WHITESTONE SOLAR FARM — EN0110020
SAVE OUR BRIDLEWAYS
Procedural Deadline A — 27 October 2026
Request for Accompanied Site Inspections and Identification of Equestrian Safety Matters
Submitted on behalf of Save Our Bridleways
Subject: Public rights of way, equestrian safety, construction traffic, temporary diversions, landscape, heritage and recreational effects across Whitestone 1, 2 and 3.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Save Our Bridleways is a community group with a following of over 550 people, established to raise awareness of the potential effects of the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm on horse riders, horse owners and the existing public rights of way network.

1.2 Information supplied on 22 July 2026, identifies 4,004 passported horses across eight postcode districts associated with the proposed development. This comprises 2,205 across DN12, S65, S66 and DN5, and 1,799 across S25, S60, S21 and S26.

1.3 These postcode districts extend beyond the proposed development boundary. The figures do not establish how many horses are kept within the Order Limits or regularly use individual bridleways. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the scale of the wider equestrian population whose interests may be affected by changes to access, construction activity and the surrounding countryside.

1.4 The Applicant's Environmental Statement Chapter 13, Table 13.9 (APP/6.13), identifies 48 public rights of way crossing or passing close to the proposed development, comprising 37 public footpaths and 11 public bridleways. These figures represent the routes identified in that assessment, rather than an independently verified total of all routes within the Order Limits.

1.5 The scale of this network demonstrates why the effects of the development should be considered both individually and cumulatively. A temporary closure, construction crossing or diversion may affect not only one route but also the ability of users to complete longer journeys through the surrounding countryside.

1.6 For horse riders, safe and continuous off-road access is particularly important. Horses are flight animals and may react suddenly to unfamiliar vehicles, machinery, noise, flashing lights, barriers and unexpected movement.

1.7 Save Our Bridleways requests accompanied site inspections to assist the Examining Authority in understanding the existing network, the practical conditions experienced by horse riders and the potential effects of the proposed development.

2. Purpose of the Requested Site Inspections

2.1 The purpose of these inspections is to assist the Examining Authority in assessing whether the Applicant's Environmental Statement and proposed mitigation adequately represent the effects of the development on public rights of way, equestrian safety and recreational amenity.

2.2 We request consideration of construction-vehicle crossings, temporary closures and diversions, route continuity, changes to landscape character, proximity to solar arrays and electrical infrastructure, and the practical suitability of proposed alternative routes.

2.3 We also request that the Examining Authority considers the experience of travelling along continuous sections of affected routes rather than relying exclusively on individual photographic viewpoints.

2.4 We consider accompanied inspections particularly valuable because local riders can explain how routes are used, where horses may encounter construction activity, and where alternative routes may be unsuitable. Any such participation would, of course, be subject to the Examining Authority's inspection arrangements.

3. Whitestone 1 — Conisbrough Parks Bridleway Network

3.1 Save Our Bridleways requests particular attention to Conisbrough Parks Bridleways 4, 13 and 14 and their connections with the wider network.

3.2 — Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 13. We request inspection of representative sections of this bridleway, including elevated positions and locations near the ancient woodland. We ask the Examining Authority to consider the changing views experienced along the route and the adequacy of the Applicant's selected landscape viewpoints, including the reported exclusion of former Viewpoint 12.

3.3 — Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 4. We request inspection of the existing bridleway and its connections with Park Lane, the proposed cable corridor and relevant construction-access arrangements. The Applicant should explain the relationship between the definitive route and any proposed private-road arrangements shown in APP/2.4.

3.4 — Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 14. Local public rights of way mapping identifies Bridleway 14 as approximately 1,230 metres long. It crosses Bridleway 4 and continues as Footpath 14, which is separately recorded as approximately 1,406 metres long. We acknowledge that the Applicant's documentation distinguishes between the bridleway and footpath sections.

3.5 We request inspection of Bridleway 14 and its junction with Bridleway 4, including consideration of route connectivity, changing topography and the landscape experienced by riders.

