

Simon Raywood

From: Peter Lister [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 July 2026 13:16
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Re: EN010147 Botley West Solar Farm

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I wish to reinforce my opposition to this application and to comment on the applicant's response to the Secretary of State's questions, dated 16 June 2026, with corrections to some errata dated 6 July 2026.

I understand that the applicant applied for extra time in submitting the response, which was rejected. I observe that the response seems rushed and incomplete in various ways, and this lack of seriousness is frankly disrespectful to all those involved in contributing to and involved with the planning and decision process. It seems that the applicant does not answer many of the Secretary of State's questions and contains at least one serious error which I do not see noted on the Inspectorate's web site.

Landscape

It seems that the Landscape study is incomplete and the applicant proposes not to decide on the buffer sizes until after a DCO has been granted. It is hard to see how the areas noted on the attached maps as 250m buffer zones relate to the nearby dwellings and it appears that other dwellings have no 250m buffer at all. The applicant had plenty of time to do a full assessment, consult with all affected residents and provide a proper submission at their expense. It seems that the applicant is attempting to persuade the Inspectorate that this is not necessary and is trying to bounce any final agreement onto residents and OHA planners after the fact, presumably expecting local residents to fund this either themselves or via the local authorities. I trust that the Inspectorate will regard this poor attempt at a submission as a clear failure to answer the Secretary of State's question.

Substation

The applicant's project is clearly dependent on a high-voltage substation being built by National Grid, at tax payers' expense. This cannot, I understand, happen before 2031 and until a separate planning process is complete. It is clear that any application for a power station cannot proceed until its grid connection is approved and this should be an absolute requirement for this application.

Heritage

PVDP apparently disagrees with ICOMOS and Historic England and asserts that the latter express "subjective" views. ICOMOS and HE are professionals whose experience should be taken seriously. The applicant's views are, inevitably, highly subjective themselves. Simply disagreeing is a clear failure to provide an answer to the Secretary of State's question.

Agriculture

The applicant still asserts that the agricultural land it wishes to take over is "poor quality" - despite evidence to the contrary. It appears also that the "community food" proposal has not been requested or welcomed by any parts of the communities in question.

Viability

The applicant's responses (paras 68 & 69) to Section 15 "Without Prejudice Offer" contain numbers which they present as evidence that they cannot reduce the development further without its becoming unviable.

First there are glaring errors in the table split across pp 144-145 which contains a line, with a green background annotated as "Marginally viable"; this appears to have numbers which are meaningless and certainly unrelated to the quantities above or below (e.g. in the column headed "CAPEX (£M)", the quantity is "01"). This line is, of course, the critical one in the table. One can theorise why such an important entry - which apparently supports the applicant's entire theory for viability - has such glaring errors and was not checked (and not noted in errata as far as I can see) but this demonstrates a shocking disregard for the Secretary of State, the Inspectorate and all readers of this document.

Presumably the applicant has a theory about what they and their investors regard as "viable". As this application is by far the largest in the UK and one of the largest world-wide, one has to wonder then how all the other renewable energy developments of various types and sizes manage to consider themselves viable. More to the point, the Red House Farm development, right next door to Botley West in Cumnor Parish, evidently perceives itself to be viable despite being a small fraction of the size of this applicant's huge proposed power station. Whether the Red House Farm development proceeds is irrelevant; we certainly know that the solar power station between Cowley and Nuneham Courtenay is being built, and that it is much smaller than the "Botley West" proposal. These developments and those of similar sizes are, we can safely assume, deemed viable by their promoters and investors.

Why then, is this applicant apparently incapable of making a success of a smaller proposal? This must either be financial incompetence (in which case, why should we trust any of the figures presented) or a tacit admission that the proposed "Botley West" sites are, indeed, not suitable for a massive industrial development in the same way that several other sites, discussed at some length in Section 1 of the response document, were also rejected.

Flooding

And finally, flooding. I am a resident of Cumnor parish; all locals know that the area around Filchampstead below Tumbledown, which the Farmoor section of the proposed power station would cover, reliably floods every year. Building a solar power station will make the situation much worse. The applicant tries to argue that research shows that solar panels make little difference to run off - or at least does so in its response to Cassington parish council; the response to Cumnor parish council is terse and dismissive. The situation is bad enough now and any significant development will make it worse, especially if the solar power station at Red House Farm is also developed.