

16<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

I watched last week's hearings and feel strongly that the issue of aviation safety was not addressed sufficiently in ISH2 issue 3f. As we live under the flight path south of London Oxford Airport and in a potential crash area, we submit that the aviation safety issues are more serious than has been conveyed. I speak as a pilot who used to fly gliders and motor gliders locally and who knows the area well from the air.

### **1. Engine Failure After Take Off**

Although we are grateful that the fields next to us have been partially cleared of solar panels, (Change Request 2, 12 September 2025) the applicant appears to have removed panels from the minimum area they can get away with. We observe from our house that Aircraft taking off and landing south of the airport do not just fly in a straight line from the runway. They often deviate to either side and, of course, fly circuits over the surrounding fields which would be dangerously covered by panels. In the event of a crash, which indeed could be fatal, rescue and fire crews would have severely limited access. How would they get in and how would the electricity be turned off?

### **2. Glint and Glare**

The recent Schiphol airport fiasco, where glint and glare from a nearby solar farm shut down flights at great expense, shows that the problem is real, not minimal as suggested by the applicant. The Pager Power analysis submitted by the applicant persists in assuming that aircraft fly in a dead straight line after leaving the runway and the pilots only look ahead over a limited angle. From my own flying experience, pilots are trained to look over a much wider angle and hence would suffer from glint and glare.

### **3. Birdstrike**

The applicant minimizes the birdstrike dangers. We often see, from our house, flocks of jackdaws, crows and seagulls, with geese and swans passing over and red kites soaring above. If, as seems likely, the solar panel arrays displace these birds towards the limited grassland left, such as the airport, then there is an increase of danger to aircraft.

### **4. Thermal Plumes**

It is possible that the heat plumes from the solar panels could disrupt the primary radar reflections from aircraft. Primary radars from Brize Norton and LOA could be affected, and the precautionary principle should be applied, in that very large areas of solar panels should be limited near nationally important sites such as Brize, which is the home base for the RAF flight refueling fleet. Not all aircraft have transponders, and illegal or invading aircraft are unlikely to turn them on. Gliders, in particular, are not required to carry transponders and, because of their composite structure, are difficult to see on primary radar. This is a real danger!

### **5. Conclusion.**

For aircraft safety, solar panels should be removed from the fields near London Oxford Airport, and, at the very least, from all the fields between Bladon and Begbroke. Overall, the Botley West Solar farm proposal is the wrong project in the wrong place, and you should recommend that it is **NOT** approved.

Yours sincerely,  
Martin Oldfield