3.6 APP/5.14 identifies construction-access interactions and temporary diversion arrangements affecting routes within Conisbrough Parks. We request that the Examining Authority considers how these arrangements may affect the safety and continuity of the existing bridleway network.

3.7 We also request that the inspection considers the wider historic landscape, including views towards Conisbrough Castle and other heritage features where visible. The experience of travelling through this landscape should be considered alongside the effects of proposed fencing, solar arrays, electrical infrastructure and associated works.

3.8 Particular attention should be given to the relationship between Firsby Lane, Park Lane and the surrounding bridleways. Firsby Lane provides vehicular access to the residential properties at Firsby, and the implications of construction traffic for residents and other road users should be considered alongside equestrian safety.

4. Whitestone 2 — Bridleway Crossings and Temporary Diversions

4.1 The Applicant's Outline Public Right of Way Management Plan (APP/5.14) identifies Ulley Bridleway 6 and Thurcroft Bridleway 9 within or immediately adjacent to Whitestone 2.

4.2 APP/5.14 identifies Thurcroft Bridleway 9 as interacting with proposed site access or internal vehicle tracks and requiring a temporary diversion during construction.

4.3 We request inspection of Thurcroft Bridleway 9, particularly at the proposed construction-access interface, to establish the practical conditions experienced by horse riders and the suitability of any temporary diversion.

4.4 We also request consideration of Ulley Bridleway 6 and relevant connecting routes, including the effects of the development on recreational amenity, route character and connectivity.

5. Whitestone 3 and Associated Cable Corridors

5.1 APP/5.14 identifies additional bridleways potentially affected by construction and cable-corridor works, including Whiston Bridleways 20 and 27 and Aston Bridleway 18.

5.2 We request that the Examining Authority considers representative inspections of affected crossing and diversion locations, particularly where construction vehicles, temporary closures or cable installation may affect equestrian access.

5.3 The Applicant should identify the precise works affecting each route, the anticipated duration of any restriction and the measures proposed to protect horse riders.

6. Equine Behaviour, Construction Traffic and Equestrian Safety

6.1 Save Our Bridleways is particularly concerned about the interaction between horses, construction traffic and proposed construction activities across Whitestone 1, 2 and 3. Horses are flight animals whose responses to unfamiliar or sudden stimuli can include stopping, reversing, spinning or bolting, potentially placing riders, other public rights of way users and construction workers at risk.

6.2 The Applicant's Outline Public Right of Way Management Plan (APP/5.14, paragraphs 4.5.5 and 4.6.2–4.6.3) proposes traffic marshals, warning signs, flashing vehicle lights, temporary fencing and crossing controls. However, the documentation reviewed by Save Our Bridleways has not identified the specialist equestrian research, behavioural evidence or route-specific risk assessments relied upon to demonstrate that these measures are appropriate for horses.

6.3 We request that the Applicant identifies any equine behavioural research, published guidance, specialist advice or consultation with equestrian organisations used to assess horses' responses to heavy goods vehicles, construction machinery, reversing alarms, flashing lights, piling, sudden movement and temporary changes to familiar routes.

6.4 We request clarification of whether a suitably qualified equestrian safety specialists have reviewed the proposed construction crossings, temporary diversions and traffic-management arrangements.

6.5 APP/5.14 paragraph 4.6.3(c) proposes a 2-metre-wide chicane to slow cyclists at crossing points. The Applicant should confirm whether this measure is proposed on any bridleway and demonstrate that its design is suitable for ridden horses and horses being led.

6.6 We also request details of the procedures to be followed when a horse approaches a construction crossing, including whether vehicles will be brought to a complete stop, how marshals will communicate with riders, what training will be provided and how an incident or unexpected equine reaction will be managed.

6.7 The Applicant should identify the measures proposed to protect horses using bridleways adjacent to construction works, including separation distances, screening, visibility, noise controls, working arrangements and the management of sudden or unfamiliar activity.

6.8 We ask the Examining Authority to establish whether equestrian-specific risk assessments have already been undertaken and, if not, how the Applicant has reached its conclusions concerning the safety and suitability of the proposed arrangements.

