



Botley West Solar Farm

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND –
West Oxfordshire District Council

EN010147/APP/11.7/13

12 November 2025

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Statement of
Common Ground -
West Oxfordshire
District Council
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Approval for issue

Jon Alsop

12 November 2025

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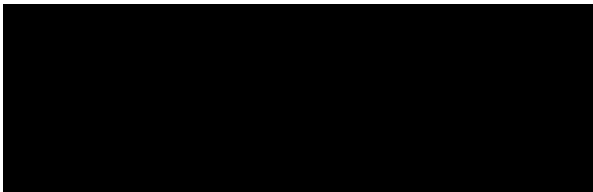
This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by SolarFive Ltd and West Oxfordshire District Council.

West Oxfordshire District Council



Andrew Thomson
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11 November 2025

SolarFive Ltd



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1 Introduction

1.1 DCO Reference

1.1.1 EN010147/APP/11.7/12

1.2 Date of Examination

1.2.1 May 2025 – November 2025

1.3 Statement Overview

1.3.1 This Statement of Common Ground ('SoCG') comprises a record of consultation held with the relevant SoCG organisation to date as appropriate, and is designed to evolve, representing the ongoing nature of these discussions throughout the Examination period.

1.3.2 This SoCG has been prepared between (1) the Applicant and (2) West Oxon District Council (jointly referred to as the Parties).

1.3.3 An overarching Statement of Commonality **[EN01047/APP/11.6]** has been submitted alongside this document and should be referred to in conjunction with this SoCG.

1.3.4 The Examining Authority has requested that the SoCGs include the following matters as set out in the Rule 6 Letter **[PD-006]**:

- Methodology for environmental assessments;
- Data collection methods;
- Baseline data;
- Data/statistical analysis, approach to modelling and presentation of results;
- Expert judgements, assumptions and worst case scenario;
- Assessment of alternatives;
- Design development;
- Identification and sensitivity of relevant features and receptors;
- Construction and operational effects;
- Embedded and additional mitigation;
- Cumulative effects and mitigation; and
- Relevant wording in the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO)

1.3.5 It can be taken that any matters not specifically referred to in sections 3 and 4 of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to West Oxon District Council's representations and therefore have not been considered in this document.

1.3.6 For the avoidance of doubt, this SoCG comprises contributions from the following environmental topic disciplines:

-
- Ecology
 - Historic Environment
 - Agricultural Land Use & Public Rights of Way
 - Landscape and Visual Resources
 - Noise and Vibration
 - Planning Policy

1.3.7 This statement addresses the following areas of common ground in relation to the Applicant Project Team's engagement with West Oxon District Council to date:

- a. Relevant submission documents and plans
- b. Record of relevant correspondence to date
- c. Matters that are agreed
- d. Matters yet to be agreed
- e. Matters that are not agreed

1.3.1 As referenced above, c, d, and e (sections 0), summarises issues that are 'agreed', 'yet to be agreed' or are 'not agreed'. 'Not agreed' indicates a final position where the parties have agreed to disagree. 'Agreed' indicates that an issue has been resolved.

1.4 Proposed Development

1.4.1 The Applicant is seeking development consent for Botley West Solar Farm (the 'Project'), which in summary will comprise the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a photovoltaic ('PV') solar farm and associated infrastructure with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts ('MW'), in parts of west Oxfordshire, Cherwell and Vale of White Horse districts. The Project will export electricity for connection to the National Grid at Botley West.

1.4.2 The Project is classed as a 'nationally significant infrastructure project' ('NSIP') for the purposes of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008) and requires an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). The application for development consent is being submitted to the planning inspectorate ('PINS'), with the decision on whether to grant a DCO to be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (the 'Secretary of State'), as required under the PA 2008.

1.4.3 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to accompany the DCO application made to the Secretary of State under section 37 of the PA 2008 for the proposed Project. The Application has been submitted by SolarFive Ltd (the Applicant).

1.4.4 A Location Plan can be found in the Examination Library at **[AS-024]** and a full description of the Project can be found at ES Chapter 6 - Project Description **[APP-043]**.

2 Development Consent Order

- 2.1.1 It is agreed that West Oxon District Council will act as a relevant planning authority in relation to the discharging of requirements of the DCO applicable to its administrative area and LPA boundary. Where the expertise of the Local Highway Authority and / or Local Lead Flood Authority is required then Oxfordshire County Council will either be the discharging authority or subject to consultation during the approval process.

3 Planning Policy Context

- 3.1.1 It is agreed that the following energy national policy statements (NPS) are applicable to the proposed development:
- NPS EN-1 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy;
 - NPS EN-3 Renewable Energy Infrastructures; and
 - NPS EN-5 Electricity Networks Infrastructure.
- 3.1.2 It is accepted by the parties that from the planning authorities perspective, assessment of the proposed development against these statements is solely a matter for the Examining Authority and no further assessment on the degree of compliance is made by them in this statement. It is agreed that the development plan, in West Oxfordshire, applicable to the development proposal comprises:
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031
 - Salt Cross Area Action Plan
 - Cassington Neighbourhood Plan – 2021 to 2041
 - Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan – 2018 to 2031
 - Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan – 2020 to 2031

4 Relevant Submissions Documents and Plans

- 4.1.1 A list of DCO documents and plans of relevance to engagement with West Oxfordshire District Council is identified in the tables below for ease of reference.

Table 4.1: Draft DCO submission documents and plans record pursuant to West Oxfordshire District Council discussions – Ecology and Nature Conservation

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/2.2	Streets, Access and Rights of Way Plans	CR2-004	Rev2/September 2025
EN010147/APP/2.6	Statutory and Non-Statutory Sites - Features of Nature Conservation Plan	APP-009	November 2024

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/2.8	Habitats of Protected Species Plan	APP-010	November 2024
EN010147/APP/2.9	Statutory and Non-Statutory Features of Historic Environment Plan	APP-012	November 2024
EN010147/APP/2.10	Hedgerow Removal Plans	AS-007	February 2025
EN010147/APP/3.1	Draft Development Consent Order	TBC	Rev9November2025
EN010147/APP/6.2	ES Volume 0, Non-Technical Summary	APP-037	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.3	ES Volume 1, Chapter 9 Ecology and Nature Conservation	REP4-010	Rev3/ August 2025
EN010147/APP/6.4	ES Volume 2, Figure 9.1 Statutory Designated Sites	APP-086	November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	ES Volume 2, Figure 9.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites	APP-087	November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	ES Volume 2, Figure 9.3 a b & c Phase 1 Habitat Map	APP-088	November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.1 Desk Study	APP-150	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report	APP-151	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.3 Hedgerow Survey Report	APP-152	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.4 Bat Survey Report	REP5-039	Rev1/September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.5 Great Crested Newt (GCN) Survey Report	APP-154	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.6 Invertebrate Survey Report	APP-155	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.7 Reptile Survey Report	APP-156	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.8 Badger Survey Report [CONFIDENTIAL]	APP-157	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.9 Breeding Bird Survey Report	APP-158	P0/ November 2024

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.10 Wintering Bird Survey Report	APP-159	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.11 Dormouse Survey Report	APP-160	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.12 Arable Weeds Survey Report	APP-161	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.13 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	CR2-040	Rev2/September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.14 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report	REP6-022	Rev1/October 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.15 Veterans Tree Survey Report	APP-164	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.16 Section 42 Consultation Responses	APP-165	P0/ November 2024
EN010147/APP/15.6	Bat Technical Note	REP6-044	Rev 1/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.3.3	Landscape, Ecology and Amenities Plan	CR2-043	Rev3/ September2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.1	Outline Code of Construction Practice – Part 1	REP6-028	Rev 5/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.1	Outline Code of Construction Practice – Part 2	REP6-030	Rev 5/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.2	Outline Operational Management Plan	REP6-032	Rev 5/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.3	Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan	REP6-034	Rev 6/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.4	Outline Decommissioning Plan	REP6-036	Rev 2/October 2025

Table 4.2: Draft DCO submission documents and plans record pursuant to West Oxfordshire District Council discussions – Historic Environment

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.2	ES Non-Technical Summary	APP-037	November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.3	ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Historic Environment	CR2-019	Rev 3/September 2025

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.1: Historic environment desk-based assessment	APP-131	November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.2: Assessment of airborne remote sensing and satellite imagery for archaeology	APP-132	November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.3: Geophysical survey report, Parts 1-8	APP-133 – APP-140	November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.4: Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site – Heritage Impact Assessment	CR2-036	Rev1/September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.5: Settings Assessment	CR2-038	Rev 3/ September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Figures 2.1a – 2.4c – Illustrative Masterplan	CR2-026	Rev 2/September2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES Figures 8.248 - 8.371 - Photomontages (Winter and Summer)	CR2-032	Rev2/September 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.5	Outline Written Scheme of Investigation	CR2-053	Rev 3/September 2025
EN010147/APP/12.7	Additional Photomontages for Historic Environment Assessment	CR2-059	Rev 1/ September 2025
EN010147/APP/17.11	Archaeological Evaluation Report by Cotswold Archaeology – Parts 1 to 8	REP6-055 to REP6-062	October 2025
EN010147/APP/17.12	Archaeological Evaluation Report by Wessex Archaeology	REP6-063	October 2025

Table 4.3: Draft DCO submission documents and plans record pursuant to West Oxfordshire District Council discussions – Agricultural Land Use and ProW

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.2	ES Non-Technical Summary	APP-037	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.3	ES Chapter 17 - Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way	APP-054	Rev0/November 2024

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.4	ES - Figures 17.1, 17.2 and 17.6	APP-108, APP-109 and APP-113	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	ES - Figures 17.3, 17.4 and 17.5	CR2-033, CR2-034, and CR2-035	Rev 1/September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	ES - Appendix 17.1 ALC and Soil Survey Report	APP-223	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/7.6.1	Outline Code of Construction Practice - Part 1 Annex B: Outline Public Rights of Way Management Strategy and Annex C Outline Soil Management Plan	REP6-028	Rev5/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.2	Outline Operational Management Plan	REP6-032	Rev5/October 2025

Table 4.4: Draft DCO submission documents and plans record pursuant to West Oxfordshire District Council discussions – Landscape and Visual Resources

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.2	ES Non-Technical Summary	APP-037	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.3	6.3 - ES Chapter 8 – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	REP6-012	Rev4/October 2025
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.128 to 8.243: Representative Viewpoint Photographs (Summer)	CR2-032	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.12 to 8.127: Representative Viewpoint Photographs (Winter)	REP5-028	Rev1/September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.1-8.3 Site Location	APP-067	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.244: National Character Areas	APP-068	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.245: Regional Landscape Character	APP-069	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.246: Local Landscape Character Areas	APP-070	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.247: District Landscape Character Areas (including ZTV)	APP-071	Rev0/November 2024

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.248 to 8.371: Photomontages (Winter and Summer)	CR2-032	Rev2/September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.4-8.6: Landscape Resources Plan	APP-081	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.7: ZTV and Representative Viewpoints (Whole Project Overview)	APP-082	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.8: ZTV Section Overlaps (Whole Project Overview)	APP-083	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.8a: ZTV Bare Earth	APP-084	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	Figure 8.9-8.11: Representative Viewpoint and Photomontage Locations	APP-085	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	Appendix 8.1: Landscape Character	APP-143	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	Appendix 8.2: Landscape Value	APP-144	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	Appendix 8.3: Strategic Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement	APP-145 to APP148	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	Appendix 8.4: Photomontage Methodology	APP-149	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.3	Figure 2.1a to 2.4d: Illustrative Masterplan	CR2-026	Rev2/September 2025
EN010147/APP/7.3.3	Landscape, Ecology and Amenities Plan	CR2-043	Rev3/September 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.3	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan	REP6-034	Rev 6/October 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	PRoW and Route Assessment	REP5-037	September 2025
EN010147/APP/6.5	Representative Viewpoints	REP5-038	September 2025
EN010147/APP/17.13	RVAA Part 1 and Part 2	REP6-064 & REP6-065	October 2025

Table 4.5: Draft DCO submission documents and plans record pursuant to West Oxfordshire District Council discussions – Noise and Vibration

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/6.3	6.3 - ES Chapter 13 - Noise and Vibration	PDB-010	Rev1/May 2025
EN010147/APP/6.4	6.4 ES - Figure 13.1 - Construction Phase Noise Study Area	APP-103	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	6.4 ES - Figure 13.2 - Construction Phase Vibration Study Area	APP-104	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.4	6.4 ES - Figure 13.3 - Operational Phase Noise Study Area	APP-105	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	6.5 ES - Appendix 13.1 Baseline Sound Survey	APP-211	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	6.5 ES - Appendix 13.2 Construction Phase Noise and Vibration	APP-212	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/6.5	6.5 ES - Appendix 13.3 Operational Phase Noise	APP-213	Rev0/November 2024
EN010147/APP/7.6.1	7.6.1 - Outline Code of Construction Practice - Part 1	REP6-028	Rev5/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.1	7.6.1 - Outline Code of Construction Practice - Part 2	REP6-030	Rev5/October 2025
EN010147/APP/7.6.2	7.6.2 - Outline Operational Management Plan	REP6-032	Rev5/November 2025

Table 4.6: Draft DCO submission documents and plans record pursuant to West Oxfordshire District Council discussions – Planning Policy

Document/Plan Ref.	Title	Examination Library reference	Rev./Dated
EN010147/APP/7.1	7.1 Planning Supporting Statement inc. Green Belt Case	REP1-012	Rev1/ June 2025

5 Record of Relevant Correspondence

- 5.1.1 The Project has been the subject of pre-application engagement with West Oxfordshire District Council, and both parties continue to engage throughout and beyond the submission of the DCO application for the Project.
- 5.1.2 **Appendix A** identifies the discussions and correspondence that have taken place between the Applicant's project team and West Oxfordshire District Council to date.

