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## Veterinary report

### **Lime Down Development proposal**

#### Introduction

I have been asked to comment and discuss veterinary concerns over the development of a large solar energy plant development project in the North Wiltshire area. I have been provided with a description of the development phase of the project along with a description of the completed site.

My comments are restricted to my professional capacity as an Equine Veterinary surgeon and do not include my personal opinions on the environmental impact of the development that I have documented and submitted elsewhere. My comments will include welfare and commercial concerns.

#### Background

I have been a veterinary surgeon for 43 years and for most of that time have been in purely equine practice. In particular, I have been involved in equine reproduction and stud medicine and I am the retained vet for a number of large studs within our practice area.

I am employed by B&W Equine Vets, a large multi centred practice covering Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. I am based at the Willesley branch which is situated approximately 5 miles from the centre of the proposed development.

B&W have the following client types within a 5 mile radius of the site;

1. Stud clients. 8 commercial studs producing thoroughbred or sports horses for sale.
2. Professional competition yards. This category includes eventing, dressage, showjumping and polo yards.
3. Hunting yards. Primarily associated with the Beaufort Hunt.
4. Private yards. Family run yards with pleasure horses and children's ponies. Numbers per yard vary between 1 and 5 horses.

There will be other veterinary practices that service clients included in the above categories in the development area over and above those serviced by B&W.

#### Veterinary concerns

1. Noise both during the development process and ongoing operational considerations.

The development process will necessitate huge numbers of lorries and HGV vehicles in the area along with construction noise including chain saws and pile driving. Ongoing noise will include inverters and associated infrastructure.

Horses are fight and flight animals and there are real risks of injury to themselves and their riders from unusual noise. They have very good hearing, far better than human hearing.

Young horses (foals, weanlings and yearlings) are particularly susceptible to noise, and I have had numerous examples where they have been spooked by loud noise and have injured themselves either by galloping and slipping within the field or by breaking through fencing. Lacerations from the latter have been extensive and in some cases life threatening.

Clients riding pleasure horses will be at risk from the noise and appearance of construction traffic during the development period. Riders must use country roads as part of their excursions and many are narrow and winding. Lorry and other HGV drivers do not always have the knowledge or consideration to slow down or stop when approaching horses that other rural road users do. Injury to horse or rider or both may result.

Horses from all categories can react unpredictably when being handled (groomed, shod, veterinary treatment etc) to unusual noise, again risking injury to themselves or their handler. Young horses are particularly sensitive, so stud clients probably will quite rightly be most concerned about potential implications.

## 2. Access

All equestrian properties necessitate a certain amount of light service traffic in and out. Feed merchants, farriers, staff and clients are examples. Most veterinary visits are not emergencies but occasionally they are. Delays in attending because of construction diversions, temporary road closures and slow HGV traffic could have disastrous consequences. This has occasionally been an issue with roads closed for other reasons, but would be a higher risk during the development phase.

## 3. Dust and toxic gas

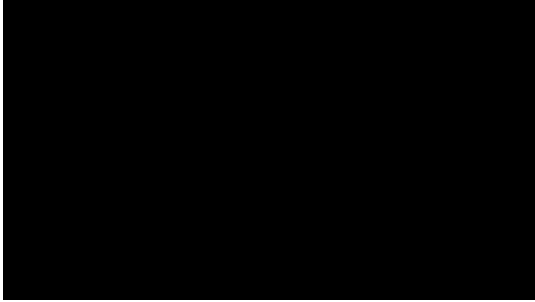
Horses are athletic animals and reliant on a healthy respiratory system for performance. Inhalation of dust or toxic gases can cause primary disease and an increased likelihood of developing chronic respiratory conditions such as inflammatory airway disease and equine asthma.

There will be risk from dust during the development process, particularly for properties immediately adjacent to the development site.

Probably more concerning is the risk from a hazardous incident at the Battery energy storage system site. The implications of this have been discussed and submitted for consideration in detail elsewhere. In brief, a fire at the site could result in the release of a toxic gas plume consisting of a variety of gases with hydrogen fluoride being the most concerning. I would see this as a constant worry during the lifespan of the site and could result in significant injury and disease to the horses of my clients in the area.

## 4. Commercial considerations

As described, B&W Equine vets have a large number of clients in the vicinity of the Lime Down development. The concerns 1 – 3 listed above will be at the least an annoyance to some clients, and at the worst have considerable deleterious commercial implications for other clients. As a practice and business, we are concerned that some clients may decide to move themselves and their horses and businesses elsewhere. This would affect us and the rest of the local community who are dependent on the equine establishments in the area for their business.



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