

Jessica Dunlop

From: Peter Harvey [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 July 2026 14:31
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Botley West Solar Farm - unsatisfactory submission; undemocratic extension

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. Learn why this is important at [REDACTED]]

Interested Party Registration Number [REDACTED]

Peter Harvey (Jericho Farmhouse, Worton, OX29 4SZ) peter@peterharvey.com

Dear Secretary of State

I am writing to you with reference to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm to express my concern about the response to the answers provided by PVDP to the Secretary of State's recent questions.

I live with my wife at [REDACTED] near the village of Cassington and own the field along the Yarnton Road to the south. Our property is within 250 metres of the boundary of the proposed Solar Farm site.

It is extremely concerning - shocking even - that PVDP intend to make a further substantial new submission around 16 July despite the categoric refusal by your office to allow any further extensions after the 9 June deadline. From the beginning PVDP have acted - both as a company and at a personal level in the behaviour of its representatives at the meetings

- with an offensive confidence that this is a 'done-deal' which no objections will be able to prevent, or influence to any significant extent. This attitude has been apparent throughout, PVDP having made a mockery of the planning system and consultation process, arrogantly ignoring requests by residents, and even national bodies such as Historic England and the Examiners (!) for specific reports, assessments and details. Their cavalier approach to the process is clear and their well-funded media campaign has spread mis-information including their spokesperson appearing in the national press stating that the Solar Farm will 'not be noticeable' and that Botley West will not affect living conditions in the area! How can this be the 'proper process' required on which to base a decision which will affect a vast part of West Oxfordshire for many decades?

Their careless disregard for due process makes one entitled to wonder if in fact there has all along been an agreement - tacit or otherwise - made between PVDP and the relevant branches of the national government. Without some such understanding, it is hard to understand their being willing to commit up-front to the enormous scale of investment already undertaken, termination of farmers' leases, etc.

There are still many questions that remain unanswered:

- why is it needed on agricultural land when enough solar could be generated with a strategic nationwide policy on brownfield sites and roofs
- why it is so oppressively close to people's homes? PVDP have had plenty of time to produce a property by property impact assessment, but they have chosen not to do so.
- why is it so close to historic villages and grade 1 listed churches and why have they ignored comment from Historic England, CPRE and other national bodies?
- why is the crucial Visual Amenity Assessment plan still missing?
- why have PVDP still not visited homes and sites on the edge of the Solar array?
- how is it being paid for? Surely the public have a right to know how a project of national significance will be financed?

- why have PVDP not proved that they will meet the special circumstances required to use so much of the Green Belt?
- why does PVDP say that it would be linked to the grid in 2029 when NGET say that this will not happen until 2031? There is no decision yet on exactly where the substation will be sited or whether it will get permission from VHDC. This is the wrong way around. If there is no substation the project will be worthless and destroy this beautiful part of Oxfordshire unnecessarily.
- why is there so little concern for food security? A mega solar site such as Botley West built on productive farmland locks it out of food production for decades (for ever, in reality, since the thousands upon thousands of concrete piles used to support the arrays will be left in the ground). I would ask that the government pause mega solar approvals including Botley West until a clear strategic plan is in place, including the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) and that the government ban using any high grade BMV land for mega solar sites, preventing loss of farmland and rural character.
- why do PVDP not take the flood risk in our very local area seriously? “Their response is to state that any changes to run-off will be insignificant provided the ground beneath the panels remains vegetated”. But they provide no evidence that this “vegetated state” can be guaranteed. The response, again from PVDP is white-washing and wishful thinking.
- why have PVDP decided to offer to include a larger buffer zone at this late stage, but say that it is only 'provisional'? This is a worthless non-promise. If this is passed they will have no legal obligation to adhere to the revised plan, and it seems highly doubtful that they will do so.
- why is the cable route still not finalised when surely this is a prerequisite to the project being possible?

In summary PVDP have undertaken some local consultations and asked for questions and concerns, but they have rarely provided any pertinent answers or produced many of the specific reports that have been requested by residents, national bodies and the Examiner. The arrogance of PVDP is clear to see. They cherry-pick which questions to answer and ride rough-shod over the due process and democratic framework. It would be profoundly undemocratic if they are now given special exemption to the rules which have been repeatedly stated (and which they have been unable to satisfy at any stage).

I sincerely hope that a Development Consent Order will not be granted for Botley West and that a more coordinated and strategic way forward will be found for renewable energy production which does not risk destroying historic countryside, productive farmland and precious ecology.

Yours faithfully
Peter Harvey