Areas of Discussion between the Parties

Table 0.1: Areas of Discussion between the Parties – Ecology and Nature Conservation

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
4.1.1	6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation (Rev 3) [REP4-010]	Survey methodology	Other than where noted below, survey scope and methodology agreed.	Agreed.	Agreed.
4.1.2	6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation (Rev 3) [REP4-010]	Assessment approach, scope and methodology	Other than where noted below, assessment approach, scope and methodology agreed.	Agreed.	Agreed.
4.1.3	6.5 ES - Appendix 9.13 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment [REP6-020]	Biodiversity Net Gain	The Council welcomes the commitment to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) above the minimum statutory requirement of 10% due to come into force in November 2025. The statutory biodiversity metric has been used to calculate the BNG outcome from the proposed development. However, this has only been calculated for area habitats and hedgerows, without taking account of the presence of watercourses within the site. As the red line boundary of the site encompasses a watercourse, to ensure compliance with the statutory biodiversity metric user guide, the watercourse module should be applied. Clarity is also needed as to whether a delay to habitat creation and enhancement works should be applied in the metric due to the construction period of two years.	<p>Following discussions with Natural England, the watercourse section of the metric will be included in the BNG Assessment, following River Morph surveys.</p> <p>Although the total construction period is anticipated to be two years, as a staged approach to work areas will be undertaken (excluding temporary compounds), it is considered that the majority of the site will be constructed in less than one year from construction, as such the Project does not require temporal multipliers to be entered. This will be developed once further details of construction methodologies and timings become available.</p> <p>November 2025 update: ES Appendix 9.13 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment was updated at Deadline 6 [REP6-019] to incorporate the watercourse module of the BNG assessment and to provide the supporting surveys. The assessment showed that the Project would achieve at least 20% watercourse BNG.</p>	Agreed.
4.1.4	6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation (Rev 3) [REP4-010]	Farmland birds	<p>Although the majority of farmland birds and other birds recorded breeding/foraging and over wintering on site will be effectively mitigated for as part of the enhancement proposals for the solar farm, including hedgerows, woodlands, scrub and tussocky grassland, the Council are concerned about the proposed mitigation for skylark and lapwing. There are both priority species and written into the NPPF Chapter 15.</p> <p>The breeding bird assemblage identified within the project area is of county importance (Table 9.6.4 page 60 of the ES) and the Council therefore recommend that this should be given detailed consideration at examination to ensure that impacts on protected and priority species are avoided and adequately compensated.</p> <p>The proposed development will result in significant loss of breeding territories for the local skylark population resulting in a landscape scale impact. The proposed skylark plots within the project area are to provide winter foraging habitat for skylarks rather than being used for breeding. Mitigation for loss of breeding habitat is proposed via the creation/enhancement of 36 hectares (ha) of meadow on land that is not being used for solar arrays due to their archaeological importance. However, this quantum of compensatory habitat is unlikely to be sufficient as it appears to be comprised of small, spread-out parcels of land across the project area. Skylarks are unlikely to use proposed</p>	<p>Table 9.6.4 in ES Chapter 9 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP4-010] sets out that the breeding bird assemblage is of County importance. This is carried through into the assessment of effects (e.g. section 9.9.90) and in the summary table 9.16.1.</p> <p>Skylark plots are proposed to provide skylark with additional foraging opportunities throughout their breeding season in order to increase fecundity. The provision of Skylark plots at a ratio of two plots provided for each potential lost territory is an accepted and widely used mitigation strategy for developments that will result in the loss of Skylark territories. Skylark plots also benefit other farmland bird species.</p> <p>The Project site will be managed through conservation grazing to create grasslands of varied diversity and structure. Recent research on the impact of solar farms on farmland birds (Copping et al 2025) found that solar managed for mixed habitats (either ungrazed or grazing with an allowance for wildflowers to set seed, woody hedgerow features) had significantly higher numbers of both farmland birds and bird species than an intensive arable baseline. Given that, as set out in the oLEMP</p>	Not agreed.

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
			<p>skylark plots for breeding when surrounded by solar panels as they require long, unbroken sightlines and minimal perches for raptors (predators).</p> <p>The solar panels themselves will therefore reduce the desirability of the area for nesting skylark due to the perceived risk of predation. Post-construction monitoring of over 100 solar farms in England and Wales found no evidence of nesting skylarks (In Practice Issue 117, September 2022, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, CIEEM). The Council calculates that in order to compensate for the recorded 228 no. breeding territories identified through the applicant's assessment, the development will need to provide 114ha of suitable habitat (based on two skylark territories per ha). In the absence of further clarification and justification for the applicant's approach, proposed compensatory habitat would appear to be insufficient.</p> <p>Measures to safeguard protected and priority species within the project area are essential but it is not clear whether specific measures or mitigations are included in the scheme to compensate for impacts on lapwing and nightingale habitat.</p>	<p>[REP6-034], the Project will be managed via conservation grazing with pauses in the grazing over the summer to allow plants to flower and set seed, it is anticipated that the Project will provide an overall enhancement for the bird assemblage present.</p> <p>November 2025 update: As agreed at ISH2, the primary concern of the OHAs, including West Oxfordshire District Council, was with respect to skylark mitigation. The Applicant's position with respect to skylark mitigation is set out in Annex 6 Skylark Technical Note of the Applicant's Response to ExQ2s [REP4-037] and expanded upon within the Applicant's response to the ExA's schedule of changes to the dDCO [REP6-051]. As set out within the Applicant's Response to The ExA's Schedule of Changes to the DCO [REP6-051], providing areas of suitable grassland for skylark within the project site area is the approach that has been adopted and accepted for all NSIP-scale solar development that has been consented that the Applicant is aware of, none of which have required any off-site mitigation provision but which have similar impacts to the Project. As such, the Applicant considers the provision of grassland within the Project site to be suitable mitigation, in line with how other consented solar NSIPs have addressed this issue.</p>	
4.1.5	6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation (Rev 2) [REP4-010]	Wetland birds and aquatic invertebrates	<p>There has been no assessment of the potential effects during operation of the solar farm on wetland birds and aquatic invertebrates. The zone of influence of the impact assessment should take this into account due to the close proximity of several large waterbodies of value to birds</p> <p>in the local area, including Cassington Gravel Pits, Blenheim Lake and the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area. An understanding of the use of the wider landscape by wetland birds and aquatic invertebrates is needed to assess how the solar panels might influence the behaviour of these species and consequent impacts on their populations through mortality or reduced breeding success. Evidence suggests that the polarised light of solar panels can be confused by these species for open water, for example, resulting in dragonflies laying eggs on them. The size and density of the proposed solar farm project is such that this could result in a significant effect on local populations. The impact of the new linear corridors for wildlife created by the proposed screening is to be welcomed but the adverse impact upon species wishing to roam locally but prevented from so doing by the new fences and screening also needs to be factored in.</p>	<p>Operational impacts on all breeding and wintering birds, and invertebrates identified within the Botley West Solar Farm have been assessed in ES Volume 1, Chapter 9, Section 9.9 [REP4-010].</p> <p>The impacts of birds colliding with solar panels, having mistaken them for water (the 'lake effect') are assessed within ES Volume 1, Chapter 9, Section 9.9 [REP4-010]. Although the lake effect has been hypothesised as a possibility, a review of the impact of solar farms on birds by Natural England (2017) concluded that there is no scientific evidence of collision risk associated with solar PV arrays and the risk of collision with solar panels is likely to be very low but not impossible. Research in the United States found some evidence that such an effect could occur but the particular circumstances of that work (solar in desert locations with no water in the surrounding landscape) are not directly applicable to those in the UK where water bodies are frequent. Solar sites within the UK are also very well studied with respect to their bird populations and no evidence has been published demonstrating that there was any significant risk of collision. Indeed, most research found that solar sites are beneficial for bird species in general (e.g. Copping et al. 2025).</p> <p>November 2025 update: the oLEMP has been updated at Deadline 7 to incorporate monitoring of Tier A bat buffers with respect to invertebrate abundance which include water features. This specifically references</p>	Agreed

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				recording Odonata to support assessment of local abundance within the solar site.	
4.1.6	6.5 ES - Appendix 9.4 Bat Survey Report [REP5-039]	Bat assemblages survey and assessment	<p>The bat survey concluded that the assemblage of bats present at the site is at least of national importance, due to the presence of two Annex II species – Bechstein’s and Barbastelle bats, which are using woodlands adjacent to the site for roosting, including maternity colonies. The mosaic of habitats within the site are also considered to have at least national importance for bats, including for foraging and commuting. However, the Environmental Statement concludes that the impact on the local bat population will be negligible due to the retention of the majority of the landscape features that the bats are using for foraging, commuting and roosting, and the protection of these with buffers. However, In particular, although there is mention of the provision of a suitable buffer to protect all important bat flightlines as a key commitment (ref. 9.20), these are not shown on the Masterplan or in any other documentation, including the CoCP, Outline Operation Management Plan and Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan submitted with the application. there is limited information regarding proposed avoidance or mitigation measures for bats. In particular, although there is mention of the provision of a suitable buffer to protect all important bat flightlines as a key commitment (ref. 9.20), these are not shown on the Masterplan or in any other documentation, including the CoCP, Outline Operation Management Plan and Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan submitted with the application. The conclusion in the Environmental Statement that 5 metre gaps to be created in hedgerows are unlikely to cause changes to commuting routes and foraging habitats is unjustified as no information has been provided with regard to which hedgerows are important bat flightlines. This conclusion is therefore unsupported.</p>	<p>Further survey work and data gathering was completed in 2024 and is the subject of on-going discussion with Natural England. Data will be provided to the Examination as a separate bat technical note soon as analysis is complete. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional static detector recording (including in-field data); full details of radio tracked bats (over-night tracking to generate home ranges, biophysical details, roost characterisation, flight line usage etc.); and full details of trapping/radio tracking to be completed in May 2025. <p>It is intended that these data, combined with that submitted in with the application (ES Appendix 9.4 Bat Survey Report [REP5-039]) will be used to determine the extent of the ‘appropriate buffers’ for bats that the Project has committed to implementing (ES Appendix 6.1 Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [REP4-014] Commitment 9.20). Discussions between the Applicant and Natural England/other IPs with respect to the use of these data for this commitment are on-going</p> <p>November 2025 update: A detailed Bat Technical Note [REP6-044] and updated ES Appendix 9.4 Bat Survey Report [REP5-039] have been submitted to the Examination and agreed with Natural England. The oLEMP [REP6-034] has been updated to ensure that the measures with respect to bat avoidance measures (i.e. buffers of key flight lines) are secured. It has been further updated at Deadline 7 to account for requests by the OHA with respect to the figures showing the locations of the Tier A bat buffers.</p>	Agreed
4.1.7	6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation (Rev 2) [REP4-010]	Otter and water vole	<p>The Environmental Statement indicates that it is assumed that otters and water voles forage and commute within the project site, and that there may be otter holts (or laying up sites) along the river, but no surveys have been carried out to confirm this. It is recognised that there could be short term disturbance to otters due to noise and vibration during construction, and the impact assessment would be better informed if it were understood whether there were any holts present along the river within the site. This is equally applicable to the potential for water voles to be present on the river (the Environmental Statement takes the approach that this species is adequately covered in the assessment of impacts to watercourses). This is particularly relevant to any crossings over watercourses within the site but could also apply to the installation of solar panels near watercourses (not just the main river).</p>	<p>Although not surveyed for specifically, otter have been recorded using the Evenlode and it is possible that water vole may also be present. Therefore, both species were considered as receptors within ES Chapter 9 Ecology and Biodiversity [REP4-010], otters as an explicit IEF and, as set out in section 9.6.77 of ES Chapter 9, water vole by virtue of their potential presence within water bodies. This assessed the potential impacts of the Project on both species, including with respect to potential disturbance during construction. The conclusion of that assessment was that while there may be some short term and localised disturbance from noise at a distance to these species, there would be no significant effect from any potential impact.</p> <p>This conclusion took account of the use of appropriate buffer zones around water courses and water bodies along with hedgerows and other linear features that might be used by commuting or sheltering otter. The</p>	Agreed

