

From: Annie Haight [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 July 2026 17:23
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Haight response to PVDP 9 June submission

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I am writing in response to the June 9th submission by the Applicant, PVDP, to the questions raised by the Secretary of State for Energy and Net Zero regarding the proposal for Botley West Solar Farm. I am a long-standing resident of Cumnor Village in Oxfordshire and have followed and participated in the consultation and planning permission process for this proposed development since 2023. I have responded a number of times to both PVDP's consultation process and, as a registered interested party, in the Planning Inspectorate's formal process. I would like to reiterate a point I have made before in my comments over this period: my concerns are shared by many residents in the local area who do not have the time (as I do, being retired) to participate in these processes and to formally register their objections.

I also reiterate that I am deeply concerned by global warming, support the goal of net zero in the UK's energy production and encourage the government to seek and authorise truly sustainable renewable sources of energy. However, I believe this can be done without drastic damage to human environments, agricultural land, and natural habitats. For this reason, I oppose the proposed Botley West Solar Farm and respectfully request the Department of Energy and New Zero to deny permission to this destructive proposal and seek better options.

As the DENZ's 70 questions demonstrate, even after the Botley West Solar Farm proposal had been through the lengthy and rigorous Planning Inspectorate process and the recommendations that followed, there were many issues that were insufficiently addressed by the Applicant. A number of these concerned flaws or omissions in the proposal, often regarding the mitigation of environmental harms and the degradation of the quality of life of the local communities. A number of these issues remain insufficiently addressed in the Applicant's most recent submission. These include issues (among others) surrounding:

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- Human safety, including
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flood risks near Cassington, Worton, Jericho Barns and areas around Cumnor, with attendant danger to human life, health and property;
the risks from glare to air traffic out of London Oxford Airport;
considerable potential dangers from construction vehicle traffic operating on already crowded village roads

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- Environmental protection
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for example regarding habitats, wildlife, and risks of damage to tree roots from cable trenching
It is unacceptable that the proposal's Environmental Management Plan has been omitted from the Applicant's response and promised for 'later' (presumably after permission has been granted)

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- Co-ordination with other key energy-related infrastructure
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There is an alarming discrepancy between PVDP's claim of connection to the National Grid in late 2029, and the National Grid's own projection of a connection date in the fourth quarter of 2031 - a variance of two years. It is unacceptable that this point is left so vague. It is worth noting that the National Grid has not yet submitted a planning application (or chosen an exact location) for this substation.

The Applicant has ignored the PI Examiner's suggestion for a Grampian clause ensuring that construction of Botley West Solar Farm would be delayed until the National Grid substation had been granted planning permission.

The Applicant's recent responses follow a pattern of evasion, dismissal and misdirection familiar to concerned local residents. Opponents of the proposal have long experience of the Applicant's failure to address concerns put to them by the community and interested parties during the course of the consultation and Planning Inspectorate's examination. To me, this indicates that they have no answers to our awkward questions, either because they hope they will be able to fudge and bulldoze their way through them once they have obtained permission, or because our concerns and objections are fundamentally unanswerable.

It is in fact not possible to mitigate the destructive effects that the building, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of this massive construction would inflict on such an intricate, historic rural landscape in which precious heritage sites, agricultural land, fragile ecosystems, villages and already inadequate road systems are interwoven.

It is extremely significant that PVDP's other projects have been located in unpopulated areas, such as the remote Japanese island of Ukujima, where cabling is situated underwater. PVDP lacks experience of siting their solar facilities in inhabited areas, and certainly not in an area with the complex character of this part of rural Oxfordshire. Perhaps the Applicant's unwillingness or inability to address genuine concerns stems from this fact. They are out of their depth planning a project such as the one proposed, and are unable to mitigate the deleterious cost to the local community and environment that it would entail. In effect, Botley West Solar Farm is a gigantic, unprecedented and ill-conceived experiment. Should it be approved, it would be at an unprecedented and possibly permanent cost to the local environment and communities.

Given the arrival of a new Prime Minister, and what we may assume will be a period of considerable administrative upheaval in most government departments, I believe it is highly inappropriate to continue to rehearse the arguments regarding this benighted proposal. The more time and resources are spent considering it, the less there is to spend on more viable and truly sustainable and effective renewable-energy projects, such as those involving tidal or wind power.

I urge you to deny this application and move on to more sustainable options.

Dr Annie Haight
Cumnor, Oxford