

AOC ANNEX 1: SURVEY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS



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1. Introduction

The statutory public consultation on the Botley West Solar Farm (BWSF) proposals took place from Thursday 30th November 2023 to Thursday 8th February 2024, with consultation events between 8 December 2023 and 19 January 2024. The consultation was run by the developer, PVDP.

The Stop Botley West (SBW) campaign undertook to carry out a survey of local residents to ascertain the effectiveness of this consultation. SBW worked with an independent consultant to ensure that the survey design was unbiased and that the questionnaire allowed respondents to express their views effectively, regardless of their stance on the proposals. Great care was taken to avoid leading questions, to make questions clear and concise, to provide a wide range of possible responses and to include ample space for free text responses where people wished to clarify or add to their answers. The questionnaires were made available in a variety of ways:

- in hard copy with 11,000 copies delivered to homes in the local towns and villages most affected by the BWSF proposals - with drop-off points in local village pubs/shops
- at the various consultation events, where members of the SBW team would invite individuals to complete the questionnaire as they left the consultation event
- on-line – with on-line submission

In total this produced 1,442 responses (significantly more than the 661 responses received in a similar exercise on the informal consultation conducted in November-December 2022/23).

2. Consultation Arrangements

2.1. Awareness of the consultation

Of the 1,442 respondents, 1,345 (93.27%) were aware of the consultation on the proposals.

Of the 1,337 people who indicated how they had first become aware of the consultation, 53% said it was from SBW, nearly 16% was by word of mouth, 4.64% heard from the local council, and 5.83% by a range of other means including local village groups, posters (probably SBW), and parish councils.

Only 14.81% said they first heard about it from the developers of BWSF, which potentially indicates that the developer's efforts to advertise their consultation had been inadequate.

2.2. Means of accessing the consultation

Respondents were asked how they accessed the consultation and, to reflect that some may have done a number of things to inform themselves, they were allowed to give multiple responses.

- 57.5% had read the Botley West consultation leaflet, produced by the developer
- 51% had attended in-person event(s)
- 31% had accessed information on the developer's Botley West website
- 4.5% attended the developer's community webinar
- 12% said they did not access the consultation although they would have liked to

2.3. Suitability of consultation arrangements

More than half (52.3%) said they had not received adequate information before the consultation. 82 people (over 6%) said they had accessibility issues that had impacted on their ability to participate in the consultation. Nearly half of these cited mobility issues, though it is not clear to what extent this was a result of accessibility issues at the actual venue.

However, 22 people specifically said that they had not accessed (taken part in) the consultation due to "format and/or venue inadequate for my needs", which indicates that the consultation arrangements overall were lacking in their ability to take account of the needs of those who are less able. These 22 people who had wanted to take part were effectively excluded from the consultation.

Furthermore, 77 people (which may include some or all of the above 22) said they didn't access the consultation due to "difficulty accessing the venue/webinar" – which again indicates a level of exclusion of some groups.

In total, 594 individuals said they had not accessed the consultation for various reasons. Of these, 388 (65%) said it was because the time, date or day was not suitable. A couple of key reasons for this were frequently cited in the comments:

- the consultation ran over the Christmas period
 - Many people pointed out that this time of year is incredibly busy for everyone with family and social commitments, and lots of preparation during December. For some, it is also a busy time at work – more so in January

- Some respondents specifically expressed their scepticism that the Christmas timing (a repeat of the timing of the informal consultation last year) was a deliberate choice by the developer to make it difficult for people to engage fully.
- A further comment was on the length of consultation documentation – off-putting in itself, and even harder to make time to explore fully at such a busy time of year
- the timings of the consultation events made it difficult for those in ‘conventional’ 9-5 employment
 - This potentially discriminated against professional people, and others working conventional hours. Many people commented that the consultations finished too early for them to get there after work. Typical comments included:
 - “Some of us work during the day, so can't pop into the village hall in the middle of the afternoon” and “It ran over an inconvenient time, including the evening rush hour and mealtime” and “(Location) consultation could have done with being much later in the day to enable me to attend after work”.

To make this more difficult, some pointed out that the developer’s consultation leaflet – setting out the dates and venues – had landed through their letterbox quite late in the process, leaving “Not enough time/notice to organise around available events”. One even complained that the “Leaflet arrived after the in-person event had taken place in my most convenient location”.

Even the timing of the on-line event was unhelpful in this regard, as evidenced by the comments “Was travelling home from work at the time of online event” and “There was only one webinar with no alternatives for me to join at a more convenient time.”

Respondents made clear suggestions as to how the timings of the consultation events could have made them more accessible to enable higher levels of participation, including:

- later finish times, such as 8pm
- some weekend events
- avoiding the Christmas and New Year period

One person commented that the times were simply “over too short a period given the scale of the development”.

