



EYNSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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The following response expresses Eynsham Parish Council's concerns regarding the proposed Botley West Solar Farm development.

While recognising the importance of renewable energy infrastructure, there are significant issues with both the scale and location of this project. Several key concerns need addressing:

1. The disproportionate scale of development in relation to local infrastructure and existing communities
2. The cumulative impact when considered alongside planned housing developments
3. The loss of productive agricultural land and wildlife habitats
4. The degradation of recreational value for an expanding local population
5. The existence of more suitable alternative locations and approaches, such as mandating solar panels on new housing developments and utilizing industrial rooftops

This proposal would irreversibly transform a vital green space that currently serves multiple villages and communities. The parish of Eynsham already hosts two substantial solar farms, demonstrating our community's support for renewable energy when appropriately scaled and located.

The Botley West development appears driven more by opportunistic land use than strategic energy planning. While we support renewable energy initiatives, they must be appropriately scaled and located to preserve the essential character and function of our rural communities.

The context of planned local development is particularly relevant. Multiple housing developments are already scheduled for Yarnton, Woodstock, Hanborough, and Eynsham, which will significantly reduce existing green spaces. The addition of this solar farm would effectively create an urban sprawl of approximately 8 miles from Oxford's city boundary to Blenheim Palace Park, fundamentally altering the character of this historically significant landscape.

The proposed development area is situated within a crucial green belt. This land currently provides essential agricultural production, supports diverse wildlife habitats, and offers significant recreational value through its network of public footpaths. The area's undulating landscape and far-reaching views contribute substantially to residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

As an example of more suitable locations and approaches, Eynsham Parish Council continues to support Salt Cross Garden Village, a Net Zero Carbon Development, on the outskirts of Eynsham, that aims to incorporate 100% on site renewables. Should similar policies and design principles be applied to new developments there would be less demand for overbearing schemes such as Botley West Solar Farm.

Given the recent announcements of an AI Growth Zone at Culham, and the reestablishment of the Oxford-to-Cambridge Growth Corridor, any approval should include comprehensive community compensation packages and clear commitments to preserving essential green corridors between communities.

In summary, whilst renewable energy infrastructure is crucial, this development appears driven by opportunistic land use rather than strategic planning and would irreversibly impact a vital green space serving multiple communities.