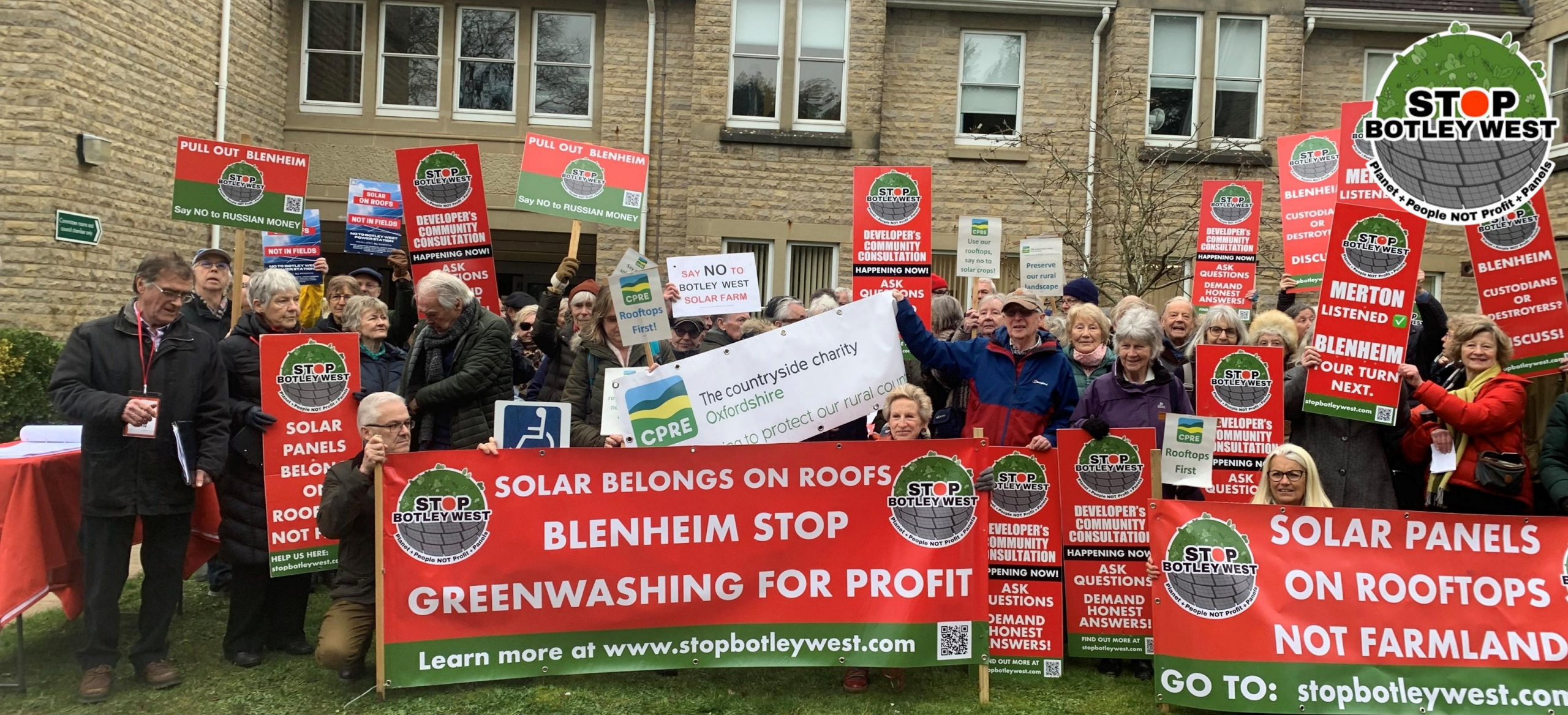




The Botley West Solar Utility Scale Power Station: Plans and Status Prof. Alex David Rogers (Chair)



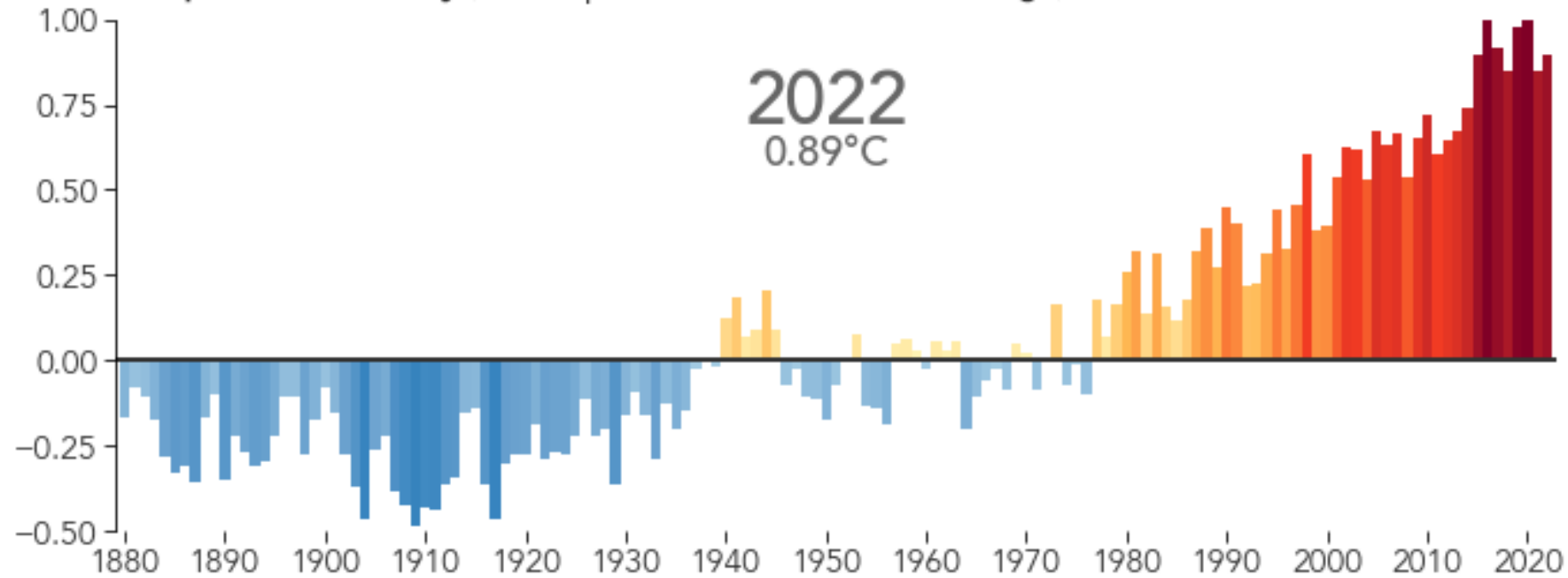
A GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP
CORE ORGANISING COMMITTEE
VOLUNTEERS