Other hindrances to attendance included:

- lack of parking (e.g. at Woodstock and Bladon venues)
- difficulty of getting there by public transport
- This is not the fault of the developer – more a reality of the site of BWSF being surrounded by, and therefore impacting on, more rural areas which are generally not well served by public transport across the county. However, this means that the availability of adequate parking is essential for consultation venues – and this was clearly not taken into account.
- lack of a local consultation venue (for example, there was no consultation event held in either Yarnton or Tackley)

This last point, combined with the limited timing of the consultation events, made access for working people even harder.

It is worth noting that there were only 8 locations in total, and only 9 dates on which in-person consultations took place. Four of these were between 8th and 13th December, and five were between 12th and 19th January; i.e. within two relatively short windows. This seems totally inadequate for a consultation on a development of such a scale and with such wide-ranging implications.

It is also worth noting that the attendance at Woodstock – the only venue which had a consultation event on two dates - was 3 times greater on 13th January (175) than on 9th December (57). This would seem to indicate that more than one date at a location leads to an increase in attendance, and also (in this case at least) that the January date attracted more attendees than the December date, perhaps providing more evidence that the choice of December dates effectively reduced attendance rates. This is further supported by the attendance figures in December (68, 57, 46 and 80; an average of 62.75 attendees per event) being significantly lower than the attendance figures in January (195, 175, 155, 49 and 163; an average of 147.4 attendees per event).

It is highly likely therefore that the venues with only a December consultation date (Bladon, Begbroke and Hanborough), all of which are significantly affected by this proposed development, were effectively discriminated against in the consultation process, because it was harder for their residents to engage fully in the process.

2.4. Coverage of the consultation

The following table summarises where respondents live (or the village/town to which they are closest), giving a sense of the geographical spread of people engaging in the consultation. 1226 people responded.

Begbroke	30	Filchampstead	1	Swinford	3
Bladon	109	Freeland	38	Tackley	21
Botley	25	Glympton	2	Thrupp	1
Cassington	108	Hampton Poyle	1	Woodstock	107

Chipping Norton	5	Kidlington	16	Wootton	60
Church Hanborough	71	Long Hanborough	134	Worton	7
Combe	4	North Leigh	36	Wytham	0
Cumnor	130	Oxford	23	Yarnton	62
Eynsham	141	Shipton-on-Cherwell	2	Other (specify below)	50
Farmoor	30	Stonesfield	9		

3. Public Experience of the Consultation Process

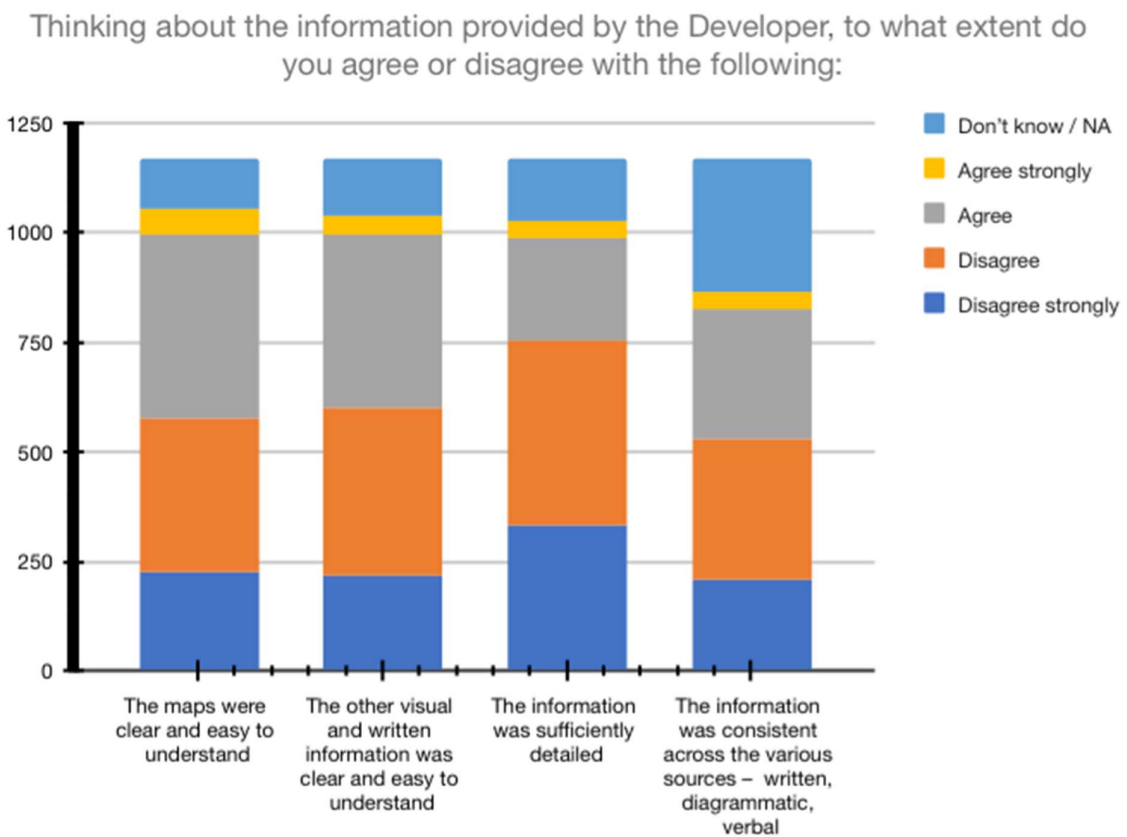
3.1. Clarity of information provided

1169 people responded to four questions on this, based on the extent to which they agreed with the following 'positive' statements:

