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From: Grizelda Graham [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 June 2026 03:00
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: My comments on the section on site selection by PVDP

Categories: SoS Consultation 2 Response

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Dear Planning Inspectorate

There is no doubt that renewable energy is of the utmost importance in protecting life on Earth from the ravages of climate change. However, the ways in which renewable energy is generated should be optimised.

I note that site selection by PVDP was dependent both on the feasibility of connecting to the grid and on identifying suitable local land on which to erect panels.

On grounds of sustainability, their land selection is most unsuitable for the following reasons:

1. Shade cast by the panels will inevitably reduce sunlight reaching the vegetation beneath them. This would be expected to reduce fixation of carbon, and also to reduce the production of oxygen by plants. Reportedly, Botley West would be the largest solar farm in Europe, and the significance of these effects would be proportional to the size of the land area covered by the panels.
2. Life on Earth depends on plants in many ways, including the regulation of carbon dioxide, and the production and replenishment of the oxygen which is constantly consumed from the atmosphere. We also depend on plants for all our nutrition, whether vegetarian or omnivorous, because animals ultimately feed on plants.
3. Thus, covering a very large area of productive agricultural land with panels will have an adverse effect on sustainability because it will limit local food production and it would be expected to make the land less efficient in trapping carbon and producing oxygen.
4. Less easy to quantify would be the loss of beautiful rural surroundings accessed by public rights of way, currently enhancing the health and wellbeing of the walkers who enjoy these surroundings so much.
5. It has been reported that PVDP will pay three times the rate of agricultural rent to lease the land, clearly adding to the cost of generating electricity, a cost which will surely be passed on to customers?
6. So are there alternative sites where far less environmental damage would be caused by panels, perhaps at a more competitive rent? Panels which shade tarmac will not impair plant metabolism, and might actually protect the tarmac from melting in hot weather. Could the environmental footprint be reduced by arranging the panels differently?
7. State-owned property could potentially be leased to a private company with conditions set on the level of profit exacted from consumers? If panels were to be erected on stands which raised them far enough above the ground for cars to drive underneath, all the large Park and Ride car parks around Oxford could be covered in South-facing panels - arranged in a similar way to those covering fields, but higher above the ground. The same possibility might apply to railway station car parks? These car parks already have security fencing and CCTV, thus avoiding the massive additional security costs associated with using agricultural land. They also have electrical connections which might possibly assist in forming electrical conduits from the panels to the grid?

8. In South Korea, cycle tracks are roofed by solar panels which shade the cyclists as well as generating electricity. Oxford has several substantial cycle tracks, for example beside the Marston Ferry Road, where such a plan could be considered?

9. Could the solar panel footprint be reduced so less land area is covered in panels? Why not arrange panels in vertical tiers (similar, but on a different scale, to how a tree arranges its leaves to catch the sun) alongside the south and west facing aspects of tall buildings such as sports stadiums, leisure centres, and multi-storey car parks?

10. In summary, PVDP has only considered productive agricultural land in proximity to possible grid access, a recipe for causing maximum environmental degradation for this project. Instead, they should surely look first for sites which have already been degraded, no longer support plant life, and for this reason are not sites of natural beauty. Oxford has five large Park and Ride car parks covering about 130 acres - not much compared with the more than 3,000 acres in PVDP's proposal, but any sparing of productive agricultural land would help to mitigate the environmental damage it will cause,

Yours faithfully
Grizelda Graham

Sent from my iPhone