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				<p>Project retains all water courses and hedgerows with appropriate buffers. It also does not result in the loss of any woodland and maintaining connectivity between woodlands and water course features is ensured within the masterplan through the provision of the buffers around water courses, hedgerows etc. Indeed, the masterplan would improve connectivity between these features compared to the baseline as the majority of the fields present across the Project site have little or no field margin. Once built, the Project would provide a minimum of 5m of margin either side of all hedgerows.</p> <p>The use of a buffer zone of between 3-5 m from the toe of banks around water courses to avoid impacts to water vole is recommended within the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Dean et al 2016). The Project includes buffer zones of at least 8m from all watercourses, well above this recommended minimum. As such, the Applicant does not agree that further surveys for water vole or otter are necessary since all impacts are avoided.</p> <p>The Project includes enhancement with respect to both species through the provision of the buffer zones and the enhanced Evenlode Corridor. Some of the smaller water courses on the Project site are currently farmed up to the top of the embankment and will be subject to agricultural run off from fertiliser and other chemical additions. The removal of these agricultural inputs and the provision of a much wider buffer along the top of the bank will help ensure that both species are protected and their aquatic and terrestrial habitats enhanced.</p> <p>All watercourses will be crossed via HDD with no open-cut methods proposed.</p> <p>November 2025 update: The Applicant agreed to add the completion of pre-commencement surveys for otter and water vole, as necessary, to the oCoCP [REP6-028] at section 1.10.5.</p>	
4.1.8	6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation (Rev 3) [REP4-010]	Great Crested Newts	The ES ecology chapter appears to keep the licensing option for great crested newts open and refers to both a great crested newt mitigation licence and the District Licensing Scheme (administered by NatureSpace). However, Section 8.3.1 in the Outline LEMP states that a Natural England mitigation licence will be obtained for the site, so no off-site compensation would be possible. It is unclear why the District Licensing option has been discounted. If the District Licensing Scheme is not used, then we would consider this a significant missed opportunity for landscape-scale conservation for this species if all habitat works are carried out on site only (via the standard mitigation licence approach). Use of the District Licensing Scheme can be secured via the appropriate wording from the standard planning conditions and translated into planning requirements within the DCO. The Council recommends that NatureSpace should be consulted for their comments to inform the Examination to understand the details of the likely impacts to this species.	<p>The Project will require a licence to address potential effects to GCN populations on and around the site. At this stage, it is anticipated that the Project will use a Natural England mitigation licence for GCN and discussions with NE in respect of this are on-going. However, the Project may make use of the DLL, if that is more appropriate, as per commitment 9.13.</p> <p>November 2025 update: The Applicant has submitted a draft GCN licence to Natural England and is anticipating receiving a Letter of No Impediment by the end of the Examination.</p>	Agreed

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			<p>The closest ponds are located 20m (P83) and 30m (P64) of the site boundary and the nearest great crested newt population through surveys was P19, 130m from the site. Although the majority of suitable habitat will be retained, apart from small sections of hedgerow spread across the site for vehicular access, there would be temporary disturbance and loss of terrestrial habitat as a result of the proposed development. The council notes the negative eDNA result from the ponds at City Farm where great crested newts were previously recorded (for the Salt Cross Garden Village outline planning application) and that ponds with a 'below average' or lower score in the HSI assessment were not subject to an eDNA survey. Negative eDNA survey results from a single survey are not sufficient to prove absence, several years' worth of negative eDNA results are needed in line with Natural England guidelines (for licence applications) and the species does occur in below average suitability ponds. The HSI assessment is not intended to be a marker for which ponds are likely to contain newts or not.</p>		
4.1.9	7.6.3 Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (Rev 6) [REP6-034]	Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (OLEMP)	<p>The Outline LEMP refers to a detailed LEMP being produced by condition as part of the DCO. The Council recommends that this should be for lifetime of the development and include monitoring for BNG. The guidance in EN-1 5.4.44 indicates that any habitat creation or enhancement delivered for compensation or Biodiversity Net Gain would be maintained for a minimum of 30 years, or for the lifetime of the project, whichever is longer. The oLEMP mentions monitoring for 30 years, but elsewhere references monitoring for the lifetime of the project. Clarification and correction of the documents is therefore suggested to provide certainty that management and monitoring will be undertaken for the lifetime of the development as a minimum. The Council would also encourage the ongoing management of habitats created/enhanced as compensation and for Biodiversity Net Gain to extend beyond the lifetime of the project. The Outline LEMP lists the inclusion of "bee hives" in (see section 9.12 of Table 9.8.1 on page 71 of the ES ecology chapter), however, we are unconvinced that it would be appropriate as it would increase competition with native bumblebees and other pollinating insects. Depending on the number of bee hives, it might be possible to locate these in areas of wildflower-rich habitat to ensure a lower level of competition with native bees. Further clarity is required on this part of the proposals. It is the intention as set out in the oLEMP for multiple LEMPs to be produced for the different zones within the site, and for these to be approved by the District Councils before be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the LEMPs. The applicant needs to demonstrate the mechanism for ensuring that the District Councils are adequately resourced and funded to do this and set out the mechanisms whereby the District Councils could take enforcement action in case of non-compliance commencement. This presents an issue in terms of oversight of the whole project and who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the LEMPs. The applicant needs to demonstrate the mechanism for ensuring that the District Councils are adequately resourced and funded to do this and set out the mechanisms whereby the District Councils could take enforcement action in case of non-compliance.</p>	<p>The Project site will be managed and maintained for the lifetime of the Project, as set out in paragraphs 1.1.10 and 17.1.1 of the oLEMP. The reference to 30 years is in respect of the minimum commitment for the maintenance of features for Biodiversity Net Gain purposes. However, this will be clarified in the next iteration of the oLEMP.</p> <p>The bee hives will be in accordance with those identified in Appendix A of the OLMEP [REP6-034], providing habitat for native invertebrate species. Project edges containing meadow grassland with wildflowers for invertebrates are outlined in the OLEMP [REP6-034].</p> <p>November 2025 update: the oLEMP [REP6-034] has been updated to refer to 'insect hotels' rather than bee hives, better reflecting the nature of the features to be installed.</p> <p>With respect to the funding of authorities, the Applicant is willing to discuss an extension to the existing Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to cover reasonable resource requirements over and above that already appropriately secured in the DCO.</p>	Not agreed.
4.1.10	7.6.3 Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (Rev 6) [REP6-034]	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	<p>The aim of the proposed development is to create a landscape-scale wetland corridor along the River Evenlode, which is welcomed by the Council, and this aligns with the priorities and mapping in the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire. However,</p>	<p>Noted re the broad alignment between the Ecology Strategy for the Project and the emerging LNRS.</p> <p>The Project has committed to providing appropriate buffers along key flightlines for bats (ES Appendix 6.1</p>	Not agreed

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			the enhanced connectivity for other habitats, notably ancient woodlands, is not given the same weight. Hedgerow planting is planned to provide connectivity between Tackley Wood and the Blenheim Estate, and Bladon Heath and Burley Woods. While this is welcomed in principle, the current proposals only integrate the minimum 15 metre buffer to these ancient woodlands, and this would seem to be a missed opportunity to allow for woodland expansion in future. The woodlands would effectively become surrounded by solar panels for 42 years and therefore restrict the ability of any future woodland restoration plans. The Council recommends that the potential for wood pasture and natural woodland regeneration in the area is explored further to provide greater woodland connectivity, aligning with the mapped measures in the emerging LNRS and supporting the important bat populations that have been found to use these woodlands.	<p>Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [REP4-014] Commitment 9.20). The nature of the buffers with respect to management and habitat creation will be set out in more detail in the bat technical note to be published. However, it is intended that such buffers support the connectivity for bats and other wildlife between the ancient woodland blocks and ensure that the overall permeability of the landscape remains post development.</p> <p>November 2025 update: the ancient woodland around the Project site has been included within the Tier A of bat buffers meaning that it will have a 25m buffer. The oLEMP has been updated at Deadline 7 (at section 8.5.7) to include for the expansion of woodland into buffers surrounding woodland, helping to provide enhanced connectivity for those woodlands.</p>	

Table 0.2: Areas of Discussion between the Parties – Historic Environment

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
4.2.1	ES Chapter 7: Historic environment [CR2-019]	Assessment approach, scope and methodology.	Other than where noted below, assessment approach, scope and methodology agreed.	Other than where noted below, assessment approach, scope and methodology agreed.	Agreed.
4.2.2	ES Appendix 7.3: Geophysical Survey Report [APP-133 – APP-140]	Methodology for geophysical surveys.	The application of the geophysical survey methodology within the Project Site is acceptable.	The application of the geophysical survey methodology within the Project Site is acceptable.	Agreed.
4.2.3	ES Chapter 7: Historic environment [CR2-019]	Mitigation of potential impacts on buried archaeological remains.	The proposed methodologies for the mitigation of potential impacts on buried archaeological remains are acceptable.	The proposed methodologies for the mitigation of potential impacts on buried archaeological remains are acceptable.	Agreed.
4.2.4	Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (Rev 2) [REP2-021]	The proposed programme of further archaeological work.	The proposed programme of further archaeological work is acceptable.	The proposed programme of further archaeological work is acceptable.	Agreed.
4.2.5	ES Chapter 7: Historic environment [CR2-019]	The level of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.	Where harm to the significance of designated heritage assets is less than substantial, the correct policy test is the one set out in paragraph 5.9.32 of NPS EN-1.	Where harm to the significance of designated heritage assets is less than substantial, the correct policy test is the one set out in paragraph 5.9.32 of NPS EN-1.	Agreed
4.2.6	ES Appendix 7.4: Heritage Impact Assessment – Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (Rev 1) [CR2-036] ES Appendix 7.5: Settings Assessment (Rev 1) [CR2-038]	The likely significance of effect on designated heritage assets as a result of the change within their setting, including: the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site; Grade I listed buildings at Church Hanborough and Cassington; Scheduled Monuments at Sansom's Platt and Bladon Camp; and Conservation Areas at Church Hanborough and Bladon.	The applicant's assessment of effects in relation to the historic environment confirms that no significant effects in respect of any aspect of the historic environment have been identified within the Environmental Statement. The effects on designated heritage assets, including the Blenheim Palace WHS, as a result of change within their setting have been assessed by the applicant as not significant. The effects on buried archaeological remains resulting from physical impacts have also been assessed by the applicant as being not significant. The cumulative effects assessment examined likely impacts on designated heritage assets as a result of change within their setting and the impacts on the character of the historic landscape. The applicant concludes that there are no significant cumulative effects from the Project alongside other projects/plans.	<p>The Applicant's assessment of likely impacts and effects in respect of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site are presented in the Heritage Impact Assessment (ES Appendix 7.4 (Rev 1) [CR2-036]). This assessment was undertaken in accordance with the 2022 guidance from UNESCO for the assessment of impacts on World Heritage Sites (<i>Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage context</i>), and the preparation of the report was carried out within an iterative process in consultation with Historic England.</p> <p>The Heritage Impact Assessment identified a likely 'minor negative' impact on one attribute (Attribute 7) which contributes towards the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Blenheim Palace WHS.</p>	Not agreed.

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
			<p>WODC do not agree with these conclusions and consider that the applicant has played down the likely significance of impacts arising from the proposed development.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the conclusions that the applicant makes through their own assessment, it is the view of WODC that there are residual harmful impacts that are likely to arise from the project on heritage assets that are of international and national importance and that these impacts should be regarded as significant.</p> <p>This includes the impact on the settings of the heritage assets including Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, Grade 1 Listed Buildings at Church Hanborough and Cassington, Scheduled Monuments at Sansom's Platt and Bladon Camp, and Conservation Areas at Church Hanborough and Bladon.</p> <p>The maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site and its setting is a key objective and therefore needs to be given particular consideration through the examination of the solar farm proposals.</p>	<p>The overall assessment of likely impacts and effects on the historic environment is presented within ES Chapter 7: Historic environment [CR2-019]. The likely impact on the Blenheim Palace WHS is set out at paragraphs 7.9.52 – 7.9.56 of that chapter. The magnitude of impact on the heritage significance of the WHS has been assessed as 'no change' despite the 'minor negative' impact on a single attribute of the OUV as identified in the Heritage Impact Assessment (ES Appendix 7.4 [CR2-036]). The impact would be time-limited and fully reversible. The sensitivity/value of the WHS is determined as 'very high', resulting in a likely effect of 'minor adverse' significance, which is not significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>The Applicant notes the Deadline 6 response from Historic England [REP6-092]. Historic England conclude that, following the acceptance of the changes set out in the Applicant's Change Request 2 Notification, any changes to the use of land resulting from the placement of solar pv panels would not harm the contribution that this land makes to the attributes that convey the OUV of the WHS.</p> <p>The Applicant also notes that in their Relevant Representation [RR-0413], ICOMOS-UK state that '<i>the proposed Botley West Solar Farm would not have a direct impact on the OUV of Blenheim Palace and Park WHS or its setting as identified by the map 'Character of Setting of WHS' on page 50 of Appendix III of the Management Plan</i>'. ICOMOS-UK is the UK National Committee of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), which has a special role as the official adviser to UNESCO on cultural World Heritage Sites. ICOMOS-UK plays a leading role in implementing the World Heritage Convention 1972 within the UK and promoting best practice in the management of UK World Heritage Sites. The maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the UK World Heritage Sites and their settings is one of their key objectives.</p> <p>The detailed assessment of likely impacts on the heritage significance of designated heritage assets as a result of change within their settings is presented in ES Appendix 7.5: Settings Assessment (Rev 3) [CR2-038]. Some of the assessments have been revised following the acceptance of the changes set out in the Applicant's Change Request 2 Notification. The Applicant considers that the assessments presented within this document are robust and accurate.</p>	

Table 0.3: Areas of Discussion between the Parties – Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
4.2.1	ES Chapter 17: Agricultural land and public Rights of Way [APP-054]	The applicant's approach to assessing and mitigating the loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land during the project's operation and maintenance is inadequate, as it does not sufficiently consider the significant coverage of BMV land, lacks a strategy to avoid or minimise	Loss of BMV land (RR-1102-25): The applicant has scoped out the assessment of temporary and permanent loss of best and most versatile land during operation and maintenance of the Project. The applicant suggests that there would be no works during the operation and maintenance	The ALC and soil surveys (Table 2 of ES - Appendix 17.1 [APP-223]) determined that 38.35% of the whole Project site comprises Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (Grades 1, 2, and 3a), while 61.65% is subgrade 3b or non-agricultural land. The Applicants have	Not agreed.