Statement	Disagreed	Agreed
The maps were clear and easy to understand	49.3% disagreed including 19.3% strongly	41% agreed including just 5% strongly

The other visual and written information was clear and easy to understand	51.3% disagreed including 18.6% strongly	37.7% agreed including just 3.9% strongly
The information was sufficiently detailed	64.5% disagreed including 28.7% strongly	23.3% agreed including just 3.3% strongly
The information was consistent across the various sources – written, diagrammatic, verbal	45.3% disagreed including 17.8% strongly	28.8% agree including just 3.3% strongly

In each case between 10% and 26% respondents selected 'don't know'.



As can be seen from the above table, in each case there is a higher (and in 3 cases much higher) percentage of people disagreeing than agreeing with these statements. Most significantly, the percentage of people strongly disagreeing is around 20% (ranging from 17.8% to 28.7%), whereas the percentage of people strongly agreeing is just 3%-5%.

So not only is disagreement greater than agreement on all these statements, this disagreement is strongly felt by many; whereas very few people strongly agreed.

Based on the balance of opinion, we must therefore conclude that:

- the maps were not sufficiently clear or easy to understand
- the other visual and written information was not sufficiently clear or easy to understand
- the information was not sufficiently detailed (the extent and strength of feeling on this is particularly clear, with 2/3 respondents identifying this as an issue)
- the information was not sufficiently consistent across the various sources

603 people provided comments to justify why they disagreed with the statements in the above table. Many pointed out the poor quality of the maps (being out of focus, very difficult to read, lacking in detail, not displayed properly, etc) and one even said that the consultants had agreed that the “map visibility was poor”.

Another said “No roads were named, no features such as churches marked so difficult to orientate oneself.”

One respondent commented that “Photos were taken from an angle to ensure the panels look smaller” and the “Height of the panels were not made obvious”.

One commented “I received two different accounts of the proposed use of CCTV and security lighting along the fences from two different reps of the consultation company. The information about the impact on wildlife was inadequate/over optimistic ie the only thing a deer fence affects is deer, otherwise birds and animals are all being taken care of by the plans of PVDP’s ecology officer and anyway, Blenheim’s responsible for the land and will continue to be so, not PVDP.”

For those who might have wanted to talk to the Ecology Officer, they were disappointed – comments included:

“There was no one there able to address my many questions on biodiversity” and from someone who had not attended an event: “Heard from attendees that experts in ecology not available at in person events, so no point in trying to attend as I have ecological questions.”

The consultants who were there apparently did not give the public much confidence in their answers:

“I asked a series of questions of one of the company representatives and they answered with phrases like I should think so or I expect this is likely. Do not inspire confidence.”

“We asked about the images showing landscapes before and after installation of the panels. There was a lack of those along the Lower Road. We were told this was because the hedges prevented them being seen. This is not true. The land rises and is visible over the hedges. Also at this time of year the leaves have fallen and the landscape is clearly visible.”

Throughout the comments made by those who had attended in-person events, there was a theme of feeling that the information was being presented in a way that deliberately emphasised the claimed benefits and skirted around the more difficult questions. There was also a theme of there being a lack of clear and substantiated facts.

One lengthy comment sums up these two themes rather well:

“At no point did I see a detailed map of the entire proposed solar farm and I believe that it is something that would make it absolutely clear how enormous this proposal is; something I think PVDP don't want people to understand. There were numerous allusions to the benefits to local communities Botley West would bring, but no facts, figures or guarantees to back up these suggestions. Certainly short on definitions of terms; e.g. upgraded footpaths, buffer zones, horizontal directional drilling and 'Botley West is committed to establishing an environmental and longstanding legacy across the area', I think we have that already and B W is poised to destroy it. Possibly if I had the time or energy to wade through the folders on the back table, (presumably the whole report,) there might have been all of the information lacking in the displays, but nowhere did I see any assessment of the numbers of heavy plant, square footage of fencing, tons of decent topsoil removed (and sold ?) habitats lost. Right at the end of the displays there was a simple timeline showing only the hope of a date for submitting the application for the project, I would like to know how long the area would be subjected to the construction phase.”