The Climate Emergency



Last 9 Years Warmest on Record

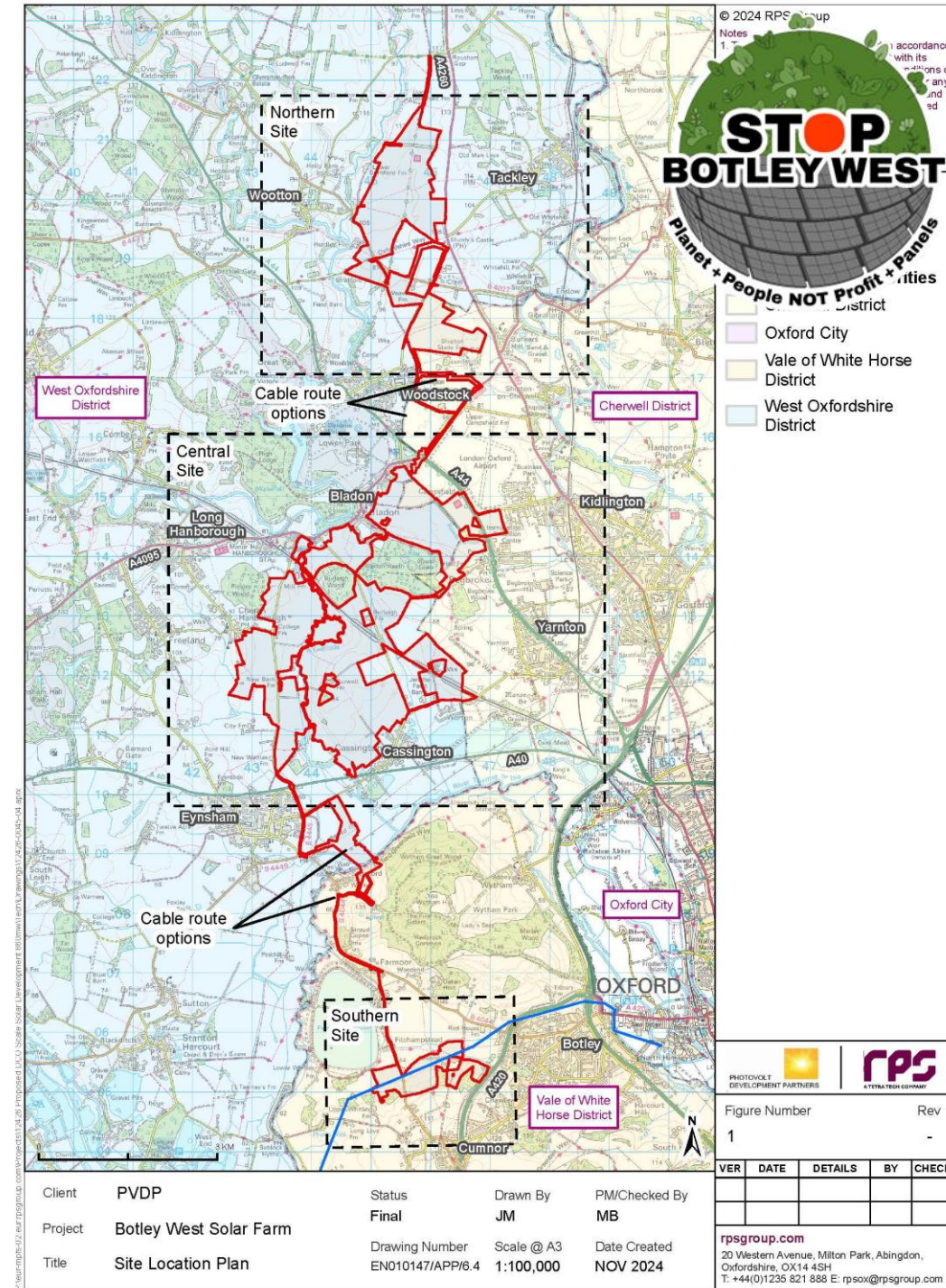
Global Temperature Anomaly (°C compared to the 1951-1980 average)



NASA Earth Observatory, Columbia University, National Geographic, Newcastle University

The Botley West Scheme

- Area of 838.5 Ha of solar arrays (1,100Ha overall)
- 1.8 – 2.2 million solar panels
- 0.78 -1.6 million piles (1.0 - 3.0m into the ground)
- 156 power converter stations (2.7-3.0 m high)
- 6 Secondary substations (4.0-6.0m high)
- Main substation 87x30m footprint, 12m high
- Boundary of 25m (panels as close as 7m to the boundary)
- >70% on Greenbelt
- 41% (36%) BMV land
- 11,000 Homes within 1.5km



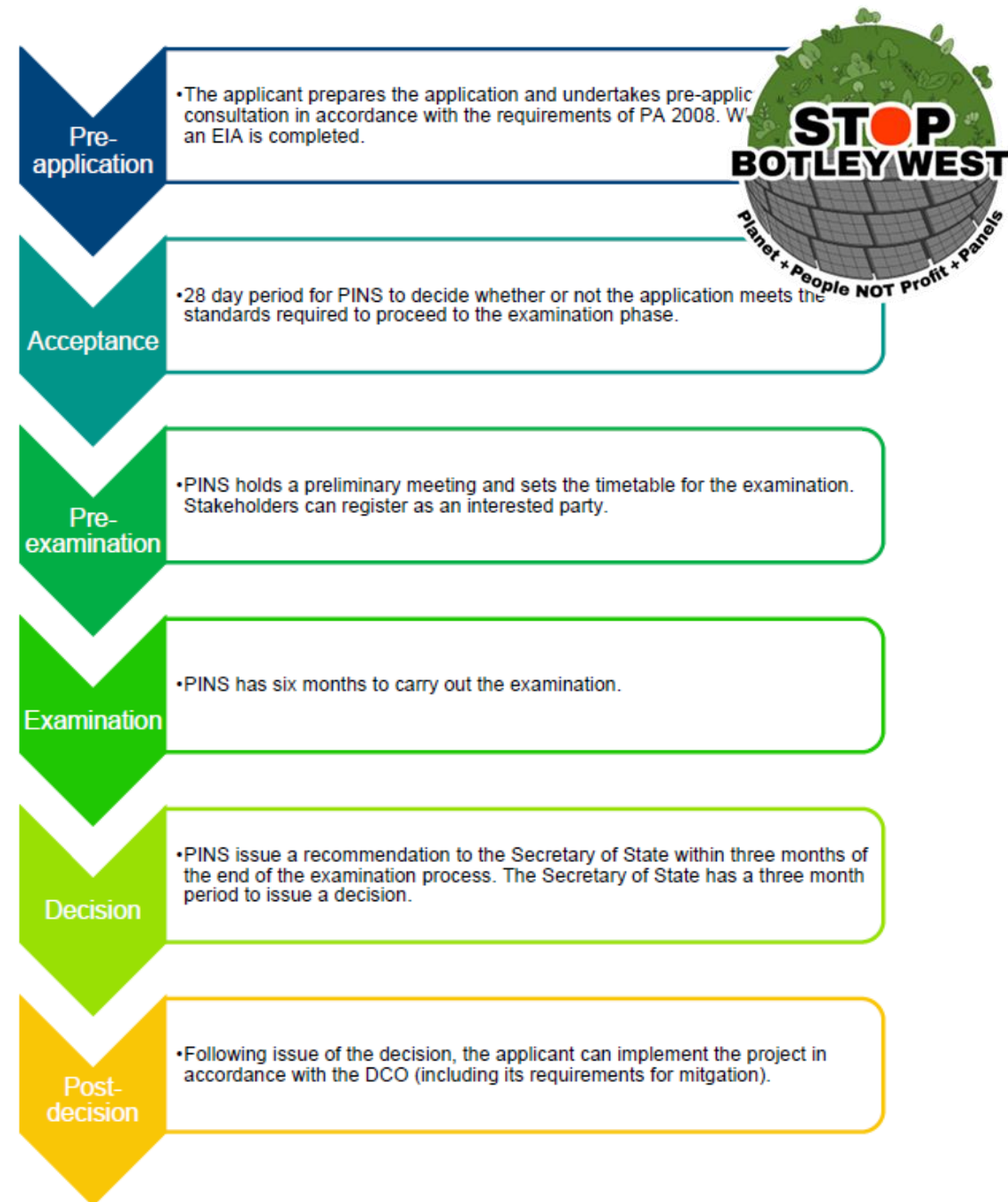
- Botley West is one of the largest solar power stations in the world
- 18 of the other top 20 largest schemes are located in desert / arid land (one other on farmland in Vietnam)
- Few people, high solar insolation, no impact on food production



