Submission ID: SB73514D5

Whitestone Solar Farm – EN0110020
Request for Examining Authority Site Inspection Viewpoints Submitted by: Rachael Redmond
Interested Party reference [redacted]
Address - [redacted]
Procedural Deadline A — 27 October 2026 Dear Examining Authority
I am writing to request that the Examining Authority visits several locations around Ravenfield, Conisbrough Parks and Firsby as part of its examination of the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm, particularly Whitestone 1.
I live at [redacted]. My home was recently built, and I moved here in 2024. One of the main reasons I chose to live here was the beautiful countryside overlooking Conisbrough Parks and the opportunity to ride my horse safely along the extensive network of bridleways without having to use busy roads. Had I known that a solar development of this scale was being proposed across this landscape, I would not have chosen to move here. I am extremely concerned about what the development could mean for my home, the countryside I look out onto and the safe riding routes I use regularly. I would ask the Inspectors to visit [redacted] to appreciate its setting and the views across Conisbrough Parks. This is not simply a distant landscape to me. It forms part of my everyday life and was a major reason for choosing this location. I am concerned that the Applicant's selected landscape viewpoints cannot adequately represent the effects on my home and its surroundings. I would like the Inspectors to see the relationship between [redacted] the changing levels of the land and the proposed development for themselves. I am particularly worried about the long-term visual effects of extensive solar panels, security fencing, substations and associated infrastructure. Given the topography, I question whether the proposed planting could realistically screen the development from my home and the surrounding elevated routes.
I regularly ride my horse along the interconnected bridleways throughout Conisbrough Parks and along Rotherham Ravenfield Bridleway No. 4. These routes are one of the main reasons I moved to this area. They allow me to enjoy the countryside while avoiding busy roads, which is particularly important when riding a horse. What makes this area so special is that the bridleways form a network. I can ride through the Parks and choose different routes without continually having to return to public roads. I am worried that the proposed development would undermine the safety and practical usefulness of this entire network. The Applicant may say that the bridleways will remain open during construction, but I do not believe that is enough. A bridleway must be practically safe and usable for horse riders. Horses are flight animals, and it is unrealistic to assume that all horses will safely tolerate heavy construction vehicles, machinery, reversing alarms and unfamiliar activity alongside the routes they use. I am genuinely frightened that, if these bridleways become unsafe or impractical to ride, equestrians will be pushed onto surrounding roads, many of which carry fast-moving traffic. That could expose riders and horses to risks they currently avoid by using the off-road network.
I find this proposed location deeply concerning. It would introduce substantial electrical infrastructure into an historic countryside setting alongside a route used by horse riders. I am also concerned about the potential effects of associated construction activity and vehicle movements on horses using the bridleway. A frightened horse can react in seconds, and the consequences for its rider could be extremely serious. I would ask the Inspectors to see the proposed location and consider whether its effects on equestrian safety, the historic landscape and the character of the bridleway have been properly assessed.
Locations I request the Examining Authority to visit
Conisbrough Parks Bridleway No. 13 — towards Hooton Woods and land parcel 29 I am particularly disappointed that a viewpoint previously identified on Bridleway No. 13 appears to have been scoped out of the Applicant's landscape assessment. The views from the higher ground near the ancient woodland are breathtaking. They extend across a historic landscape which would be fundamentally changed by the proposed solar development.I would ask the Inspectors to walk along this bridleway and experience the changing views, particularly towards the higher ground, rather than relying on the Applicant's selected photographs. I do not believe a single viewpoint adequately represents the experience of riding along this route.
Conisbrough Parks Bridleway No. 2 — Firsby Lane / Hilltop Farm towards Arbour Lane I would like the Inspectors to visit this bridleway and examine its relationship with the proposed construction arrangements and surrounding routes. It forms part of the wider riding network, and I am concerned about the possibility of construction traffic, crossing movements and nearby activity making it difficult or unsafe to use.
Conisbrough Parks Bridleway No. 4 — Park Lane, Conisbrough Lodge and the proposed substation I would particularly ask the Inspectors to visit the section of Bridleway No. 4 near Conisbrough Lodge, where I understand the Applicant proposes to locate a substation nearby.
Conisbrough Parks Bridleway No. 14 — Arbour Lane towards Park Lane I would like the Inspectors to visit this route, particularly the higher ground where there are views towards Conisbrough Castle and the surrounding historic countryside. The relationship between the Castle, the open landscape and the connected rights-of-way network is an important part of the area's character. I would like the Inspectors to experience these views rather than assessing the route only from plans and photographs.
Rotherham Ravenfield Bridleway No. 4 — St James' View towards Moor Lane I regularly use this bridleway and would particularly like the Inspectors to walk along it. It provides an opportunity to understand the topography of the surrounding land and how the proposed development could appear across the landscape.