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
		its loss, and fails to address feedback from the PEIR consultation.	phase of the Project that would result in the temporary or permanent loss of best and most versatile land. In addition, they propose that soils located below the solar panels will be retained and made available for grazing during operation of the Project. On this basis, they argue that the temporary and permanent loss of best and most versatile land during operation and maintenance of the Project is unlikely to result in likely significant effects and has been scoped out the assessment in this Chapter of the ES. The LPA have considerable concerns with the above approach The applicant’s mapping submitted in support of the application indicates significant coverage of Best and Most Versatile across the project area. It is not clear that the proposed design, layout or scale of the project has been shaped by the presence of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. As this is a non-renewable resource there should be a strategy to avoid its loss and to consider mitigation only where loss is very small in scale and unavoidable. Similarly, a strategy to focus the development on the poorest quality land should have informed the site scoping stage of the scheme. A key policy objective for West Oxfordshire is to protect and conserve soil resources and this includes Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. Our response to the PEIR consultation identified areas of land that could be removed from the project to avoid multiple harms including landscape, heritage and loss of BMV land. The design of the scheme has not responded to these comments.	<p>sought to avoid impacts on BMV land by siting permanent infrastructure away from these areas (ES Chapter 5 [APP-042]) The assessment of the significance of effects of the Project on ALC identifies that only 5.5ha of BMV land would be permanently lost during construction, which is not significant in EIA terms (ES Chapter 17 [APP-054], paragraph 17.9.6).</p> <p>In terms of the distribution of grades, according to the provisional mapping of ALC grades within Oxfordshire, the county comprises approximately 20.9% Grades 1 and 2 land, 58.5% of Grade 3 land (which includes both Subgrades 3a and 3b) and 20.1% Grade 4 land (Table 17.14 of ES Chapter 17 [APP-054]). If only one third of the provisionally mapped comprised Subgrade 3a land, this would provide an estimate of an average of 40.4% Grades 1,2 and 3a in Oxfordshire. The detailed ALC survey results for the Project site (Table 17.17 of ES Chapter 17) identify that only 7.4% of the land comprises Grades 1 and 2 land, with approximately 29% Subgrade 3a land. In comparison to the pattern of land quality that might be expected in the wider county, therefore, the distribution of land quality grades within the Project site comprises a typical, if not slightly lower average percentage of the best and most versatile land.</p> <p>The temporary impacts on agricultural land quality and soils during construction of the construction compounds, solar PV array, cable corridors and access tracks will be managed through the Soil Management Plan, ensuring soil quality is maintained (ES Chapter 17 [APP-054], paragraph 17.9.8). The inherent quality of the best and most versatile land would not therefore be lost within these areas as a result of the Project.</p> <p>The Applicant proposes to retain agricultural land use under solar arrays, between converter stations and substations, and in undeveloped areas, using conservation grazing by sheep and small-scale horticultural production (ES Chapter 6 [APP-043], paragraph 6.1.4).</p> <p>The socio-economic impacts of the proposed changes in the agricultural use of the site based on the current pattern of agricultural land use within the Project site are assessed in Section 15.9 of Chapter 15 of the ES [APP-052]. However, decisions about changes to the pattern of land management within the Project site in the future both with or without the implementation of the Project remains a matter for the owners and farming enterprises occupying the land to determine at that time.</p>	

Table 0.4: Areas of Discussion between the Parties – Landscape and Visual Resources

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
4.4.1a	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	LVIA Methodology	<p>It is agreed that these documents form the industry standard guidance used to inform scope and methodology used in LVIA.</p> <p>*Note that representatives from Cherwell District Council did not attend this meeting, but all the other OHAs were represented, as well as a representative from LUC</p> <p>The OHA agree that GLVIA3 and Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Notes, including Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2024-01: Notes and Clarifications of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third edition (GLVIA3)</p> <p>Whilst it is agreed that these documents form the industry standard guidance used to inform scope and methodology used in LVIA, WODC remains concerned that the applicant has not used these documents in preparing their LVIA, relying on the use of Design 'Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA104 and LA107 instead.</p>	<p>The key (industry standard) guidance documents used to inform scope and methodology used in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) by landscape professionals are the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (LI and IEMA, 2013) GLVIA3 and Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Notes, including Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2024-01: Notes and Clarifications of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third edition (GLVIA3) (LI TGN2024-01), was agreed at a meeting with the OHAs dated 10th June 2025. This was further clarified at the meeting with the OHAs held on 16th October 2025*.</p> <p>*The Applicant notes that representatives from Cherwell District Council did not attend this meeting, but all other OHAs were represented, as well as a representative from LUC, LUC appears to be the landscape consultancy representing/providing advice to the OHAs.</p>	Agreed
4.4.1b	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	LVIA Methodology	<p>Whilst accepting the industry best practice guidance, this does not translate to agreement of the applicant's methodology. In paragraph 1.2.29 of The applicant's response to the OHA's response to the Rule 17 Letter [REP3-066] the applicant stated 'The Applicant's Position – The use of the National Highways Standard significance of effects matrix (DMRB LA104, Table 3.8.1) adapted to reflect LVIA terminology (Table 8.12 of APP-045) is appropriate for the Botley West Solar Farm project.'</p> <p>WODC remain concerned about the use of and how the applicant has applied the Design 'Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA104 and LA107 for a solar development. Basing the assessment methodology and tables on the DMRB LA107 but not reflecting the level of significance as covered in LA104. Page 15 of the Design 'Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA104 (Highways England et al. 2020) guidance NOTE 3 'Significant effects typically comprise residual effects that are within the moderate, large or very large categories.</p>	<p>The Applicant's position is that the DMRB template, used in the ES by other topics (as a preferred approach to ES chapters – promoted by the OHAs) modified to accommodate the LI guidance, as the Landscape Institute requires is appropriate for the assessment of solar farms.</p>	Not agreed
4.4.1c	[REP6-012] Chapter 8:	LVIA Methodology	<p>The OHAs agree that this is what the text of GLVIA3 states</p>	<p>GLVIA3 states that <i>"This edition concentrates on principles and process. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of</i></p>	Agreed

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	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment			<p><i>the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand. The aim has been to make the advice specific enough to meet the needs of UK practitioners but also to avoid too much detail about specific legislation which will make it of less value elsewhere.”</i> (preface to GLVIA3, Roman numeral page x).</p> <p>On determining significance GLVIA3 explains that <i>“The Regulations require that a final judgement is made about whether or not each effect is likely to be significant. There are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed ‘significant’ but LVIA’s should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be the significant and non-significant effects. Some practitioners use the phrase ‘not significant in EIA terms’ to describe those effects considered to fall below a ‘threshold’ of significance but this can potentially confuse since the phrase has no specific meaning in relation to the EIA Regulations (IEMA, 2011b: 61”</i> (GLVIA3, paragraph 3.32).</p> <p>Paragraph 3.33 explains that <i>“It is not essential to establish a series of thresholds for different levels of significance of landscape and visual effects, provided that it is made clear whether or not they are considered significant. The final overall judgement of the likely significance of the predicted landscape and visual effects is, however, often summarised in a series of categories of significance reflecting combinations of sensitivity and magnitude. These tend to vary from project to project but they should be appropriate to the nature, size and location of the proposed development and should as far as possible be consistent across the different topic areas in the EIA.”</i></p>	
4.4.1d	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	LVIA Methodology	It is agreed by the OHAs that the EIA Regulations do not set out methodologies, thresholds or state what effects should be considered significant or not	It is agreed that the EIA Regulations do not set out methodologies, thresholds or state what effects should be considered significant or not	Agreed
4.4.1e	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	LVIA Methodology	<p>The OHA agree that GLVIA3 and subsequent technical notes is the accepted best practice guidance. The reference in para.3.32 discusses significance thresholds and refers to page 61 of IEMA 2011 in this context. GLVIA3 is from 2013 and is, together with subsequent guidance notes, the accepted guidance that should be used.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the IEMA document at page 61 also states ‘<i>Problems arise in practice when the ES fails to either: justify the use of different methods to evaluate significance between topic chapters, or present the significance of effects related to a particular environmental issue</i>’ and ‘<i>As such, there is a clear need to ensure that all the findings set out in the ES are evaluated in terms of their significance; ideally this would be in a format that allows them to be readily compared with the EIA’s other findings.</i>’</p>	<p>It is agreed that the IEMA document ‘The state of environmental impact assessment in the UK’ (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2011) (IEMA 2011) explains that there is no legal requirement to follow a set approach – in fact it is common for certain topics not to follow a set approach.</p> <p>LVIA is not a scientific discipline – it deals with perceptual qualities and relies on professional judgement.</p> <p>IEMA 2011 notes that <i>“In reporting the EIA’s findings, ESs often set out a generic methodology at the start of the document indicating that significance has been assessed using a standard matrix style approach, with magnitude on one axis and receptor sensitivity on the other” ... “Despite this, it remains relatively common for one or more ES chapters to use an alternative approach. This is not a legal concern, as there is no regulatory requirement to apply the same methodological approach to significance evaluation across an EIA. In some cases significance may be linked to whether the predicted effect passes a quantified threshold established in a relevant standard.”</i> (IEMA 2011, page 60, section 6.3).</p> <p>On consistency of significance, “IEMA’s Guidelines on EIA indicate:</p> <p><i>‘There is often not a single, definitive, correct answer as to whether an impact is significant or not. Significance is influenced by the values of the individual, how the changes to the environment affect them and whether they have a stake in the project or not’</i> The evaluation of significance in EIA is often subjective. In order to provide justifiable results, EIA practitioners gather evidence to inform and explain the evaluation of the individual effect. Effective EIA practice ensures that the methods used can be readily understood by those reading the ES. EIA does not tend to discuss significance in absolute terms. Instead, the assessment’s findings are regularly set out as different levels of significance (e.g. major, moderate, minor, etc).</p> <p><i>This approach is considered good practice; whilst recognising the inherent subjectivity of the assessment, it attempts to aid communication of the scale of the impact by introducing a classification. This approach also allows the practitioner to identify and discuss effects that some groups may consider significant, whilst others would not. For example, a negative landscape effect described as being of ‘minor significance’ might be considered to indicate that a majority of people</i></p>	Not Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
				<p>would not consider the effect to be significant; however, a smaller group, perhaps within the local community, may disagree and consider the effect to be significant. It also allows for the comparison of impacts across seemingly incomparable topics by providing a consistent basis for the assessment's terminology." (Section 6.3, page 60).</p> <p>On determining the significance thresholds of effects IEMA 2011 notes that "... the EIA regulations do not set out terms for evaluating whether the assessment's findings are significant or not" (IEMA 2011, page 61, section 6.3).</p> <p>REP2-029 notes that the IEMA 2011 document above is referred to in GLVIA3, paragraph 3.32 and has not been superseded, and the points made in it remain relevant.</p> <p>The Applicant's position is that it has justified the methodology used in the LVIA throughout the Examination. It is a methodology that has not been challenged at (most recently) three consented DCOs, Mona offshore wind farm, Morgan offshore wind farm and Gatwick Genesis.</p>	
4.4.1f	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	LVIA Methodology	<p>The applicant bases their assessment methodology and tables on Design Manual for Roads and Bridges LA107 but does not reflect levels of significance as covered by LA104, i.e that Significant effects typically comprise residual effects that are within the moderate, large or very large categories.</p> <p>It is noted that the applicant has been guided by the latest Landscape Institute guidance LI TGN 2024-01, and has judged moderate effects to be significant and not significant.</p>	<p>The assessment methodology used within the Botley West Environmental Statement (ES) is based on the DMRB (National Highways, Standards for Highways) as set out in paragraph 4.2.9 of Chapter 4: Approach to Environmental assessment [APP-041].</p> <p>The two relevant documents published as part of the National Highways Standards are LA104 – Environmental assessment and monitoring (revision 1) (August 2020) and LA107 – Landscape and visual effects (revision 2) (February 2020).</p> <p>The DMRB notes that significance of effects is judged on the effects that remain after the mitigation has taken place, i.e. the residual effects.</p> <p>The Botley West Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment significance of effects matrix is based on the DMRB matrix used in other chapters in the ES, albeit adapted to reflect more recent GLVIA3 guidance LI TGN 2024-01 issue 3(5), which states that moderate effects can be significant or not significant.</p> <p>Also, 'No Change' column has also been removed, as LVIA assessment concentrates on potential significant effects.</p> <p>The Applicant's Position – The use of the National Highways Standard significance of effects matrix (DMRB LA104, Table 3.8.1) adapted to reflect LVIA terminology (Table 8.12 of APP-045) is appropriate for the Botley West Solar Farm project.</p> <p>The applicant has been guided by the latest Landscape Institute guidance LI TGN 2024-01, and has judged moderate effects to be significant and not significant, this is reflected in paragraph 8.3.1 of the text of Rev 4 of Chapter 8 [REP6-012].</p>	Not Agreed
4.4.2a	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Assignment of significance	<p>It is agreed by the OHAs that the latest version of Chapter 8 (Rev 4) [REP6-012] includes the updates of the Applicant's Rule 17 Response [REP2-029] which reconsidered the significance of effects, providing a detailed explanation within each resource/receptor as to why some Moderate effects are now considered significant and some remain as not significant,</p> <p>There have been limited changes in the assessment outcomes, and the OHA are still concerned that the LVIA underplays the scale of the effects of the development on landscape character and views, especially with regard to the expected Magnitude of impact, and therefore the significance of the effect.</p> <p>These issues were raised in the OHA Joint Local Impact Report [REP1-072]. While the</p>	<p>The latest version of Chapter 8 (Rev 4) [REP6-012] includes the updates of the Applicant's Rule 17 Response [REP2-029] Which reconsidered the significance of effects, providing a detailed explanation within each resource/receptor as to why some Moderate effects are now considered significant and some remain as not significant,</p> <p>The Applicant notes the LPA's concerns in respect of judgements of significance, but note this is simply a matter of professional opinion between the parties, not a weakness in the authority's or Applicants positions.</p>	Not Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
			<p>amended LVIA [CR2-022] has added paras 8.5.17 and 8.5.19 to address the duration and reversibility of effects, the LVIA methodology is still not clear how these effects are weighted with regards to size, scale and geographical extent, which also inform the Magnitude judgement within the impact assessment. The LVIA reports most of the Magnitude judgements as Low (leading to effects being considered not significant), or when a Medium magnitude is given, it is not judged to result in the expected Moderate to Major level of significance as per Table 8.22.</p> <p>It is also noted that the assessment of the same receptors differs between different sections of the LVIA and appendices.</p>		
4.4.2b	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Assignment of significance	The OHAs believe that the LVIA [REP6-012] has, many cases, underplayed the level of significance for a number of Representative Viewpoints	<p>The Applicant's current position remains as follows:</p> <p>The LVIA follows Landscape Institute and IEMA guidance. The assessment within Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment [REP6-012] uses the methodology set out at sections 8.4 and 8.5 of the submitted LVIA [REP6-012]. The methodology and its application is clear and transparent, as required by GLVIA3 (e.g. at paragraph 2.24).</p>	Not agreed
4.4.3	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.	Suitability of representative viewpoint selection and photomontages	<p>OHAs have questioned the number of Representative Viewpoints and photomontages used within the LVIA [REP6-012].</p> <p>Aerial viewpoints</p> <p>At no point were aerial viewpoints suggested, by the OHAs.</p>	<p>The Applicant's current position remains as follows:</p> <p>The candidate representative viewpoints were presented on a ZTV at Scoping. The viewpoints were consulted on with WODC on the 13.10.2022, there were subsequent emails to and from Andrew Thomson up to and including emails on the 14.12.2022. Details of alternative / additional viewpoints are included in Table 8.5 of LVIA [REP6-012]. Andrew Thomson also forwarded suggested addition from Church Hanborough PC, 19.12.2022. Again, these are also included in Table 8.5 of the LVIA.</p> <p>It should be noted that WODC did not comment on viewpoints within their Scoping response and there were no specific comments received at the PEIR stage.</p> <p>Of the 55 Representative Viewpoints, 33 were selected for photomontages [APP-072 to APP-080]. These were agreed with the local planning authorities and considered appropriate and proportionate to the Project and illustrate the Project at winter Year 1 and summer Year 15, in accordance with the LVIA methodology and best practice guidance [APP-149]. It would have not been appropriate to have illustrated photomontages from all Representative Viewpoints, as there were a number with limited or no views of the Project. However, all viewpoints are included within the assessment of effects in the submitted LVIA [REP6-012].</p> <p>Aerial viewpoints</p> <p>At no point were aerial viewpoints suggested, either by the Applicant or by the OHAs. GLVIA3 only mentions aerial imagery twice, in the context computer-generated 3D models (paragraphs 8.28 and 8.29). Moreover, GLVIA3 explains that such <i>models "do not necessarily represent the way that people would experience the change [in view] and so can be misleading in an assessment context"</i> (GLVIA3, paragraph 8.29). This is especially true of people within vehicles including aircraft, travelling at speed on the approach to, or taking off from airports.</p> <p>The transient nature of potential views available from the air and the enclosed nature of the aircraft would reduce the sensitivity of the visual receptor to such a degree that there is no potential for significant effects. Land-based dynamic receptors are considered at paragraphs 8.6.44 to 8.6.65 of the LVIA [REP6-012].</p>	<p>Position on representative viewpoints - Agreed.</p> <p>Position on photomontage selection – Not agreed</p> <p>Position on aerial viewpoints - Agreed</p>
4.4.4a	[REP6-012] Chapter 8:	Mitigation	OHAs and other RRs have questioned the suitability of mitigation proposals.	The Applicant's current position remains as follows:	Adequacy/suitability of mitigation

