

Re: The plans for Botley West Solar Farm

Date: July 6th 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

I am incredibly frustrated with this whole affair and especially with the arrogance of the developer, PVDP and the main land owner, Blenheim Estates. This whole matter should never have gotten to this end point of greyness and weakness of decision making on the part of the Secretary of State. It is most certain from the attitude taken by the examiners that this should never have been presented to them in the first place. It has become extremely obvious that the examiners recommended to the SoS, that the plan be rejected, Botley West Solar Farm was always a non-starter from the outset. The community was never asked if it wanted such a travesty on its doorstep and from where I stand, we do not need it anyhow as we have more than adequate-plus energy making sources for our country in the pipeline at the present and indeed in waiting (some for very long periods) to get connection to the National Grid.

With my sense of frustration and anger said, **there are more obvious reasons why this must be rejected**. Just for starters, they are: Landscape and Visual impact, Heritage, Airport safety, flood risk, tree damage, loss of Green Belt good agricultural land and of wildlife habitats.

1. Unnecessary Community Growing Plots in Hanborough

Re: Question 50 The Applicant is requested to provide an update on the interest in community food growing, further to [REP5-005].

The developer is still proposing to use 30hectares of land around Church Hanborough (CH), Long Hanborough and Bladon for what they misleadingly call "Community Food Growing". The fields in my parish of Hanborough are within the CH Conservation Area and such use would be detrimental to this status. There would be a huge negative impact on the setting of heritage assets within it (e.g. St Peter & St Paul Church) which would arise from filling the conservation field with paraphernalia associated with food growing. The residents of CH objected almost unanimously to the fields being used for the said purpose following a local survey on the matter. There is no gain for the residents of CH or the parish of Hanborough as a whole from this proposal. West Oxfordshire District Council have already raised concerns about such usage. The developer claims that there is "easy and safe access" to these fields. Locals know this is not true.

The developer states that they have had discussions (with no real binding agreements in place!) with third party organisations e.g. Cherwell Collective and Plot 4 to use this land, neither of which are local to Hanborough. PVDP have also been in contact with *OxFarmtoFork initiative* who sell their produce directly to the Oxford

Colleges. They evidently consider these growers a better bet because they will operate on a larger scale than Cherwell Collective etc. With a touch of sarcasm on my part, they even try to make out that they are “so green in operation” by stating that they will use electric vehicles to deliver food to Oxford colleges.

They additionally say they will work with Roots, a subscription allotment company. The residents of CH have stated that they do not require allotments. PVDP admit that they have not consulted Hanborough Parish Council or the local residents. Do any of these organisations have any rights to the land in the event of the BWSF scheme failing and if so to whom will their tenancy be assigned?

2. Substation and more Alternative Sites Considered

The National Grid (NGET) is now predicting a grid connection date in the last quarter of 2031. However, PVDP are still claiming a 2029 connection. NGET must apply and receive planning permission from the VHDC first before they can proceed which will involve a public consultation (i.e. more time once again) and there is still no decision on where it will be sited. PVDP have suddenly written a really surprising amount about their search for sites and how and why they chose this one. None of this information was offered during the Examination. Hence, I wonder why it is only now being presented?

3. Heritage

Living in Long Hanborough on the very doorstep of Blenheim, I have to really wonder at the thinking of the trustees and PVDP about how they really thought they could get away with this not affecting the setting of the palace, the grounds and it's surrounds in terms of heritage. It certainly does affect the setting. The old duke and Winston Churchill must be turning in their graves. PVDP continue to disagree with ICOMOS and Historic England on “setting issues”.

In Conclusion:

I wholly object to this and believe the whole plan needs to be thrown back to where it came from.

Dr Mike Franklin

A Long Hanborough resident.