 (compulsory acquisition of rights) would allow SolarFive Ltd to compulsorily acquire existing and new rights, as well as impose restrictive covenants over land.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please provide an indication of the anticipated content and/ or an initial draft of any restrictive covenants intended to be imposed. 2) Should a requirement for consultation with relevant owners/ occupiers as regards the drafting of any such restrictive covenants be imposed?
1.5.20	All local authorities	<p>Scope and Purpose of the Compulsory Acquisition Powers</p> <p>Are you aware of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Any reasonable alternatives to CA or TP for land sought by the Applicant? 2) Any areas of land or rights that the Applicant is seeking the powers to acquire that you consider would not be needed? Please identify which plots these are and explain why you consider they would not need to be acquired. <p>RESPONSE: CDC: Not aware of 1) any alternatives to CA or TP or 2) of any other powers to acquire land that would not be needed.</p>

		<p>VWHDC:</p> <p>Not aware of 1) any alternatives to CA or TP or 2) of any other powers to acquire land that would not be needed.</p> <p>WODC:</p> <p>Not aware of 1) any alternatives to CA or TP or 2) of any other powers to acquire land that would not be needed.</p> <p>OCC:</p> <p><u>Highway Land</u></p> <p>The Highway Authority notes that drawing [AS-006] Land Plans categorises all of the Highway Land which will be impacted by the proposed development as ‘Order Land- new rights (including restrictions) to be compulsory acquired and temporary use of land and in relation to which it is proposed to suspend or extinguish easements, servitudes and other private rights’.</p> <p>OCC would in no way support the compulsory acquisition of Highway Land and indeed do not understand why the applicant would need to acquire Highway Land. Acquisition of Highway Land could jeopardise the delivery of future highway improvements.</p> <p>OCC has outlined its opinion on multiple occasions (such as paragraph 3.26 of OCC’s Relevant Representation [RR-0793] and row 10 of table 20 of the joint Local Impact Report [REP1-072]) that the powers proposed under Part 3 of the DCO [REP1-005] are too wide ranging and that OCC would welcome discussion with the applicant on a Highways Side Agreement in combination with a more specific set of powers within the draft DCO. This side agreement would also need to cover the costs of any work that OCC would need to undertake to fulfil their obligations under the agreement in line with the Council’s standard practice for S.278 agreements.</p>
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		<p>With such an agreement in place (or indeed if the DCO remains unchanged and the applicant is given all of the powers currently proposed in Part 3 of the Draft DCO [REP1-005]) there would be no need for the applicant to compulsorily purchase any Highway Land as the applicant would be able to undertake works on the public highway without the need to purchase the land.</p> <p>Therefore, OCC do not believe that any Highway Land would need to be CA or TP by the applicant and would welcome a revised version of drawing [AS-006] which reflects this. OCC would also still welcome a discussion with the applicant over a highways side agreement more in line with OCC's standard S.278 agreements.</p> <p><u>Third Party Land</u></p> <p>OCC is concerned that the Land Plans drawing [AS-006] categorises third party land that may be needed for the Botley to Eynsham and Eynsham to Hanborough cycle schemes (see Joint LIR [REP1-072] paras 7.8.61 – 7.8.64) as 'Order Land'.</p> <p>The design of the B4044 path is being developed using funding from the Government Active Travel Funds. In particular, land adjacent to the highway owned by Oxford University is to be dedicated as highways on the northern side of the route. If OCC is unable to complete the dedication of the land as highway due to the proposed CPO, this could jeopardise the delivery of the B4044 path. OCC require that any rights granted over highway land or third party land adjacent the highway do not jeopardise the dedication of land as highway or the delivery of the B4044 path in its entirety.</p> <p>Delivery of the Eynsham to Hanborough Station walking and cycling route requires third party land to the west and east of the Lower Road highway, as per the completed feasibility design* (sent to the Applicant in December 2024). A large proportion of this third-party land is owned by Blenheim Estate, who are amenable to the delivery of this walking and cycling route. Without this land, it will not be possible to deliver the connection between Eynsham and Hanborough Station via Lower Road.</p> <p>*www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/connecting-oxfordshire/strategies-and-corridor-plans</p>
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1.5.21	Applicant	Whether Adequate Funding is Available The CA Guidance, paragraph 17, considers the resource implication of the proposed development. In the light of that guidance and noting the detail within the funding statement [APP-022], please set out the degree to which other bodies (public or private sector) have agreed to make financial contributions or to underwrite the scheme, and the basis upon which any such contributions or underwriting is to be made.
1.5.22	Applicant	Whether Adequate Funding is Available In the light of paragraph 18 of the CA Guidance, what evidence is there to demonstrate that adequate funding is likely to be available to enable the CA within the statutory period following any DCO being made?
1.5.23	Applicant	Whether Adequate Funding is Available Please summarise the evidence relied upon to support the conclusion that there is a reasonable prospect that the scheme, if granted consent, would actually be taken forward and in what time period?
1.5.24	Applicant	Whether Adequate Funding is Available The Funding Statement, section 5 [APP-022], states that an estimate of the amounts necessary to cover the payment of compensation associated with the exercise of any CA powers granted has been considered in the overall project cost. Paragraph 7.4 provides an estimate of the cost of land acquisition. Please explain further the nature of the expert advice taken in that respect and the basis for and reliability of this estimate?
1.5.25	Applicant	Funding and Corporate Structure In paragraph 4.8 [APP-022] it states £11 million has been given to Solar Five Limited as a shareholder loan. Why does this not appear on the balance sheets, which show the company made a substantive loss at the end of 2022?
1.5.26	Applicant	Funding and Corporate Structure Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) at the end of 2022 indicated a retained profit of just over £1 million [APP-022]. The project cost is purported to be circa £820 million in paragraph 5.1 of the Funding Statement. It appears there is a significant absence of funds. Paragraph 6.1

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		<p>of the Funding Statement [APP-022] appears to skim over this by saying the ability to procure financial resources exists.</p> <p>How does the Applicant explain this disparity and where is the significant investment due to come from?</p>
1.5.27	Applicant	<p>Funding and past activities</p> <p>Paragraph 4.5 of the Funding Statement [APP-022] suggests that, since 2009, PVDP has developed 980W across 20 solar projects worldwide. It is assumed that is meant to read MW (Megawatts). If that is indeed the case, this averages at 49MW per project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Does the Applicant have any experience in the delivering or financing of a project the size and scale that is proposed here? 2) Has the Applicant got demonstrable experience in raising the financing required for a project of the size proposed? 3) If not, what reliability is there in the optimism that the finances required for the project will materialise?
1.5.28	Applicant	<p>Funding and accounts</p> <p>Please provide annual financial statements dated 31 December 2023 (or 2024 if currently available), including balance sheets, for Photovolt Development Partners GmbH and SolarFive Ltd. Please provide unredacted and redacted versions.</p>
1.5.29	Applicant	<p>Funding Statement</p> <p>Paragraph 7.6 of the Funding Statement [APP-022] refers to Article 47, please review this reference and confirm whether the reference is correct.</p>
1.5.30	Applicant	<p>Photovolt UK Limited</p> <p>It is stated in paragraph 4.6 [APP-022] that Photovolt UK Ltd would facilitate development activities for the Project and other UK projects.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Where is this company registered? 2) Provide the accounts for this business.
1.5.31	Applicant	<p>Other Matters</p> <p>In the light of the CA Guidance, paragraph 19, please demonstrate:</p>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How potential risks or impediments to implementation of the scheme have been properly managed. 2) The account taken of any other physical and legal matters pertaining to the application including the programming of any necessary infrastructure accommodation works and the need to obtain any operational and other consents applicable to this type of development.
1.5.32	Applicant	<p>Other Matters</p> <p>Section 11 of the SoR [AS-015] refers to the Consents and Licenses Required Under Other Legislation [APP-035] which identifies the other consents, licenses and agreements that are required for the proposed development to be implemented. Please indicate whether there are any changes to the status for each consent, licence and agreement listed within that schedule since the application was submitted.</p>
1.5.33	Applicant	<p>Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017</p> <p>Given the parliamentary approval to the temporary possession regime under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 ('NPA 2017'), which was subject to consultation and debate before being enacted (and which, by virtue of article 6(1)(g), the applicant is seeking to disapply), should any provisions relating to notices/ counter notices which do not reflect the NPA 2017 proposed regime, not yet in force, be modified to more closely reflect the incoming statutory regime where possible?</p> <p>As examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The notice period that will be required under the NPA 2017 Act is 3 months, substantially longer than the 14 and 28 days required under articles 29(3) and 30(3) respectively. Other than prior precedent, what is the justification for only requiring 14 days' and 28 days' notice in this case? 2) Under the NPA 2017, the notice would also have to state the period for which the acquiring authority is to take possession. Should such a requirement be included in this case? 3) Powers of temporary possession are sometimes said to be justified because they are in the interests of landowners, whose land would not then need to be acquired permanently. The NPA 2017 Act provisions include the ability to serve a counter-notice

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		objecting to the proposed temporary possession so that the landowner would have the option to choose whether temporary possession or permanent acquisition was desirable. Should this article make some such provision – whether or not in the form in the NPA 2017?
Statutory Undertakers		
	Statutory Undertakers	<p>Acquisition of Statutory Undertakers' Land</p> <p>The SoR, paragraph 10.3.4 [AS-015], states that adequate protection for statutory undertakers will be included within protective provisions in the dDCO [AS-009] (updated at DL1). SolarFive Ltd therefore considers that statutory undertakers will not suffer serious detriment to the carrying on of the undertaking as a result of the CA of land or rights over land or powers of TP. For those statutory undertakers who have been sent the draft protective provisions but have not confirmed agreement, please explain for each one why these protective provisions are considered to provide adequate protection and why SolarFive Ltd considers that the land and rights can be acquired without serious detriment to the carrying on of the undertaking.</p>
	Statutory Undertakers	<p>Planning Act 2008</p> <p>Set out your position with regards to the tests under s127 and s138 of PA2008 as applicable to your respective interests.</p>
1.5.36	Applicant	<p>Thames Water Utilities Limited</p> <p>Noting the content of the Thames Water Utilities (TWUL) DL1 submission, please confirm if an outline infrastructure drainage strategy has been submitted to TWUL.</p>
Individual Affected Persons		
1.5.37	Applicant	<p>Roderick William Cameron Cooke and Christine Mary Cooke</p> <p>Please review the 'Likelihood of resolution during the Examination' column in the Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker submitted at DL1 and confirm whether green fill/ shading is correct.</p>
1.5.38	Applicant	<p>Siemens Healthcare Limited</p> <p>Please provide a detailed summary in respect of negotiations with Siemens Healthcare Limited regarding their outstanding objection relating to the proposed easement over Wharf Road.</p>

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		Please advise whether any alternative routes exist and whether discussions have been held in respect of alternatives.
Crown land and special category land		
1.5.39	All local authorities	<p>S131 and S132 of PA2008</p> <p>Are the local authorities aware of any irregularities in the applicant's compulsory acquisition documents with regards to the classification of land, particularly with regards to s131 and s132 of PA2008? If so, explain with reasons.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>CDC:</p> <p>Not aware of any irregularities. Not aware of any areas of registered common land within the application site inside Cherwell district.</p> <p>VWHDC:</p> <p>Not aware of any irregularities. Not aware of any areas of registered common land within the application site inside the Vale of White Horse district.</p> <p>WODC:</p> <p>Not aware of any irregularities. Not aware of any areas of registered common land within the application site inside the West Oxfordshire district.</p> <p>OCC:</p> <p>Not aware of any irregularities. Not aware of any areas of registered common land within the application site.</p>

Q1.6. Cultural Heritage		
Cultural Heritage errata		
1.6.1	Applicant	<p>ES Appendix 7.5 Settings Assessment [APP-142] errata</p> <p>The ExA have noted some discrepancies within this document that require amending or an explanation if amendment is not needed. These are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Paragraph 1.9.17 refers to Sansom's Platt but is under the heading of Hensington Earthworks. Correct this and ensure that the assessment provided is accurate for Hensington Earthworks. 2) Paragraph 1.9.50 states Lower Dornford is grade II* but elsewhere in the document it has been referred to as grade II. Ensure consistency and ensure the assessment reflects the status of the asset. 3) Paragraph 1.9.54 refers to Lower Dornford Farm and not Shipton Slade Farm. Correct this and ensure the assessment conclusions are correct.
1.6.2	Applicant	<p>Photomontages [APP-079] - errata</p> <p>Viewpoint 42 shows panels to the southeast of Cassington, whereas the plans show that panels would be located to the northwest. Coupled with this, the existing and illustrative photomontages for both Year 1 and Year 15 are incorrect [APP-079, Viewpoint 42].</p> <p>Re-issue with correct information and ensure that any individual asset assessments that rely on Viewpoint 42 are checked and amended as necessary.</p>
1.6.3	Applicant	<p>Change Request 1 - Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (OWSI) [CR1-005]</p> <p>The site location plans in Figure 1 of this document do not show the amendments to archaeological protection areas and Order Limits proposed by the change request. Please amend and re-issue this document.</p>
1.6.4	Applicant	<p>Change Request 1</p> <p>The key on the plan [CR1-007, Appendix A] is illegible. Please re-issue.</p>

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1.6.5	Applicant	<p>Gazetteers</p> <p>There are several separate Historic Environment gazetteers and tables, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [APP-142] Appendix A comprises the Designated Heritage Assets within the 2km Study Area, noting whether these have been scoped in or out for assessment; referenced with the National Heritage List England (NHLE) number. • [APP-131] Annex A provides a full list of designated and non-designated Heritage Assets that have been assigned a BW reference, referenced with their BW number and NHLE number. • [APP-132] Table 2 provides a gazetteer of all sites and landscapes within and just outside the Order Limits that were identified during the Archaeological surveys. These are referenced with an APS number. • [APP-133] provides written description of anomalies by Field Numbers but does not provide any identifying reference. • [CR1-003] Table 7.15 - Impact of the Project on designated Heritage Assets; referenced with NHLE numbers. <p>The plans show BW numbers that require cross referencing to various other tables, which is time consuming and confusing.</p> <p>Provide a separate table that combines references for the scoped in Assets and arranges them under site areas and field numbers. Suggested headings for this document are: Area (north, central, south); Field Number*; Name of Asset; Asset Type; BW ref; NHLE ref*; APS ref*.</p> <p>*If appropriate</p>
Above Ground Heritage Assets		
1.6.6	All Local Authorities	<p>Conservation Areas (CA)</p> <p>With regard to the affected conservation areas and the potential views into and out of these areas, the ExA note the responses in your LIR, submitted at DL1.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Do you consider that any Neighbourhood Planning documents covering the affected conservation areas have been adequately addressed in the Applicant's assessments?

		<p>2) For affected conservation areas that do not have a current Character Appraisal, please note any views or particularly characteristics that you feel may be adversely affected by the proposals.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>CDC:</p> <p>1) Not applicable. There are no made Neighbourhood Plans within Cherwell within the vicinity of the site.</p> <p>2) Not applicable. All affected conservation areas within the vicinity of the site have current Character Appraisals.</p> <p>VWHDC:</p> <p>1) No. The Key Views element of Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan is not referenced in the Heritage chapter of the ES [CR1-003]. The Key Views and the associated Policy DBC7 are noted for their contribution to the essential rural character of the Parish. These views as shown on the accompanying maps are both to and from the Neighbourhood Plan Area and the designated conservation area within.</p> <p>The Cumnor Conservation Area appraisal also contains reference to views in and out of the designated boundary, albeit the Neighbourhood Plan is more extensive with regards to the areas impacted by the proposal. The views identified in the Cumnor Conservation Area appraisal were not referenced in the Heritage Chapter, nor in the Landscape Chapter of the ES [PDB-006].</p> <p>2) Not applicable.</p> <p>WODC:</p> <p>No West Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans are referred to in setting the local planning policy context for the historic environment chapter of the Environmental Statement [CR1-003]. They are however referenced in the historic environment desk-based assessment [APP-131]</p>
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		<p>Cassington Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Policy CAS4 and CAS5 state –</p> <p>POLICY CAS4: CASSINGTON CONSERVATION AREA Development proposals should sustain and enhance the historic environment, particularly the special architectural and historic significance of the designated Cassington Conservation Area and its setting. Features identified as positive characteristics of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting are defined in the Cassington Design Code attached as Appendix B, to which all proposals must have full regard.</p> <p>POLICY CAS5: DESIGN CODE FOR CASSINGTON VILLAGE Development proposals in Cassington Village should have full regard to the essential design considerations and general design principles set out in the Cassington Design Code attached as Appendix B.</p> <p>A key component of the Cassington Neighbourhood Plan is the Cassington Design Code. The design code seeks to identify features that are important to the historic character, conservation and setting of the conservation area. Much emphasis is placed on the character of the landscape surrounding the village in defining its setting and identifies areas for landscape enhancement. Whether the Cassington Neighbourhood Plan has been adequately addressed in the applicant's assessment depends on whether the proposed development would be considered as an enhancement to the landscape character, to the north of the village in particular.</p> <p>There are two West Oxfordshire Conservation Areas in direct proximity to the project area, that could be adversely affected by the proposals and which do not benefit from Conservation Area Character Appraisals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Church Hanborough Conservation Area• Wootton Conservation Area <p>In both cases, the proposed development would extend up to the boundary of the Conservation Area, but would be excluded from within the CA boundary.</p>
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		<p>In the case of Church Hanborough, the Project Area overlaps with the CA boundary, but the Masterplan indicates that the area within the CA will be made available for community food growing.</p> <p>Church Hanborough forms an isolated settlement enjoying a gently rolling' landscape setting. The prominent spire of the church is a notable landmark in the long vistas afforded to the settlement from the surrounding open countryside. It also dominates short views from within the village itself.</p> <p>These views within the village are interrupted at several points by bends in the road. As a consequence, the streetscape is revealed as a sequence of picturesque views.</p> <p>There are limited views out into open countryside from within the village, which adds to the sense of enclosure.</p> <p>It was designated as a Conservation Area in April 1990.</p> <p>A number of significant views within and out of the Conservation Area are illustrated on the map below.</p>
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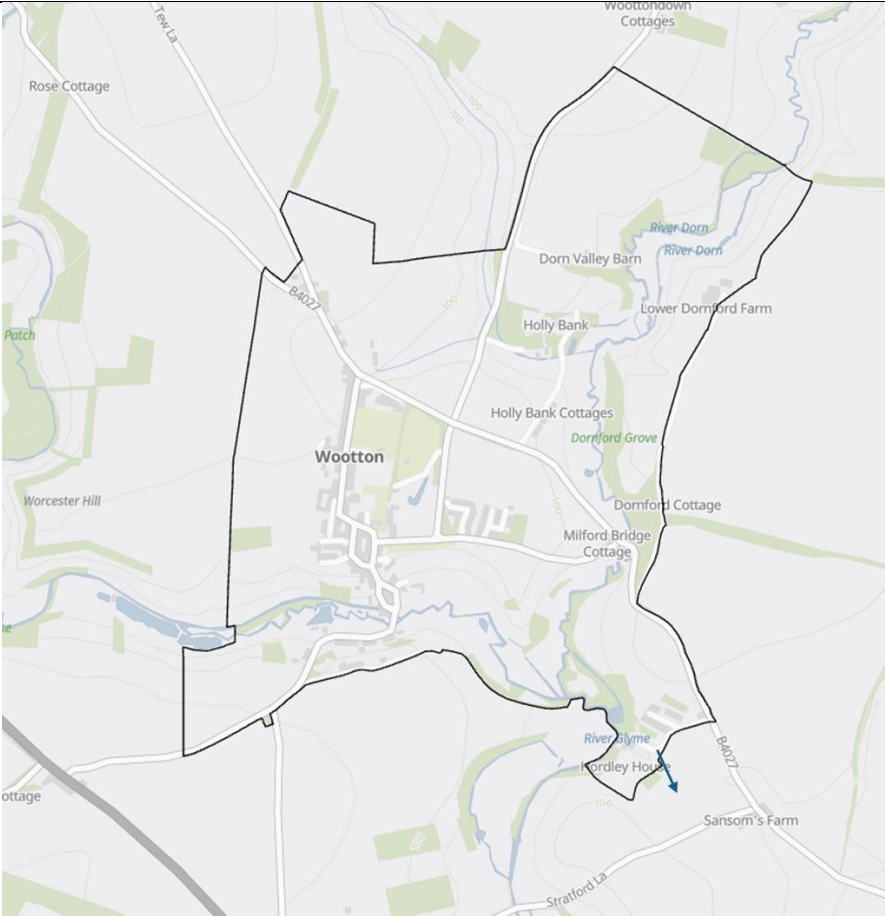
Key Views Within the Church Hanborough Conservation Area

Views to the south and east of the Church Hanborough Conservation Area are particularly relevant to the proposed development where the views to the surrounding countryside can be appreciated from public rights of way that extend from the south of the village.

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		<p>Wootton Conservation Area was designated in 1976 and extended in 1992 to incorporate more land to the east, up to Dornford Lane and to the south to incorporate Hordley Farm.</p> <p>Near distance views from the south of the Wootton Conservation Area provide a visual connection between the Conservation Area and the historic landscape extending towards Akeman Street. Views to the east are relatively well contained by the strong landscape structure and dense hedgerow adjacent to the B4027.</p>
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		 <p><i>View from edge of Wootton Conservation Area to the south</i></p>
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		<div data-bbox="763 189 1644 1109"></div> <div data-bbox="763 1117 1859 1157"><p><i>Direction of photographic viewpoint from south of Wootton Conservation Area</i></p></div> <div data-bbox="763 1204 1064 1244"><p>OCC: Not applicable.</p></div>
1.6.7	Applicant	<p>Group Value</p> <p>In the settings assessment [APP-142], other than specific examples, your assessments do not appear to address, or make reference to, the group value of heritage assets and how these are perceived in the landscape. From the USI [EV2-001 to EV2-005] the ExA experienced that in</p>

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		<p>some cases, several heritage assets were visible in the same view and as such, consider that their group value in relation to their settings, should also be assessed.</p> <p>Review your position on the group value that may be experienced in far reaching views and comment on the group values of assets within the landscape.</p>
1.6.8	Applicant	<p>Conservation Grazing</p> <p>Conservation grazing is mentioned in the Heritage Impact Assessment [APP-141], section 1.5. There are other ways of managing land in order to improve soil structure and quality that do not require the installation of solar panels. Explain why this should be considered a heritage benefit that could not be achieved by alternative farming practices?</p>
1.6.9	Historic England ICOMOS	<p>Aerial Views</p> <p>Aerial views over the World Heritage Site (WHS) and wider landscape are readily available from planes flying to and from Oxford Airport and RAF Brize Norton. Drone footage that includes views of the wider landscape is also seen in advertising literature for Blenheim Palace and in addition, the new rooftop tours at the Palace will afford greater views out towards the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Do you consider that such views should be taken into account in terms of assessment of the setting?</p>
1.6.10	ICOMOS	<p>Maps of proposed omissions</p> <p>Your DL1 submission included plans and a written statement on areas of panels that you consider should be removed from the proposed development in order to be less oppressive to local villages and less harmful to the landscape. These plans were produced on the Preliminary Masterplan and consequently some areas you suggest for removal have already been taken out of the proposals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please refer to [AS-020] for the most up-to-date illustrative masterplan and re-submit your representation. 2) Please ensure that the colours used provide distinction and clarity to your suggestions.
1.6.11	ICOMOS	<p>Extent of proposed omissions</p> <p>Your DL1 submission proposes areas of panels that should be removed from the proposed development in order to be less harmful to the landscape. However, the landscape in question</p>

