

From: John Orme [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 October 2026 10:13
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Botley West Solar Farm (BWSF): EN010147

Dear Secretary of State

October 4, 2026

Botley West Solar Farm (BWSF): EN010147

I am an active member of the Stop Botley West community group. As well as supporting SBW's submissions, I am also writing in my private capacity as a long-term resident of Woodstock in Oxfordshire, home of Blenheim Palace and its UNESCO World Heritage site surroundings.

My aim is to highlight the key points that I believe should persuade the UK Government that approving the BWSF Solar Farm DCO application would be a major political, democratic and environmental mistake that has the capacity to embarrassingly undermine everything the current government is trying to achieve.

In summary:

1. A SCHEME DESIGNED FOR TAX AVOIDANCE

It is clear that the Applicant and its partner, Blenheim Estate, have woven into their business structures a combination of significant debt and offshore accounts to minimise, if not completely avoid, paying any tax to the UK government. This cannot be an appropriate relationship for the Government to contemplate - particularly at a time of peak demand for tax revenues to achieve the new Prime Minister's laudable ambitions, such as developing a social care service that is fit for purpose.

2. NATIONAL STRATEGIC ASSET HANDED TO FOREIGN SPECULATORS

If BWSF is approved, a significant proportion of the UK's strategic energy infrastructure would be handed over to foreign speculators with a worryingly questionable financial background. They also have no proven track record of ever staying around to build and operate a solar farm once approved.

For example: PVDP's marketing material spotlights "six of our highly successful projects undertaken in Japan", spearheaded by the Ukujima Mega Solar Project in Nagasaki Prefecture. PVDP started the planning and licensing process in 2012, and in December 2018 the developer sold the project on to a consortium of local companies.

Construction was scheduled to start in early 2020 - but recent reports show that "the Ukujima Mega Solar Project is currently under active construction following years of delays, with local residents filing petitions in late 2025 to halt work over water run-off and flooding concerns."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1do406gA8EY>

It would be a very brave political choice to grant DCO approval to PVDP on the basis of its claimed track record.

3. WHO CARRIES THE CAN WHEN PVDP SELLS ON?

All the evidence points to the conclusion that PVDP has already found a partner to sell to once a DCO has been granted. This negates all the future commitments and attempted reassurances made by the developer as part of its application. If this is the case, the likely buyer should be identified and be obliged to submit the application itself, in order to inject some transparency into a frustratingly opaque application process.

4. NO CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNITY SOLAR ALTERNATIVE

Working in contravention of one of the main requirements of the NSIP planning process, the Applicant and Blenheim Estate have consistently refused to enter into any meaningful discussions about alternative sites or production models. As a long-term Woodstock resident, I am a big fan of the idea of working with the communities of the other 14 villages who would be directly affected by BWSF to develop a connected chain of community solar farms based on the successful Charlbury model in Oxfordshire.

5. WHY SACRIFICE PRODUCTIVE LAND FOR SPECULATIVE PROFIT?

Your predecessor, Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband, recently addressed the UN General Assembly and urged delegates to recognise “the interconnectedness of food, water and economic resilience” and called for an urgent strategic re-evaluation of national security in light of climate change and nature loss.

The sacrifice of more than 2,000 acres of generally good quality and productive BMV arable land to satisfy the profit motives of foreign speculators who are unlikely to complete the BWSF project would surely not pass the high bar implied by ‘an urgent strategic re-evaluation of national security in light of climate change and nature loss’.

6. WILL THE GOVERNMENT GAMBLE WITH PILOTS’ LIVES?

Submissions from two of the pilot training schools based at London Oxford Airport, situated at the edge of the proposed solar farm central site near Kidlington, include the following from Andy MacFarlane, CEO of Leading Edge Aviation (ENO10147-002868-C2-176): “We do not believe that the aviation safety implications of the development have been adequately addressed, and we remain concerned that the proposal would materially degrade the safety environment surrounding the airport.”

He continues: “The extensive open land surrounding Oxford Airport has long been regarded as an important safety asset, particularly for *ab initio* and advanced pilot training. The proposed scale and proximity of solar panel development would erode that safety margin and make the airport less attractive as a long-term training base.”

Given the UK’s status as a leading global provider of top-quality professional pilot training, and London Oxford Airport’s central role in this important UK industry, I find it unimaginable that the UK government would take the risk of approving the BWSF application, gambling with the wellbeing, safety and lives of thousands of trainee pilots a year.

CONCLUSION

In light of these concerns, I repeat my point that “approving the BWSF Solar Farm DCO application would be a major political, democratic and environmental mistake that has the capacity to embarrassingly undermine everything the current government is trying to achieve”, and I urge you to turn down the BWSF DCO application.

With best wishes.

John Orme

Interested Party