Michael Adams (Wikipedia)

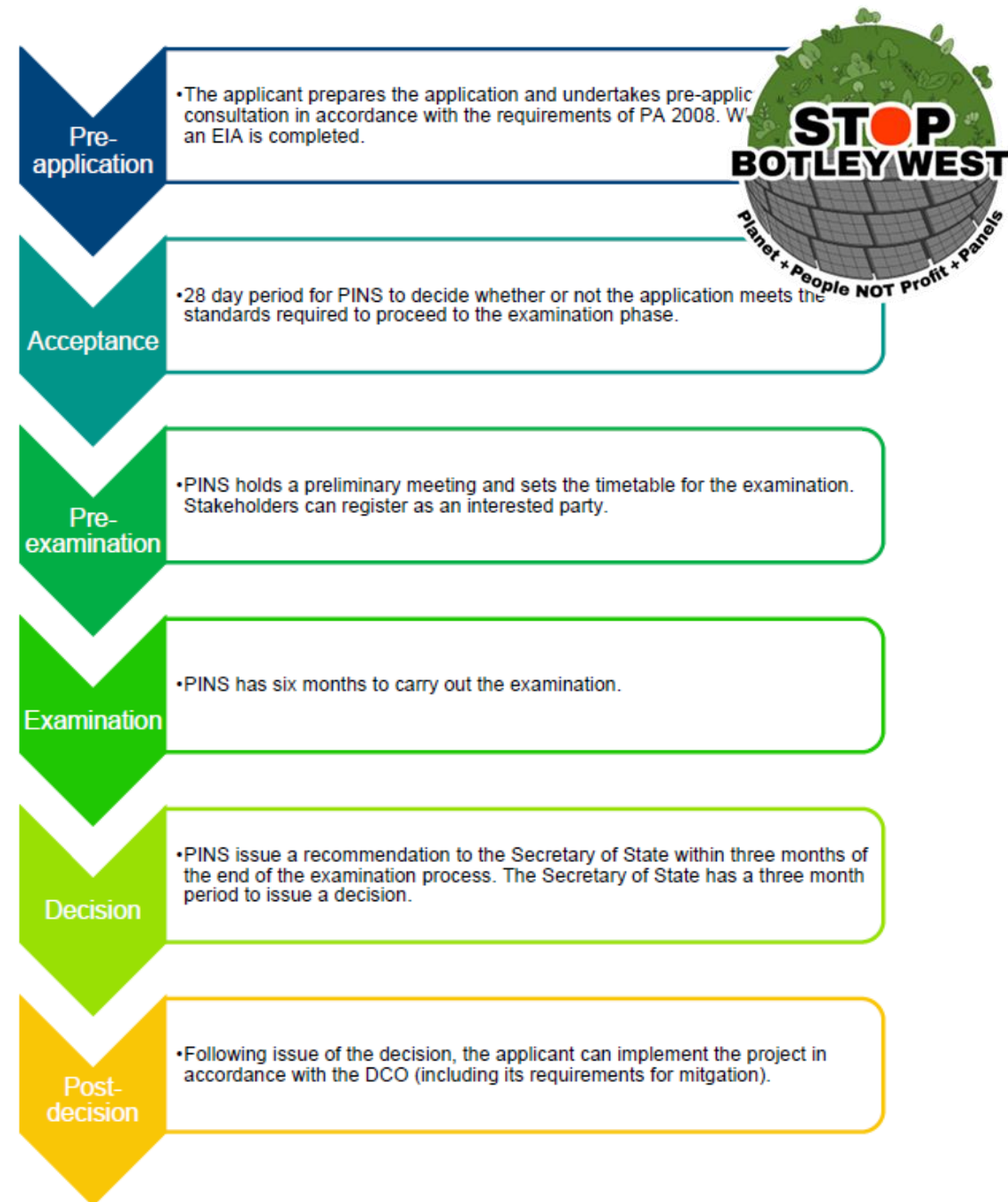
The Planning Process

- Proposal was submitted 15th November
- Acceptance stage completed
- Pre-examination
 - Complete
- Examination (6 months)
 - Preliminary meeting 13th May
 - Open Floor Hearing One 13th May
 - Open Floor Hearing Two 14th May
 - Issue Specific Hearing One 15th May
 - Forthcoming Hearings
- PINS issue recommendation
- Secretary of State makes a decision