Some people identified very specific questions they felt remained unanswered. For example:

- “How is Biodiversity Net Gain calculated to be at least 70%?”
- “What are the exact cabling options (with their pros/cons) for the part of the route not yet finalised in the plans? I'm particularly concerned about the crossing of the Thames near Swinford given the vulnerable floodplain meadow plants in that area.”
- “Where can I find a detailed map and table with the area (hectares) of the different types of agricultural land by grade (not lumped together)?”
- “What is the evidence that bats (especially the high number of red-list/rare species) are NOT impacted by vast areas of solar panels. As this scale of solar panels hasn't been really realised anywhere, how can you be certain that this has no effect on the acoustics used by bats. Surely large areas of smooth reflecting panels will affect how well bats can use their acoustics? I think you need to provide evidence for this, especially for the scale at which solar panels are covering the landscape. See, e.g. <https://appliedecologistsblog.com/2023/09/18/editors-choice-609-bat-activity-falls-byoverhalf-at-solar-farms/> “
- “What measures exactly will be put in place to improve water quality and reduce run-off into the Evenlode and other surface waters?”

Others identified areas where, based on their own expertise, the developers seemingly have insufficient evidence or understanding to back up their claims of adequate mitigation of impact. For example:

“The mitigation of the impact on the environment and wildlife also included 3 sentences about putting in skylarks nesting sites, bat and bird boxes and bee hives. They just stated that these will be provided. As a zoologist, I know that you can't just pop in a bird box (or bat box or skylark nest site or bee hive) and expect the local animals to move in. They have to be sited with an understanding of their behaviour, territory size, migratory patterns etc etc. 3 sentences stating that these would be present does not show any due diligence on behalf of these animals. You have not shown how the impact on these animals can be mitigated. I believe this is because it hasn't even been considered.”

Many people commented on such things as:

- “Maps scattered in a heap”
- “Large ring binders of supporting documents, some with contents spilling out, were heaped on a stage at the far end of the room, difficult to get at and peruse”
- “The number of photographs showing the existing locations for the development were very limited, overly selective and unclear”
- “Photographs are badly printed; extremely dark and with poor contrast”
- “No guide to consultation documents and cross-referencing inconsistent and confusing”

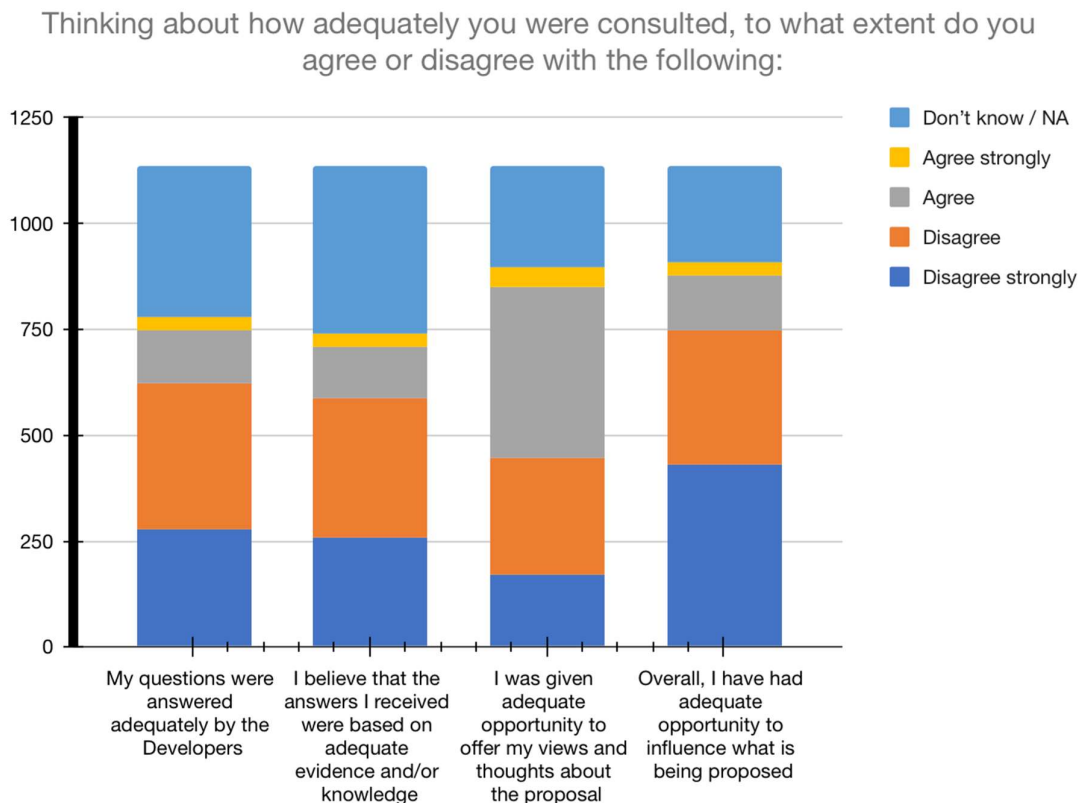
This indicates a lack of helpful organisation, making access to relevant information unnecessarily difficult. Whether by accident or design, this is not conducive to an effective consultation.

