

**From:** Hannes Bergmann [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 August 2025 10:53  
**To:** Botley West Solar Farm  
**Subject:** EN010147- Botley West Solar Farm  
**Attachments:** EN010147- Botley West Solar Farm .docx

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To the Planning inspectorate,

Please find below my response to questions recently raised by the planning inspectorate in regards to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm. I have also attached photos showing flooded resident homes and proof of existing high ground water level (photo taken in summer 2021: 50cm below surface level; in winter it can be as close as 30cm below surface level). In addition I have attached a photograph showing the traffic queue originating in Eynsham and going all the way to the red farm cottage at Eynsham Road at the time SSEN was replacing 1m pipe close to the farm round about which necessitated a short distance of single lane traffic. I don't want to imagine the impact of laying cables from Tumbledown Hill to Eynsham will have on traffic and quality of life for residents and negative impact on businesses in the area.

Kind regards

Hannes Bergmann  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]













## **To the Examining Authority**

### **Re: Botley West Solar Farm Proposal**

Please find below my response to the questions recently raised by the planning inspectorate in regards to the Botley West Solar Farm Proposal.

#### **Response to Question 2.10: Flood Risk, Hydrology, and Water Resources**

I am writing to express my significant concern regarding the increased flood risk associated with the proposed solar panels, specifically in the area between Eynsham Road, Cumnor Road, and the A420, including Tumbledown Hill and Denman's Farm. This entire area already experiences significant flooding with increasing frequency and quantity. Properties in Nobles Lane (1-3) and Dean Court have suffered from escalating flooding over recent years, with property number 3, in particular, having its garden submerged for many days annually. The fields adjacent to 1 Nobles Lane are also persistently flooded, indicating a substantial lack of capacity to manage rainwater already and this will become significantly worse with installation of any additional solar panel even if flood risk mitigation measures will be implemented.

In response to the inquiry regarding flood risk mitigation, particularly concerning the proposed solar farm development at Denham Farm area, it will be impossible to entirely mitigate the increased runoff rate and volume that result from such a development due reduced water infiltration into the ground, concentration of surface runoff, and subsequent soil erosion, all of which are exacerbated by the installation of large-scale infrastructure.

Despite residents installing soakaways and attenuation chambers, which are regularly maintained, the local soil conditions in combination with a high ground water level already present mean these measures are insufficient. The installation of solar panels will exacerbate this existing and serious flood risk. The area around Cumnor Road and Eynsham Road has also seen increased flooding in recent years, and introducing solar panels there is highly concerning.

Attempting to achieve the maximum possible mitigation, which would still fall short of 100% effectiveness, necessitates a significant degree of industrialisation of the landscape. This process involves extensive engineering works that fundamentally alter the character of the area. The consequence of such large-scale intervention is that restoring the land to its original, natural state after the solar farm is decommissioned becomes exceptionally difficult, if not impossible.

Therefore, the most effective and critical strategy for mitigating flood risk is not post-design engineering, but rather judicious site selection from the outset. Choosing a location with suitable geological and hydrological characteristics is paramount. For instance, the green belt area situated west of Botley has been identified as a particularly unsuitable location for any solar panel installation due as this area is characterised by heavy clay soil, which naturally has poor drainage. Developing on this type of ground would significantly increase flood risk, and for this reason, it should be unequivocally avoided for such projects.

#### **Response to Question 2.16: Traffic and Transport**

I have serious concerns about the proposed laying of electricity cables along Cumnor Road and Eynsham Road. This will have an unsustainable and unbearable impact on the residents of Farmoor. As the owner of Oxford Veterinary Specialists, I am also deeply concerned about the negative impact on my business. The resulting long traffic queues will create significant difficulties for both clients and staff attempting to access our practice. Residents are already frustrated by regular traffic jams caused by even minor roadworks, and the proposed works would create an unsustainable further burden.

### **Response to Question 2.13.8: Visual Impact and Agricultural Value**

Neither the proposal to plant 3-metre-high hedges nor the acceptance of solar panels as a visual feature is an acceptable option, particularly in the visually sensitive Tumbledown Hill area near Denman's Farm. I strongly recommend that solar panels be omitted entirely from such visually sensitive locations.

Furthermore, the land around Denman's Farm area is of high agricultural value. The hay produced there is a vital local resource, used for feeding sheep, horses, and cows in the surrounding area. Converting this land for solar panels would mean the loss of a significant local agricultural producer. Consequently, animal feed would need to be transported over longer distances, which would negatively impact CO2 emissions and contribute negatively to climate change.

### **Overall Conclusion**

I find the Botley West Solar Farm proposal to be absolutely unacceptable. The area, particularly around the Farmoor Reservoir, is a sensitive, beautiful nature reserve and Green Belt land, which is cherished by residents from the outskirts of Oxford for relaxation. This project would represent an inappropriate industrialisation of this valued landscape.

While I am a strong proponent of solar energy, having installed panels on both my home and my veterinary practice, this is the wrong project in the wrong place. Large-scale solar farms are appropriate in the right locations, but this is not one of them. Numerous other projects are in development, and there is no compelling need to proceed with this one, which appears to be driven purely by business interests.

The construction phase alone will have a huge negative impact on residents, who already contend with significant traffic delays on a regular basis. This project is not justified given its profound negative impact on the natural environment and the local community. I urge you to take these concerns, shared by many thousands of other individuals and organisations, seriously and prioritise the well-being of the country over profit-making ventures.