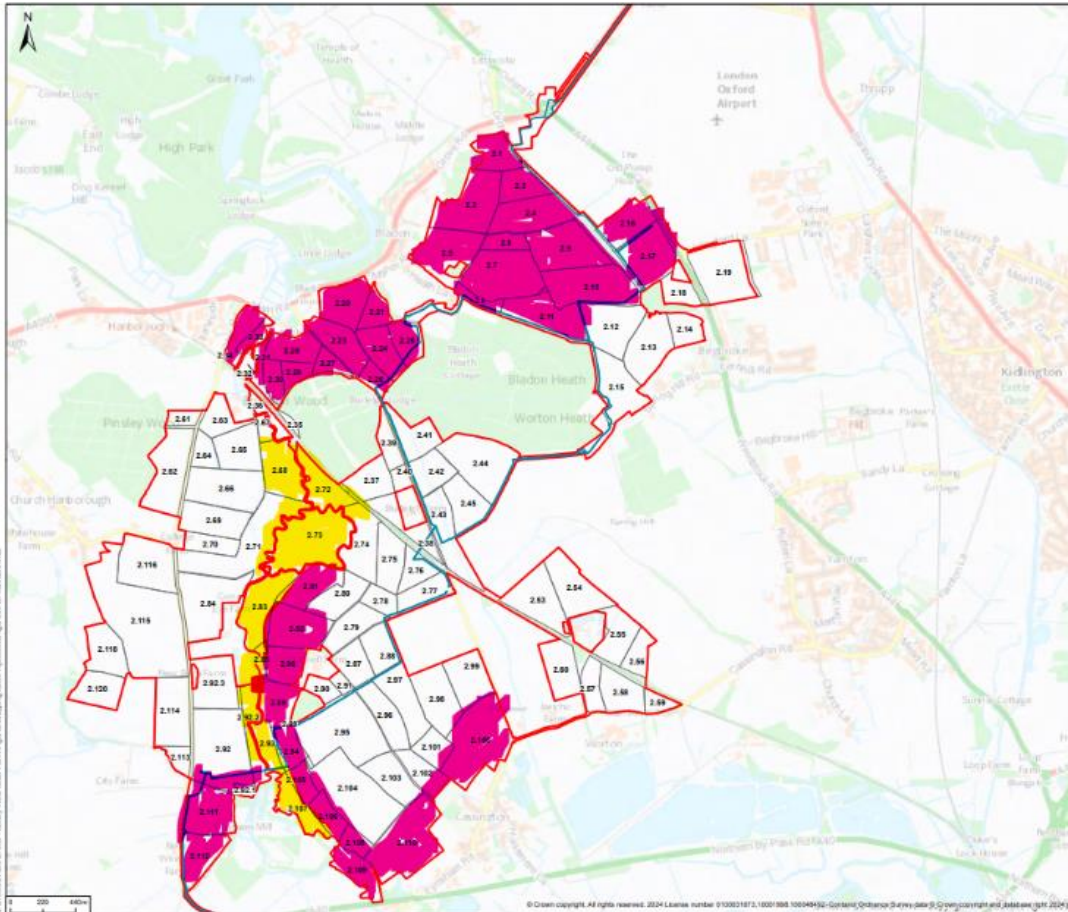
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		<p>has no statutory designation and does not form part of a formal buffer to the World Heritage Site (WHS).</p> <p>You state in paragraph 1 of section B of your submission that <i>“ICOMOS-UK has an interest in sustaining the quality of the rural landscape in the UK, which in this instance contributes to the setting of the WHS”</i>.</p> <p>Explain how the areas of panels that you have identified in your submission contribute to the setting of the WHS and how the proposed development within these areas may be harmful to the setting.</p>
1.6.12	Applicant	<p>Response to ICOMOS Relevant Representation [RR-0413] and DL1 submission</p> <p>Whilst the applicant responded to RR at DL1, the ExA are keen to explore the suggestions of ICOMOS as to the areas for excluding solar panels to better protect Blenheim’s rural landscape that were submitted at DL1.</p> <p>Notwithstanding ICOMOS’s use of an earlier masterplan, in respect of each suggestion, provide any comments you wish to make and then, on an individual and cumulative basis, summarise the likely overall impact of such exclusions on the solar farm’s operational viability.</p>
1.6.13	Applicant	<p>Response to Historic England’s DL1 Submission</p> <p>Whilst some areas overlap with ICOMOS’ suggestions, the ExA are also keen to explore the suggestions of Historic England as to the field numbers that should be excluded from development in order to maintain Blenheim’s OUV.</p> <p>Provide any comments you wish to make and then, on an individual and cumulative basis, summarise the likely overall impact of such exclusions on the solar farm’s operational viability.</p>
1.6.14	ICOMOS Historic England West Oxfordshire District Council	<p>WHS Buffer zone</p> <p>The Blenheim Palace and Park World Heritage Site Management Plan 2017, Appendix III (Settings Study), indicates in chapter 2 that a formal buffer zone was not deemed necessary at the time of production due to existing designation protections, such as the Cotswold National Landscape, the Oxford Green Belt, and WODC Policy EW9 that includes wording designed to protect the wider landscape from potentially harmful development.</p> <p>Would the omissions proposed in the ICOMOS and Historic England DL1 submissions provide sufficient buffer to protect the rural landscape that is important to the setting of Blenheim Palace?</p>

		<p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>WODC:</p> <p>Details from Icomos DL1 response</p> <p>The response states:</p> <p>“ICOMOS-UK considers that the proposed Botley West Solar Farm would not have a direct impact upon the OUV of Blenheim Palace and Park WHS or the setting as identified by the map ‘Character of Setting of WHS’ on page 50 of Appendix III of the Management Plan. The 1000 ha park is enclosed by a high wall and continuous tree belt so that there are only two outward views from the park. A southerly view from the Palace to Bladon Church is terminated by woodland on high ground only a kilometer [sic] beyond the southern boundary of the park. An easterly view from the Column of Victory ends at the nearby houses of Woodstock, a view which also incorporates the view of Woodstock church beyond the Grand Bridge. The three proposed solar farms to the N-E and south of Blenheim Park are beyond these terminations. The setting map also identifies an Area of High Scenic Value outside the southwest of the Park, which would be unaffected by the Solar Farm, though the N-W corner of the central block of the Solar Farm is not far away from the WHS.” (LUC emphasis)</p> <p>The remainder of the Icomos response relates to general commentary on landscape and, to a lesser extent, historic environment issues, not the WHS. Similarly, this is contrary to the position taken in Icomos’ Technical Review report of March 2024.</p> <p>The differing positions are likely a result of the representations being made by ICOMOS UK (Relevant Representation and Written Representation to which the ExA question relates) and ICOMOS International, the official advisory body for the World Heritage Committee.</p> <p>Commentary</p> <p>WODC – like Historic England – does not concur with Icomos’ statement that there will be no effect on the OUV of the WHS as a consequence of setting change. This is principally due to the relatively narrow approach to setting taken in the response.</p> <p>The ‘Character of Setting of the WHS’ map (in Appendix III of the WHS Management Plan) does not represent the whole of the setting of the WHS, nor does it reflect current</p>
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		<p>understanding of the concept of setting, as defined in policy and associated guidance. We do not consider that this affords sufficient understanding or weight to concepts of setting extending beyond simplistic intervisibility. For example, there is no consideration afforded to the experience of arrival at the designed landscape, or the wider contribution to the heritage significance of the designed landscape of the 18th and 19th century working agricultural landscape.</p> <p>The areas of solar array highlighted for omission in the Icomos response are not, in WODC's view, sufficient to 'provide sufficient buffer to protect the rural landscape that is important to the setting of Blenheim Palace'. The reasons for this are summarised below:</p> <p>No consideration appears to have been given to the potential effects of the landscape mitigation (chiefly planting of hedges / woodland blocks) intended to screen sensitive receptors from visibility of solar arrays. These have the potential to affect the understanding, appreciation and experience of the WHS in views from the surrounding landscape (e.g. parts of the estate functionally and temporally associated with the park).</p> <p>Planting is considered in relation to other interests well beyond Icomos' area of responsibility. Arrays adjacent to the southern circuit of the WHS / Blenheim Park boundary have the potential to generate impacts on the ability to understand, appreciate and experience the asset in its rural, agricultural setting.</p> <p>We would suggest that greater separation would be advisable, particularly with regard to the arrays between Burleigh Wood, Bladon Heath Wood, and the southern boundary of the WHS.</p> <p>Similarly, the section between Bladon Heath Wood and the A44 may benefit from reduction / removal to conserve the experience of arrival at the Park through its open, agricultural setting. (Given the presence of identified archaeological remains, this may also contribute to a pragmatic response to elevated archaeological potential.)</p> <p>WODC agree with Icomos that removing panels from the escarpment above the Evenlode valley, to the east of the floodplain, will be helpful in reducing the prominence of the panels in longer views to the WHS and also agree that panels should be pulled back from the environs of Eynsham Mill, but would suggest that greater separation is required to the east.</p>
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		<p>Historic England</p> <p>WODC concur with Historic England's (HE) view that, as a consequence of setting change, there would be some harm to the OUV and heritage significance of the Blenheim Palace WHS. At present, given the extent of the proposed development and the level of change in the setting of the WHS, we concur that this is likely to be a significant effect for the purposes of EIA, and less than substantial harm for the purposes of the National Policy Statement.</p> <p>HE consider that the removal of panels from fields 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, and 2.20-2.26 on Figure 2b with ES Appendix 7.1: Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment [APP-131] is required. As stated above, we consider that more extensive deletions will be required to safeguard the character and significance of the historic landscape that forms part of the setting, and hence significance of the WHS and RPG. An outline sketch of suggested deletions, using the same map base as HE, is included below.</p> <p>We agree with HE that the significance of the Churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Church Hanborough; St. Peter's in Cassington, and St. Michael's in Begbroke will be affected as a consequence of setting change. We agree with HE's assessment of the missing information that should be provided by the Applicant to provide greater detail and clarity on the likely significant effects on the historic environment.</p>
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		<div><div><p>© 2024 RPS Group</p><p>Notes</p><p>1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.</p><p>2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.</p><p>Legend</p><p>Order Limits</p><p>Cable Route</p><table><tr><th>Rev</th><th>Description</th><th>By</th><th>CR</th><th>Date</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p>PHOTOVOLT DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS</p><p>Client: PVDP</p><p>Project: Botley West Solar Farm</p><p>Title: Plot Numbers - Central Site Area</p><p>Status: FINAL</p><p>Drawn By: NB</p><p>PM/Checked By: CL</p><p>Drawing Number: EN010147APP6.5</p><p>Scale @ A3: 1:22,000</p><p>Date Created: NOV 2024</p><p>Figure Number: 2b</p><p>Rev: -</p><p>rpsgroup.com</p><p>20 Western Avenue, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4RN</p><p>T: +44(0)1235 821 888 E: enquiries@rpsgroup.com</p></div></div>	Rev	Description	By	CR	Date					
Rev	Description	By	CR	Date								
1.6.15	Applicant	<p>Blenheim Palace WHS – assessment of setting (1)</p> <p>Paragraph 3.02 of the Blenheim Palace and Park World Heritage Site Management Plan 2017, Appendix III, Settings Study states: <i>“the objective of protection of the setting not only has value in its own right in protecting the OUV of the WHS but also contributes directly to the economy,</i></p>										

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		<p><i>health and welfare of its surrounding villages and residents, by taking account of the distinctive character of the landscape and the green infrastructure it helps to provide.”</i></p> <p>Explain how this statement has been explored and assessed throughout the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) [APP-141].</p>
1.6.16	Applicant	<p>Blenheim Palace WHS – assessment of setting (2)</p> <p>Following on from Q1.6.15 above, the RR from Historic England [RR-0398] and DL1 submission considers the impact on the setting of the WHS as greater than negligible.</p> <p>Explain how the findings of no harm to the setting have been reached in light of the statement in the WHS Management Plan and Historic England’s submissions.</p>
1.6.17	Applicant	<p>Response to Historic England DL1 Submission</p> <p>Please provide a response to paragraphs 5.44 to 5.46, 5.49, 5.50, 5.51 relating to a more detailed assessment of the potential impact on Attributes 1, 4 and 5 and 7 of the OUV of the WHS.</p>
1.6.18	Applicant	<p>Church of St Peter and St Paul, Church Hanborough (Gd I)</p> <p>It is acknowledged in [APP-142, paras 1.9.28 to 1.9.31] that views towards the Church would change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Given that only one viewpoint towards the Church is provided (viewpoint/ photomontage no. 27) which is approx. 1.5kms distant, and given that closer views are likely to be even more disrupted by the panels, how is the assessment of “barely affected” arrived at and justified? 2) The RR from Historic England [RR-0398] considers the impact on the setting of the WHS as greater than negligible. Explain in more detail how you came to your conclusions, or reconsider your position, providing clear assessment and reasoning.
1.6.19	Applicant	<p>Church of St Peter, Cassington, (Gd I) (1)</p> <p>Regarding [APP-142, paras 1.9.32 – 1.9.34] the submissions from Historic England ([RR-0398] and DL1) consider the impact on the setting of the Church as greater than negligible. Explain in more detail how you came to your conclusions, or reconsider your position, providing clear assessment and reasoning.</p>
1.6.20	Applicant	<p>Church of St Peter, Cassington, (Gd I) (2)</p>

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		<p>As required by question 1.6.2 above, photomontage 42 requires amendment. Once this has been completed it is considered that this photomontage will not convey the potential impact of the panels on the setting of the Church.</p> <p>Provide an additional photomontage from a more appropriate location and reassess the potential impact.</p>
1.6.21	Applicant	<p>Church of St Michael, Begbroke (Gd II*)</p> <p>Paragraphs 1.9.39 to 1.9.41 [APP-142] states that there are views towards the Church and the neighbouring former Priory that indicate a complex of ecclesiastical buildings. From the ExA's USI, it was clear to the ExA that there will be intervisibility between the Churchyard and the panels, and vice versa.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In light of the above, explain how the assessment of negligible impact has been reached. 2) Given the Grade II listing of the neighbouring St Philip's Priory buildings and separate Grade II listing for the attached Church of St Philip, explain why these Assets have not also been assessed, both separately and for their group value. 3) The RR from Historic England [RR-0398] and their DL1 submission considers the impact on the setting of the Church as greater than negligible. Explain in more detail how you came to your conclusions, or reconsider your position, providing clear assessment and reasoning.
1.6.22	Applicant	<p>Swinford Bridge (Gd II*)</p> <p>The scale of the Horizontal Directional, Drilling (HDD) entry and exit compounds close to Swinford Bridge that are outlined in [APP-130] are substantial. It is appreciated that construction traffic is not proposed to use Swinford Bridge, however in the event that there may be additional usage of the bridge during construction by other vehicles, explain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How Swinford Bridge may be impacted during construction in terms of additional traffic, access to the south bank etc and how this might impact the setting or structure. 2) Whether a commitment to repairs, undertaken to best conservation method and practice will be secured prior to any use of the bridge for additional traffic.
1.6.23	Applicant	<p>Hoardley House (Gd II*)</p>

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		<p>The ExA observed from USI5 that the experience of Hoardley House extends to the east and southeast, and into the areas of proposed panels whereas the Settings Assessment [APP-142] only considers potential intervisibility and not the wider meaning of experience.</p> <p>The ExA request further detail in respect of the assessment conclusions reaching a negligible impact and minor adverse effect. Explain in more detail how you came to your conclusions, or reconsider your position, providing clear assessment and reasoning.</p>
1.6.24	Historic England	<p>Swinford Bridge (Gd II*) and Hoardley House (Gd II*)</p> <p>The ExA note that you have not included reference to Swinford Bridge or Hoardley House in either your RR [RR-0398] or your DL1 submission. Please confirm whether you have any particular concerns regarding the setting of these Grade II* Heritage Assets.</p>
1.6.25	Applicant	<p>Shipton Slade Farm Group (Gd II)</p> <p>Following the USI [EV2-004], the ExA has concerns over the assessment for this property presented within [APP-142, paras 1.9.51 – 1.9.54].</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged that the principal aspect of the complex is to the south, this does not diminish the contribution of the open farmland to the north and this historic context of the hamlet in its landscape has not been considered in the assessment.</p> <p>It would appear that the setting of this group could be severely impacted by the introduction of panels with only a limited buffer zone.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Further explain how the assessment of impact arrived at a finding of negligible adverse or reconsider your assessment. 2) Explain why such a limited buffer zone is proposed.
1.6.26	Applicant	<p>Burleigh Farmhouse (Gd II)</p> <p>Your assessment notes the principal elements of setting as the associated farm buildings [APP-142, paras 1.9.68 – 1.9.71] but ignores the historic context of the farm in its landscape, which provides the reason for the farm's existence.</p> <p>No buffer zone is proposed to the east and with land rising; this could have an impact on the setting and therefore significance of the heritage asset.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide a wider consideration for the significance of the farm, including its historic landscape setting.

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		<p>2) Further explain the reasons for the assessment of only slight harm to the significance or reconsider your assessment.</p> <p>3) Explain why no buffer zone is provided to the east.</p>
1.6.27	Applicant	<p>Mill Farmhouse Group (Gd II)</p> <p>Your assessment notes the extensive setting along the floodplain of the River Evenlode and the hill to the east towards Purwell Farm [APP-142, paras 1.9.72 – 1.9.76], but appears to ignore the historic context of the farm in its landscape, which provides the reason for the farm's existence. Given this, and the location of the panels to the south and east, and PCS to the east:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide a wider consideration for the significance of the farm, including its historic landscape setting. 2) Further explain the reasons for the assessment of only slight harm to the significance or reconsider your assessment. 3) Explain why a more substantial buffer has not been provided, particularly to the south.
1.6.28	Applicant	<p>Dunbar Farmhouse (Gd II)</p> <p>Your assessment notes the elevated position of the farmhouse and that there are extensive views to the east and south, looking across the Evenlode valley, and that the setting makes a reasonable contribution to the buildings' significance [APP-142, paras 1.9.77 – 1.9.80].</p> <p>Given this elevated position and the location of the panels to the south and east, explain in greater detail the reasons for the assessment of only 'slight harm' to the significance, or reconsider your assessment.</p>
1.6.29	Applicant	<p>Upper Whitley Farmhouse (Gd II)</p> <p>Your assessment notes the principal elements of setting as the associated farm buildings [APP-142, paras 1.9.98 - 1.9.100], but appears to overlook the historic context of the farm in its landscape, which provides the reason for the farm's existence. Its elevated position and historic association with the surrounding land creates a much wider setting and the proposed Project Substation and the potential presence of the National Grid Substation within this has not been assessed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Further explain how the assessment of no change was concluded or reconsider your assessment.

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		2) Provide further assessment that includes the presence of the project substation and also the National Grid Substation, should it be located within the Order Limits
1.6.30	Applicant	<p>Bladon Conservation Area</p> <p>The assessment identified that the screened perimeter of the development would be clearly visible within a number of significant views (as identified within the Bladon Conservation Area Character Appraisal) [APP-142, paras 1.9.106 - 1.9.110] yet offers no assessment of the possible impact, merely stating that the significance of the CA would be slightly harmed. Further explain the assessment that led to a conclusion of low adverse impact or reconsider your assessment.</p>
1.6.31	Applicant	<p>Begbroke Conservation Area</p> <p>The assessment of the CA [APP-141, paras 1.9.111 - 1.9.114] omits information regarding the sensitivity of the views back towards the church and priory as outlined in question 1.6.15 above.</p> <p>Further explain the assessment that led to a conclusion of negligible impact, or reconsider your assessment</p>
1.6.32	Applicant	<p>Church Hanborough Conservation Area</p> <p>The last sentence of paragraph 1.9.117 [APP-142, paras 1.9.115 - 1.9.118] is confusing. If it means that there would be views towards the conservation area that include the prominent church spire that would be impacted, this has not been clearly assessed and it is therefore not clear how the conclusion of slight harm has been reached.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Expand on this assessment to include the nature of harm and from where this might be experienced. 2) Further explain the assessment that led to a conclusion of low adverse impact, or reconsider your assessment
1.6.33	Applicant	<p>Cassington Conservation Area [APP-142, paras 1.9.119 - 1.9.125]</p> <p>Following on from question 1.6.2 and the issues with Viewpoint 42, the ExA has further concerns. Given the errors in this photomontage, it is not clear how the assessments have been made. In addition, the assessment for Cassington relies heavily on the whether or not the panels will be visible from specific points rather than taking a wholistic approach to the potential</p>

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		<p>impact on the character of the village. This includes single direction views from the outlying recreation ground, from which the panels will be prominent.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Expand on the assessment, taking into account a wider consideration of the character of the village. 2) Further explain the assessment that led to a conclusion of low adverse impact or reconsider your assessment.
Archaeology		
	Applicant	<p>Assessment of non-designated archaeological sites.</p> <p>In ES Chapter 7 [CR1-003] Table 7.5 refers in several places to “A total of 44 areas containing significant buried archaeological remains have been avoided and sufficiently buffered within the Project design as shown on the Illustrative Masterplan presented as Figures 2.1 – 2.3 within Volume 2, Figures of the ES”</p> <p>[APP-132, paragraph 5.3] identifies 49 records that lie within the site boundaries, with a further 5 sites that lie just outside with the potential to extend into the Order Limits therefore 54 sites in total.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Explain the discrepancies between these documents. 2) Provide a table indicating which sites have been included for assessment, including their BW/APS/NHLE references (as appropriate), ordered by field number.
1.6.35	Applicant Oxford County Archaeology Service	<p>Buffer Zones around non-designated archaeological sites</p> <p>ES Chapter 7 [CR1-003, Paragraph 7.9.7] refers to “appropriate buffer zones.”</p> <p>Applicant - Explain what is “appropriate” and how this figure/measurement has been established for each asset?</p> <p>Oxford County Archaeology Service - are you in agreement with the identified areas of non-designated archaeology and their respective buffer zones?</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC: We are in broad agreement with the areas of non-designated archaeology and their buffer zones, and these have been produced in consultation with OCAS. The final areas should</p>

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		however be based on the detailed archaeological evaluation report once this has been produced and submitted.
1.6.36	Oxford County Archaeology Service Historic England	<p>Outline Written Scheme of Investigation</p> <p>Are you in agreement with all aspects of this document [CR1-005]? Please provide any concerns/ amendments etc in full.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC: The submitted Outline Written Scheme of Investigation, dated March 2025 [CR1-005], does not meet our standard requirements as set out in our Local Impact Report [REP1-072]. We provided the following comments to the applicant's archaeological consultant in March 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2.2 This outline WSI will need also to be agreed with OCAS and conform to our standard requirements. • 1.6 the evaluation work does not include the cable routes for the connection of the proposed solar farm. This will need to be undertaken in advance of the determination of this application in order that the impact of these proposals on archaeological heritage assets is appropriately understood. • 1.6.3 – 2 this section proposes that any areas that were not available for trenching would simply be subject to a strip map and record. This would not be appropriate however and the potential for archaeological remains to be present which would require preservation in situ cannot be ruled out. As such any such areas would need to be subject to an initial archaeological evaluation to identify the presence of, and the significance, of any heritage assets that may be present. Where significant archaeological heritage assets are identified then the outline strategy will need to provide for their physical preservation. • 1.6.3 – 3 These areas will need to be evaluated via trenching in advance of any final decisions being made on the location of these cable connections in order that the impact

		<p>on heritage assets is understood, and significant heritage assets can be appropriately dealt with including their physical preservation where necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.6.9 monitoring arrangements set out within this outline WSI will need to conform to our standard requirements as set out in our generic brief and specify that we require 10 days' notice to book site visits. <p>Archaeological Fieldwork Methods 1.6.14 – 1.6.22 [CR1-005]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section could be misinterpreted to assume that there will be an archaeological watching brief in the first instance with provisions for this to be replaced by a more controlled excavation should this encounter significant archaeological deposits. Whilst such recording actions (watching briefs) may be suitable for some impacts such as cable trenches in less sensitive areas there will also be areas where more detailed and controlled excavation may be required, such as for compounds, access roads and other larger impacts.• Areas that had not been subject to archaeological evaluation prior to the determination of this proposal would need to be evaluated in the first instance. Appropriate mitigation can then be based on the results of this evaluation. Where evaluation has been undertaken as part of the submission then this data and the specific impact will be used to determine appropriate mitigation in advance of the agreement of the detailed specifications.• As stated in this overarching WSI the purpose of this document is to describe the procedures that will be used to determine the requirements for further archaeological work, which will then be set out in detail within the more site specific written specifications (2.3). This detailed specification will need to be based on the results of the geophysical survey and the archaeological trenched evaluation, the latter of which has yet to be reported.• It is useful for the general principles for evaluation, excavation and watching briefs to be set out but this could be made clearer in this overarching WSI that which would be most
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		<p>appropriate for any individual area will be agreed and set out in the detailed specification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For clarity the WSI should include the principles of these fieldwork methods in separate sections making clear in each that which of the mitigation methods will be appropriate for any specific area will be determined from the results of the evaluation work, both submitted and any evaluation undertaken post consent and agreed at the detailed specification stage. • 1.6.30 environmental sampling would need to be undertaken as standard for any areas of archaeological excavation and a sampling strategy would need to be agreed with OCAS at the start of any excavation area. • 1.6.45 The WSI should make it clear that the draft copy of the PXA will need to be agreed with OCAS rather than just provided to us. • 1.6.46 the level of publication required will depend on the nature of the results and the outline WSI will need to highlight that this would need to be agreed with OCAS. • 1.6.49 the Outline WSI will need to state that whether or not a transfer of title for has been signed is indicated within any reports. Given the recent Historic England guidance on archiving and transfer of title the detailed specification will need to confirm whether or not the landowner has agreed to this transfer. <p>Following our comments a revised outline WSI was produced – revision 2, dated June 2025 and this revised OWSI has address our comments and is an acceptable scheme of investigation. It is assumed this document will be submitted into the examination by the applicant in due course.</p>
1.6.37	Oxford County Archaeology Service Historic England	<p>Designated Archaeological sites</p> <p>Based on the evidence provided in [APP-133] and [APP-143] and with regards to a) Sansom's Platt, b) Rectangular Earthworks, Hensington, c) Blenheim Villa and Associated field system:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Are you in agreement with the significance assessment of these Scheduled Monuments? 2) Do you agree with the buffer zones that are proposed?

