

Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) believes that the creation of Botley West solar farm, as a significant new piece of national infrastructure based in Oxfordshire should generate benefits for the local community. Specifically, this should be in the form of grants to the smaller charitable organisations in the county who work hard to support those in most need, but struggle most to access funding. We welcome the latest increased proposal from PVDP for a community benefit fund at £440,000 per annum but we think this is insufficient.

We note there is a live UK government working paper consulting on 'Community Benefits and Shared Ownership for Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure'. We note it refers to the Scottish Government's Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments, which sets an expectation that qualifying projects will provide community benefits of £5,000 per MW of installed capacity per year for the operational lifetime of the project.

We also note the powerful arguments made by Oxfordshire charitable organisations Low Carbon Hub, Sustainable Woodstock and GreenTEA that 2% of project revenue should be invested directly in local communities. 1,000 people signed their petition on this topic.

Founded in 1995, OCF is a long-standing registered charity that helps to build thriving communities through effective philanthropy. We award around £2 million in grants annually. We work with local philanthropists, businesses and local authorities in the County, pooling their funds, as appropriate, so that they can make a bigger difference together. Our aspiration is that the Botley West community benefit fund would form a basis for further match-funding from across Oxfordshire so that this unique project could leverage extraordinary value for Oxfordshire.