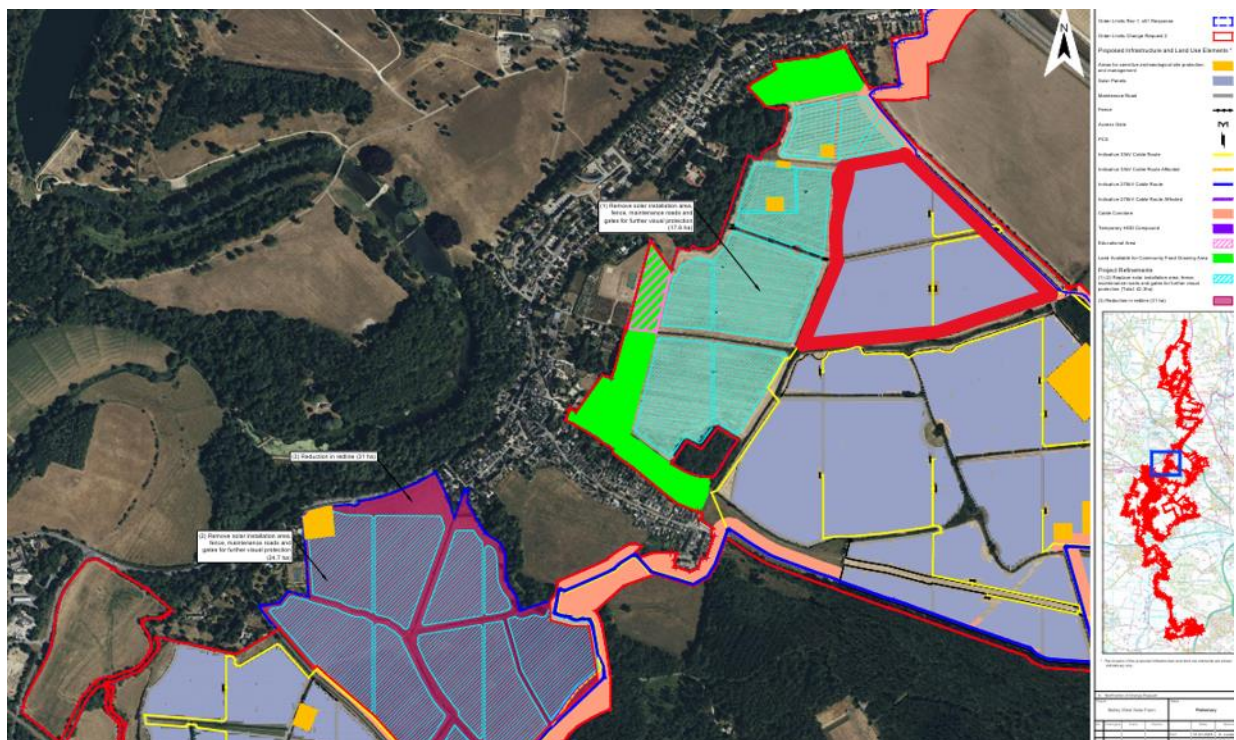


Response	Percentage
Effective	68%
Ineffective	28%
No opinion	4%

REF: EN010147 Botley West Solar Farm Representation: Feedback to PVDP Change

Further to my first submission on 5th June, I would like to feedback on the proposed PVDP change proposal.

PVDP Proposed Changes



I welcome some of the PVDP changes, although very frustrated at the route it has taken to force the change. My areas for concern however are as follows:

1. My observation having walked the fields with reference to the proposed changes, is that If PVDP conceded the two fields outlined with the **red outline**, then most of the concerns would be removed, and the current natural environment would be maintained. The main walks of Bladon, and visitors to Churchill's Grave, is down Orchard Field Lane and across two footpaths towards St Martin's Church, the main one being the furthest pathway which runs along the Rowel Brook, and ends up at St Martin's Church. The hedge row is mature and would act as a natural barrier to the solar panels behind. This would provide a 30 – 45 minute walk without observing any solar panels.