6.9 These matters should be considered during accompanied site inspections, particularly at Conisbrough Parks Bridleways 4 and 14, Thurcroft Bridleway 9 and other proposed construction crossings. The physical conditions and surrounding terrain are relevant to understanding how horses may respond to construction activity.

6.10 Save Our Bridleways requests that the Applicant identifies which minimum equestrian safety measures would be secured through the Development Consent Order and associated management plans, rather than leaving their adequacy entirely to future contractor decisions.

7. Horse Riders as Vulnerable Road Users — Construction Traffic and Highway Safety

7.1 Save Our Bridleways requests that the Examining Authority considers horse riders and those leading horses as vulnerable road users, particularly where the proposed development would introduce construction traffic onto roads used to access the existing bridleway network.

7.2 The Highway Code recognises horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles as vulnerable road users. Rule 215 advises drivers to exercise particular care around horses, to slow to a maximum of 10 mph when passing and to allow at least 2 metres of space. Drivers should avoid actions likely to frighten horses, including unnecessary noise or sudden movements.

7.3 These considerations are particularly relevant to heavy goods vehicles, agricultural-scale construction machinery, abnormal loads and other vehicles associated with the proposed development. The

consequences of an unexpected reaction by a horse may be serious for the rider, the animal, vehicle occupants and other road users.
7.4 The Applicant's Transport Statement (APP/6.20, Section 3.7) acknowledges equestrian accessibility, while ES Chapter 13 considers road-user safety, non-motorised user amenity, delay, fear and intimidation. Save Our Bridleways requests clarification of how horse riders have been specifically considered within those assessments, rather than being treated solely as part of a wider category of non-motorised users.

7.5, The Applicant should identify whether its construction traffic assessments have considered roads used by riders travelling between bridleways, equestrian properties and other off-road routes. This should include roads where narrow carriageways, restricted visibility, limited passing opportunities or high construction-vehicle volumes may increase the potential for conflict.

7.6 Within Whitestone 1, consideration should be given to Firsby Lane, Park Lane, Common Lane and the roads connecting to the Conisbrough Parks bridleway network, where relevant to proposed construction movements. The assessment should distinguish between roads used by construction vehicles and roads used by riders to reach or connect between bridleways.

7.7 We request that the Applicant explains what equestrian-specific training and instructions will be provided to construction drivers, including HGV drivers and subcontractors. This should address safe passing distances, vehicle speeds, stopping procedures, avoidance of unnecessary noise and the appropriate response when a horse becomes distressed or difficult to control.

7.8 Where temporary diversions would require riders to leave existing off-road routes and use public highways, the Applicant should demonstrate that the alternative route is lawful, reasonably safe and practically suitable for ridden horses. The existence of an alternative route on a plan should not, by itself, be regarded as evidence that it provides equivalent equestrian access.

7.9 The Applicant should also clarify whether horse riders have been specifically included in any road safety audits, construction traffic risk assessments and assessments of vulnerable road users, and identify the evidence supporting its conclusions.

7.10 Save Our Bridleways requests that the Examining Authority considers these matters during accompanied site inspections, particularly at locations where construction traffic routes intersect with bridleways or where riders may be required to use public roads.

7.11 We ask the Examining Authority to establish whether the proposed highway and construction traffic mitigation adequately protects equestrian users and whether any additional measures or enforceable requirements are necessary before the development could safely proceed.

8. Landscape, Heritage and Recreational Experience

8.1 The effects of the proposed development on horse riders extend beyond the physical ability to travel along a designated route. The existing landscape, topography, openness, heritage setting and changing views form part of the recreational experience.

8.2 We request that the Examining Authority considers continuous journeys along representative bridleways, particularly within Conisbrough Parks, rather than relying solely on individual photographic viewpoints.

8.3 Particular attention should be given to the elevated and changing views from Bridleways 13 and 14, including views towards Conisbrough Castle, ancient woodland and the surrounding historic landscape where visible.

8.4 We ask the Examining Authority to consider whether the cumulative landscape and recreational effects of Whitestone 1 have been adequately represented in the Applicant's assessment.

