Submission ID: S8BDEEBAA

To: The Examining Authority, Planning Inspectorate
From: Thornberry Animal Sanctuary
Submission: Deadline 1 – Site Inspection Requests
Dear Examining Authority,
On behalf of Thornberry Animal Sanctuary, we respectfully request that the Examining Authority includes the following locations in its site inspection programme for Whitestone Solar Farm, particularly Whitestone 1 (W1).
We request Accompanied Site Inspections wherever practicable, to allow sanctuary staff and people with relevant local equestrian knowledge to explain how the surrounding roads, bridleways and countryside are used.
As outlined in our original representation, Thornberry is a registered charity based on Braithwell Road. We care for and rehabilitate horses and other large animals, many of which arrive frightened, stressed or in poor physical condition.
We can have approximately 30 horses and large animals in our care at any one time and help approximately 100 horses over a year.
The quiet rural environment and access to the off-road bridleways within Conisbrough Parks are important to our rehabilitation work. These routes allow nervous and inexperienced horses to rebuild their confidence away from ordinary road traffic.
We believe that visiting the locations below would help the Examining Authority understand the practical implications of the proposed development.
1. Thornberry Animal Sanctuary – Braithwell Road
We request an accompanied inspection of Thornberry Animal Sanctuary, including its stables, paddocks, rehabilitation areas and surrounding countryside, subject to appropriate access arrangements.
The sanctuary was established in a relatively quiet and secluded environment, which is important for rehabilitating animals that may have experienced neglect, poor treatment or stressful circumstances.
We are concerned about the potential effects of construction noise, machinery, vehicle movements, unfamiliar activity and possible operational disturbance.
We would particularly welcome the opportunity to explain how noise travelling across the valley could affect horses both when being exercised and when resting in their stables or fields.
An accompanied visit would allow our staff to demonstrate the rehabilitation environment and explain why the behaviour of vulnerable horses requires particular consideration.
Thornberry also employs six people, relies upon a substantial volunteer community, provides educational and training opportunities, works with local businesses and is developing a nature area within its grounds.
The sanctuary is therefore both an animal-welfare organisation and an important local community resource.
Purpose of inspection: To understand the existing environment, the sanctuary's rehabilitation activities and the potential consequences of construction and operational disturbance.
2. Common Lane, Ravenfield – Equestrian Access to Conisbrough Parks
We request an accompanied inspection of Common Lane, Ravenfield, including the route used by horse riders travelling towards Braithwell Bridleway 4 and the wider Conisbrough Parks bridleway network.
Thornberry regularly uses local roads to reach the safer, quieter off-road routes where horses can be exercised and rehabilitated.
These journeys can be particularly challenging with nervous, inexperienced or recovering horses.
We ask the Examining Authority to consider road width, traffic conditions, visibility, vehicle movements and the practical difficulties of riding horses along Common Lane.
We specifically request inspection of the protective fencing installed by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council along Common Lane, which we understand was intended to improve safety for equestrian users accessing the Parks from Ravenfield.
We believe it is important for the Examining Authority to appreciate why such protection is needed and how additional construction traffic could affect riders.
Purpose of inspection: To understand the existing equestrian access arrangements and the potential safety implications of construction traffic for vulnerable horses and their handlers.
3. Ravenfield Footpath 10 – Hildrecks and Applicant Viewpoint 9
We request an accompanied inspection of Ravenfield Footpath 10, particularly the beginning of the route in the area locally known as Hildrecks.
The surrounding land is used for horses, and the public footpath is used by the local community.
We ask the Examining Authority to experience the views from this location, including views towards Conisbrough Castle and the surrounding historic landscape.
We are concerned that the Applicant's Representative Viewpoint 9, described as Ravenfield East / Garden Lane / Ravenfield Footpath 10, does not adequately represent the views available from the beginning of Footpath 10 or the changing experience along the route.
The Applicant's assessment is contained in Environmental Statement Appendix 7.4, paragraphs 7.4.151 onwards.
We request that the Examining Authority visits the beginning of Footpath 10, considers the relationship between the definitive route and Viewpoint 9, and assesses whether the selected photographic position adequately represents the views experienced by users of the wider footpath.
Purpose of inspection: To appreciate the actual landscape experience, horse-grazing environment, changing views and historic landscape, rather than relying solely on a single representative photograph.
4. Conisbrough Parks – Bridleway Network and Horse Rehabilitation
We request that the Examining Authority visits representative sections of the bridleway network within W1, particularly those used by Thornberry for exercising and rehabilitating horses.
These routes are not simply recreational facilities for our sanctuary. They form part of our working environment and allow us to rebuild the confidence and trust of horses before rehoming.
We are concerned that construction activity, vehicle movements, noise and unfamiliar machinery could undermine the quiet and controlled conditions we currently rely upon.