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		<p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC: We would defer to Historic England on the significance assessment of the impact on the scheduled monuments but would highlight that the results of the archaeological evaluation do show a continuation of the Roman ‘small town’ at Sansom’s Platt, beyond the currently scheduled area. This is likely to be of demonstrably equivalent significance to the scheduled site. This could only be fully understood once the report for this archaeological evaluation has been produced and submitted.</p>
1.6.38	Applicant	<p>Sansom’s Platt (SM)</p> <p>In their RR [RR-0398] and DL1 submission, Historic England consider the potential impact as greater than negligible due to the modern intrusion that will detract from the significance of the monument through the impact upon the appreciation of the rural surroundings.</p> <p>Explain in more detail how you came to your conclusions or reconsider your assessment.</p>
1.6.39	Applicant	<p>Piling Impacts</p> <p>ES Chapter 7 [CR-003] Paragraphs 7.9.30 to 7.9.44 indicate that the solar farm would be beneficial due to the cessation of ploughing. However, the potential impact of the required piling is not discussed or brought into this assessment, leaving an unquantifiable effect that requires addressing. Include these impacts in your assessment and reconsider the outcome/ conclusions reached in light of the additional evidence.</p>
1.6.40	Applicant	<p>Surface-laid cables - significant archaeology</p> <p>ES Chapter 7 [CR-003] paragraph 7.9.7 notes that any cables that are required to cross areas of significant archaeology will be placed in protective ducts and placed on the ground surface. Provide more detail in terms of how many of the archaeological sites this may affect, how many cables this might entail, how large the ducts will be and how this may impact on the openness of the land and, where public access remains, how walkers would be protected from trip hazards.</p>
1.6.41	Applicant	<p>Surface-laid cables - Less significant archaeology</p> <p>Paragraph 7.9.33 of [CR1-003] states that following further site investigation, appropriate strategies during construction could include the placement of any cables within protective ducts</p>

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		<p>placed on the surface of the ground, or the implementation of an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation ahead of construction.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Explain what an “appropriate programme of archaeological investigation” might entail in these circumstances. 2) Explain what surface laid cables might look like, how they would be protected, how this would impact on the ability to use the land for conservation grazing.
1.6.42	Applicant	<p>Cable Route and accessible areas in areas of significant archaeology.</p> <p>ES Chapter 7 [CR-003] paragraph 7.9.8 notes that significant archaeological remains may be identified through pre-construction geophysical survey and/ or trial trenching along the proposed route of the 275 kilovolt (kV) cable.</p> <p>The additional mitigation proposed suggests an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation prior to construction.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Explain what this might entail, given that this paragraph indicates that the archaeology would have been discovered through investigation prior to construction? 2) Explain how this mitigation is explicitly secured within the oWSI and DCO
1.6.43	Applicant	<p>Cable Route and accessible areas in areas of less significant archaeology (1)</p> <p>ES Chapter 7 [CR-003] paragraph 7.9.34 notes that locally important archaeological remains may be identified through pre-construction geophysical survey and/ or trial trenching along the proposed route of the 275 kV cable.</p> <p>The additional mitigation proposed suggests an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation prior to construction. Explain what this might entail, given that this paragraph indicates that the archaeology would have been discovered through investigation prior to construction? Explain how this mitigation is explicitly secured within the oWSI and DCO</p>
1.6.44	Applicant	<p>Cable Route and accessible areas in areas of less significant archaeology (2)</p> <p>ES Chapter 7 [CR-003] paragraph 7.9.35 notes that less significant archaeological remains could be present within the easement required for construction of the 275 kV cable within areas that are not accessible for pre-construction surveys and therefore potentially only discoverable during construction.</p> <p>The additional mitigation proposed is indicated in a provisional tense, suggesting alternatives, but also suggests investigation ahead of/ during construction.</p>

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		<div>1) Please provide a more definitive statement of the proposed mitigation if such circumstances arise.</div> <div>2) Explain how this mitigation is explicitly secured within the oWSI and DCO.</div>
1.6.45	Applicant	<div>Archaeological Investigations</div> <div>ES Chapter 7 [CR1-003] paragraph 7.4.13 states that archaeological trial trenching was commenced in August 2024 and the report will be submitted as soon as possible.</div> <div><div>1) Submit these results or provide an update on when you expect to be able to submit.</div><div>2) Respond to paragraphs 5.69 and 5.70 of Historic England’s DL1 submission.</div></div>

Q1.7. Draft Development Consent Order		
Interpretation and Articles		
1.7.1	Applicant	<p>Ensuring correct terminology</p> <p>The dDCO refers to the 'permanent close of a Public Right of Way'. Is this the correct terminology, or is this meant to read 'stopping up'? Please examine all wording in relation to closures and stopping up and reflect on whether what is actually intended would be delivered through the dDCO.</p>
1.7.2	Applicant	<p>Correct referencing</p> <p>In the Part 1 Interpretation, it would appear that the 1961 Act and the 1965 act (m) and (n) are out of logical sequence. Please address.</p>
1.7.3	Applicant	<p>Definition of maintain</p> <p>The definition of maintain includes the caveat of "but not remove, reconstruct or replace the whole of Work No.1 at the same time."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is envisaged by this clause and what constitutes 'at the same time'? 2) What is meant by the word 'whole' and could a more specific figures be applied? 3) What does this actually allow the Applicant to do and what are the limits the public and local authorities can expect to result from this clause? 4) If replacing a lot of infrastructure in Work No.1 at the same time, would construction compounds be required for the lay-down, storage of new and old panels and for workers involved with the maintenance? 5) If replacing a lot of infrastructure, would haul roads need to be re-laid? 6) If replacing a lot of infrastructure, but not the 'whole' project, would the terms of the code of construction practice serve as enforceable provisions?
1.7.4	All local authorities Natural England Environment Agency Statutory Undertakers	<p>Disapplication of legislative provisions</p> <p>Article 6, together with Schedule 3, of the dDCO relate to the disapplication of legislative provisions. Set out whether there are any anomalies on the list, whether there is any disagreement in respect of any provision being disappplied and set out any reasons behind this disagreement (if any exist).</p>

		<p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OHA: Row 7 of Chapter 8 (comments on draft DCO) of the Joint LIR of Cherwell DC, Vale of White Horse DC, West Oxfordshire DC, Oxfordshire CC [REP1-072] concerns art.6(1)(a) (application and modification of statutory provisions) and states –</p> <p>“This provision seeks to disapply s.23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. As stated elsewhere in this LIR (Chapter 6.6 (hydrology and flood risk)) OCC (the lead local flood authority) would prefer to maintain the tried and tested regime under s.23, rather than replace it with a regime which includes, for instance, shorter timeframes for determining applications. OCC therefore opposes the disapplication of s.23”.</p> <p>The OHAs maintain their position in respect of that provision.</p>
1.7.5	Applicant Local Highway Authority	<p>Street authority scope</p> <p>In Articles 9(5) and 10(6), it refers to the undertaker being the street authority. The implication in Article 10(6) appears to be that streets where the undertaker is the street authority do not need to be maintained. Is that a reasonable interpretation?</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC:</p> <p><u>Article 9 (power to alter layout, etc., of streets)</u></p> <p>Article 9(3) of the draft DCO [REP1-005] says the undertaker must restore any street that has been temporarily altered under the Order to the reasonable satisfaction of the street authority.</p> <p>Article 9(4) of the draft DCO says the powers to interfere with “any street” conferred by article 9(2) may not be exercised without the street authority’s consent. (The powers to interfere under article 9(2) are: to alter the layout of any street, including (a) alter the level or increase the width of any kerb, footway, cycle track or verge; (b) make and maintain passing places; and (c) alter, remove, replace and relocate any street furniture, including bollards, lighting columns, road signs and chevron signs.</p>

		<p>Article 9(5) disapplies paragraphs (3) and (4) of article 9 where the undertaker is a street authority for a street in which works are being carried out.</p> <p>So, in circumstances where the undertaker is a street authority for a street in which works are being carried out, the undertaker would not need to (i) restore any street that has been temporarily altered or (ii) obtain consent before interfering with that street or those streets.</p> <p><u>Article 10 (construction and maintenance of altered streets)</u></p> <p>Article 10(6) states article 10(2) to (5) do not apply where the undertaker is the street authority for a street in which the works are being carried out.</p> <p>Article 10(2) states the temporary alterations to each of the streets specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 must be completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the street authority and the temporary alterations must be maintained by and at the expense of the undertaker for the duration that the temporary alterations are used by the undertaker. By article 10(6), where the undertaker is the street authority for a street in which the works are being carried out, the temporary alterations will not have to be completed to another party's reasonable satisfaction and will not have to be maintained at the undertaker's expense.</p> <p>Article 9(3) states the undertaker must restore any street that has been temporarily altered under the Order to the reasonable satisfaction of the street authority. By article 10(3) the restoration works carried out under article 9(3) must be completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the highway authority or street authority and must be maintained by the undertaker for a period of 12 months from their completion and from the expiry of that period by and at the expense of the highway authority or street authority. By article 9(5), where the undertaker is the street authority for a street in which the works are being carried out, no restoration will be necessary. It follows that since there will be no restoration works, they do not need (per article 10(6)) to be completed to a particular standard or for a particular period.</p> <p>Article 10(4) states that, in any action against the undertaker in respect of loss or damage resulting from any failure by it to maintain a street under article 10, it is a defence (without prejudice to any other defence or the application of the law relating to contributory negligence) to prove that the undertaker had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the street to which the action relates was not dangerous to</p>
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		<p>traffic. By article 10(6), where the undertaker is the street authority for a street in which the works are being carried out, it appears that the undertaker cannot make use of that defence.</p> <p>Article 10(5) further concerns the defence under paragraph (4) and is reliant on that paragraph. Since article 10(4) does not apply (per article 10(6)) where the undertaker is the street authority for a street in which the works are being carried out, it follows that article 10(5) would also not apply in those circumstances.</p>
1.7.6	Applicant Local Highway Authority	<p>Usage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW)</p> <p>Article 11(1)(b) authorises the Applicant to allow the use of public rights of way by motor vehicles.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Why is this power necessary? 2) Is there a list of such paths where this is anticipated and have those paths been assessed as to their suitability to take motor vehicles? 3) Where in the dDCO is the restoration and reinstatement of these paths secured? <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is assumed the power is necessary to enable occasional access for maintenance vehicles exercising a private right of way rather than exercising public rights of way that in most cases do not allow MPV access (OCC will await the applicant's answer to this question to confirm this assumption). It is further assumed that the PRoW will be made suitable for the intended use (surfacing, width, gradient, gates etc) and that the detail of these will be supplied for advance approval. We request that the applicant confirms this is the case. 2. A list has been supplied but the LHA has not assessed these for suitability as it is assumed they will be widened and surfaced to accommodate this MPV use without impacting on public exercise of rights of way. We request that the applicant confirms this is the case. 3. The DCO does not contain adequate detail on the specification to which these PRoW will be provided and the monitoring/maintenance of them which will be applied to enable private MPV access and protect users exercising public rights of way. Again, the LHA requests how this will be provided.

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		<p>Moreover, as set out in the LIR [REP1-072], OCC wish to reiterate that the proposed highways powers in the dDCO Part 3: Streets, in their current form, are too wide-ranging and that OCC as the Highway Authority would welcome discussion with the applicant on the scope of the highways powers and a separate highways side agreement.</p> <p>OCC are similarly concerned by the wide-ranging power to interfere with PRow under article 11. For instance, article 11(1) of the draft DCO [REP1-005] allows the undertaker to “temporarily close, prohibit the use of, restrict the use of, authorise the use of, alter or divert <u>any</u> ... [PRow]”. The power extends beyond the Order limits and it is not clear from the application documents how this power is justified in this instance, particularly when the Outline PRow Management is limited to “managing impacts to affected PRow within the Project site during construction” (paragraph 1.1.8 of Appendix B to the Code of Construction Practice - Part 1 [APP-232]. Again, OCC would welcome the opportunity to discuss this point with the Applicant.</p>
1.7.7	Applicant Local Highway Authority	<p>Access to premises</p> <p>Article 11(2) affords access for pedestrians to premises.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What about those with vehicles needing to access premises or houses? 2) If vehicles are temporarily unable to access premises, how will this displacement be managed included any displaced parking in the area? <p>RESPONSE: OCC: We await the applicant’s response before commenting.</p>
1.7.8	Applicant Local Highway Authority	<p>Traffic Regulation Orders</p> <p>Article 16(2) seems to suggest the Applicant can impose traffic restrictions on any road, regardless of whether it is within the Order limits or not. Clarify the situation and, if that is what is intended, justify the scope of the powers sought.</p> <p>RESPONSE: OCC: We await the applicant’s response before commenting.</p>

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1.7.9	Applicant	<p>Tree preservation orders</p> <p>Under Article 39, is it appropriate to allow for a tree covered by a preservation order to be felled without any requirement to replace it? Should not a ratio of 1:1 for felled trees be more equitable for nature?</p>
1.7.10	Applicant Local Highway Authority National Highways	<p>Article 41</p> <p>Article 41 is stated to follow wording seen within Transport and Works Acts Orders. No equivalent precedent is cited from the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) regime. Explain with reasons.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC:</p> <p>While the Explanatory Memorandum [REP1-007] does not cite a precedent, this provision is reasonably well precedented in recent years. While the drafting is not identical on each occasion, examples include the following provisions of the following DCOs –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 47 of the Southampton to London Pipeline Development Consent Order 2020 (SI 2020/1099), Article 67 of the A122 (Lower Thames Crossing) Development Consent Order 2025 (SI 2025/462), and Article 52 of the Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm Order 2025 (SI 2025/468). <p>The OHA's comments on the draft DCO (chapter 8 of the Joint LIR, [REP1-072]) do not include any concerns with the inclusion of this provision.</p>
1.7.11	Applicant	<p>Community educational facility</p> <p>The Applicant has provided illustrative drawings of the educational building to be constructed. It is not clear to the ExA which article or requirement in the dDCO would actually deliver this building or control/ stipulate its size, scale or appearance. Explain where this is detailed, controlled and secured.</p>
1.7.12	Applicant	<p>Article 22</p>

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		It is noted that Article 22 is drafted to enable compulsory acquisition of new rights over all of the Order land, with a schedule which limits the compulsory acquisition power in defined plots to the defined rights listed in schedule 9. Please justify and explain the need for such an approach and how this complies with guidance detailed in <i>Planning Act 2008: Guidance related to procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land</i> published by DCLG (now MHCLG).
1.7.13	Applicant	<p>Article 24</p> <p>The Explanatory Memorandum [AS-011, paragraph 3.5.11] states the basis for the article's wording is on a dDCO for a scheme that the ExA notes has not yet been through Examination, let alone its recommendation period. Why is it appropriate to base the wording for this article on an unmade, unexamined Order?</p>
1.7.14	Applicant	<p>Article 29</p> <p>For clarity, please amend the first sentence of Article 29 to include express reference to the land in question being allowed "to be temporarily used for the carrying out of the authorised development".</p> <p>Please provide must be evidence to show that persons with an interest in the Order land were aware that undefined new rights were being sought over all of the Order land and were consulted on that basis.</p>
1.7.15	Applicant	<p>Articles 29 and 30</p> <p>It is noted that Articles 29 and 30 give temporary possession powers allow temporary possession of any of the Order land, with Article 30 also allowing temporary possession over additional land within the wider Order limits. As such, temporary possession powers are not limited to the land specified in Schedule 11.</p> <p>Please justify why wider powers, which also allow temporary possession of land not listed in Schedule 11, are necessary and appropriate and explain what steps they have taken to alert all landowners, occupiers, etc. within the Order land to this possibility.</p>
Requirements		
1.7.16	Applicant	Requirement 3

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		Under Schedule 2 Requirement 3 of the dDCO, clarify the scope of what "amendments" are permissible to the proposed development. Also set out justification as to why the SoS is not part of this amendment process.
	Applicant	Requirement 4 Schedule 2 Requirement 4 establishes a community liaison group during the course of construction. Could or should that be extended, albeit with perhaps different terms of reference, for the operational period so that residents have a direct conduit of information with representatives throughout the lifespan of the project?
1.7.18	Applicant	Requirement 5 Requirement 5(2) refers to the OLDP document. Would the Requirement better be written as needing a Full/ Detailed Layout and Design Principles document in accordance with the outline as in the case of other management plans referred to in Schedule 2?
1.7.19	Applicant All local authorities Oxford County Archaeology Services	Requirement 10 Is there not a need to require a Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy to be submitted and approved as well? RESPONSE: OHA: The detailed archaeological mitigation strategy is the same as the archaeological written scheme of investigation required by Requirement 10(1) which also contains provisions for this to be agreed. Requirement 10(3) requires that this archaeological WSI for the mitigation phase must be in accordance with the submitted Overarching/Outline WSI submitted with this application. An amended version of this, revision 2, has now been agreed with OCAS and should be submitted by the applicant into the examination in due course.
1.7.20	Applicant National Highways	Requirement 11 Does National Highways need to be referenced as either a discharging body or consultative body, having particular regard to the construction traffic management plan?
1.7.21	Applicant	Clarification of terms The dDCO appears to use the terms fibre optic cables and telecommunications cables interchangeably. Explain whether they constitute one and the same, or if they serve different purposes.

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Schedules		
1.7.22	Applicant Statutory Undertakers	<p>Protective Provisions</p> <p>Please review the protective provisions contained in the dDCO.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Advise whether there is written agreement or disagreement on the protective provisions as drafted. 2) If there is disagreement, highlight those areas where dispute exists and the positions of the parties behind this dispute. 3) If the Statutory Undertaker(s) are unhappy, the Statutory Undertakers to provide a full copy/ transcript of their preferred protective provisions and set out the reasons behind the differences with those submitted by the Applicant. <p>RESPONSE: OCC: Please see Joint LIR [REP1-072] paragraphs 7.5.30 to 7.5.35 in relation to dDCO Schedule 15: protective provision Part 3. OCC understands the purpose of these PPs is to amend the existing timeframes for determination of a consent under section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 ("LDA 1991"). OCC is used to the tried and tested regime under section 23 and does not consider the Applicant's proposed departure from it is justified. OCC considers the existing regime strikes a fair balance between the interests of the Applicant and decision maker and therefore considers it should not be disapplied by the Order.</p>
	Applicant Statutory Undertakers	<p>Definitions</p> <p>In Schedule 1(1) there is reference to 'auxiliary equipment'. It is not known whether this is classed as associated development, ancillary development or some other term that is not covered by PA2008. Explain and elaborate on this term.</p>
1.7.24	Applicant National Grid Electricity Transmission	<p>Full work details required</p> <p>Work No.2 in the dDCO simply states "development of a New National Grid substation" without any breakdown of the apparatus or equipment that comprises this work. Set this out fully within the Order.</p>
Controlling Documents for the dDCO		
1.7.25	Applicant	Discrepancy in details

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		<p>In paragraph 2.9 of the guide to the application, it provides dimensions of the substation with a maximum height cited of 15 metres [APP-004]. This height is also repeated in the Statement of Statutory [APP-018] Nuisance at paragraph 1.4.10. Meanwhile, paragraph 1.3.6 of the Explanatory Memorandum [APP-017] says the maximum height would be 12 metres. Furthermore, the Statement of Statutory Nuisance, at paragraph 1.4.10 states the maximum height of 15 metres excludes connecting tower structures, but no detail is given as to the prospective height of those. The revised OLDP states the main building would be 14m high and not 12 metres.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Clarify the situation, rectify any errors so that all documents are consistent and tell the ExA categorically the parameters that were used within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 2) Explain why a requirement, specifying the maximum parameters of the proposed development, is not written on the face of the dDCO. 3) Without prejudice, provide wording for a requirement specifying the parameters of the proposed development.
1.7.26	Applicant	<p>Other Consents and Licences</p> <p>Within the Consents and Licences position statement, there are a number of additional consents required with some listed as being "not started." Has any progress been made towards applying for or obtaining these and if not, why not?</p>
1.7.27	<p>All local authorities</p> <p>Natural England</p> <p>Environment Agency</p> <p>Historic England</p> <p>Statutory Undertakers</p>	<p>Management Plans</p> <p>A number of management plans are submitted with the application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review those management plans and set out clearly what changes, if any, you consider necessary. It may be better to put these in a tabular format. As long as the rationale behind the proposed amendments are explained. 2) Are there any management plans promised in the future (see Table 1.1 of the Outline Code of Construction Practice) that you consider are important or critical to be reviewed during the Examination, and thus the Applicant should submit now? <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>CDC:</p>