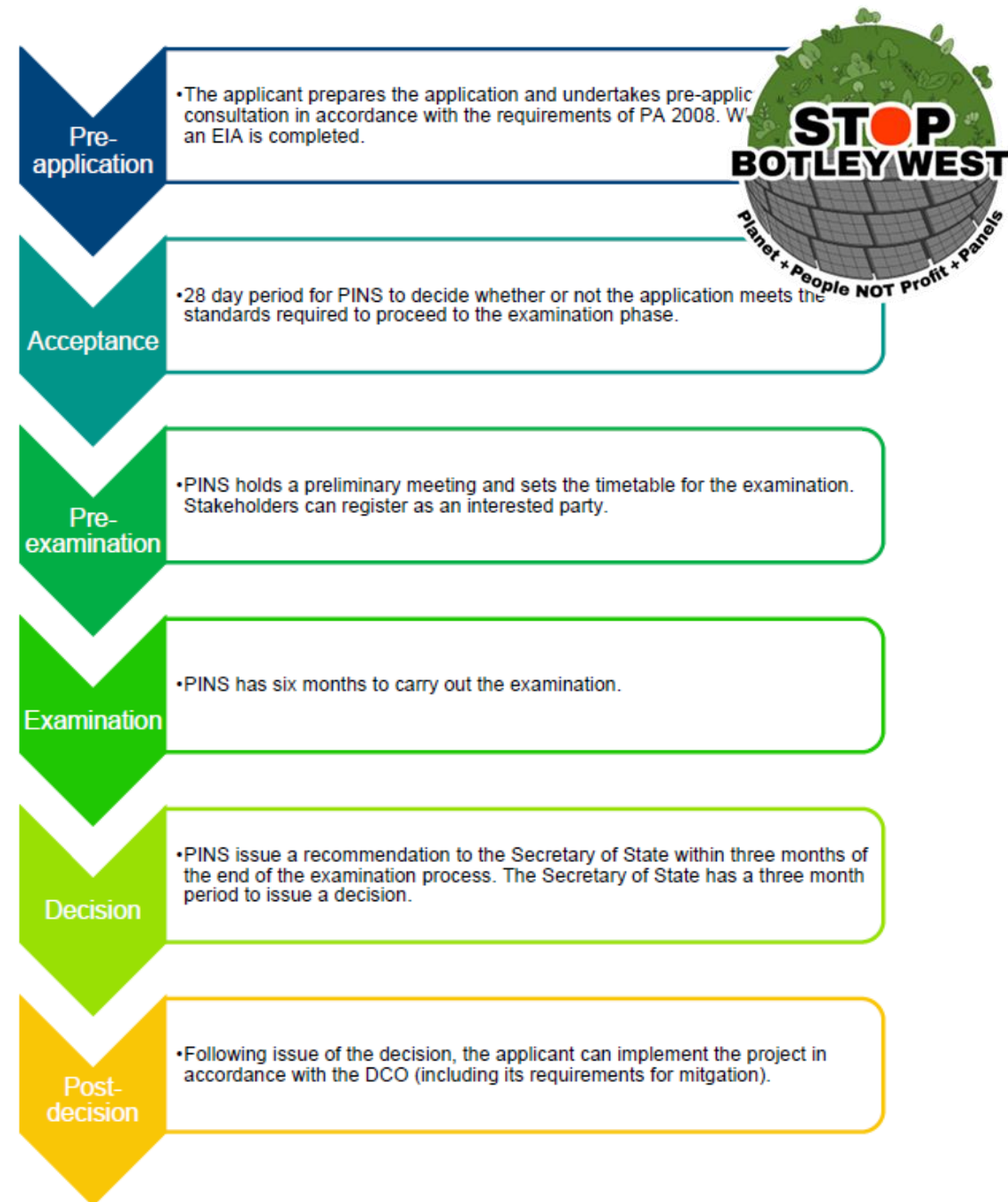
The Planning Process: Summer

- **4th June Deadline 1**
 - Written Representations; Local Impact Reports (LIRs); Summaries of Oral Presentations
- **10th June Examiners First Written Questions**
- **1st July Deadline 2**
 - Responses to Examiners questions; Comments on responses to RRs; Comments on WRs, LIRs and other D1 submissions
- **22nd July Deadline 3**
 - Comments on submissions to D2 and responses to LIRs; Comments on responses to Examiners Qs
- **30th July Examiners Second Written Questions**
- **22nd August Deadline 4**
 - Responses to Examiners 2nd Qs; Comments on submissions to D3



