

Planning Inspectorate Inquiry.

Application by Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) on behalf of SolarFive Ltd for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Botley West Solar Farm project.

Submission for October 4th 2026 deadline.

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New, contradictory evidence on the applicant's collaboration with Exeter College's High-Performance Computer and Data Centre proposal¹.

The box below is copied from this IP's previous submission for the 4th October 2026 PINS deadline, commenting on the revelation in the applicant's covering letter for its 16th July 2026 submissions (**C1-094**) of '*advanced negotiations with Exeter College, Oxford*', over the latter's plan for a new innovation quarter involving, *inter alia*, a High-Performance Computer and Data Centre at the Frieze Farm site near Kidlington, Oxford. The quote in italics states quite clearly that the applicant's project (i.e. BWSF) will supply '*all of Frieze Farm's electricity*'.

New developments in the applicant's plan

At best mentioned only briefly in passing during the Examination phase of BWSF, it now appears that the applicant is negotiating with Exeter College Oxford to supply renewable electricity to the College's proposed innovation quarter (EXOq) based on a College-owned green belt site near Kidlington.

This was formally revealed for the very first time in the applicant's 16th July cover letter to PINS (**C1-094**) as follows:

*"PVDP is also in advanced negotiations with Exeter College, Oxford, to supply renewable energy to their 100MW Frieze Farm Data Centre development. The site is 2 km from the project boundary and will comprise a data centre, laboratories, offices and a district heating scheme for neighbouring Kidlington. Exeter College has submitted a planning application to Cherwell DC. The plan is for the project to use its solar generation and connection at Farmoor substation to supply all of Frieze Farm's electricity."*¹

The implications of this proposal for BWSF are considerable, because data centres and High Performance Computers (HPCs) are notoriously 'energy-hungry'.

Box 1. From this IP's earlier contribution for the 4th October PINS deadline.

This IP's previous submission calculated that approximately half of the entire annual output of an 1100MWp BWSF installation would be required to support a 62MWe² High-Performance Computer and Data Centre (the estimated size of the installation from its areal footprint in comparison with other large UK data centres). This would in turn reduce the amount of renewable electricity available for other uses by an amount equal to the annual electricity needs of over 143,000 homes, or about half of Oxfordshire's entire household number (288,108 in the ONS 2021 census³).

¹ This contribution is an Addendum to a previous contribution by this IP and includes relevant evidence that has come to light since its submission.

² MWp refers to the installation size, determined by the total number of installed solar panels, and MWe refers to the electricity output from the installation. MWe is always less than MWp (considerably less so for solar installations). MWe also refers to the electricity requirements of Exeter College's Computer and data Centre.

³[https://\[REDACTED\]](https://[REDACTED])

This collaboration between the applicant and Exeter College was subsequently revealed in several local newspapers that featured campaigners' concerns about this new development (the loss to the computer centre of a large percentage of BWSF's electrical output), and the applicant's response to such concerns, for example as shown in the box below (from the Oxford Mail, 1st October 2026⁴):

Oxford Mail
News Sport Oxford Utd What's On Crime Business Climate Awards Notices e-Editions
News Your Area Crime Opinion

Major solar farm set to power Oxford University data centre



A major solar farm is set to power an Oxford University data centre, if an agreement is reached, with the developer pledging it will account for no more than five per cent of its energy output.

Photovolt has said that any electricity supplied from Botley West to Frieze Farm remains subject to a commercial agreement and would otherwise be drawn from the grid.

A spokesperson for the developer said: "Any electricity that may be supplied directly to Frieze Farm remains subject to commercial agreement and would, in any event, account for no more than 5 per cent of the project's generation.

"That electricity would otherwise be drawn from the grid, so it would not reduce the overall amount of power available to other users."

Box 2. Headline and opening paragraphs of an Oxford Mail article, 1st October 2026.

The applicant has thus veered from stating to the SoS on 16th July that it plans to supply 100% of Exeter's electricity requirements, inevitably involving more than half its total electrical output, to stating to the general public, via newspaper articles, that it will supply '*no more than 5%*' of the project's generation.

Both claims made by the applicant cannot simultaneously be correct, and one wonders if either is.

This seems to be yet another example of the applicant saying one thing to one constituency and something quite different to another.

As others have concluded, this continually revised application has so many internal contradictions, omissions of fact and unjustified claims that it should be rejected outright in its current form.

Anything other than outright rejection following the long, drawn-out saga of the applicant's proposal makes a mockery not just of the public consultation phase of NSIP applications but also of the entire NSIP process itself.

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