		<p>1) CDC have no comments to make regarding the Outline Code of Construction Practice (Parts 1 and 2), the Outline Operational Management Plan and the Outline Decommissioning Plan. It is noted that for the OCoCP [APP-232] a final Plan supported by a series of management plans listed in table 1.1 of the document is to be submitted.</p> <p>2) The management plans in Table 1.1 of the Outline CoCP relevant to Environmental Protection are the Dust Management Plan, Pollution Prevention Plan, Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan, and the Contaminated Land and Groundwater Discovery strategy. The first three would be expected to be incorporated into a CoCP, which can be secured by a requirement. Similarly, the Contaminated Land and Groundwater Discovery strategy can be covered by an Unexpected Contamination requirement. It is not considered to be critical for these management plans to be submitted during the examination.</p> <p>VWHDC:</p> <p>1) No comment to make regarding the Outline Code of Construction Practice (Parts 1 and 2), the Outline Operational Management Plan, and the Outline Decommissioning Plan. The requirement to protect the listed milestone on the Oxford Road however needs to be included for construction and decommissioning phases.</p> <p>2) With regards to the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan. While the LEMP proposes there will be detailed LEMPs as the project progresses, there should be more information and clarification in the Framework. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.2.1 refers to Planting areas are shown on the illustrative masterplan (ES Volume 2, Figures 2.1a - 2.4d however this plan does not show the detail of the planting, just that planting will happen. The scale of the drawings makes it difficult to cover the proposed detail. Similar scale issues exist for the Landscape, Ecology and Amenities Plan. • Zone 5: Southern Area falls within the WWHDC. Para 4.6.3 '<i>New planting, including woodland blocks, to visually break up the mass of the Project seen in views across Farmoor Reservoir and other areas to the north of the zone.</i>' Planting should not be restricted to views to the north; other views are also important. There is no woodland
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		<p>blocks of planting illustrated on the Masterplan in this Landscape area, just a very narrow strip of planting similar to the width of a hedgerow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paragraph 5.6.1 Southern Area describes landscape proposals. However, the proposed planting is predominantly restricted to creating hedgerows adjacent to the PROW routes and the narrow strip of woodland north of the substations. It is not of a form or scale that breaks up the mass of the proposed solar arrays and substations located on the north facing slopes.• Offset distances should be clearly explained, which I could see hedgerows at least 5m and water courses a min 8m, I couldn't see information of existing trees or woodlands, especially as many of the woodlands are ancient. It would be helpful to have details of the proposed offsets for footpaths, bridleways etc in one place to inform the detailed design.• More variety is required in the proposed vegetation, such as hedgerow grassland mixes, to reflect different orientation of hedgerows. Limited types of planting species mixes are provided such as woodland planting, woodland core and woodland edge.• Paragraph 15.1.4 states 'During the first two years of establishment, the works will be inspected three times (during the growing season) and thereafter the works will be inspected annually.' However, I would therefore expect the defects period to match. Paragraph 1.3.1 12 months defects period is not long enough for especially for hedgerow and woodland planting, 24 months is suggested.• Paragraph 15.1.5 the Management plan should last for the lifetime of the project.• Paragraph 16.2 Native woodland should also include thinning trees and shrubs as they mature to create a good structure to planting.• The scale on the Indicative plans at the end of the document are keyed at 1:250 but as coming up as 1:200, is the keyed 1:250 correct? The screening woodland north of the substation is proposed at approximately 5m wide, which is not a substantial woodland block. Also is the proposed woodland planting at an acceptable easement distance from the substation and connecting electrical infrastructure. Could the required technical easement information be added? It is also not clear if these plans and associated offsets refer to all PWOR or just those being created as part of the development. This needs to be clarified.• More variation will be required in the proposed planting species, Appendix B, however this could be covered in the detailed LEMPs, there will be a requirement for a wider range of species and planting types, such as woodland core and edge mixes, hedgerow
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		<p>mixes, with variations to aspect. However, variation is expected over the 5 Zones, to reflect character and soil types.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Appendix C Typical Maintenance Scheme, the text is predominantly referring to the education area. It is not clear if maintenance will be similar over the whole site.• Structural Woodland and Shrub Mix, indicates just one visit a year which includes to cut back, or spot treat excessive weeds. However, a September date is late in the season for this. It is likely more frequent visits will be required in the establishment period. <p>WODC:</p> <p>Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [APP-235]</p> <p>It is recognised that further detail on ecological management will be provided with LEMPs for each phase to fulfil the proposed requirement 6 of the DCO. However, there are aspects that need to be added or better defined within the OLEMP to facilitate discharge of individual LEMPs to ensure the overall vision and specific habitat, or species requirements are met by the LEMPs. WODC agree with the comments made by OCC in relation to the LEMP as set out below and won't repeat them here.</p> <p>OCC:</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>In this answer, OCC refer to several instances where the control document is not satisfactory owing to a lack of detail or information. OCC's strong preference would be for the control documents to be amended during the examination, in accordance with the points raised, to allow interested parties to comment on them. If that is not possible, OCC consider the relevant requirement should be amended to require the undertaker to provide the outstanding information before the requirement can be discharged. For example, regarding the Code of Construction Practice, Requirement 11, paragraph (2) could be subject to a new paragraph (5), which would provide -</p> <p>"The code of construction practice must include the following information -"</p> <p>The information outstanding at the end of the Examination could then be set out under new paragraph (5).</p>
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		<p>Outline Operational Management Plan [APP-234]</p> <p>Climate action:</p> <p>Table 3.1 should include methods for mitigation of extreme weather-related damage to solar panels. This should also include monitoring of the number, type and impact of extreme weather events which affect the solar array.</p> <p>The table should directly address the use of planting as a mitigation for flooding, reducing soil erosion from runoff and maximising carbon sequestration.</p> <p>LLFA:</p> <p>Table 3.1 under Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage section refers to a 'detailed Operational Management Plan' to be prepared. There is a sub section in Table 3.1 'Potential impacts on hydrology and flood risk due to alterations in surface water runoff due to additional impervious areas.'</p> <p>This section of the table should include a section on surface water runoff changes from the land. The surface runoff from the site relies on the ground to absorb and control the runoff. This is reliant on the provision of suitable management practices during the construction, at the end of construction and during the operational life of the project. During operation the outline plan should set out how they are to monitor and inspect the solar array runoff periodically and after significant rainfall events; what actions will be taken to ensure where there are issues soil and vegetation are reinstated; identification of where there are persistent issues with runoff and eroding soil and vegetation; expectation of corrective measures timeframes. This should be linked to more detailed Operational plans for specific areas that consider ground conditions and landscape vegetation as well as implications of runoff across the site to ensure this is managed, at present there is no indication that this will be included within more detailed plans. We would expect to see links to the LEMP within this document as it relates to the management of the landscape around the solar arrays to provide for flood resilience of the vegetation.</p> <p>Outline Decommissioning Plan [APP-232]</p> <p>Climate Action:</p> <p>Table 3.1 should include consideration of projections for extreme climatic conditions.</p>
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		<p>The table should also consider mitigation of extreme weather on the decommissioning process due to an increase in climate-related extreme weather events.</p> <p><u>Outline PRow Management Strategy [APP-232, Annex B]</u></p> <p>PRow:</p> <p>Annex B of [APP-232] provides an outline PRow Management Strategy with the stated purpose of “to set out the approach to managing impacts to affected PRow within the Project site during construction.” And further states “A full and detailed PRow Management Strategy will be developed in general accordance with this Outline PRow Management Strategy and submitted post consent”.</p> <p>This outline PRow Management Strategy is considered inadequate as it only considers construction period and fails to consider and address representations made previously (such as OCC’s RR [RR-0793] and the Joint Local Impact Report [REP1-072] regarding the impact of the development as a whole and all stages, on PRow and users and fails to include a comprehensive range of onsite and offsite mitigation measures.</p> <p>The “<i>full and detailed PRow Management Strategy</i>” that covers all these areas in detail for each PRow is important and critical for review in the examination and should be submitted prior to the ExA’s recommendation to the SoS.</p> <p><u>Outline Code of Construction Practice [APP-232] and [APP-233]</u></p> <p>LLFA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 1.1 Refers to Soil Management Plan which would make provision to: To set out measures to conserve soil resources; avoid damage to soil structure; maintain soil drainage during construction; and identify principles for the reinstatement of the soil profile following the construction. <p>This plan will contribute to the management of the soil following the construction of the solar panels and the reinstatement of any soil (and linked to vegetation cover). The management of vegetation for the runoff from the solar panels is key to the managing runoff and flood risk from the site, however the Outline soil management plan does not</p>
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		<p>include for this and should be included in more detail at this stage to ensure that this is managed appropriately. This refers to Annex C which is not within the document but is in Part 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 1.1 discussed a Flood Risk Management Plan. <p>This plan relates to an operational plan only in relation to how evacuation will take place and is not prepared for this part of the project, if this plan were to be broadened to include for measures to manage the flood risk to and from the development during the operation then this document or a outline version should be provided at this stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Para 9.5.16 to 9.5.18 notes how the Outline Soil Management Plan identifies how compaction will be dealt with during construction. <p>More details are required on when inspections will take place across the solar array construction (linked to times when there is heavy rainfall during construction), and locations need to be identified that need attenuating during construction where compaction or rutting occurs which cannot be rectified within a short timeframe. The outline plan should identify what these measures look like, such as deployment of temporary attenuation or construction of ponds, this would be very specific in locations A list of inspections, monitoring and implementation of any measures would be relevant in an outline plan to provide confidence that these measures would be in place as there is reliance on this as part of the surface water and flood risk management measures.</p> <p>Ecology:</p> <p>The oCOCp needs to include a Construction Environment Management Plan which should include detailed construction stage ecological mitigation, as well as a requirement for ecological surveys to be kept up to date during the construction period. The ecological buffers within this document need to be reviewed in line with our comments in the LIR.</p> <p><u>Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [APP-235]</u></p> <p>LLFA:</p>
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		<p>The landscape plan does not recognise the role the landscape has on the runoff from the development, which is across a number of sub catchments.</p> <p>There are no measures included in the Landscape and Ecology plan at this stage that links or relates to the management of vegetation that may be relied upon to manage runoff from the solar arrays. This formed part of the surface water management strategy of which the LIR [REP1-072] provides commentary. Part of the oLEMP should refer to how the landscape is to be managed for the runoff requirements in the locations of the arrays, Section 16.5.12 under plant nutrients, only refers to occasions when there is a storm event and there is damage, which is undefined. This needs to be clarified.</p> <p>Ecology:</p> <p>It is recognised that further detail on ecological management will be provided with LEMPs for each phase to fulfil the proposed requirement 6 of the DCO. However, there are aspects that need to be added or better defined within the OLEMP to facilitate discharge of individual LEMPs to ensure the overall vision and specific habitat, or species requirements are met by the LEMPs.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="768 951 1966 1453"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="768 951 1048 1042">Issue</th><th data-bbox="1048 951 1328 1042">Suggested change</th><th data-bbox="1328 951 1966 1042">Rationale</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="768 1042 1048 1453">Need to clearly identify locations for measures.</td><td data-bbox="1048 1042 1328 1453">A plan is needed to accompany the OLEMP to identify where the different mitigation, management and monitoring measures will be targeted.</td><td data-bbox="1328 1042 1966 1453">The success of the measures in achieving mitigation or enhancement will be very location specific. Currently the written descriptions of location for different measures within the OLEMP are very broad. An accompanying map is needed to identify clearly on one plan that forms part of the OLEMP where the measures are needed. E.g. identifying where buffers will be needed, and their widths, identify the location of the hedgerows to link ancient</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Issue	Suggested change	Rationale	Need to clearly identify locations for measures.	A plan is needed to accompany the OLEMP to identify where the different mitigation, management and monitoring measures will be targeted.	The success of the measures in achieving mitigation or enhancement will be very location specific. Currently the written descriptions of location for different measures within the OLEMP are very broad. An accompanying map is needed to identify clearly on one plan that forms part of the OLEMP where the measures are needed. E.g. identifying where buffers will be needed, and their widths, identify the location of the hedgerows to link ancient
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				woodlands, defining the extent of the Evenlode corridor, locating the areas to be protected for archaeology and managed as meadow grassland, locating areas of grassland within the solar array, and those outside of it.	
		Bats	Following further survey to establish bat roost locations, flightlines and foraging, appropriate mitigation measures need to be included in the OLEMP, including identification of buffers to roosting sites and flightlines of a suitable width under appropriate nature conservation management and lighting regime. Broad areas appropriate for provision of bat boxes also need to be identified. Further measures	Bat populations of national importance have been found roosting in adjacent woodlands, inclusion of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures for bats will be critical in ensuring the project is compliant with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.	

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			may be needed depending on the outcome of the surveys.		
		Otter and Water vole	Following further survey to establish use of the site and adjacent watercourses and habitats, appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures need to be included in the OLEMP for bats, dormouse, skylark, otter and water vole including identification of buffers of a suitable width under appropriate nature conservation management and compensatory habitats. Further measures may be needed depending on the	The use of the site by otter and water vole is currently unknown. Once survey information has been provided, this should inform appropriate management measures in the OLEMP	

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			outcome of the surveys.		
		Biodiversity Net gain	The target habitats for biodiversity net gain including, but not limited to, those within the Evenlode Corridor, need to be better described using UKHab (and NVC where appropriate) and relate to a biodiversity metric for the site	Currently some of the habitats to be created are not well-defined; terms relating to the Evenlode Corridor have included 'Floodplain Meadow' and 'Floodplain mosaic'. Archaeological sites have been identified as creation of 'meadow grassland', bat buffer zones are described as 'a range of grasslands, scrub and mature trees'. UKHab classification terminology and NVC will ensure clarity over what is proposed; the Biodiversity Net Gain Statement submitted with the application relies on the measures set out in the OLEMP, therefore clarity over habitats will be critical with regard to delivery of the anticipated levels of BNG. Similarly, a target condition (based on condition assessment criteria) is required so there is common understanding around expectations of habitat quality to be delivered when it comes to agreeing LEMPs for each zone.	
		Watercourses	Measures for enhancement and/or creation of watercourses should be included to achieve biodiversity net gain.	This is supported by comments in our LIR [REP1-072], as well as Natural England and Environment Agency responses.	

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		Great crested Newts	Measures to enhance the site for great crested newt, through provision of ponds and linking terrestrial habitat.	As set out in our LIR [REP1-072] , there is an opportunity to provide habitats for great crested newts. No ponds are identified as being created within the site, and this is a missed opportunity for the restoration of wetlands in the landscape.
		Bats, dormice and woodland	Further measures to manage, enhance and link woodland habitats to benefit bats and dormice.	As set out in our LIR [REP1-072] , dormice and Bechstein and Barbastelle bats, are extremely rare in Oxfordshire. Further opportunities to expand, buffer and link habitats for these species should be identified. In particular between ancient woodlands where bat roosts are located. This includes the appropriate management of these woodlands.
		Farmland birds	Additional measures need to be identified within the OLEMP to effectively mitigate for the loss of suitable breeding habitat (as well as consideration of a wider farmland bird strategy to deliver compensation off-site).	<p>We have set out concerns in our LIR [REP1-072] about the effectiveness of skylark plots for mitigation of loss of breeding habitat for this priority species.</p> <p>Skylark plots are included in the OLEMP to provide foraging habitat within the solar arrays – these will not be suitable for breeding skylarks.</p> <p>Compensation for the loss of breeding habitat for skylarks must be provided – this could be part of a wider off-site farmland bird strategy or a financial contribution to habitat creation, management and monitoring in the local area).</p>

		Nightingale	Additional measures to provide continued and enhanced habitats for nightingale should be added in appropriate locations (informed by the breeding bird survey).	<p>Breeding nightingale is extremely rare in Oxfordshire, this species is identified as a priority in our emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and measures should be taken to conserve and enhance conditions for this species.</p> <p>The OLEMP should include specific management and monitoring measures for this species.</p>	
		Invertebrates	Alternative measures for supporting invertebrates should be included.	<p>As set out in our LIR [REP1-072], it is unclear what is proposed for invertebrates, whether this is bee hives (which would be inappropriate) or insect hotels. The latter are better suited to the built environment; opportunities to provide wider measures for invertebrates (such as planting of pollinator crops, beetle banks etc.) should be included.</p> <p>Native bumblebees should be the target for any such measures in the OLEMP rather than insect hotels, which are considered to be more urban features for use in public parks and gardens, or hives for honey bees (which would then compete with native bumblebees). Bumblebee nesting opportunities should be incorporated wherever possible, particularly alongside undisturbed areas of</p>	

			hedgerow and the potential to create south-facing “beetle banks” for a variety of species.
	Monitoring	Monitoring will need to be included for watercourses.	Watercourses should be considered within the BNG calculations, and appropriate creation/enhancement measures taken to achieve a net gain. This will need to be monitored.
	Monitoring	Monitoring of the ‘Lake Effect’	There is little data available to understand the impact of a solar farm of this scale in the UK on aquatic and wetland species, particularly aquatic invertebrates and wetland birds. This is set out in our LIR [REP1-072]. Monitoring during operation of the solar farm could greatly improve our understanding of these effects, as well as inform any reactive measures needed.
	Monitoring	Bats	Ongoing monitoring of impact on bat behaviour and the success of buffers should also be incorporated.

Landscape

Overall, the OLEMP is high-level and further detail on landscape and ecological management will be required going forward.

It is noted that the Code of Construction Practice suggests the preparation for a number of management plans. Notwithstanding this, the OLEMP would also benefit from being revised to address the following points. These comments should also be taken into account when preparing the more detailed LEMPs:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landscape elements: greater differentiation within the 'Landscape Elements' and their implementation and ongoing management requirements are required. For example, woodlands and grasslands can be of different character and the OLEMP does not differentiate between these, nor does it indicate their locations. The Illustrative Masterplan does also not provide this detail.• Landscape Zones: Whilst the principle of zoning is welcomed, it is not clear how these landscape zones have been defined as they are not included in the LVIA. They are also not shown on the Illustrative Masterplan. The descriptions are high-level and provide limited detail on landscape character and key characteristics to help inform the most appropriate mitigation measures and management. Further detail should be provided.• Landscape and ecological requirements: It is unclear how landscape and ecological requirements have informed mitigation and management measures, e.g. proposed planting, the width of buffers.• Timescales: the OLEMP states that the management will last for a minimum period of 30 years however the timescale of the development is minimum 40 years. Management should be provided for a lifetime of the development. The OLEMP should indicate how management could be addressed going forward after the end of the Management Plan period including during and after the decommissioning phase.• Management plan drawing: A plan is needed to accompany the OLEMP to identify where the different mitigation, management and monitoring measures will be targeted.• Management responsibilities: The OLEMP provides limited information on which parties will be responsible for the management. Further detail is required. In addition, a drawing or plan is required which clearly indicates the areas of responsibilities for management by the different parties such as the applicant, landowners, the highways authority or similar.• Management reviews: further information is required on who (which parties) will be involved in the review, who will carry out the management reviews and how changes to management will be discussed. <p>Drawings: the indicative greenway plans submitted as part of the OLEMP illustrate possible arrangements for greenways in different situations. These are illustrative only and set out a design approach rather than providing management details. These might be better placed elsewhere, e.g. in the design principles document. Notwithstanding this, the rationale and justification behind the width of the buffers indicated on the drawings are not clear and further information on this should be provided.</p>
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		<p><u>Other Outline Management Plans</u></p> <p>Climate Action:</p> <p>No Carbon Management Plan has been provided for this development, and we would recommend that one is developed. It should integrate the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy [APP-216] and take a whole life approach to carbon management, including governance and monitoring of carbon emissions for the project.</p> <p>Ecology:</p> <p>To understand impacts on bats, an outline Construction Artificial Light Emissions Plan should be submitted into the examination prior to the ExA's recommendation to the SoS</p> <p>Landscape:</p> <p>From a landscape and visual point of view the following management plans are particularly relevant and should be provided by the applicant prior to the ExA's recommendation to the SoS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – to ensure adequate protection and consideration of the natural environment during construction. Such a plan is also likely to be required when panels or cables need to be replaced during the lifetime of the project. • More detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plans (LEMPs) – these should be area-specific and provide more detail. • An Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan. This should be informed by a Tree survey to BS5837:2013 standard. • A Lighting Management Plan • Decommissioning Plan
1.7.28	Applicant	<p>Side agreements and legal agreements</p> <p>Set out which local authorities or statutory bodies are being engaged in either side agreements or, if applicable, legal agreements pursuant to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Give a broad overview of what is sought to be achieved within these agreements.</p>

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Q1.8. Ecology and Biodiversity		
Ecological interests		
1.8.1	Applicant	<p>Clearer plans required</p> <p>The Hedgerow Removal Plans are at an inaccessible scale. Please provide 1:500 drawings for each of the areas where hedges are to be removed so that a proper appraisal of their length and extent can be ascertained.</p>
1.8.2	Applicant	<p>Compounds in the Environmental Statement</p> <p>ES Chapter 9 [APP-046] makes some reference to compounds, but there appears little assessment as to the actual impacts arising from either main project compounds or the satellite temporary compounds (or how their locations were chosen). Set out clearly the potential impacts upon fauna and flora (for example from noise, dust, disturbance, lighting etc) arising from the compounds and how the locations proposed took into account ecological sensitivity.</p>
1.8.3	Applicant	<p>Substations in the Environmental Statement</p> <p>Apart from table 9.7.1 in the ES [APP-046], there is little to no reference to either the National Grid Electricity Transmissions Plc (NGET) substation, main projection substations, or the other smaller substations, or the 156 power converters. On the face of ES Chapter 9, there appears little assessment undertaken as to the construction or operation effects on wildlife (noise, dust, lighting, duration, electro-magnetic fields, emissions etc). Set this information out clearly, including any adjustments required to the ES.</p>
1.8.4	Applicant	<p>Cumulative impacts in the Environmental Statement</p> <p>There appears to be no in-depth assessment in ES Chapter 9 [APP-046] regarding the potential cumulative impacts or effects of siting the NGET substation outside of the Order limits, together with additional solar panels within the Order limits. Equally, there is only a passing remark about this in ES Chapter 20 [APP-057], without any ready understanding of the assessment that has taken place to substantiate the conclusions reached. Explain with reasons.</p>
1.8.5	Applicant	<p>Buffer zones</p> <p>The ExA wish to ensure that all the buffer zones relied upon by the Applicant to result in 'no change' conclusions (as per paragraphs 9.9.28 to paragraph 9.9.63) are secured and</p>

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		evidentially robust. Signpost exactly where these buffers are secured in the relevant management plans and the dDCO.
1.8.6	Applicant Natural England	<p>Skylarks</p> <p>Skylark plots are proposed within the proposed development.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Is there any evidence to substantiate that the skylark plots proposed, in and amongst the solar panels, would actually be effective? 2) With the presence of grazing sheep underneath the panels, would this not impact on the effectiveness of the skylark plots?
1.8.7	Applicant Natural England	<p>Wintering bird assemblage</p> <p>In ES Chapter 9 paragraph 9.9.102 [APP-046], it states there would be a moderate adverse and significant impact on the wintering bird assemblage, mainly due to 'temporary displacement.' Table 9.16.1 then concludes that there would be no change for the wintering bird assemblage.</p> <p>Why is displacement considered temporary when, post-construction, the operation of the solar farm would be in place for 40 years?</p>
1.8.8	Applicant	<p>Bat mitigation</p> <p>Natural England's RR [RR-0761] details comprehensive concerns regarding bat surveys and mitigation measures for bats. Set out to the ExA what is going to be done, and when, to resolve these fundamental concerns during Examination.</p>
1.8.9	Applicant	<p>Dormouse</p> <p>Natural England's RR [RR-0761] details comprehensive concerns regarding dormouse and the level of protection in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (OLEMP). Set out to the ExA what is going to be done, and when, to resolve these fundamental concerns.</p>
1.8.10	Applicant Natural England	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>Applicant: Monitoring commitments listed in Table 9.10.1 of ES Chapter 9 appear to be low in number. Is there a reason why monitoring is not considered to be an important or necessary part of the mitigation review?</p> <p>Natural England: Do you have any concerns about the scope of monitoring being proposed?</p>

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1.8.11	Applicant Natural England	<p>Piling in the Environmental Statement</p> <p>Applicant: ES Chapter 9 [APP-046] identifies that impact piling to 3 metres throughout the entire Project site represents the maximum design scenario, which could lead to continuous disturbance of species through noise and vibration impacts. A large number of piles are predicted to install the solar panels.</p> <p>However, the ES only mentions piling a few times, largely in the context of decommissioning (for example, paragraph 9.9.336) with little detail in relation to construction works.</p> <p>Explain why the construction has not been explicitly or separately assessed the disturbance impacts arising from piling on any species in ES Chapter 9.</p> <p>Natural England: Provide any comments you wish on this situation.</p>
1.8.12	Applicant Natural England	<p>Noise impacts to wildlife</p> <p>ES Chapter 13 [APP-050], Table 13.25, sets out that there would be high noise impacts where a receptor is less than 1,344m from piling activities. Many ecological receptors are well within that distance. In the case of SSSIs that support overwintering birds and ancient woodlands that are home to a variety of wildlife, this noise could be highly disruptive. Set out why this level of noise is not recognised or identified as requiring mitigation.</p>
1.8.13	Applicant	<p>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</p> <p>Natural England's RR [RR-0761] highlights that, whilst there is general agreement with the conclusions reached in respect of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), there are missing or misrepresented parts of the assessment. For completeness, provide a revised chapter taking into account Natural England's concerns.</p>
1.8.14	Environment Agency Natural England Beds Bucks Oxon Wildlife Trust	<p>Lack of survey data</p> <p>Within ES Chapter 9 [APP-046], table 9.3.1 reports, in response to the Environment Agency, that no surveys are being carried out for water voles. Paragraph 9.6.77 states no surveys have been carried out for fish. Paragraph 9.9.694 states no surveys have been done for otters.</p> <p>Given the Proposed Development is in close proximity to watercourses, proposes HDD underneath major watercourses (with the potential for bentonite breakout to be managed) and involves transformative proposals along waterways (e.g. River Evenlode), should surveys be undertaken?</p>

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1.8.15	Natural England	Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (OLEMP) There is no specific reference to good practice measures being undertaken within the OLEMP to manage, for example, hedgehogs. What measures would you expect/ request the Applicant to adopt and why?
1.8.16	Applicant	OLEMP completion Complete Table 13.1 in the OLEMP [APP-228], removing all 'to be confirmed' with an appropriate plan of monitoring.
1.8.17	Applicant	Licensing Natural England's RR [RR-0761] references the need to obtain various licenses for the Proposed Development. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Are these accounted for in your document at [APP-035] or does that document need to be updated?2) Are the licenses included or provided for in any way within the dDCO at present, or is there acceptance these need to be obtained separately?3) Set out a timetable for obtaining the licenses required.

