

From: Rupert Hodson [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 July 2026 13:33
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Botley West Solar Farm (BWSF) — Further Representation from Interested Party

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a registered interested party to raise further concerns about the application by Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Botley West Solar Farm. Having reviewed the Applicant's latest submissions, I do not believe sufficient, reliable evidence has been provided for the Secretary of State to strike a fair balance between the scheme's merits and its harms. I would like to draw particular attention to two issues, which have direct personal relevance to my family.

My mother lives in Shipton Slade hamlet, which falls within the footprint of this scheme, and she will be majorly affected by its scale and by the way residential buffers are being handled. Her situation illustrates exactly why the two issues below matter, not just in principle but for real households.

1. Residential buffers are being deferred, not delivered

The Examining Authority repeatedly asked PVDP to produce a proper, property-by-property Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), and in its absence proposed a minimum 250m buffer for affected residential properties. The Applicant's revised Masterplans appear at first glance to reflect this, but on closer reading they do not. PVDP is in fact proposing a minimum buffer of only 100m, with final buffer distances to be agreed with local authorities *after* the DCO is granted.

This is unacceptable for two reasons. First, it removes any meaningful opportunity for residents and interested parties to scrutinise or challenge the final buffer distances that will affect their homes — a decision of real consequence being taken outside the examination process, after the point at which the public has any democratic input. Second, the local authorities themselves have indicated they lack the time, resources, and expertise to carry out this assessment properly. Deferring a core planning judgement to a body that has said it cannot do the work is not a credible basis for consent.

For my mother in Shipton Slade, this is not an abstract concern. A 100m buffer, rather than the 250m recommended by the Examining Authority, would leave her home and daily life materially more exposed to the visual and amenity impact of this scheme, with no guarantee that a fair assessment will be carried out before that decision is locked in. I ask that the Secretary of State require PVDP to complete the full RVAA and commit to the 250m buffer recommended by the Examining Authority before any DCO is granted, not after.

2. The substation and panel construction timelines don't add up

National Grid's own projections indicate the associated substation will not be ready for connection until late 2031 at the earliest — and that assumes a smooth planning process for an application that has not yet been submitted, with a location not yet finalised. PVDP, by contrast, continues to claim a connection date of late 2029. These two positions cannot both be correct.

The Examining Authority proposed a Grampian clause preventing construction of Botley West from starting until the substation itself has planning permission — a sensible safeguard against building a solar farm with no confirmed means of connecting it to the grid. The Applicant appears to have sidestepped this requirement through an alternative mechanism rather than accepting the condition as proposed. Given the scale of uncertainty around the substation, I believe the original Grampian clause should stand, and the DCO should not be granted until there is a credible, evidenced connection timeline.

Conclusion

Taken together, these issues point to a pattern: important assessments are incomplete, and decisions with real consequences for residents like my mother are being pushed to after consent is granted, when the public will have no further say. The Applicant requested a further three-month extension to complete outstanding work, and this was refused. That work remains undone. I do not believe the application, as it stands, provides the Secretary of State with the reliable evidence needed to make a lawful and balanced decision, and I ask that consent be refused unless these matters are resolved within the examination itself.

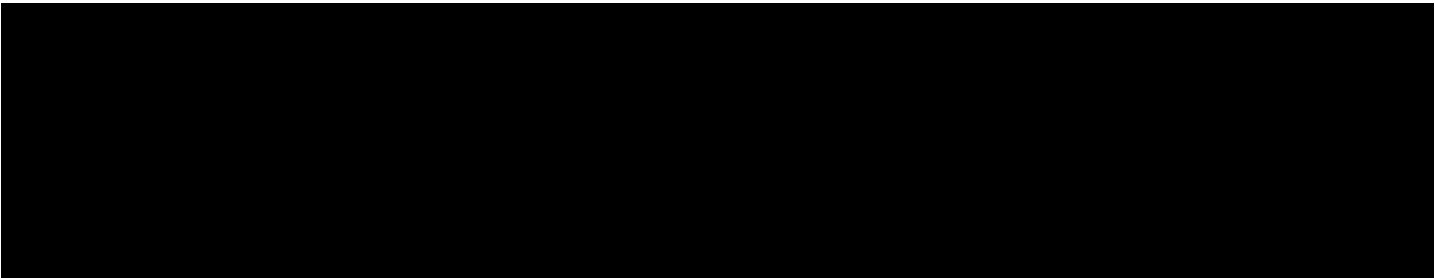
Thank you for taking my representation into account.

Yours faithfully,

Rupert Hodson (Son of [REDACTED])
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Rupert Hodson



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