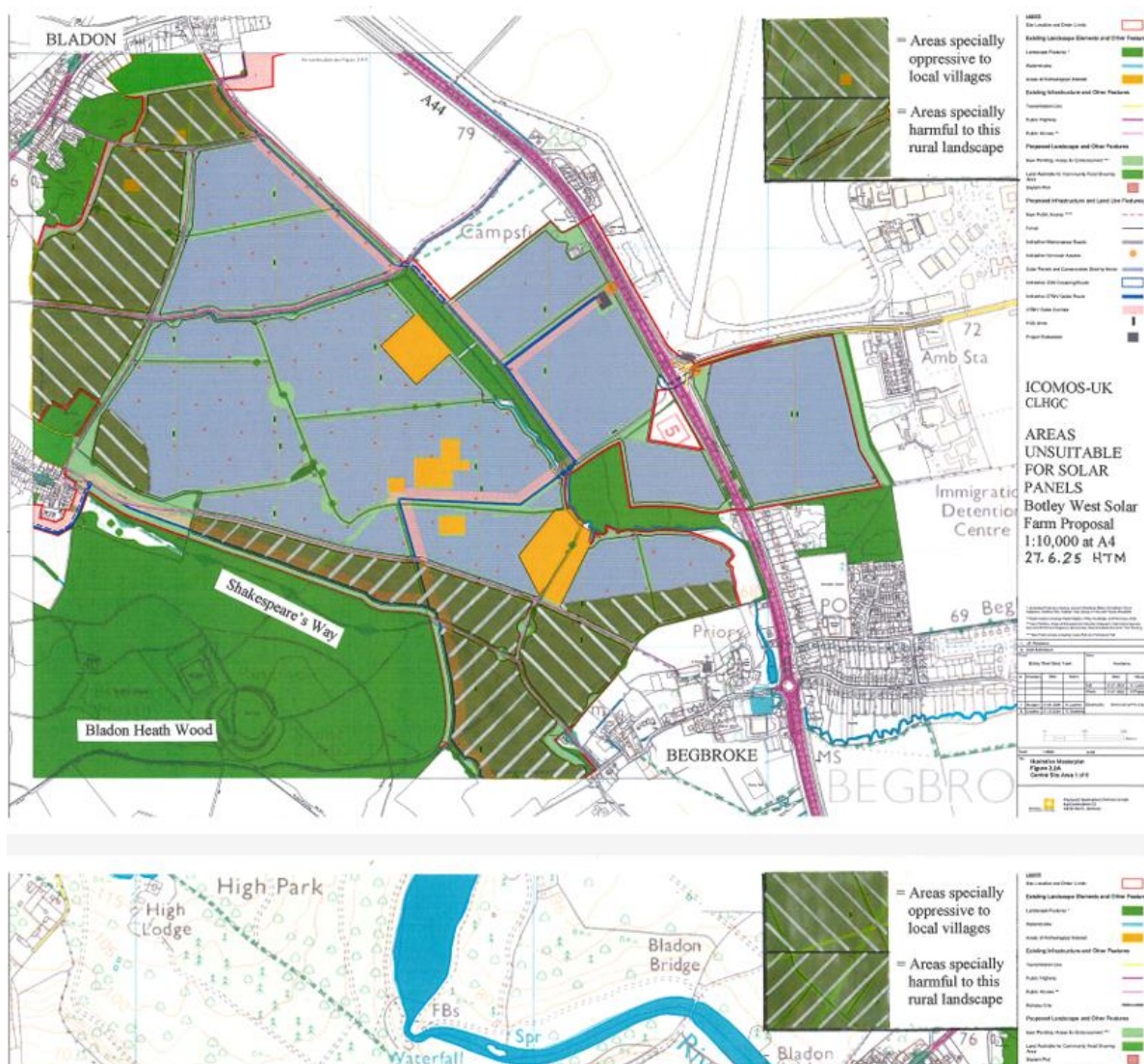
My concern is the concentration of walkers from their regular 30 – 60 minute walks to the narrow section of fields now proposed.