Q1.9. Environmental Impact Assessment		
Areas for further evidence		
1.9.1	Applicant	<p>Baseline, methodology and scope of assessments</p> <p>The post-hearing submissions from all local authorities suggest that the local authorities had little input into the ES chapters, methodologies were not agreed in advance, views were discounted, or otherwise the Applicant rejected Council requests on the grounds of proportionality.</p> <p>Could the applicant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) explain the methodologies within the ES and the efforts made to agree these with the relevant IPs? 2) set out what ‘proportionality’ tests were applied given the nature, size and scale of the proposed development?
1.9.2	Applicant	<p>ES Chapter 17 et al</p> <p>The Written Representation (WR) of Nigel Roderick Pearce at DL1 challenges the matrices used in formulating this chapter and that, as a result of the choices made, there appears “structural bias” in the way the ES has been prepared. How do you respond?</p>
Matters of clarification		
1.9.3	Applicant	<p>Procedural Deadline B</p> <p>The Applicant is requested to note that the Rule 6 letter [PD-006] set out a list of issues requiring clarification that were described as ‘examples’ and ‘non exhaustive.’ It was hoped that this would have prompted an investigation into all chapters of the ES in order to ensure consistency. However, you confined your review only to those matters the ExA drew to attention [PDB-015]. Review the whole of the ES and ensure that, if indeed table 6.3 is the worst-case scenario underpinning each chapter, that the ES reflects this in its entirety.</p>

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Flood risk		
1.10.1	Applicant	<p>New National Flood Risk Assessment</p> <p>Noting the publication of the new National Flood Risk Assessment by the Environment Agency (EA), please confirm whether an updated Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [APP-166] and Chapter 10 of the ES [APP-047] are to be submitted into the Examination? Please confirm at which deadline the amendments documents will be submitted.</p> <p>If no update is necessary, please provide a detailed justification.</p>
1.10.2	Applicant	<p>Revision to the NPPF</p> <p>The ExA notes the revisions made to the NPPF in December 2024 regarding the Exception Test. Taking these amendments into consideration, please confirm whether any amendments are necessary in respect of the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).</p>
1.10.3	Applicant	<p>Flood risk assessment – minor errors and omissions</p> <p>Noting the content of Appendix 2 of the EA's RR [RR-0308], please confirm if the identified reporting errors and omissions have been amended/ included? Please confirm when/ if an updated version of the FRA is to be submitted into the Examination.</p>
1.10.4	Applicant	<p>Flood defences – construction phase</p> <p>It is noted that a minimum vertical clearance would be maintained between HDD activities and the hard bed of a watercourse and the landward toe of the flood defences (Paragraph 10.9.82 of ES Chapter 10 [APP-047]). However, the actual clearance distance would not be confirmed until post consent.</p> <p>Given the importance of ensuring that such flood defences are adequately protected, please confirm why the clearance distance cannot be provided during the Examination.</p>
1.10.5	Applicant	<p>Flood defences – maintenance plan buffer zone</p> <p>Paragraph 10.9.90 of ES Chapter 10 [APP-047] states that where possible, during operation, any maintenance works would avoid a 16m buffer zone from flood defences. It is further stated that this would be secured in the outline Operational Management Plan (OMP) [APP-234].</p>

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		Please signpost to where this is detailed within the outline OMP.
1.10.6	Applicant	<p>Potential impact of damage to existing field drainage</p> <p>Please explain in further detail why the likely significance of effect during the decommissioning phase is stated as being of ‘minor adverse significance’ (Paragraph 10.9.125 of ES Chapter 10 [APP-047]) but the effect is of ‘negligible adverse significance’ during the construction phase (Paragraph 10.9.107 of ES Chapter 10 [APP-047]).</p>
1.10.7	Applicant	<p>Potential impact of damage to existing water supply and wastewater drainage infrastructure</p> <p>Please explain in further detail why the likely significance of effect during the decommissioning phase is stated as being of ‘minor adverse significance’ (Paragraph 10.9.154 of ES Chapter 10 [APP-047]) but the effect is of ‘negligible adverse significance’ during the construction phase (Paragraph 10.9.136 of ES Chapter 10 [APP-047]).</p>
1.10.8	Applicant	<p>Impermeable areas</p> <p>Within the Order limits what are the total impermeable areas associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the current site; and b) the proposed development site layout? <p>Please signpost to this information or provide separate calculations for both temporary and permanent infrastructure.</p>
1.10.9	Applicant	<p>Flood risk assessment</p> <p>Please confirm if there is an error in the second sentence in paragraph 6.2.3 of the FRA [APP-166]. Should this sentence confirm that the site is considered to be at a low risk of groundwater flooding?</p>
1.10.10	Applicant	<p>Flood risk assessment</p> <p>Please confirm why, despite the solar panels being elevated above modelled flood depths, it is considered appropriate to locate panels in areas at risk of surface water flooding?</p>
1.10.11	Applicant	Conceptual Drainage Strategy

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		<p>Paragraph 3.4.2 of the Conceptual Drainage Strategy [APP-167] refers to vegetated areas which would compromise of appropriate seeded vegetation to combat potential erosion and channelisation.</p> <p>Please confirm whether these strips are different to the vegetation to be planted for livestock grazing. Given that these strips form part of the proposed drainage strategy, what measures would be in place to stop livestock from grazing/removing the strips?</p>
1.10.12	Applicant	<p>Localised flood events</p> <p>At OFH1, Mr Stuart Thompson provided oral evidence on flood damage to properties in Elms Road in September 2024 as well as flooding across the A40 and A4095. Please explain what drainage measures would be in place in proximity to these areas and how the proposed development would mitigate flood issues in the vicinity.</p>
1.10.13	Applicant	<p>Assessment of groundwater and surface water flood risk in Cumnor Parish</p> <p>Please provide bespoke comments on the flood risk report prepared by GWP Consultants LLP on behalf of Cumnor Parish Council, submitted at DL1.</p>
1.10.14	Applicant	<p>Preliminary Floor Risk and Drainage Appraisal – Worton Park</p> <p>Please provide bespoke comments on the flood risk report prepared by RSK Land and Development Engineering Ltd on behalf of Worton Park, submitted at DL1.</p>
Hydrology and Groundwater		
1.10.15	Applicant	<p>Drainage layout</p> <p>Please signpost to detailed information in respect of a drainage layout for the proposed development. If not available, please submit a detailed drainage layout with identified discharge locations and, where necessary, updated water quality and maintenance requirements.</p> <p>Please also confirm how the field beneath the solar panels will be managed during construction, operation and reinstatement.</p>
1.10.16	Environment Agency	<p>Water Framework Directive (WFD)</p> <p>Are you content with all aspects of the WFD assessment [APP-174] and are you satisfied with the conclusions reached therein?</p>

Rivers and watercourses		
1.10.17	Applicant	<p>Prevention of pollution</p> <p>The ExA request to see details of a bentonite breakout plan so as to appreciate both the risk of potential leakages of bentonite into major and ordinary watercourses, and the processes for subsequent management.</p>
Control of pollution and contaminants		
1.10.18	Applicant	<p>Impacts from ground contamination on future site users</p> <p>Paragraph 11.9.19 of ES Chapter 11 [APP-048] discusses operation and maintenance effects in respect of impacts from ground contamination on future site users. However, no significance of effect is detailed at paragraph 11.9.19.</p> <p>Please confirm whether this is an oversight and if so, amend accordingly.</p>

Farming Operations		
1.11.1	Applicant	<p>Loss of agricultural land</p> <p>Paragraph 5.11.12 of NPS EN-1 states “<i>Applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5)</i>”.</p> <p>Please explain how the test in paragraph 5.11.12 of NPS EN-1 is satisfied in respect of the Proposed Development?</p>
1.11.2	Applicant	<p>Conservation grazing</p> <p>Paragraph 15.9.110 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] confirms that sheep grazing is proposed to take place on 835.5ha of land and that this would equate to approximately 3,354 sheep grazing the solar areas of the site.</p> <p>It is noted that the wider Blenheim Estate includes a sheep flock of approximately 1,000 ewes which produce approximately 1,700 lambs each year. However, please confirm whether the Applicant will be purchasing and supplying the sheep for the grazing?</p> <p>If not, has the cost to the affected land holdings been factored into the socioeconomic assessment?</p>
1.11.3	Applicant	<p>Conservation grazing</p> <p>Noting the content of paragraph 9.7.2 of the oSMP [APP-233], please confirm if conservation grazing would take place immediately following the installation of the solar panels or would there be a delay whilst waiting for the cultivation of suitable land?</p> <p>If a delay is anticipated, please confirm the duration of such a delay.</p> <p>Please also confirm what actions would be taken if the cultivation of suitable grass land fails?</p>
1.11.4	Applicant	<p>Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and soil survey</p> <p>Paragraph 17.4.9 of ES Chapter 17: Agricultural Land Use of Public Rights of Way [APP-054] states that, due to dry soil conditions, some areas or crop conditions were not included in the survey.</p>

		<p>It is noted from Table 17.17 [APP-054] and paragraph 9.3.4 of the Outline Soil Management Plan (oSMP) [APP-233] that 67 hectares (ha) of agricultural land was not surveyed. Given the scale of this surveyed agricultural land, could the exclusion of these areas have resulted in inaccurate assessment findings?</p> <p>When is it anticipated that such survey work would be undertaken?</p>
1.11.5	Applicant	<p>Land Classification</p> <p>Please set out in detail the methodology used for land classification, including information such as the number and types of samples or from where pre-existing data was sourced from. Additionally, please provide the current qualification and experience of the author of the classification survey.</p>
1.11.6	Applicant	<p>Land holding details</p> <p>For each of the 10 agricultural land holdings, please either signpost to the below information or provide the following information in a tabular format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Name and address of holding 2) Relevant plot number 3) Total size of holding 4) Holding use 5) Breakdown of land classification – by hectare and percentage of holding 6) Summary of proposed project activity on holding 7) Loss of land – defined by temporary and/ or permanent by both hectare and percentage of holding
1.11.7	Applicant	<p>Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV)</p> <p>The ExA are concerned that, despite the Planning Inspectorate's requests [APP-054, Table 17.4], the operational and decommissioning impacts on BMV land have been scoped out of the assessment. The reasons given in Table 17.7 do not appear to offer much reassurance in this regard.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please confirm the proportion of BMV land would be unavailable for current farming activities during the Proposed Development's operational lifespan.

		2) Please explain your assertion in Table 17.7, which states “ <i>On this basis, the temporary and permanent loss of best and most versatile land during operation and maintenance of the Project is unlikely to result in likely significant effects</i> ”, when BMV land is directly linked to crops and crop growth. Would there not be a significant effect on the ability for those affected farms to grow crops for an extended period of time?
1.11.8	Applicant	Best and Most Versatile Land Please provide in a tabular format, the areas of land in each land classification across the Proposed Development. Please provide specific justification for the use of land by grade.
1.11.9	Applicant	Grassland conversion and management Limited detail is provided with Chapter 17 of the ES [APP-054] in respect of how the proposed land would be converted from arable to grassland and the management of such land during the operational phase of the Proposed Development. Please provide further detail in respect of these matters.
1.11.10	Applicant	Animal Wellbeing What consideration has been given to the effect on the health and wellbeing of animals housed or grazing close to the Proposed Development i.e. effects due to noise and dust? What, if any, measures are necessary to mitigate effects and how will these be secured?
1.11.11	Blenheim Estate	Agricultural Land Yield Noting the content of your (DL1 submission, please confirm which parcels of agricultural land proposed to be included within the Proposed Development are degraded of nutritional and organic content. Please identify each parcel of affected land/soil on a plan.
Other land use matters		
1.11.12	All local authorities	Green Belt – definition of openness At paragraph 8.3.20 of Appendix 8 to the Planning Statement [APP-225], the Applicant notes that the NPPF does not provide a definition of ‘openness’. However, the Applicant, for the purposes of the Planning Statement, defines openness “ <i>in the context of the amount of the spatial presence or footprint of the development i.e. the extent of the physical presence of the development in the landscape in a two-dimensional sense i.e. from a birds eye or aerial view. Secondly, the visual impact of the development is also</i>

		<p><i>important and capable of being factored into the test of openness i.e. the degree to which the development can be seen from public vantage points and the effect of landscaping and the screening function that performs and affects what can be seen”.</i></p> <p>Please confirm whether this definition is considered acceptable. If not, please provide a detailed justification and alternative definition.</p> <p>RESPONSE: OHA:</p> <p>Attention is drawn to the PPG Guidance on Greenbelt which was updated in February 2025. Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 64-013-20250225 covers the openness of Greenbelt:</p> <p><i>“Assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgement based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume</i><i>• the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness</i> <p><i>the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation “</i></p> <p>Also relevant are the leading court cases of Turner and Samuel Smith (<i>Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government</i> and another [2016] EWCA Civ 466 and <i>R (on the application of Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and others) (Respondents) v North Yorkshire County</i> UKSC/2018/0077) which confirm that green belt openness has a spatial dimension and a visual dimension and that these dimensions work in tandem, not in isolation.</p>
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		<p>It is also not enough to consider just the two-dimensional footprint, as suggested by the applicants' definition, and account must be taken of a development's three-dimensional volume.</p> <p>Furthermore, the public perception of green belt openness is important, as visual perception is a factor which could reduce spatial harm. Whilst openness can be affected by built development (i.e. the solar panels, substations and associated development – potentially including security fencing), existing and proposed vegetation is not typically considered as part of the spatial consideration – for example woodlands, hedges etc which are present in the landscape.</p> <p>The applicants' definition does not take into account the change in the visual appearance due to the development and associated mitigation that may have an impact on the openness and availability of views. It is limited in proposing to look at whether the development can be seen with implemented landscape mitigation. The visual element of openness should not be determined simply by whether the scheme can be seen, but also by the change in the openness of the view, as covered in the above PPG definition that 'the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant'.</p> <p>Built development and mitigations can however affect the nature and availability of views, as well as the character of the Green Belt. High hedgerows (above head height) can block views, as would the solar panels themselves, resulting in a change in the openness of views experienced from or across the development area, and a change in the open landscape character of the river valley farmland and gentle hillsides which rise up to either side of it.</p> <p>Key views, or sequences of views experienced as people move along PRoWs may be blocked by proposed hedgerows, or affected by high fencing or panels, for example obscuring views of churches in villages, seen across the landscape. Visual intrusion can arise from development that appears out of place in the countryside and extends over large areas.</p>
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		<p>In the Landscape Institutes Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) - Section 9(4) covers 'How does LVIA relate to green belt and 'openness' issues?</p> <p>As stated in GLVIA3 paragraph 5.4, 'openness' may be one of the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape. Where this is the case, it would be documented and assessed as part of the LVIA. Green Belt is a planning policy designation and compliance with policy should be addressed separately to the LVIA.'</p> <p>In Landscape terms the OHA would therefore expect openness in relation to landscape and views to be covered in the LVIA and then those assessments which are part of the Green Belt to be brought into the Planning assessment of the Greenbelt. However, it is noted that the LVIA [APP-045] only contains one reference to the word 'openness' on page 69. As previously raised in the Joint LIR [REP1-072] (including paragraph 7.3.63), concern has been raised about the appropriateness of the visual assessment both with regards to the visual impacts of the proposed development on views but also on whether the impacts of proposed mitigation planting and associated impacts on available views and their associated openness have been appropriately covered in the LVIA work.</p> <p>The applicants' definition of openness is therefore not accepted.</p>
1.11.13	Cherwell District Council	<p>Green Belt – The Cherwell Green Belt Study 2023</p> <p>Reference was made to The Cherwell Green Belt Study 2023 in your RR [RR-0164]. Please submit a copy of this study into the Examination.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>CDC: The Cherwell Green Belt Study 2023 was appended (Appendix 2) to our Individual LIR/Written Representation dated 04 June 2025 [REP1-052].</p>
1.11.14	Applicant	<p>Green Belt – Alternatives</p> <p>In [RR-0164] Cherwell District Council question why the proposed location of the solar panels had been amended to omit areas of archaeological interest and to allow for sky lark plots but</p>

		<p>did not preserve those areas of land which were found to be of a higher quality agricultural grade.</p> <p>Please provide a detailed justification as to why panels located on Grade 2 and 3a quality land have not been removed and/or relocated.</p>
1.11.15	Applicant	<p>Green Belt and BMV considerations</p> <p>If the National Grid substation is located outside of the Order limits, the Applicant proposes to utilise the vacated 3.8ha of land to position more solar panels. This raises a couple of questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The solar yield of 840MW was calculated on the basis of the national grid substation being provide with the Order limits. What would the additional yield be for the 3.8ha? 2) The ALC classification map [APP-110] shows that the land vacated by the National Grid substation comprises Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land. Provide to the ExA a balancing exercise, balancing the additional yield (defined in response to question 1) versus the harms occurring to the BMV. 3) Set out the very special circumstances that would justify the construction of additional solar panels on the land vacated by the national grid substation.
1.11.16	Applicant	<p>Green Belt – Very Special Circumstances</p> <p>The ExA recognise that, as of current policy and practice, the delivery of community benefits is optional and voluntary. Indeed, the Applicant notes that the benefits proposed are not required to mitigate the impacts of the Proposed Development. However, the Applicant has sought to rely on VSC5 in making the case for very special circumstances. To this end, the ExA raises the following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If you are not relying on community benefits to mitigate the project or in the overall planning balance, why can you rely on them to substantiate a Green Belt case? 2) If you are not relying on the community benefits, specifically the educational and agricultural related initiatives in the planning balance, what is the compelling case for the compulsory acquisition of that land? 3) In paragraph 8.4.73 of the Green Belt case, it is stated: “<i>The Community Fund will be delivered as part of a Community Benefits Package agreed outside the scope of the DCO application, with relevant local authorities.</i>” Whilst this is acknowledged, the fact that the Applicant is relying on this (and other) measures to make a case for very special

		<p>circumstances means the ExA is entitled to examine the matter. The ExA request evidence, during the Examination, that such community benefits have indeed been secured, otherwise confidence in such measures would potentially be low.</p>
1.11.17	Applicant	<p>Green Belt – weighting to be given to the very special circumstances</p> <p>In considering very special circumstances, the ExA are aware that this does not prevent commonplace (i.e. not rare) being relied upon. However, the word "special" connotes not a quantitative test, but a qualitative judgment as to the weight to be given to the particular factor for planning purposes. In respect of VSC2, VSC4 and VSC6 (though not limited just to these if the Applicant wishes to respond further), explain in greater detail the weight to be given to each aspect and how 'quality' influences the weighting. How can that 'quality' be ensured and secured in either the dDCO or its accompanying management and monitoring plans?</p>
1.11.18	Applicant	<p>Not inappropriate development</p> <p>Paragraph 8.3.14 in Appendix 8 to the Planning Statement [APP-225] implies that structures to maintain agricultural use of the land would fall under the category of '<i>not inappropriate</i>' development. Whilst an example is given of sheep and cattle pens, there appears to be no limitation on this in either the DCO or the controlling management plans. The OLEMP [APP-235], at paragraph 7.2.4 only, refers to grazing infrastructure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What powers in the DCO allow the Applicant to construct or deliver 'grazing infrastructure'? 2) Define what is meant by 'grazing infrastructure'? 3) What would avoid a proliferation of barns and buildings, claimed to be structures for maintaining agricultural use, as a result of the Proposed Development?
1.11.19	Applicant	<p>Green Belt – Begbroke and Kidlington gap</p> <p>In relation to the Cherwell District Council DL1 submission, please confirm whether consideration was given to the gap between Begbroke and Kidlington within the Green Belt assessment?</p> <p>If not, please explain why.</p>
1.11.20	Vale of White Horse District Council	<p>Green Belt – NGET substation location</p> <p>In relation to your WR at DL1, in respect of the proposed NGET substation, please identify the location of land with a lower value of classification which is referred to.</p>

		<p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>VWHDC: The point was a general statement that land with a lower value of classification somewhere along the HV network could be used to site a substation. VWHDC does not have a specific location in mind.</p>
1.11.21	Applicant	<p>Temporary field compounds</p> <p>Paragraph 6.3.6 of ES Chapter 6: Project Description [APP-043] states that the satellite field compounds are to be either be returned to their previous use upon the completion of construction or used for solar installations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How and when will this decision be made? 2) In the design parameters used for the worst-case scenarios, is the assumption that these areas of land would be used for solar installation? 3) If such a decision hasn't been made to date, what implications would this potentially have on the worst-case scenarios used for the assessments?
1.11.22	Applicant	<p>Soil Management Plan – mixing of soils</p> <p>What documentation and physical control measures would be put in place to prevent accidental mixing of soils? How would these measures be secured through the dDCO?</p>
1.11.23	Applicant	<p>Soil Management Plan - stockpiles</p> <p>How would the suitability of soil stockpiles for restoration be assessed? Please confirm whether the final SMP would include a restoration methodology?</p>
1.11.24	Applicant	<p>Soil Management Plan – stockpiles</p> <p>Please confirm if stockpiled soils are to be labelled and protected from trafficking and damage? Is it proposed to seed soil stockpiles in place for more than 6 months?</p>
1.11.25	Applicant	<p>Soil Management Plan - labelling</p> <p>Noting the content of Natural England's DL1 submission, please confirm if areas of the proposed development which are not to be stripped or used for stockpiling, haul routes or compounds are to be clearly marked by signs and barrier tape and protected from traffic and construction?</p>
1.11.26	Applicant	<p>Soil Management Plan – Audit</p>

		Please confirm whether the final SMP would be subject to any internal compliance audits? If so, would the SMP be reviewed and updated as necessary? Please provide detail in respect of this process.
1.11.27	Applicant	Soil Management Plan – Reinstatement Please confirm why the oSMP does not include measures to return hardstanding to agricultural use?
1.11.28	All local authorities	Soil Management Approach Local authorities are asked whether the approach and content of the oSMP [APP-233] in respect of the management of potential effects on soil resources is appropriate? If not, please detail additional methods and/ or mitigation measures considered necessary. RESPONSE: OHA: Whilst OCC is the Minerals and Waste Authority, soil management does not fall within its remit and as such does not have any inhouse expertise on this topic. Likewise, VOWHDC, CDC and WODC do not possess inhouse specialists with the technical expertise to comment on this issue. The OHA do note however that the oSMP [APP-233] references both the DEFRA <i>Code of Construction Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites</i> as well as the Institute of Quarrying <i>Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings</i> , both of which are standard industry guidance that is referenced by other bodies such as Natural England. The OHA would also point the ExA towards the LLFA response to question 1.7.27 in respect to the Outline Code of Construction Practice which emphasises the importance of the re-instatement of the soil following construction to the ability of the land to drain. Given the lack of inhouse expertise on this issue the OHA do not believe that they would be the best body to discharge Requirement 11(2)(c) within the draft DCO [REP1-005]. Section 120(2)(b) of the Planning Act 2008 allows ‘requirements to obtain the approval of the Secretary

		<i>of State or any other person'. The OHA would therefore recommend that Requirement 11(2)(c) be discharged by another body such as Natural England or DEFRA (i.e. the Secretary of State) who would be better placed to approve the Soil Management Plan than any of the Host Authorities.</i>
1.11.29	Applicant	<p>Soil Survey – Cable Corridor Route</p> <p>Noting the content of table 17.5 of ES Chapter 17 [APP-054] and also Natural England's DL1 submission, please confirm if it is proposed to undertake soil surveys along the proposed cable corridor route(s)?</p> <p>If not, what consideration has been given to the inclusion of such a survey into the oSMP [APP-233]?</p>

Q1.12. Habitats Regulation Assessment		
Effect of the Proposed Development on its own and In-combination with Other Plans and Projects		
1.12.1	Applicant Natural England	<p>Piling in the HRA</p> <p>The project is anticipated to require 1.6 million piled foundations to install the solar arrays. However, the impact of such piles on identified European sites in the HRA (either via noise, disturbance or potential effects to water quality) do not feature in the HRA.</p> <p>Explain why piling is not considered as a potential pathway and has not been screened into the appropriate assessment.</p>
1.12.2	Applicant Natural England	<p>Thresholds for assessment</p> <p>In paragraph 4.4.10 of the HRA, the heavy goods vehicle (HGV) Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) threshold of 200 vehicles is said not to be breached in either project alone (125) or in-combination (192) scenarios.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) For clarity, can it be set out why vehicle numbers and not vehicle movements are the relied measurement here? 2) Assuming two-way movements, would 125 vehicles equate to 250 movements, thus exceeding the AADT threshold? 3) Should the Applicant, Natural England and the ExA take a precautionary assessment approach regarding the in-combination assessment given that the AADT of 192 is very close to the 200-vehicle threshold, and it would not take much change in future vehicle trips for that threshold to be exceeded?
1.12.3	Natural England	<p>Site Improvement Plans</p> <p>In the opinion of Natural England, would the project (alone or in-combination) lead to any impediment to the delivery of the Site Improvement Plans cited in the HRA and, if so, how?</p>
1.12.4	Applicant Natural England	<p>Unforeseen consequences</p> <p>In ES Chapter 9, the Applicant proposes the creation of circa 100 ha of new floodplain meadow as part of the River Evenlode enhancement corridor. Although deemed by the Applicant to be beneficial, would this have any consequence on the hydrological environment for either the Oxford Meadows or Cothill Fen Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) by, for example, causing those sites to become drier through an earlier uptake of water?</p>

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1.12.5	Applicant Natural England	Construction Noise In ES Chapter 13, the impact of pile driving is set out in table 13.25. In that table, it predicts a high impact for receptors less than 1,344 metres away from the source. However, in the HRA, it is stated there would not be any discernible impact on designated wildlife sites from construction noise in general because such sites are over 0.97km from the Order limits. The two do not seem to tally. Explain the situation and whether the action of percussive piling would have any effect on wildlife interests in the study area.
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Q1.13. Health and wellbeing		
Social health impacts		
1.13.1	Applicant	<p>Human Health Study Area</p> <p>In their Relevant Representation (RR), Oxford City Council [AS-032] questioned the rationale not to include Launton and Otmoor ward in the assessment, which have residences within 1km of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Please explain the rationale as to why this ward was not included in the assessment.</p>
1.13.2	Applicant	<p>Impacts on schools and school children</p> <p>In their submission, Oxford City Council [AS-032] raised concern over the apparent lack of assessment of potential glint and glare effects on the following schools and associated playing areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarnton Preschool • William Fletcher Primary School • Cumnor C of E Primary School <p>1) Please confirm whether the above receptors, and educational establishments in general, were included within the assessment and if not, please provide a detailed justification.</p> <p>2) Additionally, please confirm whether educational establishments were specifically considered in noise, dust and EMF assessments? If not, please provide a detailed justification.</p>
1.13.3	Applicant	<p>Climate change and adaptation</p> <p>Paragraph 16.4.3 of ES Chapter 16 [APP-053] lists the determinants which have been scoped in and assessed, this includes climate change and adaption. However, Table 1-5 of Appendix 16.1: Human Health Consultation and Engagement [APP-219] confirms that during the construction and decommissioning phases, this issue has been scoped out.</p> <p>Please clarify whether this is an error in Table 1-5 [APP-219].</p>
1.13.4	Applicant	<p>Community food growing areas</p>