3.2. Adequacy of the consultation

1137 people responded to four questions on this, based on the extent to which they agreed with the following ‘positive’ statements:

Statement	Disagreed	Agreed
My questions were answered adequately by the Developers	54.6% disagreed including 24.6 strongly	13.8% agreed including just 2.6% strongly
I believe that the answers I received were based on adequate evidence and/or knowledge	51.6% disagreed including 22.6% strongly	13.5% agreed including just 2.8% strongly
I was given adequate opportunity to offer my views and thoughts about the proposal	39.2% disagreed including 14.8% strongly	39.5% agreed including just 4% strongly
Overall, I have had adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed	66% disagreed including 37.9% strongly	14% agree including just 2.8% strongly

In each case between 20% and 32% respondents selected ‘NA/don’t know’.



In relation to the question about whether they had been given adequate opportunity to offer their views and thoughts about the proposal, there was an even split, with 39.5% agreeing that they had and 39.2% thinking they had not; although significantly more people felt strongly that they had not (14.8%) compared with the 4% who felt strongly that they had.

For all the other three questions, there is a much higher percentage of people disagreeing than agreeing with these statements, and the percentage of people strongly disagreeing (22.6 – 37.9%) is very much more than the percentage of people strongly agreeing (2.6 – 2.8%).

So, again, we see a pattern where disagreement is much greater than agreement with these three positive statements, and disagreement is strongly felt by many; whereas very few people strongly agreed.

Based on the balance of opinion, we must therefore conclude that:

- questions were NOT answered adequately by the developers
- the answers received were NOT perceived to be based on adequate evidence and/or knowledge
- individuals did NOT believe they had adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed

A very significant finding is that a massive 66% (2/3) of respondents did NOT believe they had adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed; and more than half of these (38% of

respondents) felt that strongly. This is a severe indictment of an exercise that is defined as a 'consultation'.

602 people provided comments to justify why they disagreed with the statements in the above table, leading to the conclusions above.

Many people cited examples of where their questions were not answered adequately by the Developers. Comments included:

"Answers received were either vague or had little up to date & objective evidence provided."

"Answers to key questions have been vague, misleading or inaccurate or missing."

"Answers give very vague and focused on the benefit and not on the impact."

"No information was available on how responsibly the millions of panels would be decommissioned at the end"

"Not enough clear information about long term effects"

"Reps present were prepared and briefed with insufficient background information and unable to answer basic questions such as- why place panels on North facing slopes, and what height is the new proposed power station. Also what happens after 40 years and MANY MORE questions"

"The reps of the solar farm were advised very poorly and were not at all sure of their information"

"Developers couldn't answer my questions"

"Not enough knowledge was held by event staff."

"Concerns were brushed aside and given ridiculous answers such as "EVs will need the electricity - BW is our only option"

"The representatives listened to questions but in each case definitive answers were not given. Facts were very difficult to establish."

"Most of the developer's representatives were inadequately informed to answer questions."

"The people there to answer questions were very nice but seemed quite ignorant of the area and weren't able to answer questionsThey also seemed totally unaware of historical and ecologically vital water meadows at Eynsham where it is proposed that cable lines cross (one of the options)."

There were specific concerns about inconsistencies in the information provided:

"Some answers from different representatives were contradictory."

"At 2 different consultation locations, answers were inconsistent, too many questions were answered with "that's something we're working on", or "that's not my field". Selective research reports were quoted to support the case, when there is a plethora of contradictory evidence, especially on wildlife issues."

Several respondents had very particular interests, and possessed relevant expertise themselves; and they were clearly asking quite detailed questions about specific aspects of the proposals.

Many of these individuals felt that the answers to their questions lacked evidence of appropriate

levels of knowledge and understanding; and they were disappointed at the lack of availability of appropriate experts to address their concerns.

Comments included:

“The relevant specialists - flood, engineering and ecology - were not present as they left the meeting a few hours early.”

“Hydrologist not present. Those present were unable to understand concerns or flooding”

“No ecologist came”

“No experts present for areas of concern - biodiversity and flood risk” “No data on flooding - I provided some to developer!

No data on Wildlife surveys - I provided data on impact “

“Some people we needed to talk to about cabling were not present”

“Did not feel that the respondents had adequate depth of knowledge in specific areas - heritage, security, biodiversity - and that their "experts" in those areas were not present.”

“Nobody with technical expertise present at consultation I attended”

“The developers have provided no evidence that wildlife will not be negatively affected. Brown hare, owls and other birds of prey use this land. Also several species on the red list including yellow hammers and field fares. The representative I spoke to was patronising and clearly did not give value to my opinion. His claim was that wildlife inhabited the edges of fields only. It is both laughable and offensive to be told that this enormous solar farm project will not cause harm to the environment.....”