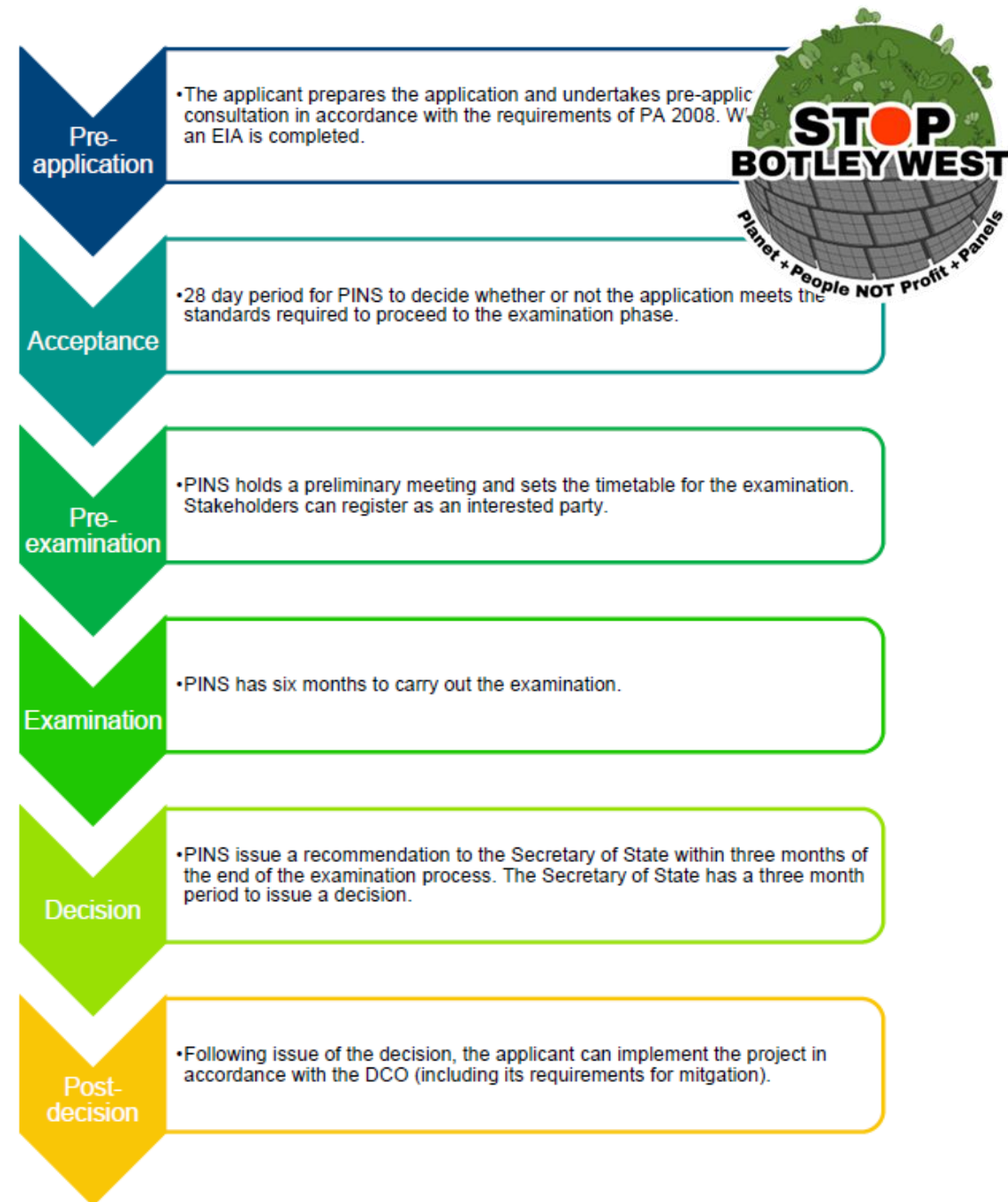
The Planning Process: Autumn

- **12th September Deadline 5**
 - Comments on responses to Examiners 2nd Qs and submissions to D4
- **18th September Examiners Publish:**
 - Report in Implications for EU Sites (RIES)
 - Proposed schedule of changes to the DCO
- **Week starting 6th October**
 - Issue specific hearings; Compulsory acquisition hearings
- **20th October Deadline 6**
 - Written summaries of oral submissions in hearings; Responses to RIES; Comments to proposed changes to DCO and submissions to D5
- **10th November Deadline 7**
 - Comments on responses to RIES, responses to proposed changes to DCO, submissions to D6; Closing statements by IPs and Aps; Final updates from applicant



The Planning Process: End

- **13th November Deadline 8**
 - Any further information requested by the Examiner is submitted.
- **13th November Enquiry Closes.**
 - Examiner has 6 months to complete the enquiry





Initial Assessment of Principle Issues

Assessment of Alternatives

Cultural heritage

Flood risk, hydrology and water resources

Geology and land use

Landscape and visual amenity

Ecology not included but Cassington Parish Council and WODC requested it is included

Assessment of Alternatives



- Development scenarios and the Rochdale Envelope, including the rationale of the preferred route and the discounting other potential routes (Rochdale Envelope relates to developments where some elements remain uncertain).
- Selection of sites for the above ground installations and blocking valve stations.
- The need for this type of infrastructure.

Heritage

- The effects of the Proposed Development on heritage assets (Designated and Non-designated) and their visual and functional settings.
- Effects upon the World Heritage Site and its elements of Outstanding Universal Value.
- Effects upon known and unknown archaeology.



Flood Risk

- Consideration of the accuracy and quality of the presented Flood Risk Assessments.
- Drainage Strategy.
- Contamination risks during construction, operation and decommissioning and whether there is sufficient information presented to ensure that the risk to the water environment as a result of the Proposed Development is effectively mitigated.





Geology and landuse

- Impacts on agricultural land, best and most versatile agricultural land and other land.
- Impacts on agricultural businesses and enterprises.
- Risks from discovery of contaminated soils/ ground water, including from adjoining sites and former uses, and securing appropriate mitigation.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

- Opportunities and constraints in elements of design.
- Zone of Theoretical Influence - The impact of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual amenity.
- Impacts on the Green Belt, together with the case for very special circumstances.
- Impacts on recreational routes and views within the local landscape.



Biodiversity



Not in initial list of principle issues but questions about Ecology and Biodiversity have now been raised by the Examiners



Legal Advisors: Pre-Examination



- Marrons Legal Firm taken on by SBW
- SBW SG consulted with Marrons to determine strategy
 - Reduction of BWSF by eliminating areas of harmful impact
 - Focus on two areas likely to be most successful: Landscape and Heritage – for reasons of cost
 - Consultants hired on Landscape and Heritage
 - SBW to work on community / residential impact report (CIR)
 - Marrons and SBW to support the Local Authorities in responding to the proposed development
- Wrote the RR with SBW with input from consultant to register as Interested Party

Legal Advisors: Preliminary Hearing and Open Floor Hearings



- Rule 6 Letter Issued by the Examiners
 - Principle issues were appropriate
 - Senior planner observed the live stream of Preliminary and Open Floor Hearings
- Rule 8 Letter Issued by the Examiners
 - Deadline 1. Preparing SBWs WR comprising an audit of the RRs submitted by local authorities, statutory and technical consultees in order to reinforce our key objection points and strategically guide the framing of the ExA questions and influence the direction of scrutiny
 - Deadline 2. Preparing to nominate Accompanied Site Visits with input from consultants to focus on where impacts are most pronounced

Community Impact Report



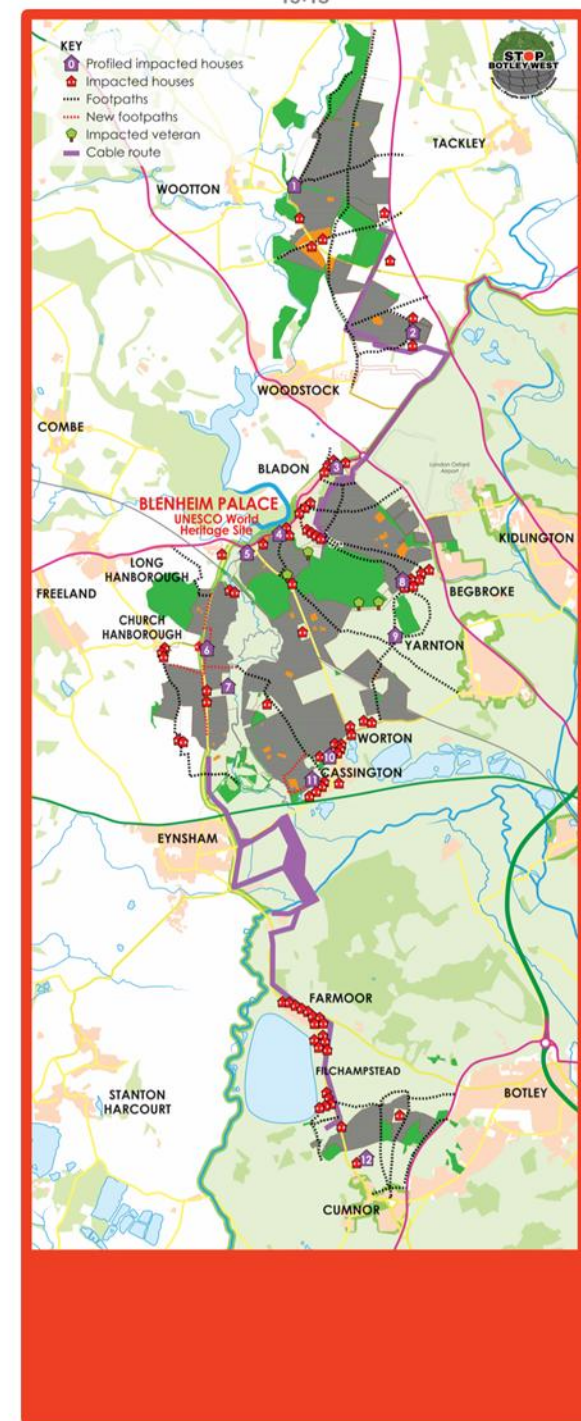
- Introduction
- Alternatives Considered
- Historic Environment
- Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Glint and Glare Study
- Ecology and Nature Conservation
- Hydrology and Flood Risk
- Traffic and Transport
- Noise and Vibration
- Socioeconomics
- Public Rights of Way