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.		<p>Concerns around mitigation are addressed in Section 7.3 and Appendix 1 of the LIR [REP1-072].</p> <p>The concerns around mitigation are summarised in the Councils' response to ExQ2.9.4 [REP4-074] (page 35).</p> <p>The OHAs agree that the text of NPS EN-1 is as stated and that the residual landscape and visual effects, after the proposed mitigation do not present an unacceptable risk to the matters listed within paragraph 4.1.7).</p>	<p>Project impacts will be minimised by a comprehensive designed in mitigation scheme. As shown on the Illustrative Masterplan [CR2-026] and the Landscape, Ecology and Amenities Plan [CR2-043]. Existing public rights of way would have managed hedgerows and trees to the north and south, where appropriate, which over time would limit available views to the solar arrays.</p> <p>The Project's main elements, the solar panels, would be low in height, at a maximum of 2.3m, and follow the natural contours of the landscape. This would help to reduce the effects upon the undulating landform of the Evenlode Valley and local area within which the Project is located.</p> <p>Regarding residual landscape and visual effects - the solar farm is a Critical National Priority (CNP) infrastructure project. NPS EN-1 explains that <i>"infrastructure to achieve our energy objectives national security, economic, commercial, and net zero benefits, will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation"</i> (NPS EN-1, paragraph 3.3.63). The NPS explains further that with <i>"projects which qualify as CNP Infrastructure, it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases. This presumption, however, does not apply to residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero"</i> (NPS EN-1, paragraph 4.1.7). The residual landscape and visual effects, after the proposed mitigation do not present an unacceptable risk to the matters listed.</p>	<p>proposals - Not agreed.</p> <p>NPS EN-1 text, at paragraphs 3.3.63 and 4.1.7) - Agreed</p>
4.4.4b	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.	Mitigation/Design Review Panel	It is agreed by the OHAs that a meeting/ review by an independent Design Review Panel post-Examination (a suggestion proposed by the ExA) would not be of assistance to developing the project.	It is agreed with the OHAs that a meeting/ review by a Design Review Panel post-Examination (a suggestion proposed by the ExA at ExAQ1.1.12) would not be of assistance to developing the project	Agreed
4.4.4c	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.	Mitigation	<p>The applicant's without prejudice LVIA offer confirms that the design and layout of the proposed development has not followed the mitigation hierarchy for landscape and visual impacts, by locating panels in more sensitive areas.</p> <p>OHA comment on the applicant's offer in their D7 submissions. While the proposed removal of areas by the applicant is welcomed, these do not go far enough to deliver a scheme that minimises landscape and visual impacts to a more acceptable level.</p> <p>WODC has indicated what they would consider to be acceptable landscape mitigation in the form of the omissions maps as updated a D6 [REP6-118].</p>	<p>The Applicant's position remains that the design process that took place before submission was an iterative one, one example of this is the PVDP Buffer Zone Analysis, Appendix B of REP6-065. The panels have been located less sensitive landscape areas as explained in [REP6-052]. The mitigation hierarchy has also been addressed by the Applicant throughout the Examination in various responses, e.g at the Applicant's Response to the Rule 17 Letter [REP2-029].</p> <p>Throughout the Examination concerns were raised by the OHAs and Interested Parties regarding potential adverse effects. The Applicant has listened to those concerns and has submitted a set of 'Without Prejudice LVIA Offer' plans in Appendix 2 of The Applicant's response to the Rule 17 Letter REP6-052 in response to ExA's Points 9 and 10. While not acceding to all of the OHAs' requests for areas of panel removal, due to their requests not complying with National Policy and making the project unviable, these plans go some way to removing panels from what might be considered to be more sensitive areas. These plans also show increased mitigation, particularly along the Evenlode Valley, which shows the introduction of areas of wet woodland.</p>	Not agreed
4.4.5	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.	Representative Viewpoints	<p>WODC agreed the location of representative viewpoints in West Oxfordshire</p> <p>The applicant's assessment of effects experienced at the representative viewpoint locations is not agreed</p>	<p>The candidate representative viewpoints were presented on a ZTV at Scoping. The viewpoints were consulted on with WODC on the 13.10.2022, Subsequent emails to and from Andrew Thomson up to and including 14.12.2022. Details of alternative / additional viewpoints included in Table 8.5 of LVIA [REP6-012]. Andrew Thomson also forwarded suggested addition from Church Hanborough PC, 19.12.2022. Again, these are also included in Table 8.5 of the LVIA.</p> <p>The Representative Viewpoints are as they are named – i.e. they are representative of available views along certain routes and within the local landscape. Where these are based on a route a summary for the whole route is included in the description of effects, e.g. for Representative Viewpoint 1, an assessment of the effects experienced by people using the whole route during the operational phase is given in paragraph 8.9.144 of Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact</p>	<p>Viewpoints agreed</p> <p>Assessment of effects experienced by receptors at representative viewpoints - Not agreed</p>