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		<p>Paragraph 16.9.17 of ES Chapter 16 [APP-053] states that the community food growing areas would benefit vulnerable groups and provide training to support growers, provide education opportunities for children and support mental and physical health benefits. As such, the implementation of these areas is stated as supporting positive health outcomes.</p> <p>Given the lack of information provided in respect of the proposed growing areas, for example location and how the areas would function, it is unclear how the above conclusions have been reached. Please provide additional detail to support the above conclusions.</p>
1.13.5	Applicant	<p>Cycle route connectivity</p> <p>It is noted at paragraph 16.9.79 of ES Chapter 16 [APP-053] that the matter of connectivity of cycle routes is likely to be a matter of post-submission discussion and as such, limited benefit has been assigned to this effect.</p> <p>Please explain why this issue is to be discussed post-consent rather than during the Examination and whether it is anticipated that connectivity may be reduced following future discussions.</p>
1.13.6	Applicant	<p>Cumulative effects assessment – open space, leisure and play</p> <p>Please review the last sentence of paragraph 16.11.15 of ES Chapter 16 [APP-053] and confirm whether an additional ‘not’ has been included in error.</p>
1.13.7	Oxfordshire County Council	<p>Health Impact Assessment</p> <p>Taking into consideration both the content of ES Chapter 16 [APP-053] and Appendix 16.2 Oxfordshire HIA Toolkit Alignment Review [APP-220], please confirm whether you are fully satisfied that the Applicant has had full regard to the Oxfordshire Health Impact Assessment Toolkit. If not, please provide a detailed justification</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC: The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is an important source of health data for a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The JSNA website can be accessed via the Oxfordshire Data Hub. It is noted from Appendix 16.2: Oxfordshire HIA Toolkit Alignment that the JSNA has been used to identify priority areas and health priorities etc. however this hasn't been referenced in the main body of Chapter 16: Human Health, dated November 2023.</p>

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		<p>As stated in OCC's Relevant Representation [RR-0793], children and young people (CAYP) are identified as a vulnerable group as well as having worse than the regional and national averages for certain health outcomes, such as rates of physical activity. There is a direct correlation between the provision of recreational space and a child's ability to be physically active, and Chapter 16 acknowledges that the development could result in a loss of (or disruption to) recreational space during the construction and future operational phase of the development. We support the intention to provide trails and education boards aimed at children via DCO mitigation measures. We wish to be involved in this process to ensure that a variety of measures are put in place to ensure that the ability for children of all age groups and geographical locations across the development area to engage in physical activity are harnessed.</p> <p>On the basis that the use of the JSNA/Oxfordshire Data Hub is referenced in Chapter 16, and on the proviso that the Public Health team are engaged with at subsequent stages to mitigating the impact of the development on the ability for CAYP to be physically active, we confirm that we are satisfied that the applicant has met the requirements of an HIA.</p>
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Deadline for responses is Deadline 2, 1 July 2025

Q1.14. Landscape Resource and Visual Amenity		
Landscape and Visual Errata and Methodology		
1.14.1	Applicant	Photomontages [APP-079] - errata Please see question 1.6.2. Also relevant to this section.
1.14.2	Applicant	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) [PDB-006] - errata The ExA believe there are discrepancies and inconsistencies in the documentation, making navigation confusing. The following paragraphs should be resolved or, if correct, an explanation given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.6.7: Should this refer to Fig 8.244? [APP-068] • 8.6.8: Should this refer to Fig 8.245? [APP-069] • 8.6.10: Should this refer to Fig 8.247? [APP-071] • 8.6.12: Should the quoted Figure numbers refer to Representative Viewpoints? • 8.6.17: Figure 130 is a photograph, and the reference is therefore incorrect. Please check Figure references throughout this document and also ensure figures are correctly labelled.
1.14.3	Applicant	Views from Outdoor Recreational Facilities - errata Paragraphs 8.66 to 8.69 of the ES [PDB-006] appear to have some text missing relating to other recreational facilities. Provide any text necessary.
1.14.4	Applicant	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) ES Chapter 8 [PDB-006] Table 8.5 shows that the Scoping Opinion required assessment for RVAA. Paragraphs 8.6.78 to 8.6.80 of this document refer to RVAA. However, the very brief paragraphs do not clearly demonstrate that the 4-step assessment suggested in The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note TGN 2/19 has been undertaken. Provide a more in-depth assessment in accordance with TGN 2/19, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1 – Define the study area and identify the properties to be assessed; • Step 2 – Evaluate the baseline visual amenity of these properties; • Step 3 – Assess the likely change to this baseline and identify of which properties requiring further assessment;

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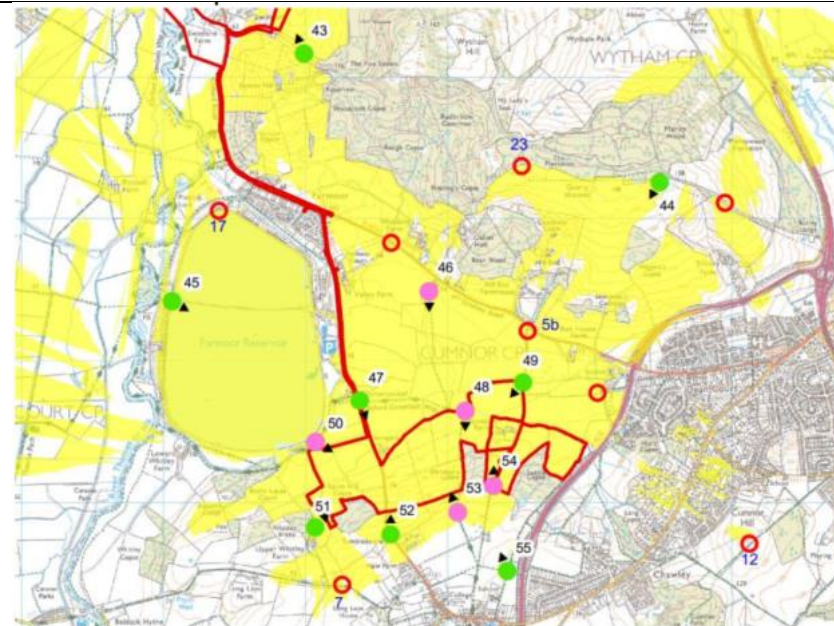
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 4 - Detailed further assessment of the individual properties identified in step 3 as having the greatest magnitude of change such that the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold may be engaged.
1.14.5	Applicant	<p>Methodology relating to duration and reversibility</p> <p>[PDB-006] paragraph 8.5.9 notes the categorisation for duration and reversibility taken from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA), paragraph 5.51 and 5.52. GLVIA makes it clear that appraisals should make the parameters for both duration and reversibility clear and justified. Neither duration nor reversibility parameters are assessed or justified in the LVIA.</p> <p>In light of the wording of GLVIA and the consideration of reversibility within, for example, a generation, justify your reasonings for considering the Project fully reversible.</p>
1.14.6	All local authorities	<p>Viewpoints and Photomontages</p> <p>Notwithstanding any consultations already received, are you happy with the number, range and direction of views provided and also with the number and range of photomontages? If not, please indicate the location and direction of other views that you feel are important, or if already provided at DL1, please signpost these.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OHA: The below response is based on a purely desk-based assessment. The OHA and their consultants (LUC) will be undertaking a site visit in mid-July, which will lead to a more accurate assessment of the appropriateness of the applicant's viewpoints and photomontages.</p> <p>The OHA therefore hope to submit more detailed comments at a later deadline.</p> <p>Initial Points:</p> <p>The viewpoints all appear to be very close to the proposed development, often taken at its boundary. It is unclear why there are not more longer distance views from elevated viewpoints, particularly as the ZTV (Figure 8.8) indicates theoretical visibility from these locations.</p> <p>It is also considered that settlement edges and residents are poorly represented.</p>

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		<p>Similarly, cable routing locations are poorly represented despite their impact being poorly understood at this stage.</p> <p>Areas which seem under- represented are appended at Appendix 1 below. It is noted that some of these may not allow visibility in practice, but it would be helpful to understand if the applicant has checked all locations and to know if these areas would be subject to significant effects. The OHA will check these and other locations on their site visit in mid July.</p> <p>Further comments from each individual council are below.</p> <p>CDC: As set out in our response to Action Point 17 of the ISH 1 [REP1-053] CDC responded through the pre-application period to agree a range of viewpoints that would be representative of key views and landscapes across the project area in Cherwell. Although more viewpoints might be anticipated for a project of this size, CDC were largely comfortable with the final list of viewpoint locations identified. It should be noted that CDC made suggestions for more viewpoints than were finally confirmed within the project area, but a number were ruled out because they didn't meet the selection criteria. Photomontages were not agreed prior to submission. CDC are awaiting the outcome of the aforementioned site visit and appraisal by the OHA landscape consultant (LUC) before further details on the adequacy of photomontages can be provided.</p> <p>VWHDC: The RR [RR-1086], pages 18 and 20 and WR [REP1 -074] especially Appendix 1: Copy of the S42 Consultation Response, set out the concerns with regards to viewpoints, photomontages and methodology and included additional viewpoints. The map and italicised text below were included in the S42 response with regards to the additional viewpoints that the VWHDC would like to see. VWHDC still request that the viewpoints highlighted below are provided, and that viewpoints are extended to cover the whole extends of the development from a view.</p> <p><i>'The range of viewpoints are still limited, such as views from the road users of Eynsham Road, the wider footpath network such as to the north and east of the site and the residential properties especially those along both Eynsham Road and Cumnor Road. GLVIA expects the identification of the people within the area</i></p>
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		<p><i>who will be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity including residents many of the views from the footpaths could also be used to represent views for the residents.</i></p> <p><i>There are several places where views have not been taken, including those highlighted in the Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan such as Viewpoint 5b, 12, 23, 7, 12 and 17. These are highlighted on the plan extract below along with additional Prow, roads, and the Wytham permitted path network. Additional viewpoints are requested from these locations. Once the Substation ZVT is undertaken there may also be additional viewpoints that need to be included.</i></p> <p><i>The EIA needs to ensure that it is using the representative viewpoints and visualisations to explain the impact of the scheme on the landscape and receptors such as roads, Prow routes etc rather than just spot points.</i></p> <p><i>It is noted that Hill End, an Environmental Outdoor Education Centre that has been running for over 100 years, is not covered as a potential receptor to the scheme. Hill End has numerous locations on its site which have clear views to the south and should be covered by the assessment.'</i></p>
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Paragraph 13 of the VWHDC response to ISH1 Action Point 17 [REP1-074] highlighted that the Scoping Report referenced 55 Viewpoints, and that the number remained unchanged from the PIER and in the EIA. The S42 consultation response [Appendix 1, REP1-074], also covered the VWHDC concerns about the presentation of the viewpoints. The RR [RR-1086, page 17] and the Joint LIR [REP1-072, Paragraphs 7.3.131 – 7.3.135], raised concerns with regards to the usability of the viewpoints and photomontages to understand the scheme. For example, *there are no plans where the viewpoints are shown in association with the masterplan layout to help understand what can be seen in the Representative Viewpoints. Due to the scale of the application, it is difficult to cross reference plans to understand how viewpoints relate to the site layout. The use of 1:50,000 rather than 1:25,000 OS mapping gives limited information with regards to field boundaries and details of PRow routes, this further exacerbating the ease of use of the submitted information to understand the scheme.*

‘Technical guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals classifies EIA as a Category A report where the appropriate visualisation types would be either Type 2 3D wireline/ model: Type 3 photomontage/ photo wire: or Type 4 photomontage/ photo wire (survey/scale verifiable). It is not clear

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		<p><i>what Type of visualisation is proposed for the EIA. Due to the scale and public interest of the project, VWHDC would expect all viewpoint plans to be annotated with key features and have Photo wires to highlight the areas of the proposed solar arrays (but not necessarily full modelling of the arrays) so areas and extent of the proposal can be easily understood by all. The Visualisations should be photomontages. A map extract to indicate the location of the view is also useful and recommended by guidance.</i></p> <p><i>Some of the Viewpoint Photography is currently poor in quality and over dark, making it harder to see landscape features, they would benefit from the photographs being retaken.</i></p> <p><i>Some of the viewpoints and visualisations do not cover the whole extents of the view of the solar farm from that viewpoint for example VP48.</i></p> <p><i>Clarification of representative viewpoints is required, as it is usual to have both summer and winter views, so the worst case is illustrated. Only year 15 summer assessment is mentioned but winter 15 year should also be provided.</i></p> <p><i>It is difficult to pick up the extra features in the visualisations such as the proposed 156 number Power Converter stations and the 4 to 6 number HV transformer secondary substation. Clarity is required on whether these elements form part of the Visualisation modelling.</i></p> <p><i>The sharpness of the visualisation is poor with pixelization. It is accepted however that this may be an issue with PDF formatting of documents.'</i></p> <p><i>Many of these issues remain a concern. Viewpoint 48, for example, was raised as an issue that the viewpoint was not illustrating the full extents to the solar farm. This could have been provided as viewpoint east, south and west to cover the range of views. There are similar concerns with other viewpoints, including 49 and 50. It is difficult to locate where the viewpoints are as wireframes or even the basics of showing the extends of the development are not indicated on the plans.</i></p> <p><i>VWHDC remain concerned about the extent the submitted viewpoints represent residential properties. It is noted that there are no viewpoints representing the residential properties of Filchampstead along Lower Whitely Road (and associated PROW). Filchampstead is not mentioned in the LVIA, although it is located to the north of the National Grid connection. Viewpoint 50 could be used to represent this area of settlement.</i></p>
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	<p>VWHDC also remain concerned about the assessment of residential properties including Hill End to the north of Eynsham Road B4044 and how they are represented in the LVIA. The photo below is taken from adjacent to the 'Fairy Ring' wooden toad stools at Hill End, beside the High Dorm.</p>  <p>VWHDC referred the applicant to the Cumnor Neighbour Plan, Important Views Report at the beginning of the viewpoint process, to use as guidance in choosing viewpoints. Cumnor Parish Council have kindly also responded to the ExA questions on Viewpoints and Photomontages in their letter dated 26 June, which is based on their Important Views Report. Their request (Table 1) that Viewpoints numbers 45, 43 (with an additional southern view, only northern view provided), 51, 47, 52, 49 and 44 should also be used as Photomontage locations along with additional viewpoints and associated Photomontages (Table 2) from the Important Views Report locations 1, 5b, 7 and 17 is supported and should be included for assessment.</p> <p>WODC:</p>
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		<p>WODC responded through the pre-application period to agree a range of viewpoints that would be representative of key views and landscapes across the project area in West Oxfordshire. Although it would be expected that more viewpoints would be expected for a project of this size, WODC were largely comfortable with the final list of viewpoint locations identified. It should be noted that WODC made suggestions for more viewpoints than were finally confirmed, having consulted with Parish Councils within the project area, but a number were ruled out because they didn't meet the selection criteria.</p> <p>Photomontages for all locations would have been helpful to inform the Council's understanding of the impacts of the proposed development locations would have been helpful to inform the Council's understanding of the impacts of the proposed development but particularly for viewpoint 24, 26 31,33 and 39 as identified on the applicant's - Representative Viewpoint and Photomontage Locations [APP-085]</p>
1.14.7	Applicant	<p>Scope of assessment</p> <p>The Landscape, Ecology and Amenities Plan [APP-228] for the southern site area shows the land proposed for the National Grid substation and the project substation/main substation as being areas of proposed grassland not beneath the solar arrays.</p> <p>Whilst it is appreciated that the Proposed Landscape Elements are indicative, the key to the plan indicates these areas would help deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The land cannot serve two purposes. Update the plans to more accurately reflect the proposals and, if necessary, recalculate the BNG.</p>
1.14.8	Applicant	<p>Lighting</p> <p>Table 8.5 of the ES [PDB-006] contains details of the Planning Inspectorate's concern regarding lighting and the impacts at night-time. The Applicant's brief sentence about this in Table 8.5 does not provide adequate justification for scoping such a matter out of the ES. Provide greater detail as to why it is felt night-time impacts would not be observed for this project.</p>
1.14.9	Applicant	<p>Suggested areas to be omitted from the Proposed Development</p> <p>Several submissions at DL1 proposed areas that should exclude panels, for a variety of reasons. These omissions were shown either as marked-up plans or as suggested field numbers within the text of their submissions.</p> <p>Provide a plan with all these omissions shown as overlays, with each layer being identified with the name of the proposer.</p> <p>This plan should include the suggestions from:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICOMOS • Historic England • The local authorities <p>Oxford Airport</p>
1.14.10	Applicant	<p>Levels of Significance in LVIA Methodology</p> <p>At ISH1 the ExA asked a question (Agenda Item 3g) regarding why effects with a significance level of Moderate for less were considered not to be significant.</p> <p>There was some discussion on this point and Mr Lilley stated that including Moderate effects as significant would have led to a disproportionate level of significant effects.</p> <p>In their response to Action Point 18, submitted at DL1, Oxfordshire County Council listed 9 previous solar farm NSIP developments, all of which were smaller in capacity to Botley West and all of which noted some major and moderate landscape impacts. These impacts were documented and considered in a reasoned and justified way during their examinations.</p> <p>In light of these examples, the ExA requires the applicant to draw out key similarities and/ or differences with the aforementioned projects, with the overall objective to substantiate the applicant's position as to why it has deemed a moderate effect not to be significant.</p>
Landscape Effects		
1.14.11	Applicant	<p>Landscape effects - Construction</p> <p>Table 8.15 [PDB-006] indicates the sensitivity of landscape character areas, with most being medium to high or high sensitivity. Paragraphs 8.9.3 – 8.9.9 provide the assessment of effects during the construction phase that concludes, overall, minor adverse effects.</p> <p>According to the definition of significance of effects matrix at Table 8.13, a minor effect is described as <i>"Where proposed changes would be at slight variance with the character of an area."</i></p> <p>From the USI's and reading the submissions at DL1 it would appear that the assessment of a minor adverse effect during construction, bearing in mind the scale of the project being over 839ha of undulating land, does not wholly seem justified.</p> <p>Explain in more detail how the assessment of minor adverse effect is justified, particularly in relation to the how the scale of construction across the proposed development site may be considered as only a "slight variance" with the existing character.</p>

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1.14.12	Applicant	<p>Landscape Effects – Operation</p> <p>In relation to the operation and maintenance phase, a moderate adverse effect is concluded at year 1 and minor adverse effect concluded at year 15.</p> <p>According to the definition of significance of effects matrix at Table 8.13, a moderate effect is described as <i>“Where proposed changes would be noticeably out of scale or at odds with the character of an area”</i> and a minor effect is described as <i>“Where proposed changes would be at slight variance with the character of an area.”</i></p> <p>In light of this, taking into account representations in many of the RR’s, as well as at OFH1, OFH2 and ISH1, and the WR’s received at DL1, the ExA require explanation as to how operational effects have been adjudged to be as low as they have been.</p> <p>Explain in more detail how the assessment of moderate/minor adverse effect is justified, particularly in relation to the change in character of the landscape from rural to industrial.</p>
Visual effects		
1.14.13	Applicant	<p>Residential Properties</p> <p>ES Chapter 8 [PDB-006] Table 8.18 indicates that Occupiers of Residential Properties form a “Key Receptor taken forward to assessment”, with a high sensitivity rating.</p> <p>Under Section 9, - Assessment of Effects, there is no reference to this Key Receptor group.</p> <p>Please update this document with the required assessment.</p> <p>See also Q.1.14.4 regarding RVAA.</p>
1.14.14	Applicant	<p>Visual effects - Construction</p> <p>Table 8.18 identifies the key visual receptors taken forward into the assessment with most being high sensitivity.</p> <p>Paragraphs 8.9.21 – 8.9.41 provide the assessment of effects during the construction phase on visual receptors, excluding the representative viewpoints. These assessments conclude a moderate or minor adverse effect.</p> <p>According to the definition of significance of effects matrix at Table 8.13, a moderate effect is described as <i>“Where proposed changes to views would be noticeably out of scale or at odds with the existing view.”</i> and a</p>

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		<p>minor effect is described as “<i>Where proposed changes to views, although discernible, would only be at slight variance with the existing view</i>”</p> <p>Explain in more detail how the assessment of moderate or minor adverse effect is justified, particularly in relation to the scale of construction across the proposed development site.</p>
1.14.15	Applicant	<p>Visual Effects – Operation</p> <p>In relation to the operation and maintenance phase, paragraphs 8.9.118 to 8.9.141 provide the assessment of effects during the operation phase on visual receptors for years 1 and 15, excluding the representative viewpoints. These assessments conclude a moderate or minor adverse effect, although at paragraph 8.9.121 a major adverse effect is concluded but this is still considered not significant.</p> <p>According to the definition of significance of effects matrix at Table 8.13, a moderate effect is described as “<i>Where proposed changes to views would be noticeably out of scale or at odds with the existing view.</i>” and a minor effect is described as “<i>Where proposed changes to views, although discernible, would only be at slight variance with the existing view</i>”</p> <p>Explain in more detail how the assessment of moderate/minor adverse effect is justified, particularly in relation to the noticeable visual changes to the views.</p>
1.14.16	Applicant	<p>Retention of hedgerows following decommissioning</p> <p>At ISH1, under Agenda item 3d (greenbelt), the ExA asked whether it was the intention to retain hedgerows that has been planted as screening for the development.</p> <p>The applicant responded that the hedgerows, as well as other planting would remain as a “landscape legacy” and would not be removed at decommissioning.</p> <p>Whilst the benefits can be appreciated in terms of biodiversity and ecology, there could be disadvantages in terms of the permanent change to the open views that are currently experienced, and the potential for not returning the land to its current state.</p> <p>Provide details on how this potential conflict could be managed.</p>
1.14.17	Applicant	<p>Arboricultural Report Update</p> <p>It is noted in your DL1 submission “Written Summary of its oral submissions at ISH1” that due to land access issue approximately 10% of the missing areas were not able to be surveyed. Please provide a simple plan showing the areas that have not been surveyed so that the ExA may consider whether these assessments are required.</p>

Q1.15. Noise and Vibration		
Noise effects		
1.15.1	All Local Authorities	<p>Local Authority views on applicant's assessment and conclusion</p> <p>Paragraph 13.14.4 of ES chapter 13 [APP-050], when referring to noise and vibration impacts states "Overall, it is concluded that there will be no significant effects arising from the Project during the construction, operation and maintenance or decommissioning phases".</p> <p>Local Authorities are asked to please state whether they agree with the assessment methodology and conclusions set out in ES Chapter 13 Noise and Vibration [APP-050]. If not, please explain where you disagree and why.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>CDC / VWHDC: The assessment methodology and conclusions set out in ES Chapter 13 Noise and Vibration [PDB-010] for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning phases are accepted. For the operational phase, a detailed noise assessment will be required to demonstrate if acceptable noise levels can be achieved at sensitive receptor locations by plant layout design alone or if additional mitigation measures such as acoustic barriers are also required, as recommended in the report.</p> <p>WODC: The assessment of noise impact to date has only taken account of noise-sensitive properties (NSPs) i.e. residential and other buildings. This reflects the approach in the British Standard (BS 4142).</p> <p>WODC would advise that an appropriate assessment should also be made for noise impacts to public rights of way, given regular use of those rights of way by residents of NSPs in the vicinity of their dwellings as well as use of public rights of way by the public such routes are located in many cases in areas of tranquillity the duration of the development</p> <p>Background Noise Assessment</p>

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		<p>A key element of assessments made under BS 4142 is the figure for 'representative background noise' at a receptor, which is compared with the rating level for a new sound source. This provides an assessment of impact, subject to an assessment of context, which informs necessary measures of noise control.</p> <p>Within the current ES, we would wish to review the derivation of the representative background levels. This will involve access to the raw data of all measured background levels for each assessed location. Such information would routinely be included in an acoustic report – in this case there will be a high volume of data involved.</p> <p>OCC: ES Chapter 13 Noise and Vibration [APP-050] states that 'A Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) will be prepared as part of the CoCP'. We support the inclusion of a bespoke method statement for any high noise-emitting works undertaken close to noise-sensitive receptors. We do not object to the conclusions of this chapter on the basis that the CNVMP is adhered to, including appropriate complaints procedures.</p>
1.15.2	Applicant	<p>Derivation of operational noise model output figures</p> <p>Can the applicant explain how the figures specified in Annex B of Appendix 13.3 Operational Phase Noise [APP-213], were derived, including why the difference between Rating Sound Level and Background Sound Level is negative on occasions.</p>
1.15.3	Applicant	<p>Noise nuisance level calculations/ assumptions</p> <p>In Appendix B of Appendix 13.3 Operational Phase Noise [APP-213], the magnitude of impact is calculated to be low at Jumpers Farm, how can the applicant be sure that even at these levels it will not cause a nuisance to receptors at this location.</p>
1.15.4	Applicant	<p>Exceedance of set noise limits</p> <p>At ISH1, the Applicant explained that should any noise limits set by the applicant be exceeded, an investigation into the cause would take place. Can the Applicant confirm if this investigation procedure will form part of the operational management plan that is to be agreed with local authorities.</p>
1.15.5	Applicant	<p>Noise reflection</p> <p>As part of their noise impact assessment, has the applicant taken noise reflection from the solar panels into consideration, including both noises generated by the proposed development</p>

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		itself and also existing noise sources which the panels could potentially amplify at certain receptors? If yes, what was the conclusion reached. If not, why not?
1.15.6	Applicant	<p>Noise nuisance and distance</p> <p>The level of noise which may cause nuisance varies for individuals, with some sectors of society particularly susceptible to noise pollution than others. How has the applicant determined what the level of noise needs to be, above which nuisance to a group or individual maybe caused? Following this how was the corresponding distance beyond which noise levels are sufficiently low to not cause nuisance, calculated.</p>
1.15.7	Applicant	<p>Missing data</p> <p>There appears to be limited data entries in Table 13.21 [APP-050] in respect of ST1, ST2 and ST3. Why were these locations only chosen for short-term monitoring, and with whom was the timing of the monitoring agreed?</p>
1.15.8	Applicant	<p>Exposure to noise</p> <p>Paragraph 13.9.11 [APP-050] suggests piling would not cause a harmful effect because it would be near a receptor for a short time only. Define what a 'short time' looks like in terms of hours and days.</p>
1.15.9	Applicant	<p>Links and noise</p> <p>Paragraph 13.9.52 [APP-050] suggests construction traffic noise would not significantly increase noise levels. That appears to overlook that some links are having over 100% increase in heavy good vehicles. Explain your position, with reasons.</p>
1.15.10	Applicant	<p>Outside of construction hours</p> <p>Embedded mitigation measure 13.2 in table 13.24 of ES Chapter 13 [APP-050], states <i>'Construction hours will be set out in the Outline CoCP [EN010147/APP/7.6.1] and secured through the DCO and agreed with relevant stakeholders.'</i></p> <p>Has the Applicant considered the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) any periods of construction activity which may need to fall beyond the normal construction hours and how has this been factored into the noise assessment/modelling?