“I am particularly concerned about the local ecology, biodiversity and potential increase in flood risk. When questioned about the ecology and biodiversity the representative was unable to provide any hard evidence for

“a net gain within the area of at least 70%” based on any previous studies involving industrial scale changes to the habitat.”

“I asked a scientifically based question about albedo levels, but the reply I got was highly unscientific and dismissive, along the lines of “we’ve never seen this so we’re not going to measure it”.

“Speaking to Mark Owen Lloyd I asked if he could explain how, by curious coincidence, the power output calculation 840 MW arrived at being able to power 330,000 (all the homes in Oxfordshire) houses as this was rather a unique selling point (USP). Very good marketing hype. I raised this as my own calculation backed by a Solar Research Institute showed this to be a much smaller number. He first claimed that the original reply to this question was published on their website. However, this calculation starts from the assumption that 840MW can be achieved without evidence of the underlying calculation and then by some rather dubious and opaque calculations suggests that 330,000 houses might be powered for a small instance of time in a good summer probably around midday.

He then subsequently claimed that the calculations had been checked by Blenheim (by whom?) and said the original calculations had been made by an engineer in Berlin.”

The above comment is a particularly good example of where the ‘facts’, as presented, were not substantiated when specific questions were asked; and there was obvious frustration at the

apparent lack of concern and absence of clear answers to questions relating to perceived risks. One comment captured this rather well:

“They had no answers to the flooding that we have most years if we have torrential rain!
They said it would be looked into! Should be looked into from the beginning!!!!”

One respondent was particularly concerned that they received inadequate answers to their questions, when they had raised these same questions in the informal consultation a year earlier. He/she was not impressed.

“When I asked about the general effect on sound as panels are hard surfaces and will reflect sound differently, the effect on animals that use echo location (bats), and the noise that rain & hail would make when falling on the panels I was told they hadn’t done any work on that and to include it on my feedback form. When I pointed out that I had done that at the previous consultation feedback and obviously it had been ignored, I was told to do it again!”

In relation to the majority view that there is inadequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed, a number of comments indicated why this view prevailed:

“The whole operation of consultation seems like window dressing and a hoop to jump through for the developer. I feel they will never take our serious views and questions into account”

“The feedback form to the second consultation was as loaded as the first in terms of questions. It is geared to elicit positive responses.”

“The personnel at the consultation were not experts in the fields that I wanted to question. They were more interested in telling me about the plans than hearing my views.”

“I think the information was overwhelming and felt the representatives were glossing over those areas they did not want to discuss.”

“I wasn't given the opportunity to express my views”

“They listened and nodded but didn't really care about villagers’ views”

“When asked about food security and loss of agricultural land Mark Lloyd said that solar panels were preferable to agriculture as they didn’t cause river pollution. He was primarily concerned with pushing the project forwards with no thought of the impact on local residents.”

“The people who presented the consultation seemed to me to be biased towards enabling the Botley West Solar Farm. There wasn’t sufficient attention given to the damage which the solar panels would create. If my grandchildren were to ask me whether I had done enough to safeguard their future relationship with the countryside I would have to say “I tried but they wouldn’t listen”.”

“There was no 'consultation'. Just 4 planners from RPS whose agenda was seemingly to reject any compromise & push forward a very chaotic display of unconnected photos & location maps”

“issues of key importance to me were not addressed. In fact I believe they may have been deliberately sidelined.”

“None of the developers were writing down any of my questions/concerns and therefore it felt as if the consultation was a 'dead process' in terms of me being in consultation with them equally or that they were treating my views with any importance to their process.”

“Although I was spoken to politely throughout, I was made to feel like a spoiler if I did not support the scheme. I was told that basically in terms of planning considerations there will always be winners and losers and the fact that I will be a loser will not carry much weight in the decision-making. It was also asserted that BW has to be supported as there are no alternatives to achieve decarbonisation.”

“From the very early stages it was quite clear the consultation was simply a box ticking exercise and local feeling will not influence the outcome. Questions were clearly biased and designed to produce the result the developer required - of course we are all concerned about climate change, of course we all agree more renewable power is needed - but I fear these answers will be spun to indicate locals also support an inappropriately huge solar farm that will blight our lives for decades, which of course we do not.” Perhaps the most telling comment is:

“I was one of a group of 3 people listening to the main representative. He said - quote - if 100% of people in the area are against it, it will make no difference. We have satisfied all of the government criteria for it to go ahead so it will”

