

Closing Submission on behalf of Mr. D. Dryden, [REDACTED]

NSIP Application: Botley West Solar Farm

Submitted to: The Planning Inspectorate, Examining Authority

Date: 10th November 2025

1. Introduction

This Closing Submission is made on behalf of **Mr. D. Dryden**, owner and resident of [REDACTED] **Lower Road**, which lies immediately adjacent to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm. Mr. Dryden has lived and farmed at this location for many years and is directly and profoundly affected by the proposals. The farm is a long-established rural holding, set within gently undulating farmland, representative of the open countryside character that defines this part of Oxfordshire.

We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Examination and wish to express, in closing, our continuing and deeply held objection to the Botley West Solar Farm application.

2. Landscape and Visual Impact

The most severe impact upon [REDACTED] arises from the **overbearing proximity of the proposed solar arrays**. The Applicant's layout brings industrial-scale solar panels right up to the immediate boundaries of Mr. Dryden's property, such that **the home would be wholly encircled by the solar installation**.

This is an entirely unacceptable relationship between a domestic rural property and a major infrastructure project. The enclosing effect would fundamentally alter the character, outlook, and amenity of the property. The surrounding landscape is presently agricultural, open, and gently undulating; the transformation of this setting into an industrialised solar complex would be oppressive and alien to its rural context.

We therefore **urge that a minimum 250-metre buffer zone** be established around the full curtilage of [REDACTED] to provide an appropriate degree of separation, visual relief, and continued residential amenity. No amount of planting or screening can mitigate the loss of openness and sense of enclosure that the current design would impose.

3. Ecological and Biodiversity Concerns

Within the grounds of [REDACTED] lies a **small lake**, which has not been the subject of proper ecological assessment by the Applicant. This feature provides a valuable habitat for **overwintering birds** and other wildlife. Its role within the local ecological network has been wholly overlooked. The absence of site-specific

ecological evaluation represents a serious gap in the Environmental Statement and a failure to satisfy the requirements of robust environmental assessment.

Given the national emphasis on **Biodiversity Net Gain**, this omission is particularly concerning. The impact of large-scale solar infrastructure on nearby aquatic and avian habitats must be properly understood before any consent is contemplated.

3. Flooding and Surface Water Contamination Risk

In addition to the ecological deficiencies identified above, there are also significant unassessed risks relating to hydrology and surface water management in the immediate vicinity of [REDACTED]

There has been no adequate assessment by the Applicant (Solar 5 / PVDP) of the increased risk of flooding and surface water contamination arising from the installation of extensive solar panels surrounding [REDACTED]. The proposed array would enclose the property on multiple sides, altering natural drainage patterns and potentially intensifying run-off flows toward the farmhouse.

In particular, the small lake within the grounds of [REDACTED] already experiences periodic flooding during heavy rainfall. The introduction of large impermeable surfaces and soil compaction during construction could exacerbate this situation significantly. No mitigation measures, flood risk modelling, or drainage strategy has been provided to demonstrate that the development would not increase the risk to the home and its occupants.

This omission is of serious concern, given the property's low-lying topography and the cumulative hydrological impact of such a large, contiguous installation. We respectfully urge that the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State give substantial weight to this unassessed hazard in the overall planning balance.

Taken together, these unassessed environmental effects - encompassing landscape, ecology, and now hydrology - demonstrate a fundamental failure by the Applicant to evaluate or mitigate the cumulative environmental harm that would arise from enclosing [REDACTED] within an industrial-scale energy installation.

4. Scale, Siting, and Impact on the Countryside and Community

The **scale and industrial character** of the proposed development is overwhelming. The project would transform an extensive tract of tranquil countryside into an industrial landscape of panels, fencing, security equipment, and access tracks. The cumulative impact on the local community is equally significant: rural roads would face **substantial construction traffic**, disruption, and ongoing change to their character and safety.

The scheme fails the basic planning test of **proportionality and fit within the local environment**. Its siting across valued farmland and close to established homes like [REDACTED] demonstrates a lack of sensitivity to place, community, and landscape.

5. Energy Policy and National Need

We also **refute the Applicant's assertion** that this project is necessary for the UK to meet its **Net Zero** obligations. Evidence to the Examination has shown that **the pipeline of consented and operational solar capacity already exceeds the levels required** to meet government targets for renewable generation from solar. National policy does not support the unrestrained expansion of solar development where it causes unacceptable local harm.

There is therefore **no overriding national need** that justifies the significant adverse effects this project would impose upon local residents, the environment, and the rural landscape.

6. National Security and Due Diligence

As the Secretary of State for the **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)** applies the **Balance of Harm** test in reaching a final decision, it is essential that **proper national security due diligence** is demonstrated with respect to all major energy infrastructure proposals and their sources of funding.

Given public reports concerning the **ownership and funding structures associated with the Applicant (Solar 5 / PVDP)**, and alleged historical connections to **Russian-linked investment**, it is in the national interest that the Department ensures that **no foreign or hostile influence could compromise the integrity, operation, or strategic control of UK energy assets**.

This is a reasonable and necessary safeguard, consistent with the Government's obligations under the **National Security and Investment Act 2021**, and should be transparently addressed before any consent is granted.

7. Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, Mr. Dryden respectfully urges the Examining Authority to **recommend refusal** of the Botley West Solar Farm application in its current form. The proposal represents an inappropriate and disproportionate industrialisation of the countryside, causing unacceptable harm to residential amenity, landscape character, and local ecology.

In addition, we ask that the Secretary of State demonstrates that **full national security due diligence** has been undertaken concerning the ownership and financing of the Applicant before any determination is made.

Should the Secretary of State be minded to approve the application, we request that a **substantial buffer zone of no less than 250 metres** be imposed between the [REDACTED] curtilage and any solar infrastructure, together with a requirement for detailed ecological assessment and protection of the on-site lake and its habitats.

Mr. Dryden remains committed to the principles of renewable energy, but this project, in this location and at this scale, is the wrong solution for Oxfordshire.

Respectfully submitted by [REDACTED]
Agent for **Mr. D. Dryden**, [REDACTED] **Lower Road**
10th November 2025