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
				<p>Assessment [REP6-012]. It should be considered that the viewpoint assessment (Appendix 8.7 of the LVIA ES Chapter) [REP5-038] deals with static viewpoint locations, a single point taken along a route, whereas PRow's assessment (Appendix 8.6 of the LVIA ES Chapter) [REP5-037] examines the potentially affected users of PRow (visual receptors), illustrated by Viewpoint(s).</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the assessment of the effects on PRow's does not include detailed section by section descriptions of the change in views along each PRow or road. However, the 55 viewpoints provide a good range of evidence of the different effects on the PRow within the study area, at varying geographical locations, distances and elevations, as well as different contexts, to enable professional judgement to be exercised in the assessment of effects along the wider networks.</p> <p>Most of the Representative Viewpoints, which have been agreed with the stakeholders, are located on PRow's. The numbers of people using the public rights of way network within the 5 m study area varies, as does the distance, context and visual characteristics of the view. It is not known how people use different sections of the Public Rights of Way, in which direction and when. Where no firm data are available a relative judgement is sufficient, as proposed in GLVIA3. Therefore, the position has been adopted of individuals using a public rights of way walking towards or through the Project, looking directly at the Project, even if wider views are available. Regarding valency, the position has been taken of that of a person who objects to the presence of the Project. Emphasis was placed on the nature and activity of the visual receptor, such as recreational receptors, e.g., users of PRow's have been cautiously considered to be of high sensitivity.</p> <p>The linear nature of the PRow's determines that views from the route differ, are transient, the visible scale of the Proposed Development varies, all of which will be experienced within a short period of time, even during the operational phase.</p>	
4.4.6	[REP6-012] Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.	Local Plan evidence base	<p>The OHAs agreed, at the meeting held on 16th October 2025, that the following documents formed part of the evidence base for the West Oxfordshire District Council and the South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse District Council local plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy for West Oxfordshire (LDA, 2016) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Renewable Energy Study Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LUC, 2024). 	<p>The OHAs agreed, at the meeting held on 16th October 2025, that the following documents formed part of the evidence base for the West Oxfordshire District and South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse District Councils local plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy for West Oxfordshire (LDA, 2016) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Renewable Energy Study Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LUC, 2024). 	Agreed
4.4.7	The Applicant's Response to ExA Q2.1.4 [Annex 3 to REP4-037]	Regarding The Special Qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)	<p>The OHAs agreed that the Cotswold National Landscape Board in its Response to Examining Authority's First Written Questions [REP2-068] states and that, at the request of the ExA, the Applicant undertook a study to assess the effects on the Cotswolds National Landscape [Annex 3 of REP4-037] which confirmed what the Cotswold National Landscape Board had stated in its REP2-068 and what the Applicant had reported within Chapter 8 – that the Project would have no significant effects upon the 14 Special Qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, and that the</p>	<p>The OHAs agree that the Cotswold National Landscape Board in its Response to Examining Authority's First Written Questions [REP2-068] states:</p> <p><i>"Having reviewed the applicant's DCO submission and visited the site and surrounding area, the Board concluded in our response dated 24 February 2025 that the proposed solar farm would have, at worst, a temporary negligible to minor adverse significance of effect at all stages of the project (i.e. construction, operation and decommissioning) on the landscape character and special qualities of the CNL and a temporary negligible adverse effect on views to and from the CNL. Our response dated 24 February 2025 provides further details on the relationship between the site and the CNL and, in particular, an assessment of the potential effects of the development on views from within, and back towards, the CNL.</i></p> <p><i>"The Board also considers that the 'new planting/areas for enhancement' on land between the solar PV arrays and the CNL have the potential to provide landscape enhancements which could be considered to contribute to furthering the purpose of CNL designation and should be secured as part</i></p>	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
			proposed landscape proposals may provide enhancements to furthering the purposes of the National Landscape:	<p><i>of the Development Consent Order should, without prejudice, the Secretary of State be minded to grant such an order. As such the Board considers that the impacts of the proposal would not represent an impediment in respect of relevant authorities’ adequate discharge of the s.85 CROW Act duty.”</i></p> <p>Nevertheless, the ExA requested the Applicant to undertake a study to assess the effects on the Cotswolds National which the Applicant did [Annex 3 of REP4-037] which confirmed what the Cotswold National Landscape Board had stated in its REP2-068 and what the Applicant had reported within Chapter 8 – that the Project would have no significant effects upon the 14 Special Qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, and that the proposed landscape proposals may provide enhancements to furthering the purposes of the National Landscape.</p>	
4.4.8	Documents secured by Requirements	<p>The OHAs agree that the documents secured in the requirements are set out in the Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [REP4-014].</p> <p>Detailed design documents need to be substantially in accordance with the outline control documents. The OHA do not agree with the mitigation proposed in the outline control documents, nor the methodology used to assess the adequacy of the mitigation.</p>	<p>The OHAs agree that the documents secured in the requirements are set out in the Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [REP4-014].</p> <p>Detailed design documents need to be substantially in accordance with the outline control documents. The OHA do not agree with the mitigation proposed in the outline control documents, nor the methodology used to assess the adequacy of the mitigation.</p>	<p>The documents secured in the requirements are set out in the Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [REP4-014].</p> <p>Specifically in relation to Requirements 5, 6 and 8 and Schedule 16 of the draft DCO, the Applicant provides the following information:</p> <p>Requirement 5 covers detailed design. The detail design of the development that must be submitted to the relevant planning authority pre-commencement pursuant to Requirement 5 of the DCO must ‘accord with the outline layout and design principles’. This ensures that the final design must be within those parameters that are now clearly secured. This gives certainty as the scope of the design parameters within which the final development will be brought.</p> <p>Requirement 6 covers the oLEMP/LEMP. It secures that no part of the authorised development may commence until a written landscape and ecology management plan has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. This retains control for the relevant planning authority by ensuring that it has a right of approval over the final landscape and ecological mitigation to be given. The requirement secures that the final plan ‘must be substantially in accordance with the outline plan’ to give certainty to the Applicant that approval will be achieved whilst giving certainty to the relevant planning authority as to the measures that are to be proposed at detailed design.</p> <p>Requirement 8 covers fencing and other means of enclosure. provides that no part of the authorised development may commence until written details of all proposed temporary and permanent fences, walls or other means of enclosure have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. This ensures that to the extent there is any flexibility in respect of fencing (etc.) which is not captured in the Outline Layout & Design Principles (on the basis that not all design detail is known at this stage), the relevant planning authority retains a right of approval which will apply at the time of discharge of requirements. This ensures that there is the necessary control on that flexibility, secured within the DCO.</p> <p>Schedule 16 of the draft DCO states that to the extent there is a disagreement or uncertainty at detailed design stage, Schedule 16 of the draft DCO sets out the process that will apply in discharging the requirements. This allows the Council to request further information (see paragraph 3 of Schedule 16) to ensure that any approval is appropriately informed, whilst offering the Applicant a route of appeal (see paragraph 4) in the event that approval is denied. This ensures certainty as to the delivery of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project in the event that the Council disagrees with the mitigation that effectively the SoS would have considered to be appropriate.</p>	<p>Documents secured in the requirements are set out in the Project Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule [REP4-014] – Agreed</p> <p>Mitigation proposed in outline control documents not agreed</p>

Table 0.5: Areas of Discussion between the Parties – Noise and Vibration

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
4.5.1	6.3 - ES Chapter 13 - Noise and Vibration [PBD-010]	Assessment approach, scope and methodology	No specific confirmation has been received from WODC.	The scope and methodology utilised for the noise and vibration assessment has been WODC and we have not received confirmation. The assessment has been undertaken in line with best practice. This was	Agreed.

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
				confirmed and agreed during a virtual meeting on the 16 th July 2025.	
4.5.2	6.3 - ES Chapter 13 - Noise and Vibration [PBD-010]	Baseline noise survey methodology	No specific confirmation has been received from WODC.	The scope and methodology utilised for the baseline noise survey has been issued to WODC and we have not received confirmation. The assessment has been undertaken in line with best practice. This was confirmed and agreed during a virtual meeting on the 16 th July 2025.	Agreed.
4.5.3	6.3 - ES Chapter 13 - Noise and Vibration [PBD-010]	Assessment Findings	No specific confirmation has been received from WODC.	This was confirmed and agreed during a virtual meeting on the 16 th July 2025.	Agreed.
4.5.4	6.3 - ES Chapter 13 - Noise and Vibration [PBD-010]	<p>Discussion regarding the noise and vibration impact assessment. The following points were discussed during the consultation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justification of the baseline data. The integration of a tranquillity assessment into the noise and vibration assessment. The methodology which was used to assess the noise emissions from the PCS units. The baseline data set. <p>Following the call, the baseline data set was issued via email to WODC.</p>	Confirmation of receipt of data.	No further comment. This was confirmed and agreed during a virtual meeting on the 16 th July 2025.	Agreed.

Table 0.6: Areas of Discussion between the Parties – Planning Policy

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
4.6.1	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>Application of Planning Policy to Decision Making for NSIP's</p> <p>Section 104 of the Act contains the most pertinent policy outlining the decision-making process for NSIPs and providing guidance on how the Secretary of State (SoS) should approach their decisions. In this respect, Section 104 (3) provides that the SoS must decide applications for development consent in accordance with any National Policy Statement (NPS) except to the extent that the SoS is satisfied that one or more of the following exceptions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that deciding the application in accordance with any relevant national policy statement would lead to the United Kingdom being in breach of any of its international obligations; that deciding the application in accordance with any relevant national policy statement would lead to the 	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed.

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
		<p>Secretary of State being in breach of any duty imposed on the Secretary of State by or under enactment;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That deciding the application in accordance with any relevant national policy statement would be unlawful by virtue of any enactment; and • That the Secretary of State is satisfied that the adverse impact of the proposed development outweighs its benefits. <p>A such, it is agreed that the following NPSs make up the relevant primary policy, against which the SoS must make their decision and to the extent that Section 104 allows, the following national, regional and local policy may also be relevant.</p>			
4.6.2	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>Overview</p> <p>The statutory framework for preparing, examining and determining application for DCOs for NSIPs is provided by the Act. As discussed in section 2, the Act sets out the consenting system for all NSIPs, including those in the energy sector, and provides the legislative context that has guided the below considerations.</p> <p>The relevant NPSs to which the SoS must have regard in accordance with Section 104 (2) and 104 (3) of the Act are considered to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3) and National Planning Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5). • Other policies of relevance identified below include: National Planning Policy Framework NPPF and the Local Development Plan documents for the host authorities West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, the Vale of Horse District Council and Oxford City Council. <p>Appendix B details local planning policy in West Oxfordshire against which the project will be judged. The appendix is described as a 'Compliance Table', and details the applicants position in respect of degree on compliance with these policy statements well as the host authorities position with respect to compliance. Together they represent matters agreed and not agreed.</p>	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
4.6.3	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (adopted)</p> <p>The WOLP was adopted in September 2018 and sets out the overall planning framework for the District from 2011 to 2031. Appendix B below identifies policies of the WOLP that are considered most relevant to the proposed development.</p>	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed
4.6.4	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>West Oxfordshire Local Plan (emerging)</p> <p>WODC are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, to cover the period up to 2043. WODC have completed an initial scoping consultation, in August – October 2022 and a focused consultation on draft plan objectives, pattern of development and call for ideas, opportunities and sites, in August – October 2023. A preferred options consultation (Regulation 18) is set to take place in October 2024, following this a draft Local Plan is to be published in March 2025, submission for independent examination in June 2025 and adoption is expected in late 2025 to early 2026.</p> <p>Whilst still at a very early stage, the focused consultation addressed Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency with Objective 1 seeking “To minimise the impact we are having on our changing climate by reducing carbon emissions across all sources, with a particular focus on transport, housing, industry and energy.” This includes the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire1 (PaZCO) aim to “achieve a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050 in Oxfordshire”. Additionally, WODC’s own Climate Change Strategy (2021 – 2025) commits WODC to a “working in partnership with Oxfordshire councils and partners to support the transition to ultra-low emission transport and active travel, a zero-carbon economy and clean energy supply”. Additionally, Objective 2 of the focused consultation seeks “To facilitate the roll out of clean, renewable energy at a range of different sites in suitable, appropriate locations across the District.” Again, PaZCO has highlighted the “need to increase local renewable electricity generation in response to an expected doubling of electricity demand due to the electrification of heating, transportation and high population growth”.</p> <p>The Council Plan (2023 – 2027) also “seeks to encourage renewable energy generation at appropriate sites in the District, improving local energy and economic resilience and</p>	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
		supporting the community benefits that this resilience will bring”.			
4.6.5	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>The Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was ‘made’ on the 23rd January 2023 and covers the period 2020-2031, to coincide with the expiry of the adopted WOLP. An area of approximately 10 ha of the project Order Limits within the Northern Site falls within the WNP designated area.</p> <p>The WNP states it “has a singular focus on the protection of green and open spaces within the plan area”. It has secured this protection through the designation of five ‘Local Green Spaces’” (Paragraph 1.4), including areas of allotments, water meadow, woodland and nature reserve. No Local Green Spaces are designated within the Project site boundary. Since there are no Local Green Spaces designated within the Project site boundary, there are no relevant policies of the WNP which are relevant to the Project.</p>	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed
4.6.6	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>The Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) was ‘made’ on 6th February 2020 and covers the period 2018-2031, again to coincide with the expiry of the adopted WOLP. An area of approximately 8 ha of the project Order Limits falls within the ENP designated area, which are currently cable route options.</p> <p>Whilst no policies specifically cover the cable route option areas, the Project site boundary is adjacent to the eastern boundary of a designated Local Green Space. Policy ENP12: Local Green Space designates LGS4: Hazeldene Close Open Space, an area of open central grassed area with young trees and orchard planting as a Local Green Space. Other relevant policies of the ENP are detailed in the appendices below.</p>	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed
4.6.7	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>Cassington Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>The Cassington Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) was ‘made’ on 26th June 2023 and covers the period 2021-2041, which will coincide with the expiry of the new Local Plan currently being prepared by WODC. An area of approximately 400ha falls within the CNP designated area. Relevant policies of the CNP are detailed in the table below.</p>	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed
4.6.8	Planning Supporting Statement	<p>Wootton by Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan Area for the parish of Wootton was designated on 14 July 2023.</p>	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed.

Ref	Relevant Application Document	Summary of Description of Matter	West Oxfordshire District Council Current Position	Applicant Current Position	Status
		Approximately 200 ha of the site Order Limits would fall within the Wootton Neighbourhood Plan Area. As of mid-2024, the Parish Council has been actively engaging with the community, and the Wootton neighbourhood Plan Survey was launched on 7th September 2024. At present, there are no policies to consider in relation to the proposed development.			
4.6.9	Planning Supporting Statement	Please see Appendix B	Discussions ongoing	Discussions ongoing	See Appendix B.