2. I am concerned over the proposed Land retention for Food growing behind Grove Road, in Bladon. I require clarification for the land use and how it will be maintained. The original proposal was for allotments for the local community, but I understand this has changed to food growing commercial enterprises selling food elsewhere. There is no community benefit from this proposal, and on either

3. I have concerns over the interpretation of Hedges and Footpaths. There is concern over the size of the hedges being proposed. Any hedgerow must be in line with the local environment and not overly oppressive and should not exceed 2m. Footpaths and bridleways should not be overwhelmed by high hedges. (ExQ2.13.8, and responses from all IPs to this question)
4. At the first hearing of the Government Inspectorate, PVDP disclosed that they would create roads for the building of the solar farm to access remote areas, and when questioned by the Inspectors stated that these roads would remain in place for the replacement of solar panels in line with their lifespan of 25years. How wide and what is the construction of these roads? Assuming the life duration, and requirement to receive heavy lorries, these roads will effectively be permanent for the duration of the project. How will these roads interact with the current footpaths and bridleways, how will they be accessed, will the roads have hedges to reduce the visual impact etc. These roads need to be detailed and make up part of the PVDP application.

ICOSMOS Recommended Changes

Ref.: EN010147-001145-BotleyW.Central omissions 1.2.5 (1)



5. My concern is the migratory nature of the deer located within the woods. Deer are regular visitors to the fields behind Grove Road, Bladon, and can be seen in the adjoining fields. It would be good to get some expertise to see how animals living in the woods could travel from the woods across to fields they currently inhabit. The ICOSMOS proposed plan for the area around Bladon Heath Wood and Begbroke offers some protection in the fields surrounding the woods and Begbroke, which I support.
6. Local Walk protected. The addition of the ICOSMOS buffer zone around Begbroke and Bladon Heath Wood would extend the Bladon walk 60 minutes. A main walk is between St Michael's Church across the pathway to Heath Lane, or via the woods, which both come out at Heath Lane. This then drops down through the fields for options of St Martin's Church, or back towards Orchard Field Lane.
7. There has been little focus beyond the Blenheim Palace setting, which is the majority of the PVDP proposal. All of the 15 villages affected by the Solar Farm are of historical importance, and pre-date the palace. There are specific areas that need close review, such as the Churches of Church Hanborough, Begbroke, Cassington and Cumnor. There needs to be a full Residential Visual Amenity Assessment to put buffer zones in place for all properties which face onto the proposed Solar Farm across the whole application. These should be in line with the zones allocated around Bladon, i.e. 500m. (ExQ2.13.15)
8. Airport concerns. This is an ongoing debate. There has been some removal of solar panels to the landing/take-off route, however the main concern remains over an aborted landing near to the airport, which will be outside of the landing/take-off route. I will support the view from the airport as they are expert in this particular field, but I am aware of two crashes in recent years which would have landed within the proposed solar farm. As the airport stated at the last hearing, a crash landing on normal fields would see passengers survive, but landing within the solar farm would lead to a fatal crash. A full risk assessment should be carried out and the solar farm should be located accordingly.
9. PVDP funding concern and guaranteed completion of the solar farm. Over the period of the consultation PVDP has remained surrounded in controversy over its funding and the source for £900 million pounds to build the development. The local concern is that PVDP has no intention of developing the solar farm and have just carried out a desk-top exercise to pass the application, before selling on the project. This would follow their experience in Japan, and the fact that PVDP remain a very small German company (£400k turnover in 2022), have yet to build a solar farm, and whose funding is under some scrutiny. PVDP need to publish auditable accounts and fully reveal their funding (ExQ2.5.1&2, 2.5.9)

In summary, the removal of two more fields marked in the image provided, along with the ICOSMOS recommendation, would see the current Bladon walks unaffected. Investigation is required to ensure that migrating deer/animals from the woods are not affected by the solar farm. Buffer zone protection for the wider villages needs to be in line with that offered to Bladon. A full risk assessment needs to be carried out on the risk of fatal plane crashes within the solar farm. There needs to be full transparency of the funding of PVDP to ensure guarantee of completion if the solar farm is to go ahead.

All the very best

David Foster

Resident of Bladon, Oxfordshire