

Simon Raywood

From: Nick Platt [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 July 2026 15:09
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Botley West Solar Farm Application

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Dear Secretary of State,

Here, I wish to state my objections to the Botley West Solar Farm application.

My major concerns are not limited to the scheme itself, but also failure of the Applicant to provide sufficient, reliable evidence that will permit a fair and lawful assessment of whether the claimed benefits outweigh the significant harms that would arise from the development.

Although repeated requests for critical information, such as key assessments and the underlying supporting evidence they have not been provided or are inadequate. This does not bode well for the future of the project. Critical matters, including residential visual amenity, environmental mitigation, wildlife protection, flooding impacts and absolute buffer distances for affected homes, remain unresolved or deferred until after any Development Consent Order is granted. The consequence of this would be loss of meaningful public scrutiny because consent would have already been given.

I am also concerned by the uncertainty surrounding the proposed grid connection and substation; the Applicant's timetable is inconsistent with National Grid's published expectations. In addition, there remain unresolved concerns regarding airport safety, flood risk, the impact on a UNSECO world heritage sites environment and the effectiveness of proposed environmental mitigation measures.

The Applicant requested additional time to complete this work, which was refused. However, the missing information has still not been provided. Therefore, I do not believe the Secretary of State has sufficient evidence on which to make a balanced and lawful decision.

Finally, the legitimacy of the source of the financing of the project and with it the inherent reputational risk has received significant coverage in the published press but does not appear to have been adequately considered by the relevant authorities. In a time of increased awareness and problems of 'dark money', particularly that derived from Russia and its client states which have resulted in necessary economic sanctions, it does seem remarkable that the opaque Russian-linked funding via Belarus for Botley West Solar Farm has not apparently been part of the evaluation. The application should therefore be refused.

Dr Nick Platt

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