

Interested Party Registration Number 20052948

Frances Sunderland [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I live with my husband [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] and own the field which abuts the Yarnton Road to the south. As an interested party (ref 20052948) I am writing to say that I hope that you the examiner will not recommend that the Development Consent Order is granted for Botley West. PVDP have constantly failed or refused to give appropriate evidence to support their application throughout this process and it is difficult to see how the SoS Mr Milliband could grant in their favour without the appropriate evidence and reports.

PVDP have made a mockery of the planning system, arrogantly ignoring requests by residents, national bodies such as Historic England and you the Examiner for specific reports, assessments and details. How can this be the 'proper process' required on which to base a decision which will affect a vast part of West Oxfordshire for many decades.

In particular the following issues are still outstanding and of concern:

RVAA – Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

This was requested over and over again and a sloppy report has just been presented by PVDP with mistakes, omissions, poor maps and photographs. It concludes that Botley West will not affect living conditions in this area. This is simply not true.

Repeated requests for the reduction of the solar installation

OHA's report has highlighted the inappropriate location of Botley West on open landscape, sloping and undulating land. The intrinsically rural character of the area will be destroyed and such a huge solar array will change the appearance of the historic landscape. The height of racks could exceed typical hedgerow heights and any rotation of racks would produce noise in this quiet rural area.

Loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural Land for food production

PVDP's statement that the land is poor is not true. Soil surveys and tenant farmers show this statement to be false. Food production and security is very important in our volatile world and with the challenges of climate change.

PVDP Funding

It seems wrong that the financial details of such a huge project are not completely transparent. If the project is of national importance then the full financial detail should be publicly available for scrutiny and its financial viability should be provable. A project of national importance should not just be for private financial gain. The financial structure of both PVDP, Solar Five and the Blenheim Estate and Blenheim Charitable Foundation should be transparent and assessed. PVDP's claim that the sketchy details on the financing of this project is 'normal' is extraordinary and again is simply untrue.

Historic villages, listed churches

Why are PVDP not prepared to consider the worth of this heritage? Only Blenheim Palace has been considered. Unique and historic listed churches, houses and villages have been ignored by PVDP. Our immediate area of [REDACTED], Worton, Cassington, Bladon and Church Hanborough sits within the central section of the proposed Botley West site and includes many historic buildings and grade 1 listed churches and the relationship between these unique buildings and the landscape in which they sit is crucial.

Flood Risk Report Missing

Despite many requests PVDP has still not provided proper evidence about increased flood risk from panel run-off in an area with a history of surface water problems.

Temporary nature of Botley West/Decommissioning

The temporary nature of Botley West has been trumpeted by PVDP, but no full details of the decommissioning after 40 years as been provided or evidence of how they will remove millions of metal piles to return the land to agricultural use. I assume they have not provided this detail as it is of no interest to PVDP who will probably sell their interest and move on very soon. It is essential that PVDP show evidence of an approved decommissioning plan and fund.

Cable Route

How can this project be given any permission without the final cable route being agreed? PVDP have failed to present a solution to crossing the Thames. There is also insufficient detail about the substations and their impacts.

Too close to homes

I was glad to see that you the Examiner have proposed that there should be a distance of no less than 250m between the solar array and any house. For example, Plot 2.60 abuts the edge of the group of the houses here at [REDACTED] and 2.57, 2.58 and 2.59 are extremely close, whilst plots 2.100, 2.102, 2.103, 2.109 and 2.110 are overwhelmingly close to the edge of Cassington Village.

Is it needed?

Many other solar farms have been built in the UK and are still not linked up to the national grid. Finally solar on new builds is being made mandatory and other requirements such as solar on car parks etc (as in other European countries) may follow. We do not need to cover our beautiful, historic and productive landscape with metal and glass. There are other renewables alternatives which should be pursued.

I would be grateful if you would consider the points that I have highlighted here seriously and hope that you will NOT recommend that permission will be granted for Botley West.

Yours faithfully
Frances Sunderland