Appendix A

Record of Relevant Correspondence

	Form of Correspondence	Topics Discussed	Outcomes
Ecology			
14/03/2023	Meeting	Identified biodiversity and approach to Net Gain methodology as a key topic.	Nil.
19/03/2023	Meeting	Identified biodiversity as a key topic. Discussion on ecological and habitat improvements through Biodiversity Net Gain.	Nil.
3/05/2023	Meeting	Overview of ongoing surveys, designated sites and Biodiversity Net Gain.	Nil.
3/12/2024	Meeting	Protected species licensing.	Letters of no impediment to be sought with Natural England for relevant species.
1/08/2024	Meeting	Set out of project update including methodologies and surveys to date, bats, results and key receptors, emerging impacts, Biodiversity Net gain and timetable.	September meeting to discuss bat radio tracking results.
19/09/2024	Meeting	Set out project update including ongoing design and progress update, Statement of Common Ground, key survey results, Biodiversity Net Gain, ecology strategy and next steps.	Nil
11/07/25	Meeting	Minutes to be agreed by areas covered included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of all bat survey work including that from May 2025 and activity data analysed to date. • Overview of Change Request 2 submitted at D2. • Proposed 25m buffer locations on key bat flightlines plus discussion on location and extent of other buffers. • Provision of bat technical note including contents. • Scope of potential air quality assessment in respect of Oxford Meadows SAC. • Discussion on Local Impact Report Responses. • Discussion on proposed skylark mitigation. 	Nil

	Form of Correspondence	Topics Discussed	Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion on nightingale enhancements to OLEMP. <p>Discussion on monitoring programs and approval process.</p>	
Historic Environment			
July 2023	WODC input into Scoping Opinion	Various	n/a
February 2024	WODC response to PEIR	Various	n/a
February 2025	WODC response to DCO submission	Various	n/a
Agricultural Land Use and PRow			
November 2024	Online meeting via Microsoft Teams	Meeting with PRow Officer from OCC to discuss the proposed management of PRow within the Project site, including temporary and permanent diversions.	Responses received during the meeting were used to inform the assessment reported in ES Chapter 17 - Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way [APP-054] and measures included in the Outline PRow Management Strategy, which forms Annex B of the - Outline Code of Construction Practice - Part 1 [REP6-028].
Landscape and Visual Resources			
October / November 2022	Correspondences (by email) with all local authorities regarding the selection of Representative Viewpoints.	A detailed log was kept of the responses and any requested for additional/alternative viewpoints. Any changes were incorporated into the PEIR and subsequent ES chapter.	Progressed.
January 2023	Meeting held with OCC (including Landscape Officer) to discuss matters arising	Minutes of meeting issued and actioned where necessary.	Progressed.

	Form of Correspondence	Topics Discussed	Outcomes
	on Project, including Landscape		
June 2023	Submission of Scoping Report, including LVIA section outlining approach to the assessment, including methodology.	Comments received from the Scoping report are detailed within the LVIA [REP6-012] Table 8.5, with details of how they have been addressed.	Progressed.
September 2024	Meeting with local authority landscape officers to discuss LVIA specific matters.	Outcome of meeting actioned as part of the PEIR / ES	Progressed.
April 2023	Email	Consultation was sought via email to agree upon the proposed baseline sound survey and noise impact assessment methodologies.	Not agreed at this stage.
May 2024	Email	Consultation was sought via email to agree upon the proposed baseline sound survey and noise impact assessment methodologies.	No Response Received Agreed.
10 th June 2025	Online meeting with local authority landscape officers to discuss LVIA specific matters	Topics of specific discussion were focused around the OHAs Joint Local Impact Report submitted at Deadline 1. With a particular focus on the LVIA methodology and application of significance of effect.	A detailed response to the OHAs Joint LIR (and appended LUC report) would be responded to at Deadline 2. Agreement was reached on the LVIA methodology.
16th October 2025	Online meeting with local authority landscape officers to discuss LVIA specific matters	Topics of specific discussion were focused around the wording of the SoCG(s), issues arising from ISH2 and continued discussions on the LVIA methodology and application of significance of effect.	SoCG(s) have been updated in response to discussions had. Minutes of the meeting completed and issued.
Noise and Vibration			
April 2023	E-mail	Consultation was sought via email to agree upon the proposed baseline sound	No response was received.

	Form of Correspondence	Topics Discussed	Outcomes
		survey and noise impact assessment methodologies	
July 2024	E-mail	The proposed noise and vibration assessment methodology was issued to VoWHDC via email.	No response was received.
10 th March 2025	Virtual Meeting	<p>During the meeting the following items were discussed with the Planning Officer as the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) was on leave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreement of the Assessment - Justification of the baseline noise environment. - Assessment of the noise and tranquillity on the PROWs - 	The Planning Officer was not able to confirm the position as the EHO was absent. The baseline data set issued to WODC.
Planning Policy			
	Email	See Appendix B	See Appendix B

West Oxfordshire Policy – Compliance Tables

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 relevant planning policies (As submitted November 2024)

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
Policy OS1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	<p>Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise-taking into account whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development 	<p>Solar farms are generally considered to be sustainable forms of development. They produce renewable energy, help cut down harmful GHG emissions, will help generate employment and significantly enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the area. The Project should benefit from the presumption in favour this policy provides.</p>	<p>The proposed development does not accord with the development Plan as a whole.</p> <p>The proposed development conflicts with Policy OS1</p>	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	should be restricted.			
Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the right places	Development in the Green Belt is to comply with national Green Belt policies	<p>The Applicant firmly believes there are VSC which support the location of the Botley West solar farm in the Green Belt. Harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is outweighed by the benefits the project delivers. See the Applicant's VSC case at section 5 and Appendix 8 of this PSS.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.7 on NPS EN-1 states that the Secretary of State will take as a starting point that CNP Infrastructure will meet the VSC case.</p>	<p>The proposed development does not comply with the general principles of Policy OS2.</p> <p>The proposed development is not proportionate and appropriate in scale to its context, having regard to the cumulative impact of development in the locality.</p> <p>The proposed development does not form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and the character of the area;</p> <p>It is considered that the proposed development would harm the openness of the Green Belt thereby representing inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Harm to the Green Belt is not outweighed by VSC or other considerations.</p> <p>The proposed development Conflicts with Policy OS2</p>	Compliance not agreed
Policy OS3 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources	All development proposals will be required to show consideration of the	The Applicant has undertaken an assessment of the use of key resources in the construction of the	The proposed development conflicts with the	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	<p>efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making the most efficient use of land and buildings, whilst having regard to the character of the locality • minimising use of non-renewable resources, including land and energy, and maximising opportunities for travel by sustainable means • minimising their impact on the soil resource 	<p>Project (see ES Chapter 18 – Waste and Resources) and has made commitments to use secondary/recycled content materials where feasible. These materials will be identified in the detailed Site Resources and Waste Management Plan, which will be prepared in accordance with the Outline Site Resources and Waste Management Plan. The Outline Site Resources and Waste Management Plan forms part of the Outline CoCP [document reference 7.6.1] and is secured as a requirement of the DCO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant has sought to maximise the efficient use of land with the location of the solar panels and associated infrastructure (whilst minimising the footprint of the Project) • Measures will be included with in the detailed Construction Traffic Management Plans to encourage contactors to make use of sustainable transport modes were possible • The Applicant will seek to minimise impacts on soil resources through the implementation of measures set out in the Outline Soil Management Plan (which forms part of the Outline CoCP [document reference 7.6.1]) and is secured as requirement of the DCO. 	<p>principles of Policy OS3.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposed development fails to have regard to the character of the area and would impact on soil resources.</p> <p>The proposed development conflicts with Policy OS3</p>	
Policy OS4 – High Quality Design	New development in West Oxfordshire must deliver high-quality, inclusive and sustainable design that respects local historic, architectural and landscape character, enhances the public realm, avoids adverse	The Applicant has carefully considered and assessed the relationship of the project design with features of historic, landscape and amenity importance. The overall approach to design matters are set out in the outline Layout & Design document [REP6-038] and	The proposed development conflicts with Policy OS4	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	impacts on neighbouring land uses, and is resilient to climate change. Proposals should conserve and enhance heritage and environmental assets, improve local green infrastructure and biodiversity, and provide appropriate, safe, and accessible open space.	the design rationale provided in response to ExA Q2.1.1 [REP4-037] specifically focusing on the WODC Design Guide.		
Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport	<p>Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised, due to opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, particularly where this would help to reduce traffic congestion on the routes around Oxford and the Air Quality Management Areas at Witney and Chipping Norton.</p> <p>Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or in combination with other proposals will be required to include a Transport Assessment (TA), and a travel plan, in accordance with County Council requirements.</p>	The Applicant has environmentally assessed the environmental effects of traffic associated with the Project. It has also produced an Outline Traffic Management Plan as part of its Outline Code of Construction management Plan [CR2-047] . The Project is in substantial accordance with this policy.	The proposed development complies with Policy T1	Compliance agreed
Policy T2 – Highway	All development will be required to demonstrate safe	The Applicant has environmentally assessed the environmental effects of	The proposed development	Compliance agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
Improvement Schemes	access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network. Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic, shall be supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and a Travel Plan. Where necessary to mitigate the impact of development and support planned growth, contributions will be sought from new development towards new and/or enhanced highway infrastructure either directly as part of the development or in the form of an appropriate financial contribution.	traffic associated with the Project. It has also produced an Outline Traffic Management Plan as part of its Outline Code of Construction management Plan [CR2-047] . The Project is in substantial accordance with this policy.	complies with Policy T2	
Policy T3 – Public Transport Walking and Cycling	All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Where opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are more limited, other measures will be sought to help reduce car use as appropriate (e.g. measures to promote home working or the opportunity for linked trips e.g. through mixed-use development). New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced	ES Volume 1, Chapter 12 Traffic and Transport [REP5-016] sets out the available public transport and the existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure within the traffic and transport study area, highlighting the sustainable transport options for construction staff. Travel plan measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport have been included as a measure within the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) which forms Annex A of the Outline Code of Construction Practice Part 1 [REP6-028] and is secured at Schedule 13 of the Development Consent Order [REP6-004] .	The proposed development complies with Policy T3	Compliance agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles with particular regard to be given to safe and convenient routes to school. Development that fails to make adequate provision of measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport will not be favourably considered.			
Policy EH1 – Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty, landscape and countryside, including wildlife and heritage, including proposals which would affect the setting of the AONB.	The Project site does not fall within or adjacent to the Cotswold AONB (national landscape). The low height of the Project and distance from the national landscape will not give rise to issues of setting, The Project therefore complies with Policy EH1.	The project complies with Policy EH1	Compliance agreed
Policy EH2 – Landscape Character	West Oxfordshire's natural environment will be conserved and enhanced.	The Project will affect landscape character during operation. The scale of the Project, necessary to meet the urgent need for renewable energy generation, and to address the climate emergency declared within West Oxfordshire, will adversely character, but that adverse effect will be limited, temporary and overtime (5 years onwards) will be offset by the significant new landscaping that will complement the existing landscape structure in the area. For most of the operational life of the Project, after new landscaping has become established, the Applicant considers landscape character will be enhanced. On decommissioning the	<p>The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH2</p> <p>The proposed development will not conserve and enhance the quality, character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's natural environment, including its landscape, cultural and historic value, tranquillity, geology, countryside, soil and biodiversity.</p>	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
		<p>character will be conserved and significantly enhanced with an important and valuable legacy left for the benefit of the area.</p> <p>On balance the Project is considered to be substantially in compliance with Policy EH2.</p>		
Policy EH3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity	The biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity and minimise impacts on geodiversity.	<p>The Project represents the most significant opportunity within the district to secure BNG, over a significant area of land. It is unique in that respect. The Defra Statutory BNG Metric has been used to demonstrate net gain. It is intended that the Project will have a gain of at least 70% Habitat BNG. Full details are set out in Appendix 9.13. The oLEMP [REP6-034] will act as a mechanism to record and monitor ecological data on created, or evolving habitats, during the operation of the Project. The dual use proposed by the Applicant on the site, a critical renewable energy project, with a retained agricultural use beneath, managed to provide significant BNG, therefore complies with Policy EH13.</p>	<p>The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH3</p> <p>Notwithstanding the substantial opportunity for biodiversity net gain, there remain concerns about the impact on protected species across the project area.</p>	Compliance not agreed
Policy EH4 – Public realm and green infrastructure	The existing areas of public space and green infrastructure of West Oxfordshire will be protected and enhanced for their multi-functional role, including their biodiversity, recreational, accessibility, health and landscape value and for the contribution they make towards combating climate change.	<p>See Applicant response to Policy EH3.</p> <p>In addition, the Project will deliver further benefits including increased public access, educational provision, and significant landscape enhancements.</p> <p>The Project complies with Policy EH4.</p>	The project complies with Policy EH4	Compliance agreed
Policy EH5 – Sport, recreation	New development should not result in the loss of open space, sports and recreational	This policy is geared towards protection of existing usable areas of public open space, recreational areas, not farmland on which the	The proposed development complies with Policy EH5	Compliance agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
and children's play	buildings and land unless up to date assessment shows the asset is surplus to requirements or the need for and benefits of the alternative land use clearly outweigh the loss and equivalent replacement provision is made. Where appropriate, development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary improvements to open space, sports and recreational buildings and land.	majority of the development is sited. Notwithstanding, the Project contributes towards new areas of recreational paths and cycleways and is therefore not in conflict with this policy.		
Policy EH6 – Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development (except wind turbines)	<p>In principle, renewable and low-carbon energy developments, especially run-of-river hydropower and the use of biomass will be supported.</p> <p>Any proposals for a solar farm involving best and most versatile agricultural land would need to be justified by the most compelling evidence which demonstrates why poorer quality land has not been used in preference to best and most versatile agricultural land.</p>	<p>As the project is a renewable energy development, the Applicant presumes support in principle from West Oxfordshire District Council,</p> <p>In terms of BMV, the Project will lead to a small loss of BMV land (refer to Chapter 17 in the ES – a permanent loss of approx. 5.5ha). Approximately 3.8ha of that loss relates to the positioning of the NGET substation. This is sited to be close to the adjacent 400kV lines and adjacent to the Applicant main substation. No better alternative siting could be established by the Applicant within the DCO Order Limits.</p> <p>The overall loss of BMV land is not considered to be significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>The Applicant is of the view that the Project is substantially in compliance with Policy EH6.</p>	<p>The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH6.</p> <p>It is considered that that the impact of the proposed development on landscape, biodiversity, historic environment, agricultural land, residential amenity, cumulative and visual impacts have not been satisfactorily addressed.</p>	Compliance not agreed
Policy EH7 – Flood Risk	Flood risk will be managed using the sequential, risk-based approach, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, of	Flood risk is addressed within Chapter 10 of the ES (ref Table 10.3). A flood Risk assessment has been undertaken amongst other assessments. No adverse effects are predicted during	The proposed development complies with Policy EH7	Compliance agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	avoiding flood risk to people and property where possible and managing any residual risk (taking account of the impacts of climate change).	construction, operation or the decommissioning phases of the Project. Additional mitigation measures are proposed north of Cassington (creation of water body and bunding and ditch widening) to help alleviate the incidence of flooding that the village currently experiences. It is considered that the Project complies with Policy EH7.		
Policy EH8 – Environmental Protection	Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to sources of pollution or risk to safety, will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise pollution and risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity.	Pollution risk has been assessed and no significant adverse effects have been identified. The Project therefore complies with Policy EH8.	The proposed development complies with Policy EH8	Compliance agreed
Policy EH9 – Historic Environment	All development proposals should conserve and/ or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment, including the significance of the District's heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation, in accordance with national legislation, policy and guidance for the historic environment.	Conserving and enhancing of heritage assets, including their settings, has been achieved through the design of the Project (Chapter 7, Table 7.3 and Section 7.8). No significant adverse effects are predicted. The Project complies with Policy EH9.	It is considered that the proposed development will be harmful to the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH9	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
Policy EH10 – Conservation Areas	<p>Proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area will be permitted where it can be shown to conserve or enhance the special interest, character, appearance and setting, specifically provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development conserves or enhances the special historic or architectural interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area. the development conserves or enhances the setting of the Conservation Area and is not detrimental to views within, into or out of the Area; 	<p>Conserving and enhancing of Conservation Areas, including their settings, has been achieved through the design of the Project (Chapter 7, Table 7.3 and Section 7.8).</p> <p>No significant adverse effects are predicted.</p> <p>The Project complies with Policy EH10.</p>	<p>It is considered that the location, form, scale, massing, density, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the proposed development is harmful to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and their settings within the project area.</p> <p>The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH10</p>	Compliance not agreed
Policy EH11 – Listed Buildings	<p>Proposals affecting listed buildings and their settings will be permitted where the historic interest of the building is conserved or enhanced, the curtilage is respected and its special interest is retained.</p>	<p>Conserving and enhancing of listed buildings, including their settings, has been achieved through the design of the Project.</p> <p>No significant adverse effects are predicted.</p> <p>The Project complies with Policy EH11.</p>	<p>It is considered that the proposed development will affect the settings of listed buildings throughout the project area, particularly in terms of their</p>	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
			landscape setting.	
			The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH11	
Policy EH13 – Historic Landscape Character	In determining applications that affect the historic character of the landscape or townscape, particular attention will be paid to, <i>inter alia</i> , age, distinctiveness, rarity, sensitivity and capacity of a historic landscape, the extent to which key historic features resonant of the area's character and the degree to which the form and layout of the development will respect and build on the pre-existing historic character and the degree to which the development conserves or enhances the special historic character of its surrounding.	<p>The assessment of the likely impacts and effects on the overall historic landscape is set out in Chapter 10 of the ES. No significant effects are predicted.</p> <p>The Project complies with Policy EH13.</p>	<p>It is considered that the form, scale, massing, density, layout, landscaping and external appearance of the proposed development will be harmful to the historic character of the landscape.</p> <p>The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH13</p>	Compliance not agreed
Policy EH14 – Registered historic Parks and Gardens	Development proposals must conserve or enhance special features and ensure development does not detract from the special interest of the asset.	<p>Chapter 7 and Appendix 7.5 of the ES assesses the effects upon Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. No significant adverse effects are predicted.</p> <p>In planning policy terms, the effects predicted are not considered to be in conflict with Policy EH14.</p>	The proposed development complies with Policy EH14	Compliance agreed
Policy EH15 – Scheduled Monuments and other nationally important	Proposals for development that would affect, directly or indirectly, the significance of Scheduled Monuments or non-	Assessment of effects upon Scheduled Ancient Monuments is set out in Chapter 7, Table 7.15 and in Appendix 7.5. The detailed assessment found that the construction, operation and	The proposed development conflicts with Policy EH15	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
archaeological remains	scheduled archaeological remains of demonstrably equal significance will be permitted where the proposals would conserve or enhance the significance of the Monument or remains.	<p>maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project would result in effects of minor adverse significance in respect of three Scheduled Monuments. In all cases the effect would be long-term, not significant in EIA terms and fully reversible.</p> <p>In planning policy terms, the effects predicted are not considered to be in conflict with Policy EH15.</p>		
Policy EH16 – Non-designated heritage assets	When considering proposals that would affect, directly or indirectly, non-listed buildings, non-scheduled, non-nationally important archaeological remains or non-Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, as such assets are also irreplaceable, the presumption will be in favour of the avoidance of harm or loss.	<p>Chapter 7 and Appendix 7.4 of the ES assesses the effects upon non-designated heritage assets. No significant adverse effects are predicted.</p> <p>In planning policy terms, the effects predicted are not considered to be in conflict with Policy EH16.</p>	The proposed development complies with Policy EH16	Compliance agreed
Policy EW9 – Blenheim World Heritage Site	The exceptional cultural significance (Outstanding Universal Value) of the Blenheim World Heritage Site will be protected, promoted and conserved for current and future generations.	<p>Chapter 7 sets out the assessment of effects upon The Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site.</p> <p>A separate Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been undertaken for the Blenheim Palace WHS, in accordance with the appropriate guidance produced on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). This is presented as Volume 3, Appendix 7.4: Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site – Heritage Impact Assessment of the ES.</p> <p>The HIA identified that the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project would result in a minor negative impact on one of the seven defined attributes which contribute</p>	The proposed development conflicts with Policy EW9	Compliance not agreed

