

FAO Simon Raywood

The Planning Inspectorate,

National Infrastructure Directorate.

August 15th, 2025

Re: Botley West Solar Farm.

My registration identification number: 20053368

Dear Mr. Raywood,

I would like to add to my comments, submitted as a Relevant Representation on 25th January, 2025.

I live [REDACTED] in Begbroke. Our house is acknowledged by the developer, PVDP, to be one of those to be most adversely impacted by their proposed installation of solar panels.

We were very relieved to see that, in response to London Oxford Airport's concerns about the safety of their aircraft, in the event of their having to make an emergency landing, PVDP have agreed to remove the planned panels from a number of fields, including those immediately adjacent to our house.

However, we are dismayed to see that they have tightly adhered to what Mr. Will Curtis described as "the absolute minimum " that would be required. The map accompanying their Draft Change Application, Appendix 2, shows their intention still to put panels along the edge of Bladon Wood (part of field 2.15). This would block the view of, and damage the environment of, the ancient oaks which form the edge of the wood. It would perversely damage the landscape, not only from our home and from those of our neighbours [REDACTED] but from far and wide. It would also badly affect the Public Right of Way that runs between Begbroke and Bladon. This bridleway is in constant use and the experience of all those walkers, runners, cyclists and riders would be harmed by the constriction of the path, as it approaches the wood, in the interest of a limited number of extra panels. The visual harm would be totally disproportionate to any imagined profit. I request that this area be removed from the project.

This is an immediate concern, but only as part of a much larger one, about the project as a whole, which threatens to ruin the wider landscape. West Oxfordshire District Council has recommended the exclusion of solar panels from many areas of visually sensitive land.

They include all the fields between Begbroke and Bladon. I strongly support their recommendation that these fields be excluded, for the following reasons:

1. They are all within the Green Belt. No “very special circumstances” have been demonstrated to justify development here. [See also the submission on this subject by the Begbroke and Yarnton Green Belt Campaign].
2. They are the essential rural surroundings for Bladon, and for St. Michael’s Church and the conservation area in Begbroke. They are also part of the setting of and approach to the World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace.
3. These fields are on rising ground and so they are visible from the A44, and far beyond, and, of course, from the air.
4. They are all agriculturally productive land, which is as essential a resource as energy and should not be sacrificed
5. They are criss-crossed by multiple Public Rights of Way, in constant use, and essential to the well-being of local people and of those from further afield, walking the long-distance paths.
6. Furthermore, I support the eloquent submissions by Professor Steven Westaby, who has had the ordeal of tending the victims of two fatal air-crashes in these fields. He recommends that solar panels be excluded from a much wider area around the airport. We await, of course, the outcome of studies concerning glint and glare, thermal plumes and increased danger of bird strikes.

I request that solar panels be excluded from the whole of field 2.15, and also from all the land between Begbroke and Bladon, on the slopes of Spring Hill. (Fields 2.1 – 2.15).

Yours sincerely,

Susan Oldfield

[Redacted signature block]