

## **Botley West Solar Farm.**

### **Closing statement from Interested Party N R GUNN, North Leigh Parish Councillor**

31<sup>st</sup> October 2025

The Applicant is Photovolt Development Partners, PVDP

#### **Applicant's Approach**

The Examiners have asked numerous valid questions of the applicant. They have repeatedly requested that the applicant answer questions fully. This in many instances the applicant has conspicuously failed to do.

I find the applicant's cavalier approach to many of the key issues not only disrespectful of the entire NSIP process, but also reveals the shallowness of the applicant's rationale in often citing the national policy on renewable energy as cover for those many issues where they have not produced the correct work requested by the ExA on time or, in many cases, at all. The applicant's arrogance poorly conceals their lack of detail, lack of method and dismissal of the deep and thoroughly set out concerns of the OHA and hundreds of IPs.

This attitude is well summed up by the Examiners in their response to the applicant's view of the limited residual effects of the solar panels:

- *"This comes across as being very dismissive of anyone's view but your own. Given that the view on residual effects is shared by the Host Authorities, Historic England and many of the Interested Parties (IP's). The ExA (ie Examiners) find it extraordinary that you have just repeated your approach and methodology, when this has been questioned on numerous occasions both in writing and in the previous hearings."*

The following are other outstanding issues that the applicant in my view has either refused to answer or has answered in an incomplete manner.

#### **Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)**

The lack of this document until the very last minute and the applicant's response to the Examiners' repeated requests for it illustrates the disrespectful manner in which the applicant has approached the Examination

in general and the total lack of understanding and indeed care exhibited by the applicant of the people who would live close to the projected solar panels..

The Examiners (ExA) have repeatedly asked for an RVAA and the Applicant has refused -insisting it is not necessary because, in their professional judgement, “there is no potential for any private views to be adversely affected to an extent that would result in a level of harm of Substantial, which trigger the threshold for an RVAA being required.” The ExA disagree and, at the hearings, declared themselves to be “very disappointed” and asked the Applicant to “confirm how properties are in the 50-250m limits”

The Applicant has hurriedly cobbled together an RVAA submitted in two parts at deadline 6 (D6). It contains many errors and omissions and comes to the same conclusion as before, namely; “Based on the assessment and professional judgement, it is considered that the effects resulting from the Project would fall below the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold referred to in LI TGN 02/2019 as visual effects “of such nature and/or magnitude that it potentially affects ‘living conditions’ or Residential Amenity”

The ExA have issued a further letter dated 23/10/25 pointing out many errors and omissions and asking for corrections.

### **Further reductions to solar installation on Landscape Grounds.**

The Oxfordshire Host Authorities (OHA), at the request of ExA, have submitted a very impressive document describing the areas for reduction of the panel area, explaining the methodology they used to decide these areas and the impacts they feel remain.

This thorough document deals with fields on an individual numbered basis. It recommends that all the southern area panels are eliminated, as well as removal of panels in many fields in the central and northern areas.

The OHA should be congratulated on such a thorough, clear and detailed document. It can't be ignored. It represents the views of the councils that would host such a development and in turn represents the people who would have to live close to such a development.

### **Funding of the project**

The applicant relies on a funding method open to chance and the vagaries of the investment market. The applicant believes that investors will be attracted by the postulated financial returns if and when a DCO is granted and they claim

that this is a normal process. Currently the applicant, PVDP, has no funding in place. The project in its current form is costed at around £850million.

PVDP is controlled by a company called Cransetta Investments. Its last published accounts are from 2013. It then showed £7million in liabilities and £4.5million in assets.

I believe this to be a poor basis to attract investors, is not a normal funding situation and therefore I believe that it is PVDP's intention to sell the project on in some form if a DCO is granted.

### **London Oxford Airport (LOA)**

#### **Potential dangers of glint and glare to aircraft, Safeguarding Zone, training facility**

PVDP erroneously claimed, at hearings, that no safeguarding zone was published by London Oxford Airport. In fact that was not true. A safeguarding zone was published in January 2023. (proof was submitted by an Interested Person (IP) at Deadline 6 (D6))

PVDP claim that no flocks of large birds have been seen by Applicant surveys for the past 2 years. Counter evidence (photos and videos) has been submitted at D6.

The CEO of Oxford Airport is very concerned about Glint and Glare impact on, particularly, student pilots. (hearings in April, 2025) Oxford airport is one of the main pilot training centres in the UK. Oxford Airport's future as a pilot teaching airport is at stake if large numbers of panels around Oxford airport are not removed.

#### **Lack of proven ability of the applicant to deliver large scale solar projects**

There is no evidence that PVDP has successfully developed large scale solar projects anywhere in the world.

The applicant states that it is the practice in these sorts of projects to subcontract the work. However, unless the controlling company does have experience of developing, running and maintaining the project in the operational phase, confusion and gross inefficiencies will inevitably result.

**Impact of solar panels on flooding characteristics**

The village of Cassington regularly floods. The latest peer reviewed data does show that solar panels do exacerbate flooding events. The applicant has not answered this recent scientific data.

The applicant's provisions for mitigating such flooding events are insufficient.

**Thank you,**

**Robert Gunn, North Leigh Parish Councillor**