Ravenfield Footpath No. 10 — Braithwell Road towards Garden Lane I would ask the Inspectors to walk this footpath and appreciate the views towards Conisbrough Castle and the historic landscape connecting Ravenfield with Conisbrough Parks. I am worried that the proposed development could seriously harm these views and the experience of walking through this countryside. The relationship between the Castle and the surrounding landscape deserves particular attention. I would also ask the Inspectors to consider whether the Applicant's selected viewpoint adequately represents the changing views along the whole route.
Ravenfield Footpath No. 2 — St James' Church towards Ravenfield Ponds and Arbour Lane I would like the Inspectors to visit this route to appreciate the relationship between St James' Church, the surrounding countryside and the wider landscape of Conisbrough Parks. These routes connect the village with the countryside and are important to local people who use them for walking and recreation.

Ravenfield Footpath No. 6 — near Ravenfield Primary School and Hollings Lane woodland I would also ask the Inspectors to visit this footpath and consider the experience of local walkers and families using the countryside around Ravenfield. I am concerned that the cumulative effect of extensive solar infrastructure could change the character of these familiar countryside routes.
B6093 Moor Lane South / Main Street — Ravenfield Primary Academy I would ask the Inspectors to visit the road around Ravenfield Primary Academy and consider the existing road environment, particularly at school arrival and departure times. I am concerned about the safety of pedestrians, children, horse riders and other road users, and whether the wider consequences of construction traffic and changes to recreational access have been properly considered.
Arbour Lane, Ravenfield - I would like the Inspectors to visit Arbour Lane to appreciate how it connects with the surrounding public rights of way and the countryside around Conisbrough Parks. I am particularly concerned about what could happen if horse riders feel unable to use the bridleways and have to seek alternative routes along public roads.
Common Lane, Ravenfield - I have ridden along Common Lane and know how concerning road traffic can be for equestrians. I would ask the Inspectors to visit Common Lane to appreciate the existing road conditions and consider the additional risks associated with proposed construction traffic. I would also like them to consider the wider implications if riders are displaced from the safer off-road bridleway network onto surrounding roads.
Braithwell Bridleway No. 4 — equestrian access arrangements I would also ask the Inspectors to examine the fencing installed by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in connection with equestrian access to Braithwell Bridleway No. 4. I believe this illustrates the practical measures sometimes needed to protect horse riders where bridleways meet roads or other traffic hazards. I would like the Inspectors to consider whether comparable attention has been given to the safety of riders affected by the proposed development.
I believe the scale of this development is far too large for this countryside. I support finding ways to generate renewable energy, but I question why greater use cannot be made of rooftops, car parks and existing industrial areas rather than changing such an extensive historic rural landscape.
The countryside around Ravenfield and Conisbrough Parks is enjoyed by walkers, runners, cyclists, horse riders and families. It provides opportunities for exercise, recreation and enjoyment of nature, and I believe those benefits to the community deserve much greater consideration.
I am also worried about wildlife and the loss or alteration of habitats. The scale of the proposal makes me concerned about whether the natural environment and the experience of people using it can genuinely be protected.
I would particularly ask the Examining Authority to examine what specialist equestrian safety assessment the Applicant has undertaken. Keeping a bridleway legally open does not establish that it will remain safe or usable for horses. I would like the assessment to consider the connected network, the behaviour of horses around construction activity, and whether riders could be forced onto surrounding roads.
I am concerned that equestrian use of Conisbrough Parks has been understated. This is not an occasional recreational activity for me. It is a regular part of my life and one of the principal reasons I chose to live here.
My request to the Examining Authority
I appreciate that the Inspectors cannot visit every location requested. My highest priorities are [redacted], Conisbrough Parks Bridleway No. 13 near Hooton Woods, Conisbrough Parks Bridleway No. 4 near the proposed substation, Rotherham Ravenfield Bridleway No. 4, Ravenfield Footpath No. 10 and Common Lane.
I would particularly ask the Inspectors to walk sections of the interconnected bridleway network and consider what it would be like to ride a horse through these routes during construction. I do not believe this can be properly understood by looking at plans or being told that traffic marshals will be provided. I would also welcome an accompanied site inspection and would be happy to explain how I use the bridleways, why their safety matters to me and how important the countryside setting of my home is. I sincerely hope the Examining Authority will appreciate the scale of what is proposed and the lasting consequences it could have for residents, horse riders and the wider community. I do not believe this development is appropriate for this location and ask that these concerns are fully examined before any recommendation is made.
If this development is to go ahead, I believe appropriate compensation and mitigation should be considered for local residents for the above issues raised and consider that there are many other issues that this will create for local residents
Thank you for considering my request.
Rachael Redmond
[redacted]