		2) should work outside of these hours ever be necessary, how will the Applicant seek to gain approval of this from relevant authorities and how would this process be secured in the dDCO?
Vibration effects		
1.15.11		There are no questions on this topic at this time. Questions may be asked in future Hearings or in further written questions.

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Q1.16. Socio-Economic Effects		
Socio-economic Impacts		
1.16.1	Applicant	<p>Tourism and recreation employment</p> <p>What percentage of employment relates to the tourism and recreation sector in the Study Area?</p>
1.16.2	Applicant	<p>Assessment and census data</p> <p>Paragraphs 15.8.11 and 15.8.12 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] acknowledge a limitation in respect of the assessment in regard to the use of 2011 Census data. As the 2021 Census data is now readily available, please explain why the most up to date data wasn't used in respect of the baseline position.</p> <p>Given that 2021 Census data is available, and used within the Outline Skills, Supply Chain & Employment Plan (OSEP) [APP-218], please comment on whether the latest available data would have any implications for the results of the assessments undertaken?</p>
1.16.3	Applicant	<p>Net direct construction employment</p> <p>Paragraph 15.9.17 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] states that "...an overall net gain in direct employment as a result of the Project of 191 direct local FTE jobs".</p> <p>At paragraph 15.9.48 this figure is stated to be 199 direct local Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) construction jobs but paragraph 15.9.50 acknowledges the loss of 8 FTE jobs to the cessation of agricultural output. Please confirm whether the actual figure in respect of direct FTE jobs is 191?</p>
1.16.4	Applicant	<p>Net direct operation and maintenance employment</p> <p>Paragraph 15.9.31 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] states that the net total jobs created over the operational phase would equate to 18 direct local FTE jobs. Please clarify that this figure has also been used in the calculation of Gross Value Added (GVA) in paragraphs 15.9.55 to 15.9.59.</p>
1.16.5	Applicant	<p>Real term economic output</p> <p>Paragraph 15.9.59 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] states that the Proposed Development would equate to a real term economic output of £64.7. Please confirm whether this figure should state £64.7 million?</p>

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1.16.6	Applicant	<p>Improved skills and qualifications</p> <p>Paragraph 15.9.80 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] states that due to the early stage of development, information in respect of procurement strategies or employment profiles is not available. Furthermore, paragraph 15.9.85 also states that the specific skills and qualification opportunities are not fully known.</p> <p>Will this information be made available before the close the Examination?</p>
1.16.7	Applicant	<p>Blenheim Palace</p> <p>The ExA cannot readily see any detailed assessment of the impacts upon Blenheim Palace in terms of agricultural productivity or impacts on tourism, with consequential effects on viability. Provide this information.</p>
1.16.8	Applicant	<p>Community food growing areas</p> <p>Paragraph 15.9.100 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] confirms that an area of up to 30ha is to be provided for community food groups. Please confirm how the scale of this initiative was decided upon. What consultation with local stakeholders was undertaken in respect of making the decision in terms of scale.</p> <p>How is the delivery of this community initiative to be secured and what scale of food production is anticipated to be provided.</p> <p>The Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [APP-129] states that the provision of such areas is additional mitigation. Given that limited information has been provided in respect of these areas, please confirm what weight should be given to this by the ExA.</p>
1.16.9	Applicant	<p>Community food growing areas</p> <p>At paragraph 8.4.71 of the Planning Statement [APP-225] (updated at DL1), it is stated that several local food growing companies have expressed interest in food growing initiatives on land within the Project Site. It is further noted that delivery of this initiative is to be established if the Proposed Development becomes operational.</p> <p>Please confirm whether it is intended to work towards draft agricultural licence agreements with interested local food growing companies prior to the close of the Examination and if so, provide an update. If not, please provide a detailed justification.</p>

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1.16.10	Applicant	<p>Outline Skills and Employment Plan - engagement</p> <p>The seven opportunities listed within the Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSEP) are noted [APP-218], alongside of Requirement 13 of the dDCO [AS-009] (updated at DL1) which states that “<i>No part of the authorised development may commence until a skills, supply chain and employment plan in relation to that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority...</i>”.</p> <p>Please provide an update in terms of the summary of engagement to date (section 7.5 of the OSEP).</p>
1.16.11	Applicant	<p>Outline Skills and Employment Plan – GVA</p> <p>Paragraph 3.2.13 of the OSEP states that the construction GVA would equate to £17 million within the study area [APP-218]. In contrast, paragraph 15.9.50 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] states that the construction phase would result in a total net gain in GVA of approximately £16.4 million.</p> <p>Please confirm which figure is correct and make amendments to any submitted application documentation if necessary.</p>
1.16.12	Applicant	<p>Outline Skills and Employment Plan – agricultural sector</p> <p>Table 4.7 and paragraph 4.5.5 of the OSEP [APP-218] state that agriculture accounted for 0.5% of all employment. Table 15.10 and paragraphs 15.9.105 and 15.9.117 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] state that the number of people employed in farm-based agriculture accounted for 1.1% of employment in the Study Area.</p> <p>Please explain the difference in figures.</p>
1.16.13	Applicant	<p>Outline Skills and Employment Plan – Table 6.1</p> <p>Paragraph 6.3.1 of the OSEP [APP-218] states that Table 6.1 contains detail in respect of skills and disciplines required for the successful delivery of the Project. However, it appears that Table 6.1 contains detail regarding potential stakeholders for skills collaboration.</p> <p>Please confirm and amend if necessary.</p>
1.16.14	Applicant	<p>Outline Skills and Employment Plan – content</p> <p>The OSEP [APP-218], as drafted, appears to include a number of suggestions of possible opportunities and/or measures the Applicant may enter into. Examples of such wording include, but is not limited to, the following:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 6.3.5 states that '<i>...the Applicant will consider a programme to promote apprenticeships during the various phases of the Project.</i>' • Paragraph 6.3.6 states that '<i>The Applicant will consider other interventions to support the training of employees and workers on the Project.</i>' • Paragraph 6.3.17 states that '<i>The Applicant will consider setting up visitor and education programming near the for educational visits and technical exhibitions.</i>' • Paragraph 6.4.9 states '<i>The Applicant could introduce initiatives to maximise the diversity of the workforce.</i>' <p>In order to enable the ExA to fully consider the content of the OSEP it would be beneficial if the OSEP could be amended to reflect those opportunities and/or measures that the Applicant is fully intending to engage in, rather than the provision of a list of possibilities. Please review and amend the OSEP as necessary. If no amendments are considered necessary, please provide a full explanation.</p>
1.16.15	All local authorities	<p>Outline Skills and Employment Plan – delivery</p> <p>Section 7 of the OSEP [APP-218] details how the Applicant proposed to deliver the fill SEP. Please comment on the content of this section, in particular the proposed roles, responsibilities and timelines.</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OHA:</p> <p>The OHA have the following comments and suggestions on the OSEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OHA would prefer the document is called a Community Employment Plan not SSEP to be consistent with the other Oxfordshire CEPS. • Resourcing of the OSSCEP – it will be crucial to appoint a specialist person/team to be responsible for detailing, co-ordinating and delivering the benefits indicated. • The Oxfordshire Post Code tracker should be included. This is used for all Community Employment Plans to determine local employment and supply chain businesses. • Business engagement should not only be via the Thames Valley Chamber but also more locally through e.g. the Kidlington Area Employers and Developers Groups (co-ordinated by Cherwell DC).

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shaun Britton from CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) should be included in the stakeholders as the Oxfordshire representative for construction businesses.• OHA's Economic Development teams should be part of all ongoing discussions, monitoring and reporting meetings/steering group as they can support with promoting supply chain events and procurement opportunities. For example, the South and Vale Business Support (SVBS) newsletter goes out to around 3,000 businesses and the teams have contacts in construction.• Monitoring should be quarterly and include Enterprise Oxfordshire, Economic Development team representative, DWP (Department of Work and Pensions), CITB.• The OHA would expect to see a sector-based work academy or skills bootcamp as part of the plan and to see work placements for T Level construction (Design, Surveying and Planning) students from local colleges throughout the construction phase.• It is not currently clear what preparations are being put in place to 'grow your own' talent in advance of work starting. More information is required. For instance, have the indicated conversations with HE colleges led to specific courses being proposed/agreed to ensure a pipeline of staff to be available locally to undertake the installation work (and on-going maintenance)?• Due to the size of the development, OHA expect a consultant to be appointed to manage the plan and bring together all parties to deliver the Community Employment Plan and provide monitoring and reporting. Enterprise Oxfordshire have a Social and Economic Value tracker that should be used for monitoring and reporting Social and Economic Value outcomes annually.• It is important there is ongoing discussion with key stakeholders (ED teams and EO) to develop the details of the plan and determine appropriate targets prior to construction starting in Q1 2026.• Referencing the contact that has already been made with Job Centre Plus (James Gilpin) it will be important to indicate how many recruits could reasonably be expected through this route.• The social value benefits should be expanded upon, including engaging and valuing the role of the local people.• Paragraph 7.6.2 suggests a review every 6 months, but this should be done every 3 months as a minimum for a meeting with monthly updates.• In appendix, commuting data is from 2011 Census – why not 2021?
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options are currently shown – this should be developed into commitments. To reiterate; a dedicated responsible person for delivering skills, employment and supply chain benefits with be importantly integrated throughout the project planning and its delivery.
1.16.16	Applicant	<p>Outline Skills and Employment Plan – monitoring</p> <p>The content of section 8 of the OSEP [APP-218] is noted in respect of monitoring. However, there is no reference as to what actions would be necessary should the monitoring indicate that the full SEP had failed to deliver the potential outputs.</p> <p>Please review and amend where necessary. If no amendments are considered appropriate, please provide a full explanation.</p>
1.16.17	Applicant	<p>Full Time Equivalent Jobs</p> <p>Some minor inconsistencies have been noted regarding direct FTE jobs in the OSEP [APP-218] and ES Chapter 15 [APP-052]. For clarity, please provide detail of direct FTE jobs for both the construction and operation and maintenance phases of the Proposed Development in a tabular form. In terms of the operational jobs, please include agricultural employment gain.</p>
1.16.18	Applicant	<p>Decommissioning – indirect jobs</p> <p>At paragraphs 15.9.39, 15.9.41, 15.9.66, 15.9.83, 15.9.160 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] and paragraph 3.2.22 of the OSEP [APP-218] it is stated that the likely number of indirect jobs in the supply chain would be reduced as there would be no requirement for the manufacturing of the solar panels. However, some indirect job creation associated with the recycling of panels and equipment is likely to offset this.</p> <p>Please provide details of the indirect job figures used to reach this conclusion.</p>
1.16.19	Applicant	<p>Community benefits</p> <p>Row 11 of Table 6.2 of ES Chapter 6: Project Description [APP-043] states that the delivery mechanisms for community benefits is detailed within ES Chapter 15 [APP-052]. Please signpost to where this information is located.</p>
1.16.20	Applicant	<p>Sand and gravel extraction</p> <p>Paragraph 11.6.30 of ES Chapter 11 [APP- 048] confirms that extraction of sand and gravel reserves with the Central Site Area and the cable route between the Central Site Area and Southern Site Area would not be possible during the construction phase.</p>

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		Has the potential effect of the cessation of such extractions been assessed in commercial terms?
Effects on social infrastructure		
1.16.21	Applicant	<p>Education facility building</p> <p>Please confirm how the possible location for the education facility was selected? What level of consultation was undertaken with local stakeholders in respect of the possible location?</p> <p>The Outline Operational Management Plan [APP-234] confirms that further detail in respect of the education facility is to be set out in the detailed Operational Management Plan. Please confirm why such detail is to be confirmed post-consent, rather than during the Examination.</p> <p>The Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [APP-129] states that the provision of such an education facility to be additional mitigation. Given that limited information has been provided in respect of this facility, please confirm what weight should be given to this by the ExA.</p>
1.16.22	Applicant	<p>Removal of the proposed retail electricity company</p> <p>Please provide a detailed explanation as to why the proposed retail electricity company has been removed from the list of community benefits.</p>
1.16.23	Applicant	<p>Additional mitigation</p> <p>Mitigation number 15.8 in Table 15.12 of ES Chapter 15 [APP-052] states that the monitoring of supply chain and employment records is an additional mitigation measure. Please expand on how such monitoring is considered to be additional mitigation.</p>

Q1.17. Traffic and Transport		
Local Road Network		
1.17.1	Applicant	<p>Origin of construction staff</p> <p>Paragraphs 12.7.13-12.7.16 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049], explain the movements of staff during the construction period. Can the applicant provide further explanation and justification for the statement in paragraph 12.7.16 ‘to ensure the assessment remains reasonable, the proportion of construction HGVs on any one highway link is capped at 100%’.</p>
1.17.2	Applicant	<p>Peak hour vehicle movements</p> <p>Table 12.23 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] refers to peak hour vehicle movements, provide a breakdown of how these figures were derived.</p>
1.17.3	Applicant	<p>Negligible impact evidence</p> <p>Provide evidence and justification for the statement in paragraph 12.9.20 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] ‘It is generally recognised within the transport planning industry that vehicle movements of less than 30 per hour would create negligible impacts upon highway capacity and the operation of junctions/ highways’.</p>
1.17.4	Applicant	<p>Scoping response</p> <p>In Table 12.4 National Highways of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] is quoted as saying ‘we would recommend that the applicant contacts us to determine any requirements we may have for the scope of the TS’, was this consultation carried out?</p>
1.17.5	Applicant	<p>Widening of roads during construction</p> <p>Paragraph 12.7.18 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] lists a number of roads to be widened to help with construction vehicle movement. In the case where roads will be widened on a temporary basis only, how can the applicant be sure the original width of the road will remain suitable for maintenance activities.</p>
1.17.6	Applicant	<p>HGV route</p> <p>A proposed route for HGV vehicles has been provided in Appendix A1 of the outline code of construction practice document [APP-232].</p>

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		<p>Can the applicant explain if on occasions would it be necessary to deviate from the proposed route? What instances do you envisage, where this could be the case? What would be the effects, how have you assessed those effects and how would you mitigate those effects?</p> <p>What management and enforcement procedures will you have in place, to ensure drivers do not use an alternative route, other than when there is a legitimate reason for doing so.</p>
1.17.7	Applicant	<p>Low sensitivity links</p> <p>When referring to the sensitivity of links 5 and 10, paragraphs 12.11.10, 12.11.14 and 12.11.20 of the cumulative impacts assessment of the ES Chapter 12 [APP-049], all state 'These links are deemed to be of low vulnerability, high recoverability and low value'. Can the applicant explain further what they mean by this statement and how they came to this conclusion.</p>
1.17.8	Applicant	<p>Impact due to access restrictions</p> <p>Can the applicant elaborate on what measures they will implement to ensure impacts on PROW, residential and business premises due to potential access restrictions, are minimised during cable route installation, when traffic management measures, may need to be implemented. Should this be the case, how has the applicant taken one way traffic flows into consideration as part of their assessment on traffic and transport.</p>
1.17.9	Applicant	<p>Glint and glare impacts on road traffic users</p> <p>Paragraph 7.6.1 of the Glint and Glare Assessment [APP-128], states 'A moderate impact has been predicted upon separate 0.3km and 0.1km sections of the B4027'. The paragraph then follows on by referring to the possibility of using fencing or vegetation as screening for mitigation purposes. How are either of these options secured in the dDCO?</p> <p>Section 9 of the assessment refers to dwellings, railways, road and aviation, as receptors, where vegetation has been specified as a possible means of mitigation for potential impacts. What assurances can the applicant provide that, should this form of mitigation be selected, it will be effective immediately with no reliance on plant growth which could take several years?</p>
1.17.10	All Local Authorities	<p>Transport Assessment (TA), methodology and conclusions</p> <p>Do Local Authorities agree with the methodology and conclusions reached as reported in the ES Chapter 12 [APP-049]? If not, please identify where issues arise and the reasons.</p>

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		<p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC: Oxfordshire County Council is the Highway Authority.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council agrees with the methodology of Chapter 12 and the conclusions reached including the requirement for the construction traffic impact to be mitigated through Construction Traffic Management Plans (CTMP).</p>
1.17.11	Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and other local authorities	<p>Mitigation measures and securing these in the dDCO</p> <p>Do OCC agree with the mitigation and output from the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), as detailed in the Outline Code of Construction Practice - Part 1 [APP-232] and are they satisfied these are appropriately secured through the dDCO?</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC: Oxfordshire County Council is the Highway Authority.</p> <p>It is not clear what maintenance will be required for the site or if all panels will need to be replaced during the life of the development. OCC would therefore suggest a requirement that states that if more than 30% of panels in the northern, central or southern site need to be replaced at the same time (i.e within a single phase of work within a single project area) then a further CTMP should be submitted for approval.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council would like clarity over how the temporary off-site highway works listed in Section 1.7 of the outline CTMP will be managed through the DCO and if possible, would prefer a separate agreement for these. OCC will also require a full highway condition survey; this is mentioned in the outline CTMP but not discussed in detail. The extent of the survey will need to be agreed with the county council prior to being undertaken and any damage caused will be fixed at the applicant's expense. The routing for construction vehicles has been agreed by OCC, and so a routing agreement should be a separate requirement of the DCO.</p>
1.17.12	Applicant	Cable drums

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		<p>In Table 18.25 of ES Chapter 18, there is reference to cable drums being used. In this respect</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Would cable drums be delivered directly to a construction compound or to the location where cable jointing works would take place? 2) Would any cable jointing works take place within the highway and, if so, what method of traffic management would be used during the course of any such works? 3) Would the movement of large cable drums constitute an abnormal indivisible load? <p>If the answer to (2) above is yes, set out where such movements are accounted for either in the ES or the suite of management plans to be produced under the OCoCP.</p>
1.17.13	Applicant	<p>Scope of the Assessment</p> <p>Table 12.7 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] reports that operational traffic is scoped out of the assessment. In ES Chapter 14 [APP-051], Table 14.9 implies that, over the lifetime of the proposed development, all of the panels would need to be replaced at least once. Provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) details of whether panels would be replaced on masse or whether there would be piecemeal replacement over a number of years; 2) details of what vehicle movements are anticipated to be generated in order to facilitate the replacement (or effective reconstruction) of the solar farm after 25 years; and 3) in light of the two questions above, justification for scoping out operational and maintenance traffic.
1.17.14	Applicant	<p>Road condition assessments</p> <p>Paragraph 12.4.11 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] sets out the nature of site-specific surveys undertaken to inform the assessment. One item that is not reported relates to road condition surveys. Has there been any attempt to understand the condition of the local highways and their suitability for use by construction traffic?</p>
1.17.15	Applicant	<p>Cumulative delays</p> <p>With reference to paragraph 12.9.13 of ES Chapter 12 [APP-049] in respect of driver delays, would there be the potential for cumulative driver delay effects to occur due to multiple works ongoing concurrently and, if so, has such been assessed?</p>
1.17.16	Oxfordshire County Council	<p>Permit Scheme</p>

		<p>The ExA welcome the Applicant's commitment to adhere to the Oxfordshire Permit Scheme for Road Works and Street Works. Does this commitment alleviate any concerns with regards the wording of Articles within the dDCO?</p> <p>RESPONSE: OCC: Oxfordshire County Council is the Highways Authority.</p> <p>Whilst it is welcomed that the applicant has committed to adhering to OCC's permit scheme, OCC would like to let the applicant know that there will soon be a Lane Rental Scheme in addition to the permit scheme. As such we would like any reference in the dDCO and other application documents to refer to 'the Oxfordshire Permit Scheme (as may be amended or replaced from time to time) and any additional schemes including the forthcoming Lane Rental Scheme' to ensure that the applicant will be compliant with the latest iteration of any permitting and other related schemes.</p> <p>OCC as Highways Authority has previously outlined (such as paragraph 3.26 of OCC's Relevant Representation [RR-0793] and row 10 of table 20 of the joint Local Impact Report [REP1-072]) that we believe that the power contained within Part 3 of the Draft DCO [REP1-005] are too broad. OCC would prefer the applicant enter into a Highways Agreement with OCC to consent the Highways Works proposed by the applicant.</p> <p>OCC is familiar with Section 278 agreements and has the legal knowledge in house to both draft and undertake S.278 agreements. OCC also has a standard method for the recovery of costs for the making of S.278 agreements and the costs of granting any consents. OCC therefore submit to the applicant that it will be more efficient for both parties when it comes to any consenting of highways works if this is done via an agreement based on OCC's standard section 278 agreement. This will help to prevent delays to consenting highways works should the SoS grant Development Consent for the proposed development.</p>
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		<p>OCC are also concerned that the DCO does not contain an equivalent to licensing e.g. under S.50 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and as such OCC would welcome discussion with the applicant to resolve this matter.</p> <p>Turning to the draft DCO [REP1-005] OCC note that it does not refer to the Oxfordshire Permit Scheme and OCC considers such a reference should be included. For example, article 12 (application of the permit schemes) of the National Grid (Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement) Order 2024 (SI 2024/958) provides that the “permit schemes apply to the construction of the authorised development and will have effect in connection with the exercise by the undertaker of any powers conferred by [Part 3 (streets)]”. Under that DCO, the “permit schemes” are “any scheme made under Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 as in force at the date on which this Order is made including the Traffic Management (Essex County Council) Permit Scheme Order 2015 as varied by The Essex County Council (Permit Scheme) (Variation) Order 2015”.</p> <p>In summary, OCC considers (i) the inclusion of a satisfactory provision in the dDCO which applies OCC’s permit scheme and (ii) the completion of a satisfactory highways agreement with the applicant should alleviate OCC’s concerns with the wording of the articles in Part 3 (streets) of the dDCO. For a flavour of OCC’s concerns with that wording, see rows 10 to 14 of the Joint LIR [REP1-072].</p>
1.17.17	Oxfordshire County Council	<p>Planned road improvements</p> <p>The Local Impact Report notifies of planned improvements to the A40 and B4449 interchange with a roundabout.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Would protective provisions in the dDCO be a means to resolution for this issue, protecting the integrity of those works? 2) If the Applicant did require to interface with your planned works, would articles in the dDCO ensure the ‘making good’ of the situation? 3) Are there any other planned works the ExA should be aware of and, if so, should these appear in the cumulative assessments in respect of the traffic and transport chapter? <p>RESPONSE: OCC:</p>