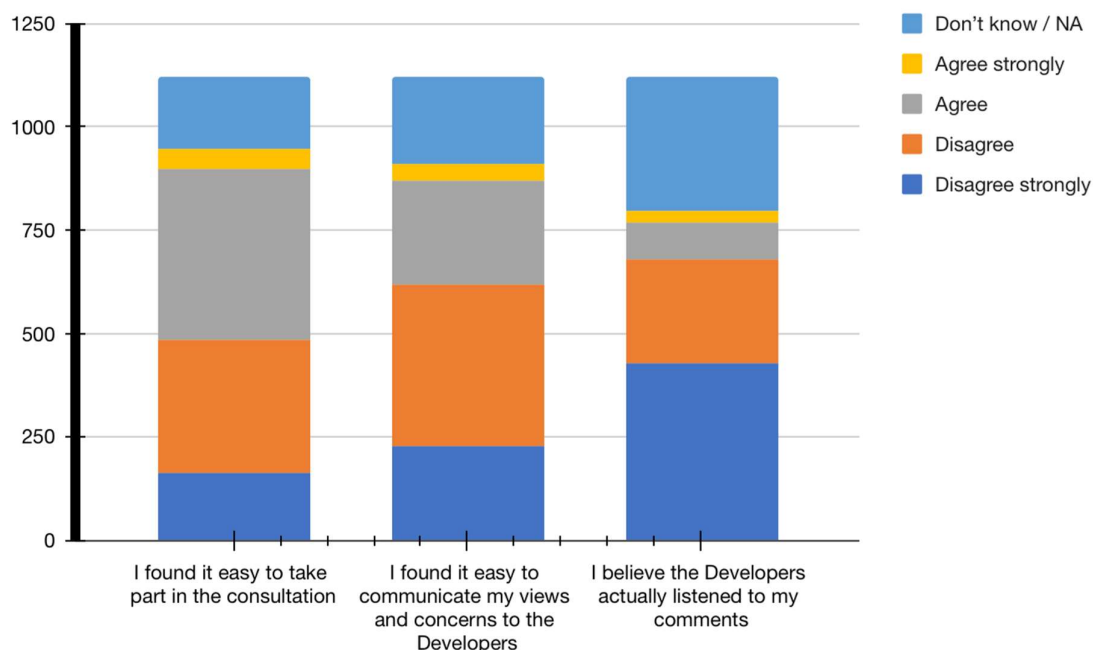
3.3. Ease of taking part in the consultation and communicating views and/or concerns

1122 people responded to three questions on this, based on the extent to which they agreed with the following ‘positive’ statements:

Statement	Disagreed	Agreed
I found it easy to take part in the consultation	43.4% disagreed including 14.5 strongly	41.9% agreed including just 4.2% strongly
I found it easy to communicate my views and concerns to the Developers	55.3% disagreed including 20.1% strongly	25.8% agreed including just 3.7% strongly
I believe the Developers actually listened to my comments	60.7% disagreed including 38.4% strongly	10.4% agreed including just 2.5% strongly

In each case between 15% and 29% respondents selected ‘NA/don’t know’.

We are keen to understand how easy it was to take part in the consultation and communicate your views and/or concerns. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:



There was a fairly even split between those who reported they had found it easy to take part in the consultation (42%) and those who had not found it easy (43%), although there was a slight differentiation between those who felt strongly about this, with 14.5% feeling strongly that it was not easy and only 4.2% feeling strongly that it was easy.

Whilst the views are relatively evenly split on this, it is not a particularly good result that only 42% of the respondents found it easy to take part in the consultation, and this does raise the question of how many people may not have taken part because they didn't find it easy to do so. Whatever the precise answer to that, this won't have helped the response rate to the consultation – and, of course, we do know that the relatively small number of events, the timing of the consultation itself (over Christmas) and the restricted times of week/day of the consultation events have all been cited as problematic, even before one considers the process of actually submitting a response to the consultation.

When it comes to how easy it was to communicate their views and concerns to the developers, and whether they felt the developers actually listened to their comments, the results paint an even more unsatisfactory picture.

Over half of the respondents (55%) said they did not find it easy to communicate their views and concerns to the developer, and 36% of these (20% of respondents) expressed that view strongly.

Only just over a quarter of the respondents (26%) said they had found it easy to communicate their views and concerns to the developer, and very few of these (14% of this group; 4% of respondents) expressed this view strongly.

The results were even more stark regarding the statement “I believe the Developers actually listened to my comments”.

61% of respondents disagreed with this statement, and nearly 2/3 of those (38% of respondents) disagreed strongly. In contrast, only 10% of respondents said they do believe the developers actually listened to their comments, with just a quarter of those (a mere 2.5% of respondents) feeling this strongly.

So it is clear that the majority of those taking part in the consultation do not believe that the developers were listening to their comments, to the extent that many expressed this view strongly.

Based on the majority views, we must therefore conclude that:

- it was not sufficiently easy to take part in the consultation.
- respondents did NOT find it easy to communicate their views and concerns to the developers
- respondents did NOT believe the Developers actually listened to their comments.

