

Dear Planning Inspectorate

I am writing to outline my own personal view on the Botley West Solar development project which has been proposed by Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) in conjunction with Blenheim Palace Estate.

The majority of people understand the need for renewable power and it's ultimate role in replacing fossil fuels. Non renewable energy is, of course, a finite resource so the ultimate direction of travel is clear. However, the timing for phasing out fossil fuels is a moot point and one of fierce debate. And with large reserves of both oil and gas still available and a strong lobby for their continued use the practicalities of switching over completely in the short to medium term have not been clearly answered in my opinion.

Therefore, it is becoming apparent that a combination of energy supply will be needed for many years to come, which suggests that the government, developers and the people in the areas effected will need to reach agreement about proposed renewable planning applications. These proposals however, need to be considered, reasonable and above all fair. And critically not a binary choice between development and non development.

The arguments made from both sides are understandable, but are they considered and fair? PVDP and Blenheim claim size is the key, from going through development consent to getting a grid connection, plus all the engineering involved - according to a director at PVDP. However, there are no alternatives on the table, so until that happens this argument can be taken with a pinch of salt and as someone who would say that in defence of the development. On the flip side objectors talk about solar panels on roofs, loss of farmland and building on the green belt. All true, but giving the impression - we think renewable energy is a good idea, but don't put panels near my house.

The developers are currently proposing to develop over 1,000 hectares on three sites with the main development west of Kidlington. The total site is huge and as a comparison I am told it is bigger than the entire area of Heathrow airport. This astonishing fact is difficult to comprehend and in my view not considered or fair. The developers also claim that upon meeting people at events they asked them 'what size would you say is the right size?' To which they claim 'I don't really get an answer.' I find that hard to believe as most people would have an opinion. Therefore, are all the people he meets fully opposed to the development; if so it reveals the strength of opinion against the project. Still, I would argue that if true this is also not a considered or fair judgement, but a reaction to a vast development close to where they live.

With this in mind can I suggest what might be a fairer size and a compromise to the existing proposal, which I believe will bring local opinion onside. The current proposal is simply too large - way too large to be considered fair. In an ideal world every community in the country should have its share of renewable infrastructure, clearly though this is not going to be practical.

However, by the same token developing large areas is simply unfair to those who have to live nearby. Therefore, I ask PVDP and Blenheim in conjunction with the government to reduce this proposal by at least 75 per cent and restrict installation to the lower less visible

fields, and as far from houses as possible. This reduced solar farm/power plant based pro-rata on the overall calculations supplied by PVDP (energy for all of Oxfordshire's - 330,000 homes) would still generate enough power for one quarter of the county's needs - 82,500 homes from a site one quarter of the size. I would then argue that the sites near Botley, Kidlington and Woodstock had had there fair share.

The county is approximately 260,500 hectares in size, so surly the remaining 75 per cent capacity can be fairly and equitably distributed elsewhere in Oxfordshire by the government if the end goal is energy self sufficiency for the county.

Yours faithfully

Tim Hearn



Apologies I can't find my IP number