

Simon Raywood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 September 2026 14:23
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Botley West Solar Farm: EN010147

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Dear Secretary of State

Botley West Solar Farm: EN010147

I am extremely disappointed that the Applicant's late submissions have been accepted, causing further delay to the decision on Botley West and imposing an additional burden on Interested Parties by requiring further responses. It is difficult to understand the purpose of setting deadlines when the Applicant is permitted to ignore them without consequence. This approach risks undermining public confidence in the integrity and competence of the planning system.

I am a supporter of the Stop Botley West campaign and fully endorse the comprehensive SBW submission of 16 July [\[C2-161\]](#). I am concerned that despite these new proposals the Application is still irretrievably flawed. Too many questions remain unanswered and the Applicant seeks to defer too many important decisions until after any development consent is granted when they will be beyond public scrutiny and challenge.

I am writing to highlight a number of significant issues that remain unresolved and, in my view require further consideration before any consent is granted.

Red-line Boundary

The Applicant now states that at least 300 hectares of land will not be used for solar panels. If this is genuinely the case, certainty should be provided by amending the red-line boundary to exclude this land, allowing it to return to agricultural use.

Heritage and Landscape

The Landscape Character Assessment requested by ICOMOS has still not been undertaken, and the concerns raised by ICOMOS remain unresolved.

National Grid Substation

The location of the substation has yet to be determined, and no planning application has been submitted by National Grid Electricity Transmission. NGET has indicated that the earliest connection date is Winter 2031. Despite this, the DCO contains no provision preventing construction of the solar farm from commencing before planning consent for the substation has been secured.

Decommissioning Fund

The Examining Authority recommended that the DCO should require a decommissioning fund, as well as a decommissioning plan, to be in place before construction begins. This recommendation has not been incorporated.

Project Viability

The Applicant has not justified its assertion that a minimum capacity of 935MW is required for

economic viability and has rejected proposals from Oxfordshire's host authorities for a smaller-scale development.

Flood Risk

No additional panel pull-back has been proposed to mitigate flood risk, despite detailed evidence submitted by Cassington and Cumnor Parish Councils and their hydrology experts (REP7-068, REP7-077, C2-162 and C2-169).

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

An arboricultural impact assessment has still not been completed, and the proposed skylark compensation strategy appears unworkable.

Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A substantial part of the central site now falls within the proposed Three Rivers potential SSSI designation, reflecting the importance of the rivers and river valleys in the area. This development should be fully considered in the decision-making process.

Community Food Growing Areas

There has been no further consideration of community food growing proposals. These areas should be removed from the red-line boundary, as previously highlighted in REP5-072, REP5-093 and REP6-076.

Aviation Safety

The current panel layout continues to create risks for trainee pilots operating near the airport. Additional panel removal in this area remains essential (see C2-210 and C2-176).

Lower Road Cycle Path

The proposed cycle path along Lower Road continues to be shown on the Masterplan despite a verbal agreement during the Examining Authority's Site Inspection on 7 October 2025 that it would be removed from the application.

Minerals and Waste

Oxfordshire County Council remains in disagreement with the Applicant regarding minerals and waste matters.

Acquisition of Roadside Verges

The proposed acquisition of roadside verges remains a further unresolved area of disagreement between the Applicant and Oxfordshire County Council.

Taken together, these matters demonstrate that a number of key issues remain unresolved. They raise significant concerns regarding the suitability, deliverability and impacts of the proposed development and warrant further examination before any decision is made.

I respectfully request the Secretary of State to refuse outright the grant of a DCO for this Application.

Yours sincerely

Sara E Goldie