

Hannigan, Georgiana

From: Quin McGill [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 November 2025 16:17
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Cc: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk
Subject: Response to PVDP

Categories: Deadline, EO

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]

Please accept my apologies, my previous email, for some reason, developed formatting problems in transit.

[REDACTED]
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9th of November 2025

Dear Inspectors,

As a long time resident of Tumbledown, I was astounded by the quality of the 'Residential Visual Amenity Document' document, which has very recently been published by PVDP, concerning our properties here.

As evidence, they had taken two photographs purporting to show '[REDACTED]' and '[REDACTED]'. These had either been downloaded from Google Street View or snapped through the window of a car from the edge of the B4017. It would seem that the photographer had not even bothered to get out of the vehicle to take the pictures. They show nothing but the entrances to the long driveways which lead to the houses. Another equally pointless photograph was taken, or downloaded, from the B4017 beside Jumpers Farm looking southwards.

Could you please ask them why the 'photographic evidence' was limited to these pointless photographs? All of the fields surrounding the houses and descending into the valley are owned by the same farm which will house the solar panels. The makers of the report would have had no restrictions whatsoever to access anywhere in the area. The authors of the study could have taken proper, meaningful photographs from anywhere and would, indeed, have been welcome to photograph from our houses and gardens in order to assess the impact properly. They could also have used the public pathways if they wanted.

Being on the rim of the Farmoor Valley and about fifty metres higher than the proposed development on the valley floor, the houses have excellent views of the whole development area and the visual impact could hardly be greater. You are very welcome to visit our properties in order to properly see the situation for yourselves.

The impact of glint and glare was not mentioned in the document. Being fifty metres higher than the fields of solar panels and to the south of them, glint and glare will have a very large impact. Glint and glare will also be a problem for drivers, cyclists and walkers if this scheme were to go ahead.

A simple person would be forgiven for thinking that this survey was cobbled together in haste at the last minute merely in order to tick boxes. Could you please ask them if the authors had actually visited our location at all or if it were just done using Google maps or similar.

More generally, few places in the country are less suitable for such a development than the Farmoor valley:

1. Being a valley, it is impossible to screen the development from the upward sloping ground which surrounds it by using hedges as described in their literature, or any other form of screening. It is also impossible to screen the glint and glare.

2 The fields at the bottom of the west end of Farmoor valley have been pretty well water-logged for most of this Autumn and winter. This is case in most years. Even the B4017 is subject to flooding from time to time, this alone should negate the placing of such electrical installations.

3. The land is productive farming land.

4. It is Greenbelt

Those of us who live near Oxford are very grateful to those far-sighted planners who from 1958 to the 1990s initiated and implemented the green belt. It would be a terrible thing to rob future generations of the Oxford Green Belt. Green Belts were the welcomed brainchild of enlightened town and country planners, they must not be thrown away. Our children will need the open spaces and wildlife and nature even more than we do. It is irreplaceable, once it is lost, it is gone forever.

All of the magnificent views across the valley between Tumbledown ridge and Wytham Woods would be irrevocably blighted.

If this development were to go ahead the amenity value of our green belt will have gone forever and the quality of life of all who live in this area of Oxfordshire will be degraded.

The Oxford County Council position statement recognises this and states that any such development would have to demonstrate very special circumstances.

There are none in this case. Such a solar power set-up can be situated anywhere in the country, preferably on brownfield sites or far from human habitation.

5 Wildlife

As you no doubt know, Farmoor Reservoir is the largest single area of open water in the county, and is probably its most-visited bird watching site. It is home to an amazing array of permanent and migratory birds, flocks of whom are to be seen on the valley floor in the appropriate seasons. You would be able to imagine how the carpeting of the solar panels would affect this as well as how they would affect the local wildlife, which move between Denman's Copse and South Hill Copse.

6 Age old paths

I, like so many others, very often walk from Cumnor down past Denman's Copse and over to the Thames. I always meet many happy people on the way. Some just walk their dogs, some want to keep fit with daily exercise, some are hikers, walking long distances from far off. In summer there are very large groups of young people seeking to achieve their 'Duke of Edinburgh Awards'. They walk down the Thames Path and then join the Oxford Greenbelt Way at Farmoor. This section is most important as it is the nexus of a whole web of pathways. The ways come together in order to join the Thames at Farmoor or to cross it, over the weir, at the picturesque Pinkhill lock (built 1791) just behind Farmoor.

Ramblers enjoy the peace and quiet of Nature. Very few would want to walk through the proposed, electro-magnetic landscape of solar panels with its two metre fences, cameras and lights and the constant hum from the inverters, transformers etc. Were this scheme to go ahead, the excellent amenity value of these paths and rights of way, some of which have been in existence for centuries, would certainly be lost.

7. The danger of lithium-ion battery banks in an inhabited valley with westerly winds.

I understand that there will be large lithium ion battery banks used to store electricity. There have been a number of incidents of overheating and spontaneous combustion in lithium ion batteries.

Thermal runaway results in toxic smoke, which, if inhaled, causes serious health concerns, especially for individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Being in a valley with predominantly westerly winds, these toxic gases will be carried to densely populated Botley and Oxford. By allowing this power station to be constructed near houses you would be placing the occupants in danger. Far better to put such dangers in unpopulated areas.

In addition to the immediate health risks, the environmental impact of a burning lithium-ion battery is considerable. Contaminants can seep into the soil and waterways, affecting local ecosystems.

Yours faithfully,

Bill McGill

Registration Identification number [REDACTED]