Appendices

- Gallery of properties at 12 most impacted locations
- Impact Map
- Data on glint and glare
- Adequacy of Consultation Report
- Survey on Public Consultation
- Survey on Residential Amenity

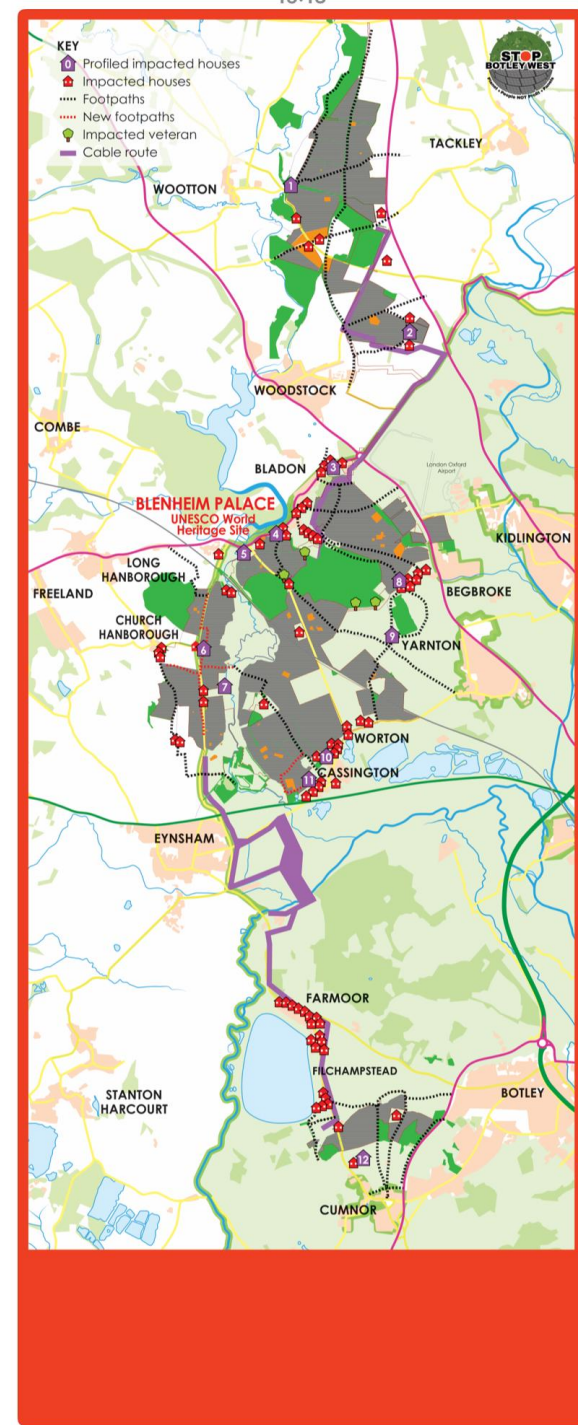
Landscape and Visual Amenity

“no impact” due to
“existing/proposed
vegetation” with no
mitigation
recommended



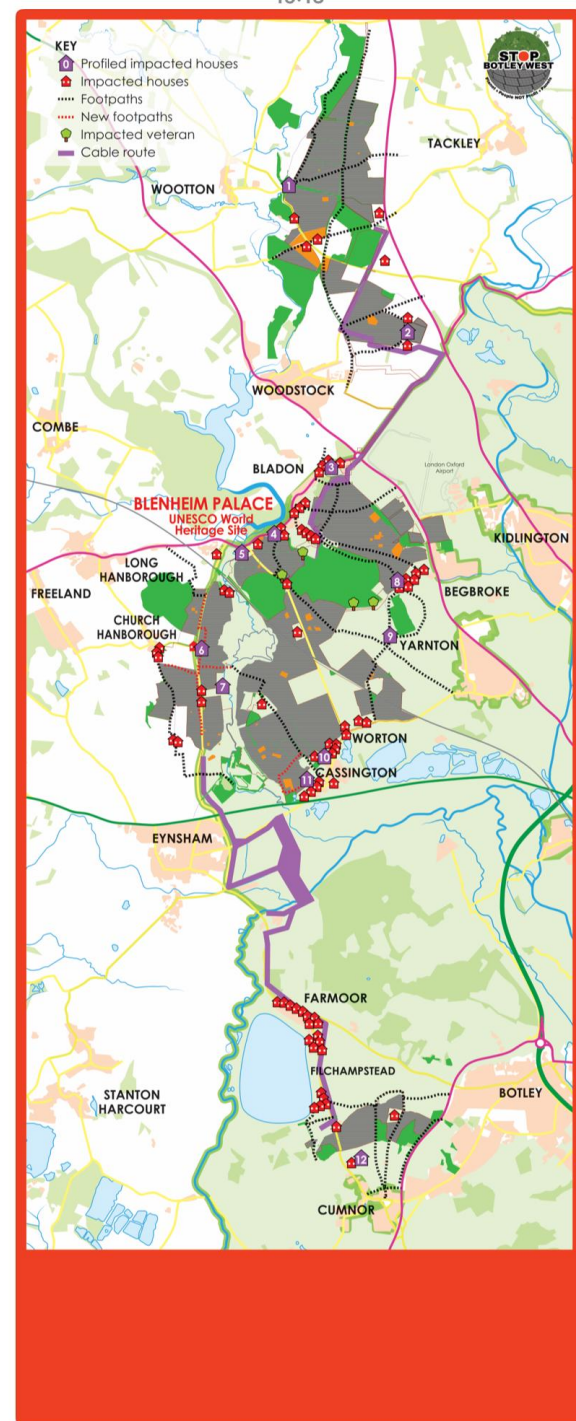
Landscape and Visual Amenity

“Existing or Proposed Vegetation is predicted to partially obstruct views”.



