

### Statement on the Developer's Application

Having followed the planning process closely, it is clear that the developer's inability—or unwillingness—to meaningfully engage with the Examining Authority's (ExA) questions has resulted in significant gaps in the evidence base. These omissions leave the ExA without the necessary knowledge or data to form a robust and balanced recommendation. It appears that the developer feels sufficiently confident to disregard legitimate concerns raised by the Examiners, perhaps relying on the precedent of the Secretary of State's previous decisions to overturn recommendations against other solar proposals.

Given the lack of satisfactory responses to these issues, I believe the ExA cannot, in good conscience, recommend approval of this application. The Secretary of State has stated that Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are to be judged on their merits. If this principle is applied consistently, then the same conclusion should be reached in this case.

### Areas of Outstanding Concern

#### 1. Residential Visual Amenity

The assessment of the development's impact on residents has been deeply unsatisfactory. Despite repeated feedback through consultations, the developer has continued without addressing legitimate concerns. The Green Belt area at the centre of the proposal is not flat; it comprises gently rolling hills, including those rising toward the ancient woodland near Bladon Heath. From our property on [REDACTED] in Bladon, our garden and outlook face south toward these hills, meaning our view will be dramatically altered by the proposed solar coverage. Moreover, these same hills are visible from the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, and ICOMOS UK has recommended that these fields be removed from the development area—advice that appears to have been ignored.

#### 2. Loss of Recreational Land

The fields between Bladon and Begbroke are used daily by local residents for walking, cycling, dog walking, and enjoying the natural environment. These free, accessible activities are vital for our community's mental and physical well-being. Replacing open fields with fenced solar panel corridors cannot reasonably be considered an equivalent amenity or public benefit.

#### 3. Airport Safety

Given that Oxford Airport is one of the region's busiest flight training facilities, the lack of detailed consideration for aviation safety is alarming. Two plane crashes have occurred in Bladon during our time here—neither within the small buffer area removed late in the development process. It remains unclear how an emergency landing or crash would be managed in the majority of the surrounding fields, which will be covered with panels and enclosed by fencing. Additionally, solar glare poses a serious hazard. Similar issues have led to operational disruptions at Schiphol Airport and even to the removal of a smaller solar development nearby. The risks to both Oxford and RAF Brize Norton airports should not be underestimated.

#### 4. Architectural and Archaeological Heritage

The proposal demonstrates insufficient regard for local heritage assets, including listed churches and historic buildings. Furthermore, archaeological investigations have already uncovered Roman and Saxon artefacts and remains, yet there has been little transparency or acknowledgement of how these findings will be protected or preserved.

#### 5. Loss of Productive Agricultural Land

A significant portion of the central site comprises Grade 3A "best and most versatile" agricultural land, currently yielding two crops per year—including rapeseed, maize, root vegetables, and barley—under regenerative farming practices. The claim that this is degraded or exhausted arable land is demonstrably false.

#### 6. Flood Risk

The extensive coverage of impermeable solar panels will inevitably alter surface water runoff patterns, increasing flood risks for nearby properties and residents. This issue has not been adequately assessed or mitigated in the proposal.