		<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>As set out in the Joint LIR [REP1-072], OCC as the Highway Authority is currently implementing a series of works to improve the A40. This includes the Eynsham roundabout where the B4449 meets the A40 which is where the applicant's cable route proposes to cross the A40. It is likely that OCC will seek to implement a notice under Section 58 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 to restrict the execution of street works once the improvements to the A40 have been completed. No detailed methodology has been put forward by the applicant to indicate how they intend to lay their cable across the site, including the A40. OCC would not support a methodology which would involve excavation of the improved section of the A40.</p> <p>Since publication of the Joint LIR, OCC understand that Horizontal Directional Drilling is unlikely to be an option given physical constraints at this location. OCC would be prepared to work with the applicant to ensure that ducting across the A40 is put in place whilst the planned highway works are carried out. The placement of ducting for the future cable would need to be funded, or carried out, by the applicant. Works are due to be undertaken in Spring/Summer 2026, so it is imperative that the applicant engages with OCC on this matter as soon as possible.</p> <p>Whilst not supported by OCC for sustainability and highway network management reasons, if the applicant is unable to work with OCC to ensure cable ducting is put in place, rather than lay a cable by trenching and backfilling across the A40, OCC would require reinstatement/resurfacing of the entire carriageway of the impacted area of the roundabout (not simply backfilling and surfacing the cable trench) to ensure the integrity of the recently completed works.</p> <p>OCC would welcome discussions with the Applicant on the points raised within this answer, and would also be grateful if the Applicant could confirm (i) whether its preferred mechanism for the Local Highway Authority to approve works to the highway (including provisions for inspection and monitoring) would be by highways agreement and (ii) since a licence under Section 50 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 would be needed to enable the applicant to install any apparatus in the ground as they are not a statutory undertaker, whether</p>
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		<p>the Applicant would propose that an agreement made under article 15 (agreements with street authorities) could provide for this.</p> <p>Turning to the specific questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Protective provisions could be an option, but OCC would favour a highways side agreement (akin to a Section 278 agreement) which would provide suitable flexibility and the ability for the Highway Authority to recover the costs incurred. Moreover, an overarching agreement for all highway works that will be needed for the Botley West proposals with subsequent supplemental agreements for detailed design may be appropriate.2) If the Applicant did require to interface with OCC's planned works, a highways side agreement would be the preferred mechanism to ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of the highway.3) OCC is not aware of any other planned works the ExA should be aware of. The Botley to Eynsham (B4044) and Eynsham to Botley (Lower Road) cycle schemes are referenced in the Joint LIR [REP1-072] (paras 7.8.61 – 7.8.64). If cable trenches are to be dug within the highway along part of the planned cycle routes, a mechanism to ensure the details of their reinstatement will be needed to ensure compatibility with the future cycle path construction. As previously stated, we would encourage discussions with the applicant on this matter. <p>OCC note that the Applicant is proposing changes to the junctions along the route including roundabouts in Farmoor and Eynsham. Further detail is needed to ensure compatibility with the Botley to Eynsham cycle scheme and to ensure the final roundabout design is compliant with LTN120 and OCC's Cycling and Walking Design Standards.</p> <p>There are emerging highway improvements as part of the Draft Eynsham and the surrounding area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. As set out in the</p>
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		answer to 1.51 above, the acquisition of Highway Land by the applicant could jeopardise the delivery of future highway improvements.
Strategic Road Network		
1.17.18	National Highways	Integrated transport assessment In table 12.4 of the ES [APP-049] the applicant has responded to the response provided by National Highways (NH) by stating an integrated Transport Assessment has been provided as part of the assessment in this chapter. Is NH satisfied this meets their recommendation for the applicant to provide a Transport Statement (TS)?
1.17.19	National Highways	Impact assessment on A34 Paras 12.7.5 - 12.7.9 of the ES [APP-049], explain that the origin of all construction traffic will be from the A34, do you agree with the methodology and the assessment carried out by the applicant of the potential impacts on this SRN due to construction as detailed in section 12.9 of the ES.
Public Rights of Way		
1.17.20	Local Authorities	Diversions and re-provision Please specify whether the diversions proposed by the applicant, proposed and temporary, are suitably justified and would not place a greater burden upon a user for accessing the countryside. RESPONSE: OHA: The diversions proposed are not fully thought through and will place an inconvenience burden on users of the PRow network, especially as they revert to the definitive line at the application boundary. Please refer to Appendix 2 of this response for comments supplied by Oxfordshire County Council's Countryside Access Legal Team and consider adjusting the dDCO red line boundary to accommodate revised diversion layouts that are less of a burden on users of the PRow network and the highway/surveying authority.
1.17.21	Local Authorities	Quality of the rights of way

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		<p>Please provide a summary of the current quality and condition of the PRoW within your respective jurisdictions. Also provide details of the impact the construction and operation of the solar farm would have on each of those PRoW.</p> <p>RESPONSE: OHA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. There is no consistent or comparable data on the quality and condition of PRoW within and in the vicinity of the dDCO boundary. However, these are all highways and PRoW and should be freely usable according to their legal status at all times of the day and year and in all weathers.2. Oxfordshire County Council has provided comprehensive assessment of impacts and proposed a range of onsite and offsite mitigation measures that should be included as a requirement in the dDCO (see chapter 7.8 of the Joint LIR [REP1-072]). There is no evidence that any of these improvements have been considered which is why a full and detailed PRoW Management Strategy should be submitted as part of this examination.3. This dDCO is not the only NSIP affecting Oxfordshire, but it is the one that stands out for the low levels of engagement with authority officers and stakeholders regarding PRoW with almost zero apparent consideration of impacts and mitigation and zero meaningful meetings and discussions. Other NSIPs in Oxfordshire by way of contrast have demonstrated good levels of engagement, listening and acting on officer and stakeholder participation.
1.17.22	Applicant	<p>Length of diversion</p> <p>Table 16.24 [APP-053] contains details of the footpath from Cassington to Yarnton and states a permanent diversion would be in place. Unless it is written somewhere else, the table does not specify the length of the consequent route. This is also true for the entry 'Cumnor.' Please explain.</p>
Air traffic and aviation safety		

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1.17.23	Applicant	<p>Reduction in development area</p> <p>The submission from Oxford Aviation Services to the ExA [PDA-002, paragraph 3.3] mentions sharing the document referred to as Annex 1 with yourselves during the pre-application stage, in which they propose a reduction to the development area, by employing an exclusion zone. It appears, following the reading of the Oxford Aviation Services submission at DL1, that resolutions are being pursued</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If the agreed panel exclusion zone were to be followed through, what would the estimated impact be on the solar farm's energy yield? 2) When can the ExA expect a change request application?
1.17.24	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	<p>RAF Weston on the Green</p> <p>The contents of your written representation are noted. In respect of both glint and glare as well as bird strike, is there any evidence you can provide to demonstrate that the impacts do occur, our realistic consequences of the proposed development and would interfere with the safety of aircraft?</p>
1.17.25	Applicant	<p>Other examples of solar near airfields</p> <p>The ExA note the Technical Aerodrome Safeguarding Report and the appendices showing the proximity of other solar developments near airfields. At a cursory glance, most of the solar developments are around 1km or greater away from an airfield and, notably, very few panels are positioned at the end of runways on the approach. The ExA do not see how the examples justify the layout of the current proposed development. If the applicant decides not to follow through with the apparent agreement with Oxford Airport, further detail will be required.</p>
1.17.26	Applicant	<p>Environmental mitigation</p> <p>Explain how the OLEMP, landscape mitigation, ecological mitigation and the measures to deliver BNG would comply with NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.5.41 (bullet 1) given that almost all the development would fall within the 13km range specified.</p>
1.17.27	Oxford Aviation Services Defence Infrastructure Organisation	<p>Radar</p> <p>It is not altogether clear whether you concur with the applicant's views on the limited potential of effects of the proposed development on radar or communications, navigation and surveillance (CNS) infrastructure. Set out any concerns for these matters.</p>

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1.17.28	Applicant Oxford Aviation Services	Substations Is there a need for aviation safety lighting of any kind to be applied to any of the proposed substations?
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Q1.18. Waste and Minerals**Waste**

1.18.1

Applicant
Environment Agency
Local Authorities

Robustness of assessment

ES Chapter 18 [APP-055] deals with waste and resources. Are there any concerns regarding the Applicant's assessment, assumptions or conclusions?

RESPONSE:

OCC: OCC is the Minerals and Waste Authority

The Minerals and Waste Policy and Strategy Team at Oxfordshire County Council have concerns with Chapter 18 (Waste and Resources) of the Environmental Statement [APP-055], particularly regarding the adequacy of the assessment.

Based on our response within our Relevant Representation [RR-0793] and our response within the Local Impact Report [REP1-070], the ES Chapter 18 [APP-055] does not adequately assess waste management methods, capacity and impact for all the anticipated waste arisings. It only considers the impact of the development on landfill void capacity, not on any waste management facilities further up the waste hierarchy. Nor is this waste assessment contained within any other submitted evidence with the application.

Due to the significant future waste arisings from the development, the application should include consideration of any potential impact on all other waste management facilities alongside the cumulative waste generation and associated significant effects on these facilities.

For example, Table 18.23 of the ES [AP-055] sets out that during the construction phase, it is estimated that the maximum number of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) modules used could be up to 2,200,000. In addition, the ES [AP-055] paragraph 18.13.11 states that for the purposes of the assessment, it has been assumed that every PV Module will require replacement during the operation and maintenance phase. This will produce significant waste arisings.

		<p>Tables 18.26 and 18.27 set out that these will be recycled, however, how and when the recycling of the waste arisings from these PV modules will be managed, and the impacts on existing waste management facilities, is not considered.</p> <p>The conclusion of the assessment that the development will cause a reduction in landfill is considered insufficient of considering the waste impacts of the development.</p> <p>In addition, the Outline Site Resources and Waste Management Plan, appended to the Outline Code of Construction Practice - Part 2 [APP-233], does not include the details of the likely quantities of waste that will arise during operation, maintenance or the decommissioning phase, and how these arisings will be managed. It only considers those quantities of arisings during construction.</p> <p>To address this lack of detail, Chapter 18 of the Environmental Statement [AP-055] states that an Operational Waste Management Plan will be agreed with the Waste Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development, and that a Decommissioning Plan will also be submitted at that stage to provide further detail on waste management.</p> <p>It is felt the supply of this detail is too late and that the management and disposal of all waste arisings from the proposed development is a key consideration in determining the application. The applicant must demonstrate the volume of waste estimated to be generated throughout the project's life, and how these arisings can be effectively managed and disposed.</p> <p>Furthermore, the potential scale of waste at the decommissioning stage could significantly impact existing waste infrastructure and the strategic planning of future waste management facilities in the County. This has implications for the preparation of future Minerals and Waste Local Plans. Therefore, this information should be provided in full prior to the granting of any consent.</p>
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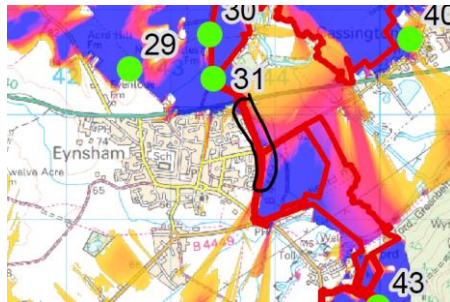
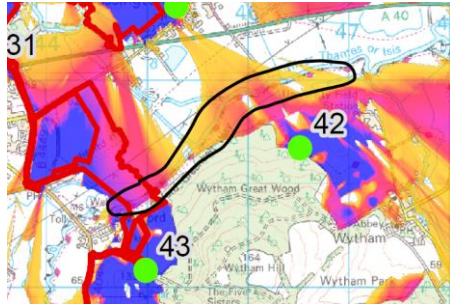
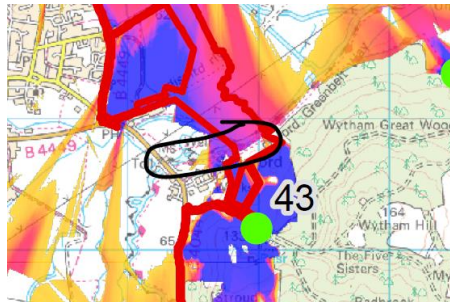
		The ability of the applicant to demonstrate the scale and quantity of waste arisings and how they will be managed is fundamental to any planning decision, as is outlined within the National Planning Policy for Waste (2014).
1.18.2	Applicant	Discrepancies or deficiencies in data Table 18.25 references material excavated from the secondary substations, but there are no figures given in respect of the project main substation or the National Grid substation. Provide the data or explain with reasons why such data is missing.
1.18.3	Applicant	Damaged goods If, for whatever reason, a solar panel or its supporting frame becomes damaged in anyway, would it be capable of being recycled or would such broken equipment go to landfill?
1.18.4	Applicant	Bill of Quantities The Applicant is requested to provide a bill of quantities for the resources required for the proposed development.
1.18.5	Applicant	Disposal In [RR-1104], the subject of Lithium-ion batteries is raised. Such components are not specified within ES Chapter 18, and the ExA have noted that ES Chapter 6 suggests battery storage would be elsewhere. Nonetheless, the ExA seek information as to the presence (or otherwise) of such potentially hazardous equipment and, ultimately, where disposal would occur.
Minerals		
1.18.6	Oxfordshire County Council	Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA) ES Chapter 18 at Table 18.5 reports that Oxfordshire County Council were recorded as reviewing the MRA and would provide a response in due course. The ExA would welcome the Council's detailed comments on the MRA at the earliest opportunity. RESPONSE: OCC: Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals and Waste (MW) Policy & Strategy Team were consulted on a draft Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA) on 15 th December 2023. On 25 th January 2024, the MW Team responded that they had received the report and would respond in due course.

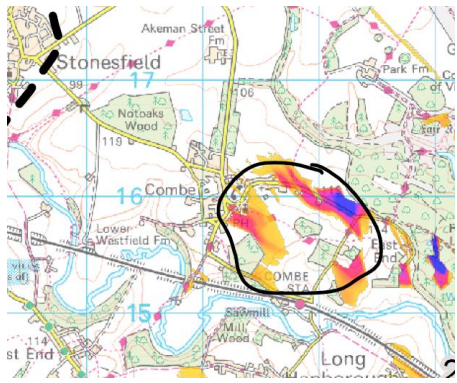
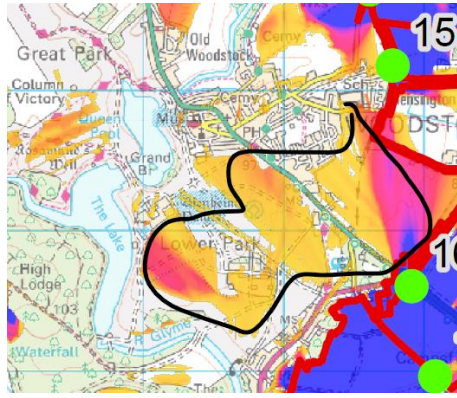
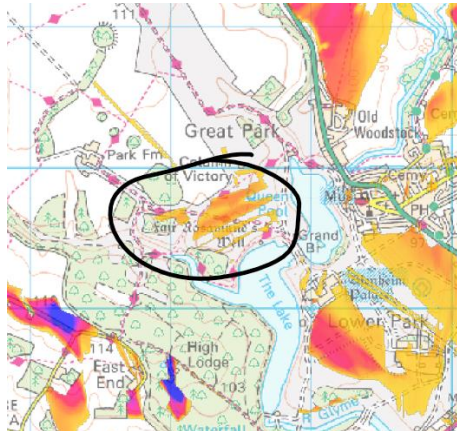
		<p>A response was provided via email on 22nd February 2024 by the MW Policy and Strategy team to RPS who had supplied the MRA for comment. This was prior to the submission of the Environmental Statement in November 2024.</p> <p>The main points raised within the February email on the draft MRA, were that we would wish to see the final ES include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include cable routes within the MSA in the assessment, considering their permanence and long-term impact on safeguarded mineral resources. • Provide justification for the permanence of the cables, given the temporary nature of the solar farm. • Include evidence of Oxfordshire's overall energy needs to support the development's justification. <p>It also raised the following points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If incidental mineral extraction is feasible, it may reduce the economic viability of working the wider resource, though acknowledged it would not result in full sterilisation of the mineral. • The development could lead to the potential loss or prevention of working approximately 5.7 million tonnes of sand and gravel within the Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA). • An update on the current status of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan was provided • A request that if mineral sales occur, the applicant should provide details of these sales to Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals and Waste team to support future mineral planning. <p>Once the M&W Policy and Strategy Team received the consultation on the complete Environmental Statement in November 2024, a full detailed response to the Submitted MRA [APP-195] was included within our Relevant Representation [RR-0793] in February 2025.</p>
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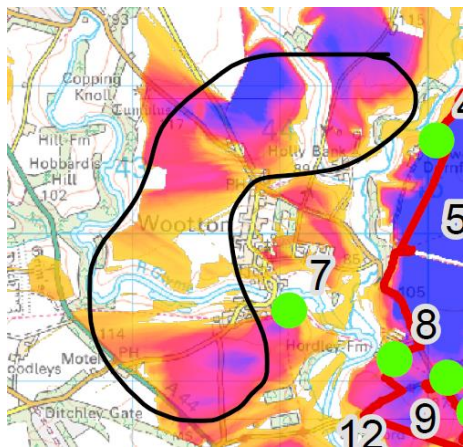
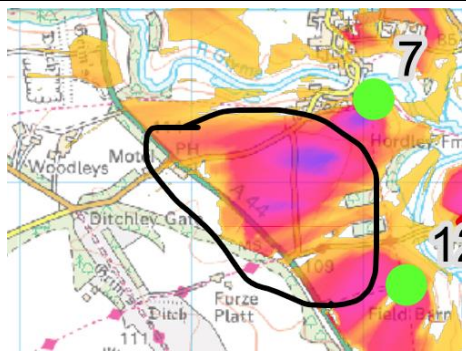
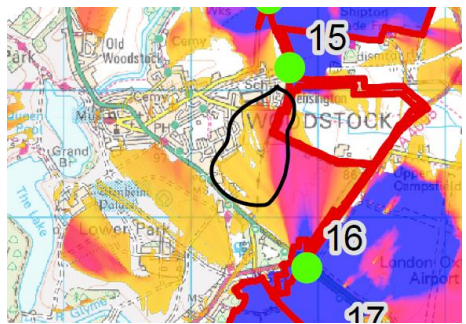
		<p>Further response was also provided within the Local Impact Report [REP1-070] (sections 7.6 Ground Conditions, 7.7 Mineral Safeguarding, and 7.14 Waste and Resources).</p>
1.18.7	Oxfordshire County Council	<p>Adverse effects on mineral resource</p> <p>The ExA note the concerns regarding sterilisation of the mineral resource and the length of time the resource would be inaccessible. In terms of piling works and the prospect for the applicant to leave cables in situ during decommissioning, are you concerned about potential damage to the mineral resource as well?</p> <p>RESPONSE:</p> <p>OCC: The Construction Phase Noise Document [APP-212] states that the solar PV modules are expected to be mounted upon a metal frame. This would be supported by galvanised steel piles or screws driven into the ground by impact piling to a depth of approximately 1.5 – 2.0 m, however the exact depth of the piles will be determined during the early stages of the construction phase when testing will be undertaken. The Environmental Statement Chapter 6 [APP-043] 6.4.1 states piling works will be between 1 and 3m depth and states an assumption of “worst case scenario”, with two legs at each end, 4 legs per solar PV module. From the Mineral Resource Assessment [APP-195] (MRA) supplied, it suggests piling will require a depth of between 1m and 2.5m.</p> <p>From evidence within the MRA [APP-195], alongside evidence within BGS Brit Pits data, Mineral resources can be found at varying depths across the proposed area located within the Minerals Safeguarding Area, and a number of borehole data reports suggest mineral resource can occur after depths of 1m. Therefore, assuming that piling requires a maximum of 3m depth, piling requirements for Solar Photovoltaic (PV) modules will directly impact mineral resources within the Mineral Safeguarding area.</p> <p>It is considered that piling is unlikely to significantly damage the mineral resource itself, as piling does not extract mineral, instead it compacts it around the steel structure. This may break down some of the gravel into smaller particle size, yet the mineral itself will remain.</p>

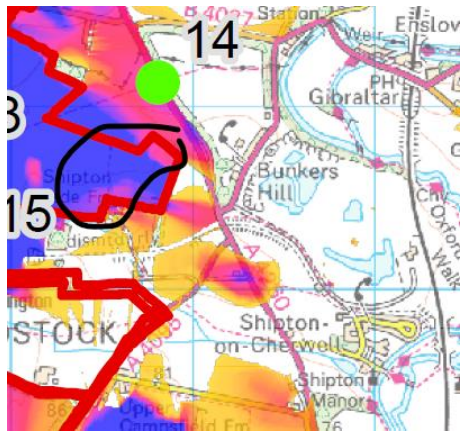
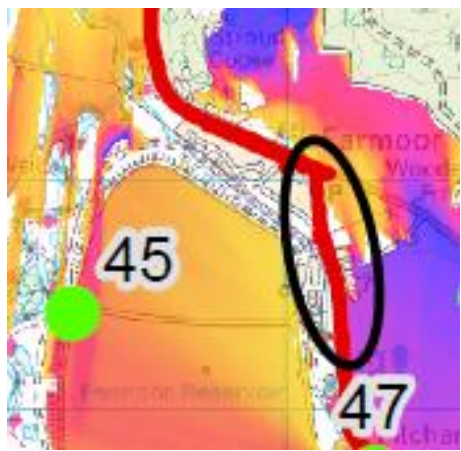
		<p>However, there is uncertainty on whether the piles will be removed from the site following decommissioning. Paragraph 2.1.2 of the Decommissioning Plan [APP-236] states that that mounting structures will be removed from the site, and excavations will be back filled with soil. However, 2.1.3 of the same report states that “Foundations and all other below ground infrastructure, which are not practicable to remove without major disturbances, will be cut to 1m below the surface to enable future ploughing. All piles are to be removed.”</p> <p>It is unclear how they intend to remove the piles, and it is also questioned what the impact of pulling 3 m steel piles out of the ground is. If the surrounding material is pulled up around the pile due to force required, this could result in significant mineral resources being pulled to the surface, significantly damaging the mineral resource.</p> <p>If it is considered impractical to remove the pilings following decommissioning, then this could significantly damage any future mineral resource viability. Any future mineral operator would need to remove these before commencing extraction work, increasing resources required and, potentially, timeframes and waste arisings, thereby damaging the mineral resources in terms of economic viability.</p> <p>In relation to cables, if they are to be removed during decommissioning, great care would need to be taken to ensure that only the overlying soils added when initially placing the cable are disturbed and not the surrounding mineral resource.</p> <p>However, if any cable is left in situ post decommissioning within the Mineral Safeguarding Area, this could cause similar issues to piling, as these will significantly limit access to mineral resources and would need to be removed prior to any extraction taking place, reducing economic viability of the resource.</p>
1.18.8	Applicant	<p>Compliance with NPS EN-1</p> <p>Set out clearly, for the SoS, how paragraph 5.11.19 has been met. Set out clearly, for the SoS, what mitigation measures under paragraph 5.11.28 are being pursued, other than simply the assertion that the development is ‘temporary’.</p>

Appendix 1: Viewpoints and Photomontages (Q 1.14.6) – Under-represented areas

Along the cable/access routes	
East edge of Eynsham	
The Oxford Greenbelt Way along the River Thames	
Cable/access crossing near Swinford Bridge on the Thames Path	

<p>The Cotswolds National Landscape e.g. east of Combe</p>	
<p>Areas where the potential for visibility is indicated around Blenheim Palace</p>	
<p>Elevated land on a Regional Trail above Rosamund's Well, south of Column of Victory</p>	

<p>Higher land in and around Wootton – both to north and south of the village, including high land north of Holly Bank</p>	
<p>High land east of Ditchley Gate (also on map above)</p>	
<p>Further locations on the edge of Woodstock</p>	

<p>PRoW by Shipton Slade Farm</p>	 <p>A map of the Shipton Slade Farm area. A red line, likely representing a Public Right of Way (PRoW), runs from the bottom left towards the top right. A green dot is marked on the red line near the top. The map includes labels for 'Shipton Slade Farm', 'Shipton-on-Cherwell', 'Shipton Manor', 'Bunkers Hill', 'Gibraltar', and 'Station'. The number '14' is prominently displayed in the upper center, and '15' is on the left. A black circle highlights a section of the red line.</p>
<p>Edge of Farmoor village</p>	 <p>A map of the Farmoor village area. A red line runs from the top left towards the bottom right. A green dot is marked on the red line near the bottom left. The map includes labels for 'Farmoor', 'Farmoor Woods', and 'Farmoor Reservoir'. The numbers '45' and '47' are prominently displayed. A black circle highlights a section of the red line.</p>

Appendix 2: Botley West Solar Farm Development – PROW affected

See separate attachment