

Yarnton Parish Council

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Yarnton Parish Council strongly objects to the planning proposal: Botley West Solar Farm.

The following listed comments relate significantly to the 'Middle Site Area' in the proximity of Yarnton.

The very title of this planning proposal is deceptive to deflect attention from the reality. By far the largest installation impact will be in villages (Yarnton, Begbroke, Bladon, Long Handborough, Eynsham and Cassington) surrounding an area some 4.5 miles from Botley West.

The proposal will transform an area of Green Belt into an industrial complex.

This area north of Oxford recently lost a significant proportion of local green belt (protection) to accommodate 2500 homes for Oxford City.

The very fact that 2500 home are planned between Yarnton and Begbroke should be cause to position thousands of solar panels on property roofs.

The proposal flies in the face of Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak's position on solar farms: *"On my watch we will not lose swathes of our best farmland to solar farms. Instead we should be making sure that solar panels are installed on commercial buildings, on sheds and properties."*

The scale of the proposal is disproportionate to available green space between the villages listed above and will in fact destroy the countryside aspect currently enjoyed for leisure and mental health.

The area is criss-crossed with public rights of way that would no longer offer the freedom and visual panorama of Oxfordshire countryside.

Security fencing will increase risks to those walking alone in the countryside as sight-lines and escape routes will be obscured/prevented.

This is an agricultural area producing what is believed to be vital food for human and animal food chains reducing 'food miles' and saving energy.

The proposal seeks, without regard to Green Belt or the openness of the countryside, to be an application based on a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) thus avoiding normal democratic planning processes.

Wildlife diversity will be adversely affected. Security fencing will prevent the normal roaming nature of mammalian life. Whilst mono-culture farming may not encourage diversity of natural flora, solar shading large areas of land causes altered micro-climate where rainfall and sunlight loss prevents growth of beneficial plant life.

Contrary to proposal claim that "*Botley West will add to Oxfordshire's biodiversity by helping to protect and rebuild habitats on land currently used for agriculture*". There is evidence that consequent to the loss of biodiversity, flora and insect life necessary for pollination is reduced.

London Oxford airport flight path passes over the area and solar glare is recognised as a hazard to aircraft safety thus creating additional risk to local communities.

Ground feeding and breeding birdlife will be adversely affected.

Ground compaction is a recognised effect on land covered by solar panels and will lead to increased risk of flooding frequency in villages such as Yarnton.

Solar panels are known to create soil contamination during deconstruction and subsequent recycling/disposal.

Yarnton Parish Council is suspicious that all comments returned to the public consultation will not be made available in the public domain. This will bring into doubt the true balance of support or objection to the solar farm proposal.

Yarnton Parish Council will monitor progress of the planning proposal and respond accordingly.

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21.12.2022