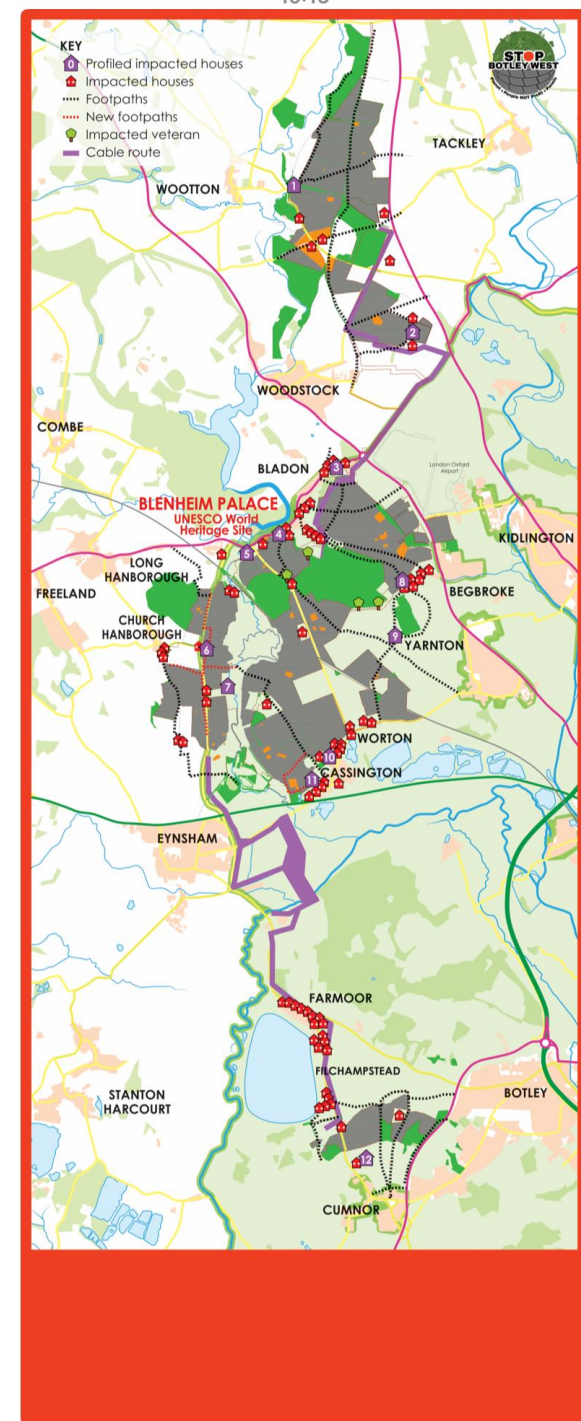
Landscape and Visual Amenity

“Moderate Impact with no significant screening”



Glint and Glare Study

“no significant screening,
moderate impact,
mitigation recommended”



Socioeconomics



- ES Chapter 15 Focuses on Construction Jobs
- Positive and negative effects based on a very narrow definition of tourism
- E.g. Loss in AirB&B compensated by rentals for construction workers (elsewhere – bused in)

Impact of proximity of BWSF to:	Significant	Moderate	Negligible	Not at All	Blank/Dont know
Appeal of the business	55%	18%	14%	5%	9%
Number of customers (footfall)	45%	14%	18%	9%	14%
Income	55%	9%	18%	9%	9%
Safe access to your premises	36%	14%	23%	9%	18%
Noise	59%	5%	23%	5%	9%
Physical and mental health of staff	41%	14%	9%	9%	27%
Health and safety of customers	32%	18%	18%	9%	23%

Our Data

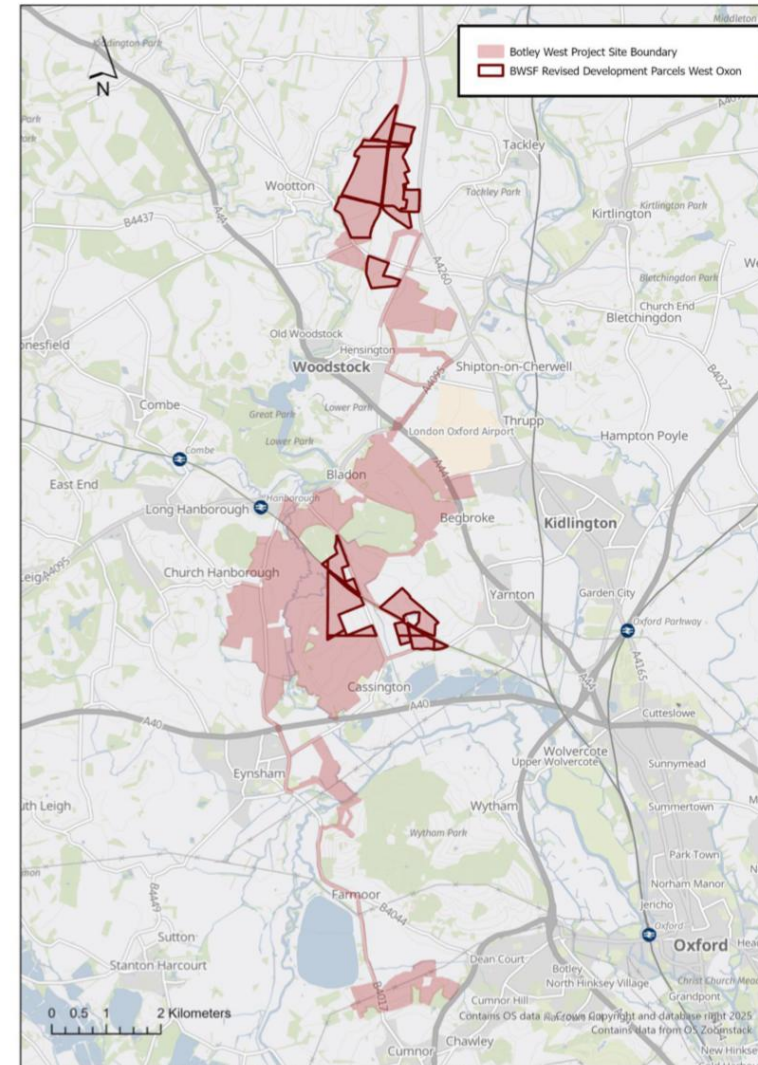
West Oxfordshire District Council: Written Representation and Local Impact Report



Summary of Positive, Neutral and Negative Impacts of the Proposed Development

Topic Area	Chapter (ES)	Potential Impact
Historic Environment	(Chapter 7) APP-044	Negative
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	(Chapter 8) APP-045	Negative
Ecology and Nature Conservation	(Chapter 9) APP-046	Negative
Hydrology and Flood Risk	(Chapter 10) APP-047	Neutral
Ground Conditions	(Chapter 11) APP-048	Neutral
Minerals and waste	(Chapter 12) APP-049	Negative
Traffic and Transport	(Chapter 12) APP-049	Neutral
Public Rights of Way	(Chapter 12) APP-049 (Chapter 17) APP-054	Negative
Noise and Vibration	(Chapter 13) APP-050	Negative
Climate Change	(Chapter 14) APP-051	Neutral – Subject to resilience
Socio-economic	(Chapter 15) APP-052	Tourism – Negative Jobs – Neutral
Human Health	(Chapter 16) APP-053	Neutral
Agricultural Land Use	(Chapter 17) APP-054	Negative
Waste and Resources	(Chapter 18) APP-055	Negative
Air Quality	(Chapter 19) APP-056	Neutral
Cumulative Effects and Inter-relationships	(Chapter 20) APP-057	Negative
Aviation impacts	ES appendix 4.4 APP-128	Negative
Summary of Likely Significant Effects	(Chapter 21) APP-058	NEGATIVE

