

Planning and Development

David Peckford, Assistant Director – Planning and Development



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

The Planning Inspectorate By e-mail to:

BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

39 Castle Quay,
Banbury,
Oxfordshire
OX16 5FD

www.cherwell.gov.uk

Please ask for: **Suzanne Taylor**
Email: **suzanne.taylor@cherwell-dc.gov.uk**

Direct Dial: **01295221656**
Your Ref: **EN010147**

DATE TO BE ADDED 2025

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/ Madam

LOCAL IMPACT REPORT / WRITTEN REPRESENTATION

Project: Botley West Solar Farm
Applicant's Name: Photovolt Development Partners and SolarFive Ltd
Registration ID number: 20055053
Our ref: 22/03407/DCO

This letter is Cherwell District Council's (CDC) individual **Local Impact Report/Written Representation** and provides our opinion on the acceptability of the proposals. A separate, joint Local Impact Report (LIR) will also be submitted in liaison with the other host Local Authorities (i.e. West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of the White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council). This LIR is not intended to repeat the information and assessments provided in the joint LIR but is to offer Cherwell's individual view on the application as agreed by its Planning Committee.

Cherwell District Council has **NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE SUBJECT TO a robust assessment of impacts, the provision of adequate mitigation measures and the amendment of the site area to exclude part of the Central Site.**

In the event that these matters are not adequately addressed Cherwell District Council would OBJECT to the application.

PRINCIPLE

CDC has declared a climate emergency and is committed to tackling climate change. The Council accepts that there is a compelling need, as a matter of principle, to increase renewable energy generation and consumption to support the Government's national agenda to reach net zero carbon by 2050.

Therefore, the Council does not raise objection to the principle of large-scale solar photovoltaic generation developments within the District subject to:

- (i) the appropriate siting of such schemes,
- (ii) the provision of appropriate mitigation to deal with any significantly harmful impacts that would arise, and
- (iii) such mitigation being tailored specifically and sensitively to matters of location and related context.

This is reflected in policy ESD5 of the CLP which states that renewable energy developments will be supported provided they do not have a significantly adverse impact, including cumulatively, on:

- Landscape and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species, and Conservation Target Areas;
- Visual impacts on local landscapes;
- The historic environment including designated and non-designated assets and their settings;
- The Green Belt, particularly visual impacts on openness;
- Aviation activities;
- Highways and access issues, and
- Residential amenity.

The acceptability of the proposal is therefore intrinsically linked with the impacts of the development.

Whilst CDC acknowledges that the proposed development would make a positive contribution to reducing carbon emissions over its proposed life span, there will be adverse effects that need to be balanced against the benefits. In order to fairly weigh up the planning balance, CDC consider that it is crucial to independently assess the robustness of the assertion that 840MW per annum (enough to power 330,000 homes) can be achieved. The amount of renewable energy that can be produced should be reflected in the weight that is applied to this key benefit.

CDC respectfully requests that the examining authority and the Secretary of State are completely satisfied that the evidence and technical reviews that underpin the various topics in the environmental statement are sufficiently robust to enable an accurate assessment of the relevant impacts prior to making a recommendation or deciding whether to issue the Development Consent Order (DCO).

Similarly, CDC respectfully requests that the examining authority and SoS ensure that adequate mitigation measures can be secured to ameliorate or reduce harmful impacts.

REMOVAL OF PART OF THE CENTRAL SITE FROM THE DCO.

CDC objects to the erection of solar panels and associated equipment on part of the Central Site; namely the field south of London-Oxford Airport and east of the A44. The reasons for this are set out in detail in the joint LIR but, in summary, the development of this parcel of land would result in:

- Unrestricted sprawl of a large urban area into the Green Belt in conflict with the NPPF;
- The coalescence of Kidlington and Begbroke in conflict with Policy ESD14 of CLP and saved Policy C15 of the CLP 1996;
- Harm to aviation activities associated with London-Oxford Airport (namely the need to preserve emergency landing areas in the event of engine failure after take-off) in conflict with Policy ESD5 of the CLP; AND
- The loss of land identified as Grade 2 quality agricultural land.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the application and for your time in considering this representation. CDC looks forward to continuing to engage positively with the examination of BWSF project and working with applicants to progress this scheme.

Yours faithfully

David Peckford
Assistant Director – Planning and Development