9. Matters Requiring Clarification During the Examination

9.1 Save Our Bridleways has identified several matters within the Applicant's documentation which warrant further examination, including the precise locations of construction crossings, the practical design of temporary diversions, the suitability of proposed permissive equestrian routes and the evidence used to establish the equestrian baseline.

9.2 APP/2.4 identifies proposed temporary closures, diversions and private-road arrangements. APP/5.14 provides outline management measures, some of which remain subject to detailed design. We request clarification of which minimum equestrian safety measures will be secured through the Development Consent Order.

9.3 We also request clarification of the surveys and other evidence relied upon to establish the existing level of horse-rider activity and assess the potential effects on individual routes.

9.4 We request that the Applicant provides a consolidated schedule identifying the affected bridleways, their proposed crossings or diversions, the anticipated duration of construction impacts and the equestrian-specific safety measures proposed.

9.5 These matters are raised as questions for examination, rather than allegations that every outstanding detail represents an established error. Save Our Bridleways intends to provide further route-specific evidence and analysis at subsequent examination deadlines.

10. Priority Locations Requested for Accompanied Site Inspection

Priority	Location	Principal reason for inspection
1	**Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 13**	**Elevated and sequential landscape views; former LVIA Viewpoint 12**
2	**Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 4 / Park Lane**	**Network connectivity, construction interfaces, cable works and historic landscape**
3	**Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 14**	**Changing topography, landscape views, equestrian use and junction with Bridleway 4**
4	**Firsby Lane and adjoining bridleway connections**	**Construction access, horse-rider safety and route continuity**
5	**Thurcroft Bridleway 9 — Whitestone 2**	**Construction-access crossing and temporary diversion**
6	**Ulley Bridleway 6 — Whitestone 2**	**Route connectivity and recreational experience**
7	**Representative Whiston and Aston bridleway crossings**	**Cable works, construction activity and diversion safety**

10.1 Where possible, we request that the Examining Authority walks representative continuous sections of the routes, rather than examining only isolated crossing points or photographic locations.

10.2 Save Our Bridleways would welcome the opportunity for local riders or representatives familiar with these routes to accompany the Examining Authority, subject to the arrangements established for accompanied site inspections.

11. Conclusion

11.1 Save Our Bridleways requests that the Examining Authority considers the proposed inspection locations to gain a proper understanding of the existing bridleway network, its landscape setting and the practical safety requirements of horse riders.

11.2 The Applicant's Environmental Statement identifies 48 public rights of way crossing or passing close to the development. Together with the wider equestrian population identified in the British Horse Society data, this demonstrates the importance of examining the potential effects on recreational access and safety.

11.3 We recognise that the Applicant has included public rights of way and equestrian users within its submitted assessments. However, we consider that site inspections are necessary to assist the Examining Authority in testing the representativeness of those assessments and the practicality of the proposed mitigation.

11.4 In particular, we request that the Examining Authority establishes what specialist equestrian research and safety assessments have informed the Applicant's proposals, how horse riders have been considered as vulnerable road users, and whether the proposed crossing and diversion arrangements are suitable for ridden horses.

11.5 We ask that the findings from these inspections inform the examination of the development's effects on equestrian safety, recreational amenity, landscape character and public rights of way, including whether the effects associated with Whitestone 1 have been adequately assessed and justified.

11.6 Save Our Bridleways intends to provide further detailed evidence, document comparisons and examination questions at Deadline 1 on 24 November 2026.

Principal Application Documents

- APP/2.4 — Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans.
- APP/5.14 — Outline Public Right of Way Management Plan.
- APP/5.12 — Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan.
- APP/6.13 — Environmental Statement Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport.
- APP/6.20 — Environmental Statement Appendix 13.2: Transport Statement.

Supporting Information

- Local public rights of way mapping identifying Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 14 and Footpath 14.
- The Highway Code, particularly Rule 215 concerning horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles.

Declaration concerning AI assistance
AI-assisted tools have been used to assist with organising the evidence, reviewing application documents and preparing this submission.