

[REDACTED]
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16 July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Botley West

I am writing to set out just some of the many issues that the Applicant has failed to adequately address by way of the inspection process. The opportunity for engagement with interested parties was not pursued in any meaningful way by the Applicant and this was very evident during the Open Hearings. The Inspector's frustration with the Applicant's ongoing failure to provide verified reports and assessments across a wide range of areas was clear to see on several occasions. The Applicant frequently sought to delay important decisions until after the DCO was granted. Gaps in vital information following the Inspector's report were so extensive that the Applicant simply didn't have time to complete the outstanding work, as requested by the SoS, by the new 9th June deadline, resulting in them asking for a 3-month extension to do what should have been completed and consulted on much earlier. All of the above illustrates the inadequacy of the application, which should have been refused following the Inspector's report.

Just some of the issues outstanding:

Landscape/Residential Visual Amenity Assessments and Buffers:

Despite repeated requests from Examiners, the Applicant failed to produce a satisfactory RVAA.

Substation and Panels

National Grid state the substation would not be ready to connect until late 2031, whereas the Applicant states a connection date of late 2029.

Airport Safety

Several flight training schools are based at Oxford Airport, with 70,000 training flights annually. They had not previously been approached by the Applicant and there is real concern around safety of student pilots due to glint and glare and turbulence.

Wildlife and Ancient Trees

Studies are incomplete and 'Environmental Management Plan' is another report promised later.

Heritage

The Applicant disagrees with ICOMOS and Historic England on the issues around "setting".

Soils & Agriculture

The Applicant continues to inaccurately refer to "poor quality land".

It is clear the Applicant has not provided anywhere near sufficient information on which to base a 'safe' decision to recommend a DCO. Additionally, they have not demonstrated the competence required to work with other agencies to manage a national infrastructure project of this magnitude.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Begley

Ed Miliband

SoS

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