We also ask that bridleways and footpaths are considered as continuous journeys, rather than being assessed only through isolated photographic viewpoints.
Views, noise conditions, surrounding activity and potential hazards change as users travel along these routes. Mounted horse riders may also experience different views because of their elevated position.
Purpose of inspection: To understand the importance of continuous, safe off-road routes for equestrian rehabilitation and how the proposed development could affect their usability.
5. Whitestone 1 – Proposed Substations and Park Lane Bridleway
We request inspections of the proposed W1 substation locations, particularly the infrastructure identified in our original representation as being close to the Park Lane bridleway.
We are concerned that substantial infrastructure close to equestrian routes could introduce unfamiliar noise, movement, visual disturbance and maintenance activity.
Horses can react suddenly to unexpected sounds or movements, particularly those undergoing rehabilitation. A startled horse may shy, spin, rear or bolt, potentially placing riders and other route users at risk.
Our original representation also raises concerns about possible drone use for security or surveillance. We request clarification of whether drones are proposed and, if so, how their potential effects on equestrian users and animal welfare would be assessed.
Purpose of inspection: To appreciate the physical relationship between proposed infrastructure, existing bridleways and the potential safety implications for horses.
6. Whitestone 1 – Construction Crossing Points
We request accompanied inspections of the proposed construction crossing points affecting public footpaths and bridleways within W1.
We ask that the Examining Authority considers the practical conditions at these locations, including visibility, approaching vehicles, road and track widths, waiting areas and the proposed arrangements for safely managing construction traffic.
We are particularly concerned about interactions between large construction vehicles and nervous or inexperienced horses.
Temporary closures, diversions or restrictions could also affect our ability to reach suitable off-road rehabilitation routes.
Purpose of inspection: To understand how construction crossings and any associated restrictions could affect the safety and continuity of the existing equestrian network.
7. Why Accompanied Site Inspections Are Requested
We respectfully request that these locations are considered for Accompanied Site Inspections.
Thornberry would welcome the opportunity for experienced sanctuary staff, local horse riders and people with relevant equestrian expertise to explain the practical issues on site.
The behaviour of a nervous horse, the importance of a quiet rehabilitation environment and the challenges of accessing bridleways along roads shared with vehicles are matters that may not be fully appreciated from maps, photographs or technical reports.
We recognise that the Examining Authority will determine the inspection arrangements and would be pleased to assist where appropriate.
8. Summary of Requested Locations

Ref	Requested inspection location	Principal reason
1	Thornberry Animal Sanctuary, Braithwell Road	Animal welfare, rehabilitation and tranquillity
2	Common Lane, Ravenfield	Equestrian access, protective fencing and road safety
3	Ravenfield Footpath 10, Hildrecks	Applicant VP9, historic landscape and Conisbrough Castle views
4	Conisbrough Parks bridleway network	Continuous riding experience and rehabilitation routes
5	W1 proposed substations, including near Park Lane bridleway	Infrastructure, horse welfare and potential disturbance
6	W1 construction crossing points	Construction traffic, equestrian safety and route continuity

Conclusion
Thornberry Animal Sanctuary is concerned that Whitestone 1 could substantially change the quiet rural environment and safe bridleway network upon which our work depends.
Our concerns relate to the combined effects of construction traffic, noise, machinery, infrastructure, possible drone activity, visual changes and disruption to established equestrian routes.
We ask the Examining Authority to consider whether these effects have been adequately assessed and whether they can be satisfactorily avoided or mitigated.
If the impacts cannot be adequately addressed, we respectfully request that the removal of Whitestone 1 from the proposed development is considered.
We believe the requested accompanied site inspections would materially assist the Examining Authority in understanding these matters.
Thank you for considering our requests.
Yours faithfully,

[redacted]
Manager
Thornberry Animal Sanctuary