Map 8 - West Oxfordshire revised Development Parcels



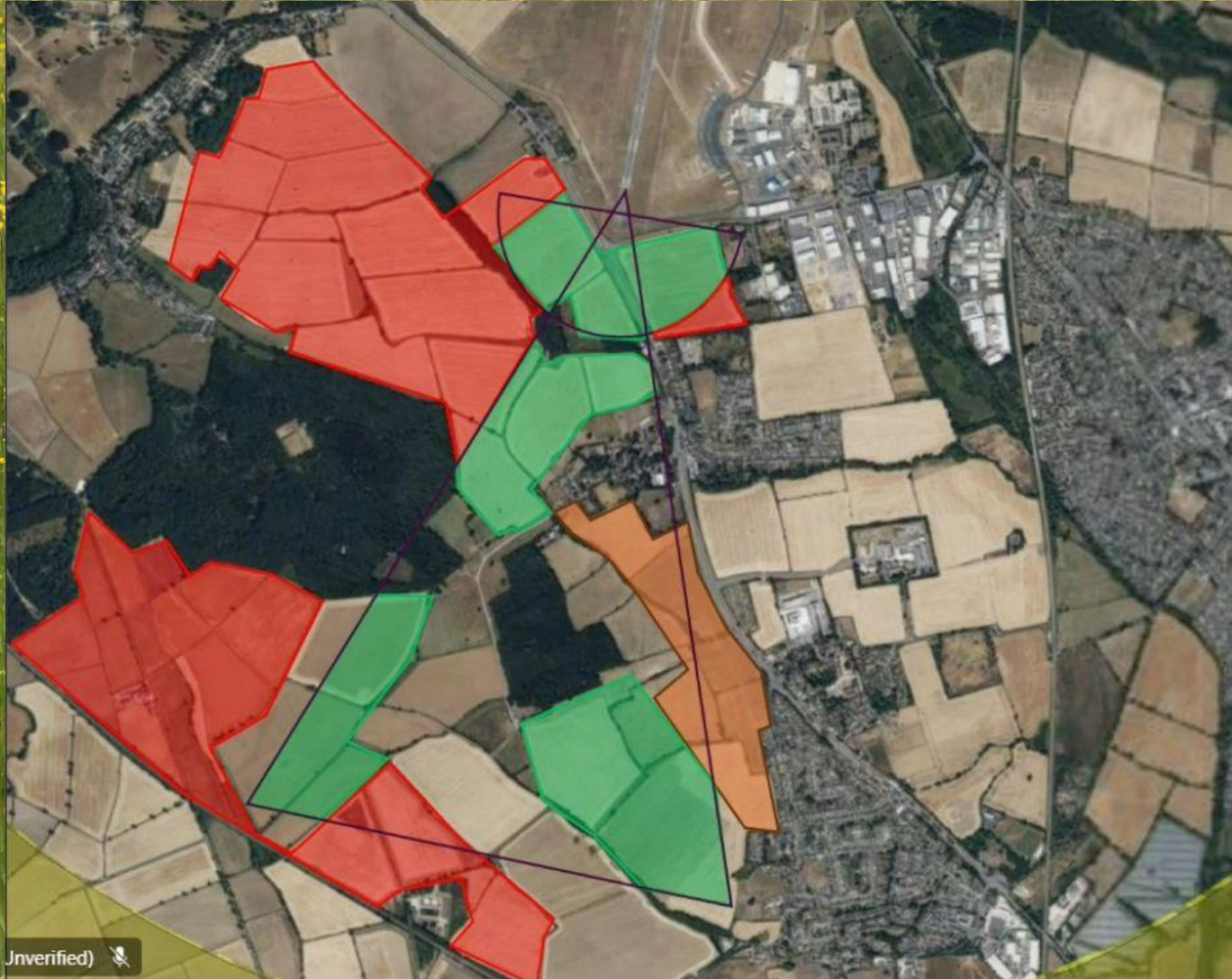
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West Oxfordshire District Council: Written Representation and Local Impact Report



- Our Legal Team and Experts are working on an SBW response to the Joint LIR issued by WODC, Cherwell DC, Vale of the White Horse DC and Oxfordshire County Council for Deadline 2 (1st July).
- They will reinforce points of duplication and identify where weight can be added by using technical evidence and community-led material (Community Impact Response).
- Also working on the Written Representations of Historic England and ICOMOS

London Oxford Airport – 10 Hectares removed from the proposal



Botley West Solar Farm

As an absolute minimum the LRST recommend that the areas shown in green are protected from future development to safeguard the future of single engine flight training at London Oxford Airport.

LONDON
OXFORD
AIRPORT

The Queen Anne Act 1705 and Blenheim Estates Act of 1856



Land should not be used for any purposes other than for the Duke

1,000 year mortgage for the land to pay off gambling debts



The Examiners Questions



- Examiners questions released on the 10th June (92 pages)
- Topics:
 - Air quality
 - Assessment of alternatives
 - Climate change
 - Compulsory acquisition
 - Cultural heritage
 - Draft Development Consent Order
 - Ecology
 - Socioeconomic impact
 - Waste and minerals
 - Noise
 - Environmental Impact Assessment
 - Flood risk
 - Geology / land use
 - Habitats Regulation Ass.
 - Health & wellbeing
 - Landscape / visual amenity
 - Traffic/transport

Accuracy of the Book of Reference



- Q 1.5.8
- Affected Persons: IPs (Interested Parties)
- Accuracy of the Book of Reference, Land Plans and Points of Clarification
- Are any Affected Persons or IPs aware of any inaccuracies in the BoR [AS-028] (updated at DL1), Statement of Reasons (SoR) [APP-021] or Land Plans [AS-006]? If so, please set out what these are and provide the correct details.
- Response by the 1st July!!!
botleywestsolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Accompanied site inspections



- These will take place w/c Monday 6th October
- Deadline for nominations is 1st July 2025
- SBW have already undertaken a significant piece of work in the Community Impact Report
- Our Legal Team and Experts are identifying key viewpoints and will put together a map, itinerary and photomontages to support onsite observations
- This is a key opportunity for Interested Parties to invite the Examiners to view areas of particular concern.

Budgeting and the importance of careful strategic use of funds



- Costs are very high, approximately 1/3rd of budget used and Examiners Questions and Issue-Specific Hearings not yet commenced

Inc. VAT	Current budget	Paid to date	Forecast to pay
	£	£	£
Planning Consultants	47,000	21,000	26,000
Barrister	36,000	8,000	28,000
Experts	41,000	13,000	28,000
Total	124,000	42,000	82,000
Contingency	26,000		
Total	150,000		

What donations are being used for



- We need to budget very carefully and follow Marrons' advice on the most strategically advantageous points in the examination for us to intervene. This will ensure we can maximise impact and have sufficient funds to last the course until the examination ends in November
- Means we cannot tackle all the principle issues (e.g. flooding; ecology). Others are doing this including Parish Councils, District Councils, Businesses and Residents
- We are doing everything we can to be successful in our shared goal, please donate what you can to help us all achieve this.

Thank you for listening!



<https://stopbotleywest.com/home>