

Simon Raywood

From: Katy Messenger [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 July 2026 13:47
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Concerns about Botley West Solar

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]

Good afternoon

I'm emailing as I'm concerned that there is still insufficient information and evidence from the Applicant to enable anyone, including the Secretary of State, to judge whether or not the merits outweigh the harm in the planning balance for Botley West Solar.

In many areas the Applicant's assessments are deeply flawed; inaccurate, incomplete and insufficiently verified. In all areas, lack of engagement, missing studies and reports and attempts to delay important decisions until after the DCO is granted all mean that the decision maker, Secretary of State for Energy and Net Zero, (SoS) has not been provided with sufficiently reliable information on which to make a fair and balanced decision and to lawfully determine this the application.

The Applicant requested a further extension of 3 months to complete the missing work and the SoS refused. Time has finally run out for the Applicant and the missing work has not been done. This should mean that a decision can't be made and the Application should be refused. Some specific issues which need to be considered are as follows:

RESIDENTIAL VISUAL AMENITY ASSESSMENT (RVAA) and BUFFERS.

Despite frequent and repeated requests from the Examiners, the Applicant failed to produce a satisfactory RVAA.

In the absence of this, The Examiners (ExA) proposed a minimum 250m buffer for all residential properties because PVDP never completed a full and proper property by property assessment as required or produced that frequently requested Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.

New Masterplans appear to show there will be a 250m buffer for at least some properties.

The plans are misleading because this isn't what they actually propose to do. Instead they are proposing a minimum of just 100m (instead of 250m proposed by ExA) and to leave the final decisions on buffers to be finalised (with local authorities) AFTER the Development Consent Order (DCO) is granted.

This delay is wrong for two reasons.

1. It is undemocratic. We will not have any say in the final decision.
2. It is unworkable. The local authorities state clearly they do not have the time, resources or expertise to do this properly.

SUBSTATION and PANELS - chicken and egg

National Grid now predict that the substation will not be ready to connect until the last quarter of 2031 and that assumes that it proceeds through planning process without a hitch since but they haven't submitted an application yet (or decided the exact location)

PVDP still claim a connection date of late 2029. They can't both be right!

The Examiners proposed what is called a Grampian clause to be added to the DCO. Essentially this means PVDP can't start building Botley West until the substation has planning permission. The Applicant has effectively ignored this request and used another device to avoid waiting for the sub-station to be approved.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE and ANCIENT TREES

Several important studies have not been completed nor results submitted. These include plans to protect habitats and species, damage to tree roots through cable trenching. Where mitigations have been proposed, for example skylark plats, bat migration corridors or translocation of fauna they are flawed, incomplete, experimental or have been demonstrated not to work. The Environmental Management Plan, like many other important issues, is being "promised later".

COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING PLOTS

- There is no evidence from PVDP that these plots would all be filled and used productively.
- They have assumed a need and desire for them without consulting the Community.
- The plans include a commercial enterprise. This is not, as claimed, a Community benefit
- The locations do not, as claimed, all have "safe and easy access"
- They could easily be abandoned and left as untended scrubland.

AIRPORT SAFETY

70,000 training flights take off (and land!) at London Oxford Airport each year and there are still concerns about their safety. Several big training companies have not been consulted before, as they should have been. They are seriously worried about glint and glare, insufficient panel removal and turbulence and will be sending in submissions.

FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY

The Applicant is sticking to the view that solar panels do not and cannot influence the rate of runoff and cite old scientific literature to back up this claim. However, there is now a large body of more recent literature which concludes that the rate of runoff is influenced by solar arrays because of the drip-line effect. This means that the Applicant has significantly

underestimated the amount of water that may flow off the Solar Power Station. Given the vulnerability of Cassington, Worton, Jericho Barns and localities around Cumnor to flooding this is a very serious issue that may lead to increased flood risk as a result of the proposed scheme. It will also destroy land drains further exacerbating the risk.

For all the above reasons, and more, I am very concerned about plans for Botley West Solar. It seems clear that the Applicant has failed to provide sufficient information and evidence around these issues for the Secretary of State for Energy and Net Zero (SOS) to be able to make a fair and balanced decision and to lawfully determine this application. As such I feel strongly that a decision cannot be made and the Application should be refused.

Best wishes

Katy Messenger

Resident of Dean Court Road, Botley