

David Charlesworth

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14 July 2026

The Rt Hon Edward Milliband

Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

1 Victoria Street London SW1H 0ET

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Botley West Solar Farm – Developer Non-Compliance and Attempt to Submit Late Evidence

I am writing as a resident of Oxfordshire to raise serious concerns about the conduct of the developer behind the Botley West Solar Farm Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The developer has repeatedly failed to comply with the Planning Inspectorate's requests for information and has now sought permission to submit substantial new evidence well after the statutory deadlines.

This behaviour is not an isolated incident. Community groups such as Stop Botley West have been monitoring the process closely and have documented a pattern of missed deadlines, incomplete submissions, and requests for extensions that far exceed what is reasonable within the NSIP framework.

Key Issues Identified by Local Stakeholders

Stop Botley West and other local bodies have highlighted several critical concerns:

- **Failure to provide required information on time**, despite clear and repeated requests from the Planning Inspectorate.
- **Attempts to introduce major new evidence after deadlines**, which would normally be inadmissible under the structured NSIP timetable.
- **A growing volume of late material**, making it increasingly difficult for residents, parish councils, and statutory consultees to review and respond meaningfully.
- **Concerns that the developer is using delay tactics**, creating an uneven process in which they benefit from additional time while the public is constrained by fixed deadlines.

- **The scale of the new information requested**, which suggests that earlier submissions were incomplete or inadequate.

These issues collectively undermine confidence in the fairness and transparency of the NSIP process.

Why This Must Be Addressed

The NSIP system is designed to ensure that all parties — including local communities — can participate on equal terms. When a developer repeatedly fails to meet deadlines and then seeks to submit large volumes of new evidence, it:

- **Compromises the integrity of the examination process**
- **Disadvantages the public**, who must continually adjust to shifting timelines
- **Creates procedural imbalance**, effectively granting the developer more flexibility than other participants
- **Risks setting a precedent** that developers may ignore statutory requirements without consequence

Given the exceptional size of the Botley West proposal — one of the largest solar developments ever proposed in the UK — strict adherence to process is essential.

Request for Intervention

I respectfully ask that your department:

1. **Review the developer's non-compliance with the Inspectorate's requests and deadlines,**
2. **Confirm whether the late submission of new evidence is admissible under NSIP rules,**
3. **Ensure that any late evidence is either rejected or accompanied by a formal extension of time for public review,**
4. **Provide assurance that developers cannot repeatedly disregard statutory deadlines without consequence.**

Local communities deserve a process that is transparent, fair, and conducted within the rules. The current situation risks undermining public trust in the NSIP system and in the governance of major renewable infrastructure projects.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

David Charlesworth