Policy	Brief Description	Applicant Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
		towards the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS. However, this was not enough to represent harm to the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. The Applicant does not believe there to be a conflict with Policy EW9.		

Eynsham Neighbourhood Development Plan relevant policies (As submitted November 2024)

Policy	Description	Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
Policy ENP4 – Green Infrastructure – The Setting for New Developments	New developments should integrate all aspects of design, connectivity and the natural environment. Consideration should be given to the setting of new development and the relationship between village and countryside.	The Applicant has adopted key layout and design principles themselves designed to avoid adverse effects upon sensitive receptors, and to enhance landscape, ecology and biodiversity (see Layout and Design Principles Document [REP6-038] . and the Mitigation Measures and Commitments Schedule ref Volume 3, Appendix 6.1 [REP4-014] . Where relevant these measures are secured through the management plans and Requirements within the DCO. As a result the Project complies with Policy ENP4.	The proposed development conflicts with Policy ENP4	Compliance not agreed
Policy ENP4(A) – Enhancing Biodiversity	In order to contribute to the achievement of increased biodiversity within the ENP Area proposals for both residential and non-residential development should where appropriate, <i>inter alia</i> , including a biodiversity action plan demonstrating how bio-diversity net gain will be achieved and seek	The Project presents a unique opportunity for the planning authority to secure significant BNG. This will be achieved by retaining an agricultural use beneath the solar arrays and on other undeveloped land, and by managing it in a way to deliver significant BNG. The Defra Statutory BNG Metric has been used to demonstrate net gain. It is intended that the Project will have a gain of at least 70% Habitat BNG. Full details are set out in Appendix 9.13. [REP6-020] The oLEMP	The proposed development is compliant with Policy ENP4(A)	Compliance agreed

Policy	Description	Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	to protect 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land unless demonstrably impractical.	[REP6-034] will act as a mechanism to record and monitor ecological data on created, or evolving habitats, during the operation of the Project. The Project complies with Policy ENP4(A).		
Policy ENP5 Sustainability – Climate Change	Particular support will be given for proposals that help meet the intentions of the Climate Change Act 2008 including development that makes the most efficient use of the land and materials and maximises the opportunities for the use of renewable and low-carbon forms of energy in accordance with WOLP Policy EH4.	Climate Change effects are set out within Chapter 14 of the ES. Significant beneficial effects from the Botley West Solar Farm are predicted. The Applicant considers the Project complies with the NPPF and represents a unique opportunity to contribute at scale to the resolution of the Climate Change Emergency declared by the host authorities.	The proposed development complies with Policy ENP5	Compliance agreed

Cassington Neighbourhood Development Plan relevant policies (As submitted November 2024)

Policy	Description	Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
Policy CAS1 - Cassington Nature Recovery Network	Development proposals that affect the Network must maintain and improve the functionality of the Network, including delivering at least 10% net gain to general biodiversity assets, in the design of their layouts and landscaping schemes.	Throughout the Project site, the Defra Statutory BNG Metric has been used to demonstrate net gain. It is intended that the Project will have a gain of at least 70% Habitat BNG. Full details are set out in Appendix 9.13. The oLEMP [REP6-034] will act as a mechanism to record and monitor ecological data on created, or evolving habitats, during the operation of the Project.	The proposed development complies with Policy CAS1	Compliance agreed
Policy CAS2 – Active Travel	a. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Active and Sustainable	The relevant parts of the Active and Sustainable Travel Network are PRow. The Applicant has aimed to avoid impacts on the PRow network through project	The proposed development complies with Policy CAS2	Compliance agreed

Policy	Description	Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	<p>Travel Network for the purpose of supporting active travel in the Parish.</p> <p>b. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should sustain, and where practicable, enhance the multifunctionality of the Network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.</p> <p>c. Proposals that will harm the functioning or connectivity of the Network will not be supported. Proposals which fragment the routes will be resisted, unless this can be replaced in a way that improves the overall Network.</p> <p>d. Development proposals that would make an appropriate contribution to the improvement and/or extension of the network will be supported.</p>	<p>design and trenchless techniques, preventing the need for stopping up or diversion of routes. Where avoidance is not possible, management measures are proposed in the Outline PRow Management Strategy (Annex B of the Outline Code of Construction Practice [REP6-028]), secured under Requirement 11 of the Draft DCO [TBC] such that the Project will not harm the functioning or connectivity of the Network or fragment any routes.</p> <p>The Applicant is in discussions with OCC regarding a contribution to the improvement and extension of the PRow network.</p>		
Policy CAS3 – Dark Skies	Development proposals that require the installation of external lighting should be	The Project will require lighting in targeted areas for security reasons. The measures implemented will be agreed in the oOMP [REP6-032] and will avoid or	The proposed development complies with Policy CAS3	Compliance agreed

Policy	Description	Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	designed to minimise the occurrence of light pollution, with energy-efficient forms of lighting expected, which reduce light scatter and comply with the Institute of Lighting Professional guidelines for rural areas. Proposals for all development will be expected to demonstrate how it is intended to prevent light pollution.	<p>minimise the potential for light pollution.</p> <p>The Project complies with Policy CAS3.</p>		
Policy CAS4 – Cassington Conservation Area	Development proposals should sustain and enhance the historic environment, particularly the special architectural and historic significance of the designated Cassington Conservation Area and its setting.	<p>Chapter 7 of the ES considers impacts on heritage assets. No adverse effects are predicted upon the Cassington Conservation Area or its setting.</p> <p>There is no conflict with Policy CAS4.</p>	The proposed development conflicts with policy CAS4	Compliance not agreed
Policy CAS7 – Local services and community facilities	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following community facilities, as shown on the Policies Map</p> <p>Development proposals which would affect the use of the identified community facilities of the policy, or which would significantly undermine their quality, will be resisted unless</p>	<p>The Project will not adversely effect community facilities. The Project will increase the number and location of recreational paths and cycleways.</p> <p>The Project is not in conflict with this policy.</p>	The proposed development complies with Policy CAS7	Compliance agreed

Policy	Description	Comment	Planning Authority Comment	Status
	<p>suitable alternative provision is made. The provisions of Policies E5 (Local Services and Community Facilities) and EH5 (Sport, recreation and children's play) of the WOLP will continue to apply.</p> <p>Proposals to change the use of part of a community, open space, sport or recreation facility that is surplus to requirements will be resisted unless it can be clearly evidenced that the proposal will not undermine the overall viability and importance of the community, open space, sport or recreation facility concerned.</p>			
Appendix A – The Cassington Green Infrastructure Plan	To identify the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible greenspace and rights of way and to plan new features that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.	The proposal is to create new permissive paths, and improve access to the open countryside, in the Green Belt.	The proposed development complies with the Cassington Green Infrastructure Plan.	Compliance agreed