

Simon Raywood

From: Felicity Burnell [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 July 2026 23:31
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Objection to Botley West Solar Farm.

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Dear Planning Inspector,

I wish to register my objection to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm Development Consent Order.

At the heart of my objection is the fact that there is still insufficient information and evidence from the Applicant for either members of the public or the Secretary of State to properly assess whether the claimed benefits of the proposal outweigh the significant harm it would cause. Without the necessary evidence, it is impossible to reach a sound planning judgment or undertake a lawful planning balance.

A number of critical environmental studies remain incomplete or have not been submitted. These include essential information relating to the protection of wildlife habitats and species, as well as assessments of the potential damage to ancient trees and their root protection areas from cable trenching and associated construction works. These are not minor details but fundamental issues that should have been fully assessed before any decision is made.

Where mitigation measures have been proposed, they are often incomplete, unproven or demonstrably ineffective. Examples include the proposed skylark plots, bat migration corridors and the translocation of wildlife. These measures rely on assumptions and experimental approaches rather than robust, evidence-based mitigation. Furthermore, the Environmental Management Plan, which is intended to provide the framework for protecting the environment during construction and operation, has still not been provided and is instead being deferred until after consent. Such an approach leaves significant uncertainty over whether the environmental impacts can be adequately managed.

I am also concerned by the Applicant's proposals for community food growing plots. There is no evidence that these plots would be fully occupied or productively used. The Applicant has assumed both demand and community support without undertaking meaningful consultation. In addition, the inclusion of a commercial enterprise means these proposals cannot reasonably be presented as a genuine community benefit. The suggested locations do not all provide safe or easy access as claimed, and there is a real risk that unused plots would become neglected and deteriorate into unmanaged scrubland. For these reasons, I believe the community food growing proposals should be removed from the scheme and the affected fields excluded from the Development Consent Order red-line boundary.

The Applicant has already been granted considerable time to provide the necessary information. Following a request for a further three-month extension to complete the outstanding work, the Secretary of State refused that request. Despite this, the missing information has still not been produced. The Applicant has therefore failed to provide the evidence required to support its application within the timescales set by the examination process.

In these circumstances, I do not believe that the application can be properly determined. The outstanding information is fundamental to understanding the environmental impacts of the proposal and whether those impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated. Without it, neither the Secretary of State nor interested parties can conclude that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the considerable harm.

The burden rests with the Applicant to demonstrate that the proposed development complies with the relevant planning policy and that its benefits outweigh its adverse impacts. In the absence of the necessary evidence, that burden has not been met.

I therefore respectfully request that the Secretary of State refuses the Botley West Solar Farm Development Consent Order application.

Yours faithfully,

Felicity Burnell

[Redacted signature]