



Department of Energy Security and Net Zero
3-8 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2AW

www.gov.uk/desz

To:
Pinsent Masons on behalf of
SolarFive Limited and PhotoVolt Development Partners

Ref: EN010147

8 June 2026

Dear Sir or Madam,

Planning Act 2008 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Application by SolarFive Limited, on behalf of PhotoVolt Development Partners (“the Applicant”) for an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed Botley West Solar Farm (“the Proposed Development”)

Following the request for further information (“RFI”) issued to the Applicant and other named Interested Parties (“IPs”) and Affected Parties on 14 April 2026 (re-issued on 20 and 28 April 2026), the Secretary of State has carefully considered your letter dated 22 May 2026 on behalf of the Applicant requesting an extension to the deadline for response from 23:59 on 9 June 2026 to 23:59 on 25 September 2026.

The Secretary of State notes the reasons provided by the Applicant, including the need to undertake further work in relation to landscape and visual matters, specifically an updated Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (“LVIA”), updated Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (“RVAA”), and engagement with the Oxfordshire Host Authorities (“OHA”) and other consultees. The Secretary of State also notes that this work may result in changes to the Proposed Development, requiring amendments to a significant amount of application documents.

The Secretary of State recognises the importance of ensuring that robust information is available to inform the decision-making process. Given the scope of the LVIA request, a period of 8 weeks was afforded for responses to the RFI. Many of the planning matters and the associated requests in the RFI were not new and arose during the Examination which concluded in November 2025. The Secretary of State considers your request, made shortly before the RFI deadline, and for a significant extension until 25 September 2026, cannot be justified in these circumstances.

The Secretary of State considers that the extension sought would have significant implications for the statutory decision-making timetable, which has already been extended from 10 May 2026 to 10 September 2026.

The Secretary of State considers that maintaining discipline within the statutory framework established by the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”) is of fundamental importance to the efficient and fair operation of the development consent regime.

Agreeing to an extension of the duration sought, and at a late stage within the RFI response period, could create an undesirable precedent and risk undermining confidence in, and the integrity of, the planning process. It may also give rise to concerns of fairness, as other respondents are working to the existing timetable and would not have benefited from an equivalent extension.

The Written Ministerial Statement made on 26 March 2026 by Minister McCluskey set a new deadline of no later than 10 September 2026 for deciding this application to enable the Department to seek further information from the Applicant with sufficient time to allow for consideration by other IPs.

For these reasons, the Secretary of State has decided to **refuse** the Applicant’s request to extend the RFI response deadline to 25 September 2026. The deadline of 23:59 on 9 June 2026 for response to the RFI therefore remains.

This decision does not preclude the Applicant from providing further information in response to the other matters in the RFI, or specifically to LVIA and RVAA, within the existing RFI timetable.

Any inability to reach agreement with the OHA’s, or other statutory consultees, in respect of updated assessment or other matters also should not preclude the Applicant from submitting its response by the RFI deadline. The outcome of any such consultation undertaken with statutory consultees during the RFI period should simply be noted in the responses.

In reaching a decision on the application, the Secretary of State will take account of all information received by the current RFI deadline, in addition to any responses to an all IPs consultation, where required. The Secretary of State will retain discretion as to whether any late submissions can be taken into account.

This decision to not accept an extension does not preclude the Secretary of State from undertaking further consultations as necessary, or to extend further requests for information deadlines in future cases, if necessary.

This letter is without prejudice to the Secretary of State’s consideration of whether to grant or withhold development consent for the Botley West Solar Farm. Nothing in this letter is to be taken to imply what the eventual decision might be or what final conclusions the Secretary of State may reach on any particular issue relevant to the determination of the application.

Yours faithfully,

John Wheadon

John Wheadon

Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning and Innovation

For and on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security
and Net Zero