

I have followed the consultation process from the beginning, including viewing the Open Floor Hearings. Throughout, the Applicant has maintained the way in which they have approached the consultation/examination. They have consistently failed to engage with the process/community/IP's in any meaningful way, and it feels very much as if they have treated it as a desktop/tick box exercise, with their lawyer stating that their expectation is that a DCO will be granted notwithstanding the inspection, as it aligns with government policy. However, Secretary of State, Ed Miliband stated on 19th October, "There has to be a proper process that we follow" and "...each project is decided on merit". This being the case, PVDP's application has fallen severely short of following that process or demonstrating that the development's merits would outweighs the significant and lasting harm that would result on multiple fronts.

The rigour with which the Inspectorate has examined the Application has clearly exposed its many and serious shortcomings, whether relating to RVAA, Heritage/wider setting of Blenheim, land quality, Flooding, Public Rights of Way, VSC - Green Belt, Airport Safety, Wildlife/Biodiversity, cabling routes, archaeology, National Grid, opaque funding, decommissioning etc. The Applicant has failed to provide required information to the ExA at deadlines, or sometimes not at all, leaving insufficient time for IP's to review and respond. The significant omissions and minimisation of the importance of points raised by IP's, as stated by the ExA, shows a "dismissive" attitude, characterizing "valid professional judgements..." as "subjective opinions that would not materially affect your assessments".

On 28th October I was present at a public meeting in Woodstock at which the CEO of Blenheim was present. An attendee commented on the Applicant's absence of experience in building a large solar installation, its lack of engagement with IP's/Inspection, with deadlines for submission of information being missed or not provided at all (specifically, in this case with reference to Oxford Airport). It was suggested to the CEO of Blenheim that this indicates that the Applicant was overwhelmed by the project. He responded by saying "...it may not be great practice".... but "...evidence tends to be handed over at the deadline date". This statement clearly illustrates how the Applicant/Blenheim have approached the examination process. He also stated that, "The airport were in the unfortunate situation where they didn't engage for quite a while". However, the Inspector is aware of the facts about the PVDP's lack of consultation with Oxford Airport until just before the commencement of the Open Floor Hearings.

It is my sincere hope that the ExA will share the opinion expressed by Stop Botley West's barrister, [REDACTED], that the Applicant's attitude to the examination "... leaves a significant gap in the knowledge and data available on which the ExA is required to make a robust recommendation.." and that, as a result, he will recommend the Application be rejected.

Thank you and your fellow inspectors for your diligent work on behalf of the community.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Begley

I note the following Parliamentary Questions were tabled by Calum Miller MP on 5th November, 2025. I have been surprised that an Application relating to National Infrastructure was allowed to progress to examination by the Planning Inspectorate, given what is known about the ownership of PVDP, information which has previously been brought to the attention of Parliament by Layla Moran MP.

Written Parliamentary Questions tabled by Calum Miller, MP for Bicester and Woodstock on November 5, 2025, and due for answer by November 12.

88459: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Planning Inspectorate and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project processes in evaluating the financial viability of funding commitments made by developers of major energy projects.

88458: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the (a) financial structure and (b) governance arrangements of (i) Blenheim Estates and (ii) the Blenheim Charitable Foundation

88457: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the financial viability of SolarFive Ltd and Photovolt Development Partners to undertake the development of Botley West Solar Farm.

88456: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether his Department has sought the advice of the office of the Financial Sanction Implementation on reported Russian-linked funding associated with the proposed Botley West Solar Farm.

88455: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of (a) the Planning Inspectorate and (b) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project processes to safeguard against national security risks from investment by (i) inappropriate or (ii) hostile overseas sources.