

Simon Raywood

From: Frances Sunderland [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 October 2026 10:09
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Botley West Solar Farm: EN010147 Objections

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Dear Secretary of State

Re: Botley West Solar Farm EN010147

I am writing to you with reference to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm to express my concern that yet another late submission from the applicant PVDP has been accepted despite promises that the planning process would be adhered to and despite the categorical initial refusal by your office to allow any further extensions after the 9 June deadline.

I live with my husband [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.

I am a supporter of the Stop Botley West campaign and fully endorse the comprehensive SBW submission of 16 July [C2-161] and ask the Secretary of State to refuse outright the grant of a DCO for this Application. 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.

Buffer Zones

I am horrified to find in this latest late submission that the situation being proposed is now even worse than that in the submission of 9 June.

The "outline Residential Visual Amenity Plan" (oRAP) [C1-108] and new Masterplan revision 5 [C1-111] now show a default buffer of only 100m (compared with the 250m default recommended by Examiners and previously shown in the Applicant's 9 June masterplan revision 4 [C1-051] "with additional offsets up to 250m applied where needed". It is not clear how this "need" would be assessed post consent when it will be beyond public scrutiny and quite clear that "need" will be in favour of PVDP. The Applicant's amended Schedule 2, requirement 15 in the DCO states that the 100m buffer minimum will be used as "the starting point which has been amended to require the final plan to be substantially in accordance with this outline plan." This implies that very few buffers will be increased to anything near 250m. This contradicts the Applicant's 9 June submissions in which the starting point was the 250m maximum to be adjusted downwards in some cases. **This is a significant and unjustified change compared to the Applicant's submissions of 9 June** in which the Applicant admitted that the Installation would still be viable, albeit marginally, with a panel area using a 250m buffer.

In addition a number of unresolved issues have still not been addressed:

National Grid Substation. - The location is still not decided. No planning Application has yet been submitted by NGET who say the earliest connection date is Winter 2031. There is no clause in DCO to say the BWSF build cannot start until the substation has planning consent.

Red-line Boundary. There are 300 hectares plus of land stated now by the Applicant not to be used for panels, but the red-line boundary has not been moved. The certainty that this land won't be used for panels should be secured by moving the red-line boundary. It can then be returned to agricultural use.

Heritage and Landscape. The Landscape Character Assessment requested by ICOMOS has not been undertaken and issues raised by ICOMOS remain unresolved.

Flood Risk. Localised flooding is a major concern here at Cassington. There is no further panel pull-back to mitigate flood risk despite well evidenced responses from Cassington and Cumnor Parish Councils and their Hydrology Experts. See REP7-068, REP7-077, C2-162 and C2-169. PVDP do not take the flood risk in our 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.

Decommissioning fund. ExA recommended DCO should ensure that a decommissioning fund (as well as a plan) is in place before construction starts. This has not been included by PVDP.

Viability. No justification for the huge size of Botley West has been provided. The Applicant has not justified its claim for a 935MW minimum 'economically viable' size for BWSF and rejected Oxfordshire Host Authority's proposals for a smaller installation.

Ecology and Bio-diversity net Gain. An arboricultural impact assessment has still not been provided. The skylark compensation strategy is unworkable.

Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI). A large part of the central site is now on the list of SSSI designation proposed development, named The Three Rivers. Why is this not being considered?

Minerals and Waste. Oxford County Council (OCC) are still in disagreement with the Applicant regarding these issues.

Acquisition of roadside verges. This is another unresolved disagreement between the Applicant and the OCC

How is it to be paid for?

The financial structure of PVDP for this project remains opaque at best. Surely the public have a right to know how a project of national significance will be financed and who will finance the decommissioning in years to come.

From the beginning PVDP have acted as if this is a done deal and that they will get the permission they want. Throughout this process PVDP have made a mockery of the planning system and consultation process, arrogantly ignoring requests by residents, national bodies such as Historic England and the Examiners for specific reports, assessments and details and laterly ignoring deadlines set by the Secretary of State. 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.

I support the need for renewables in the UK, but such a vast site taking good agricultural land from the greenbelt next to a World Heritage Site is not the answer. We need a strategic nationwide policy to generate solar power on brownfield sites and roofs initiated by the government rather than private interests whose only true motivation is to make money.

In summary PVDP have undertaken some local consultations and asked for questions and concerns, but they have rarely provided full 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, the stated timetable and democratic framework.

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

Frances Sunderland

Interested Party Registration Number [REDACTED]

Frances Sunderland ([REDACTED])

[REDACTED]