

Hannigan, Georgiana

From: Ken Wilkins [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 November 2025 17:21
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Cc: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk
Subject: Final objections to the Botley West Solar Farm proposal
Attachments: Objections to the Botley West Solar.docx

Categories: Deadline, EO

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Dear Sirs,

I have been making representations to both the Applicant and you ever since this proposal was first made. For reference, I have attached the detailed objections we submitted on 27th January this year. My objections were confined to issues which directly affected me and my property, and these were primarily on the following grounds.

Environmental damage- Visual and aesthetic Impact - Infrastructure and traffic Issues - Lack of Community Involvement and transparency – Failure to properly consider alternative solutions.

I do not accept that the applicant has satisfactorily dealt with these aspects, nor has he followed due process. During the Public Inquiry, the applicant appeared to be relying on his assumption that the project was “*Nationally Significant Infrastructure*”, and therefore there was no requirement to deal fully with these points.

I note that there are still major disagreements and unanswered questions relating to all these issues.

I did not consider the wider implications of the project; however, I note that these have been considered by our MP Calum Miller. He has recently tabled several questions to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, along the following lines:

What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Planning Inspectorate and Nationally Significant Infrastructure processes in Evaluating of the financial viability of funding commitments made by developers of major energy projects. (88459)

What assessment he has made of the financial viability of SolarFive Ltd and Photovolt Development partners to undertake Botley West Solar Farm. (88457)

Whether his Department has sought the advice of the office of the Financial Sanction Implementation on reported Russian-linked funding associated with the project. (88456)

What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Planning Inspectorate, and National Significant Infrastructure Project Processes, to safeguard against national security risks from investment by inappropriate or hostile overseas sources. (88455)

In addition, Calum has asked the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport:

What assessment she has made of the adequacy of the financial structure and governance arrangements of both the Blenheim Estate and the Blenheim Charitable Foundation. (88458)

I totally agree with Calum's reasoning in posing these questions, and irrespective of any final decisions on the on the points I have raised, it is vitally important that these additional matters should be carefully considered before a final decision is made.

Ken Wilkins (registration identification number [REDACTED])

Objections to the Botley West Solar “Farm”

Introduction

We are totally opposed to the proposed Botley West Solar “Farm” proposals. We need energy security, but food security is equally important, and utilising 3,200 acres of perfectly usable farmland, for the production of a relatively small amount of renewable energy, is not sensible. The same amount electricity could be produced by approximately 15 wind turbines! We do not have to build the largest solar “farm” in Europe in this location! In addition, the site is located mainly in protected green belt, and this is a totally inappropriate use of the land, especially as nearly 50% of the land, is best and most versatile (BMV) farmland.

Environment

One of our primary objections to the Botley West Solar “Farm” is the potential environmental impact. The installation of solar panels on such a large scale, will disrupt local ecosystems, including habitats for wildlife. Birds, insects, and other animals that thrive in the existing environment, would face displacement or loss of habitat due to the construction and operation of the solar “farm”. Furthermore, the change in land use, from agricultural or natural landscapes to solar energy production, will inevitably lead to loss of biodiversity and soil degradation.

Visual and Aesthetic Impact

The proposed “farm” is essentially industrial in nature and the visual impact of the solar “farm” is another one of my prime concerns. It will irretrievably alter the landscape. Large arrays of solar panels are unsightly, and incompatible with the rural character of the region. This change in scenery could potentially affect property values, tourism, and the overall quality of life for our local community.

Aesthetic concerns are particularly pronounced in areas with historical or cultural significance, where maintaining the natural beauty of the landscape is of utmost importance. This industrial proposal will wrap round almost three sides of the historic town of Woodstock which includes Blenheim Palace and grounds. The Grade 1 listed Palace, which is advertised as Britain’s finest palace, is a World Heritage Asset and this proposal will inevitably affect it’s setting.

Infrastructure and Traffic Issues

This is the wrong location for a proposal of this size. We do not believe there is a solar farm of this scale anywhere, either built or proposed, as close to human habitation.

The proposed site straddles both the A40 and the A44 roads, which are both major road arteries, and already plagued with traffic issues. The construction phase of the solar farm is anticipated to bring a significant increase in traffic and the infrastructure development, will disrupt the daily lives of nearby residents and commuters to Oxford. The transportation of materials, equipment, and workers to the site will lead to road congestion, noise pollution, and wear and tear on local roads. The excavation in connection with the cable routes, which cross the A40 and A44 at critical points, will severely affect traffic flow and prejudice the extremely busy ambulance flows to and from the Oxford hospitals.

In addition, the proposal will directly affect over 15 villages. This is particularly concerning for small villages and rural areas with limited infrastructure designed to handle such increased activity.

Economic Considerations

Obviously, there will be jobs created during the construction phase, but this is a very temporary benefit. The maintenance and operation of the solar panels will not provide significant ongoing employment opportunities for local residents. It will certainly not fully make up for the loss of farming jobs. Additionally, we are concerned about the financial viability and sustainability of the project, especially if it relies heavily on government subsidies or incentives.

Community Involvement and Transparency

Unfortunately, there has been a significant lack of community involvement and transparency in the planning and decision-making process. The plans produced at the consultation meeting we attended, were misleading, and in some cases out-of-date. Our own property and several others were omitted from the plans and the developer's representatives were unable to answer my queries. Generally, residents and local stakeholders feel that their concerns and opinions have not been adequately considered or addressed.

Alternative Solutions

We are not convinced that alternative solutions have been adequately explored, to meet renewable energy targets. We maintain we should primarily be using brownfield sites, previously developed land, and rooftops, especially on industrial buildings, for solar installations. In addition, investing in a diverse mix of renewable energy sources, such as wind, hydro, and biomass, could help mitigate the concentrated impact of a proposal such as this one.

Conclusion

The application states that the project aims to contribute to a sustainable future. However, it also raises significant concerns that cannot be overlooked. As is clear from the above outline, it is the wrong proposal in the wrong location.

Ken Wilkins

Jan Wilkins