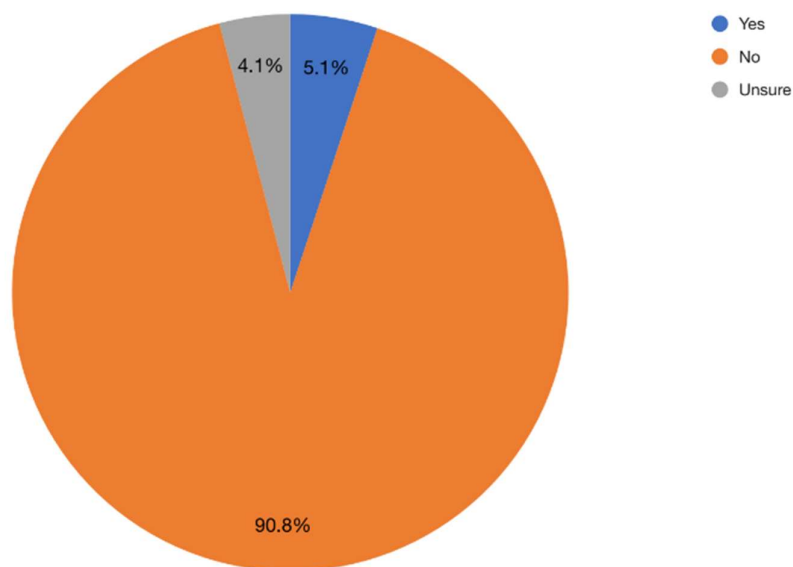
The last point is very consistent with the results in section 3.2 above, that individuals did not believe they had adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed.

Looking at the figures, the extent and strength of feeling on those points (not being listened to and feeling unable influence) are very similar.

4. Level of Support for the Current Plans

The focus of the questionnaire was specifically on the effectiveness and adequacy of the consultation, but in one simple question at the end respondents were asked a simple Yes/No question, to determine the overall balance of feeling towards the BWSF proposals. It is clear that amongst the respondents to this survey, the vast majority are against the proposals.

Do you support the current plans for the construction of Botley West Solar Farm?



5. Conclusions

It is notable that the conclusions below, based on analysis of a survey of the public's experience of PVDP's formal consultation process from December 2023 to January 2024, bear an uncanny resemblance to the results of a similar survey of the public's experience of PVDP's informal consultation held in November to December 2022. See Appendix below for comparison.

It seems that PVDP have learned nothing from feedback on that process, as the recently conducted formal consultation is similarly flawed.

Timing and availability of consultation events was inadequate

There were serious issues raised about the timing and availability of the consultation events.

- the consultation was held over the Christmas period, with around half the consultation events in the busy pre-Christmas month of December
- this is very similar to the timing of the informal consultation a year previously
- so we have a repeated timing issue, leading some to question if this was a deliberate attempt to discourage participation
- it is worth noting that prior to the formal consultation PVDP were asked by SBW to change the timing, precisely because of the clash with the Christmas period
- there were only 8 in-person consultation locations in total, and only 9 dates on which inperson consultations took place, and many people raised concerns about the restricted locations and timings of these, which made it difficult for people working 'conventional hours' to access them
- this seems totally inadequate for a consultation on a development of such a scale and with such wide-ranging implications

Clarity of information provided was inadequate

- the maps were not sufficiently clear or easy to understand
- the other visual and written information was not sufficiently clear or easy to understand
- the information was not sufficiently detailed (*The extent and strength of feeling on this point is particularly notable, with 2/3 respondents identifying this as an issue*)
- the information was not sufficiently consistent across the various sources

The consultation was inadequate

- questions were not answered adequately by the developers
- the answers received were not perceived to be based on adequate evidence and/or knowledge
- individuals did not believe they had adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed

A very significant finding is that a massive 66% (2/3) of respondents did NOT believe they had adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed; and more than half of these (37.9% of

respondents) felt that strongly. This is a severe indictment of an exercise that is defined as a 'consultation'.

Taking part in the consultation and communicating views and/or concerns was not easy

- it was not sufficiently easy to take part in the consultation
- respondents did not find it easy to communicate their views and concerns to the developers
- respondents did not believe the developers actually listened to their comments

Consistent with the extent and strength of the perception that there was not adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed, 61% of respondents felt the developers were not listening, and nearly 2/3 of these (38.4% of respondents) felt that strongly.

The vast majority of respondents do not support the current plans

91% of respondents said they did not support the current plans for the construction of Botley West Solar Farm. Only 5% do, and 4% said they were unsure.

Appendix to Annex 1: Conclusions about the informal consultation process in November-December 2022

- the vast majority of respondents are dissatisfied with the process, and with the extent and quality of the information provided to them
- there were an inadequate number of face-to-face and on-line consultation events
- the consultation events were not promoted effectively, with many people being unaware of them
- the design of the consultation feedback form was perceived to be biased in favour of the developers, and people found it difficult to express their views fully
- the above means that the reported consultation responses from PVDP are highly likely to artificially inflate the level of support for their scheme
- staff (representing PVDP and its partners) were unable to adequately answer questions raised
- only 6.6% of people who wrote to the developer felt that they got a helpful response

The overall conclusion must be that the consultation was inadequate in both its reach and its content.

STOP BOTLEY WEST CAMPAIGN, OXFORDSHIRE, May 2024