

[REDACTED]

From: George Smith [REDACTED] >
Sent: 15 July 2026 19:08
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Comments on responses of Photovoltaic Development Partners (PVDP) to Objections Raised to Botley West Solar Farm Proposal

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]

Reference: My registration number [REDACTED] My previous submissions [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

The lengthy and detailed response by PVDP to the matters raised by the Planning Inspectors fails to address the fundamental (and fatal) weaknesses of their case. Specifically:

- (i) For the UK, food security is as important as energy security. This proposed development would occupy 1000 hectares (roughly 4 square miles) of productive agricultural land, which is unacceptable. [I also note that the full set of soil surveys that is required has still not been carried out - see p.87 of the pVDP response]
- (ii) The environmental and visual impact on the nearby World Heritage site of the Blenheim Estate is also unacceptable.
- (iii) The environmental impact on the residents of neighbouring villages, on St Peter's church in Church Hanborough, and on local leisure and recreational activities is also unacceptable.
- (iv) The benefits of the proposed scheme have been grossly overstated. Repeatedly, at every stage of this proposal the development is said to be rated at "840 MW" [e.g. on pp. 85, 144, 145 and Appendix A of the present PVDP submission document]. However, my understanding is that this figure actually refers to the maximum operating capacity of the electrical engineering infrastructure of the proposed farm. For safety and security reasons, such plants would not normally be operated at, or very close to, their maximum capability. More importantly, this figure ignores the intermittency of the installation. There is no output during the hours of darkness, restricted output when the sun is low in the sky or the sky is overcast, and less output in winter than in the summer months. When averaged over 24 hours per day and 365 days of the year, the average power delivered by this farm would be nearer to 140 MW (not much more than the output of one large, modern gas turbine which could be accommodated within the area of a few football pitches!).
- (v) As far as I can tell, there is no plan to mitigate the intermittency of output of this farm by incorporating a suitably large-scale energy storage facility.
- (vi) Some storage would be feasible if the plant were connected to the Grid via Cowley, but the proposed connection via Farmoor rules this out.

In summary, this is the wrong project, in the wrong place, and at the wrong time. It should be completely rejected.

George Smith (Professor, FRS, C.Phys., C.Eng.).

