Submission ID: SC3D6C333

Dear Examining Authority,

My home, my family and why Firsby matters to me

1. I am requesting that the Examining Authority undertakes an accompanied residential site inspection at my home, [redacted], Firsby, and visits the surrounding countryside of Conisbrough Parks before reaching its conclusions about Whitestone Solar Farm, particularly Whitestone 1.

2. I am a resident of Firsby, a local businessman and, most importantly, a father who has raised his family here with my wife, [redacted].

3. Our home and its surroundings mean a great deal to us. We have built our family life here because of the location, the peaceful countryside and the opportunity to live surrounded by open green spaces rather than built-up development.

4. [redacted] is not simply a property to us. It is our family home, somewhere we have invested our time, effort and lives, and somewhere we expected to continue enjoying the surrounding countryside for many years.

5. I am deeply concerned that Whitestone 1 could fundamentally change the character of our home and its surroundings, affecting not only the views but also the sense of openness, tranquillity and rural setting that make living here so special.

[redacted] — approximately 240 degrees of potential visual impact

6. My greatest immediate concern is the relationship between Whitestone 1 and [redacted].

7. Based on my understanding of the proposed development, Whitestone 1 would extend around approximately 240 degrees of the outlook from our property. This is not a situation where a small part of the view would change. The proposed development could affect much of the surrounding landscape visible from our home.

8. The views extend from immediately outside our front door across the countryside towards the horizon. These are views that we experience every day, not occasional views from a public footpath.

9. I am concerned that the combined effect of solar panels, fencing, tracks, electrical infrastructure and associated development could make our home feel surrounded by infrastructure where there is currently open countryside.

10. I appreciate that landscape assessments use representative viewpoints and established assessment methods. However, I question whether those viewpoints adequately demonstrate the potential effects on a property such as [redacted], where the development could be visible across such a wide part of the surrounding outlook.

11. I respectfully request an accompanied residential site inspection at [redacted], by prior arrangement, so the Inspectors can experience the views from our home and garden and understand the potential extent of the proposed development.

12. I would welcome the opportunity to show the Inspectors the different directions in which Whitestone 1 could be visible, the existing topography, the open views and the relationship between our home and the proposed development.

13. I ask the Examining Authority to consider whether the Applicant has adequately assessed the combined visual and residential amenity effects on [redacted], rather than treating individual directions of view separately.

14. I also ask whether the Applicant has provided sufficient evidence of what the development would actually look like from our property during construction, at the beginning of operation and after proposed landscaping has established.

15. Where screening is proposed, I would like to understand how effective it would be, how long it would take to establish and whether it could realistically address views from a property potentially affected across such a wide angle.

Firsby Lane — access to our family home

16. I am also concerned about the proposed construction crossing affecting Firsby Lane.

17. Firsby Lane is the only lawful vehicular access to all residential properties at Firsby, including [redacted]. It is the route on which our family and neighbours depend to reach our homes.

18. As a resident, father and local businessman, reliable access is important for family life, work commitments, visitors, deliveries and everyday journeys.

19. I am concerned about the potential for construction traffic controls, delays or obstructions affecting Firsby Lane, particularly where residents have no alternative lawful vehicular route.

20. I ask the Examining Authority to inspect the proposed crossing location and consider what would happen if a construction vehicle broke down, machinery obstructed the lane or emergency services needed immediate access.

21. I also ask whether Whitestone has undertaken a location-specific assessment of the consequences for the entire residential community, rather than relying solely on general construction traffic management measures.

22. I would like the Applicant to demonstrate whether alternative construction arrangements have been properly considered that could avoid interfering with Firsby Lane.

23. I recognise that the Applicant proposes traffic management and crossing controls. However, I believe the Examining Authority needs to be satisfied that these arrangements are practical and reliable before consent is granted, particularly where an entire community depends upon one access route.

The historic landscape and Green Belt

24. I am concerned about the sheer scale of Whitestone 1 and the effect it could have on the historic countryside of Conisbrough Parks.

25. This landscape is much more than open land available for development. It contains historic features, established farms, public rights of way, wildlife habitats and views that have been enjoyed by generations of local people.

26. The relationship between Conisbrough Castle, the former medieval deer park, historic farmsteads, Ravenfield and the surrounding countryside is part of the character and identity of this area.

27. I understand that the proposed development affects Green Belt land, and I am concerned about the consequences for its openness and rural character.

28. I also consider this landscape to be of particularly high value. I ask the Examining Authority to establish what landscape designations and assessments apply and whether the Applicant has properly recognised the area's historic and visual qualities.

29. My concern is that introducing extensive solar panels, security fencing, access tracks, cables and electrical infrastructure could substantially alter the character of the landscape for decades.

30. Even if the development is ultimately removed at the end of its operational life, that would not restore the years during which local residents and their families would have experienced a fundamentally changed landscape.

31. I ask the Examining Authority to consider whether the cumulative effects on the Green Belt, landscape character,

historic setting and nearby residential properties have been adequately assessed.

The countryside and the wellbeing of our community

32. The countryside surrounding Firsby is regularly enjoyed by local residents for walking, running, dog walking, exercise and recreation.

33. Access to these peaceful outdoor spaces contributes to people's physical and mental wellbeing. I believe this is particularly valuable in a world where so much of our everyday lives is spent working, travelling and dealing with the pressures of modern life.

34. The public footpaths and bridleways around Conisbrough Parks provide opportunities to enjoy the countryside away from busy roads.

35. I am concerned that the experience of using these routes could be substantially changed by construction activity, fencing and electrical infrastructure, even where the routes themselves remain legally open.

36. I ask the Examining Authority to consider the connected network of public rights of way and the experience of moving through the landscape, rather than examining individual paths in isolation.

The legacy for future generations

37. As a father, one of my greatest concerns is the legacy we leave for our children and future generations.

38. We chose to raise our family in Firsby because of the countryside, the open spaces and the quality of life that this location offers.

39. I believe we have a responsibility to protect the landscapes and historic places that make our communities special, while recognising the need for responsible development.

40. My concern is that a development of this scale could fundamentally change the identity of Conisbrough Parks for much of a generation, with consequences extending far beyond the construction period.

41. I do not believe that the benefits of renewable energy should mean that the environmental and community consequences of a particular location are overlooked.

42. I would like the Examining Authority to consider whether there are reasonable alternatives or changes to the scheme that could deliver renewable energy while avoiding the most sensitive parts of this historic landscape.

Locations I ask the Examining Authority to inspect

43. I respectfully request that the Examining Authority considers the following locations for site inspections, particularly to understand the effects of Whitestone 1 on [redacted], the surrounding countryside, residential access and the historic landscape.

44. My requested inspection locations are:

- [redacted], Firsby — accompanied residential site inspection (highest priority). Our family home, where I would welcome the Inspectors by prior arrangement to appreciate the views from our home and garden. I particularly ask them to examine my concern that Whitestone 1 could affect approximately 240 degrees of our surrounding outlook, including views from immediately outside our front door towards the horizon.
- Firsby Lane — proposed construction crossing. The only lawful vehicular access to all residential properties at Firsby. I ask the Inspectors to consider the proposed crossing, traffic management arrangements, emergency access and the potential consequences for residents.
- Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 13 — towards Hooton Woods and land parcel 29. To appreciate the elevated views, topography, historic landscape and changing experience of the countryside, including the area associated with the previously omitted landscape viewpoint.
- Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 2 — Firsby Lane towards Hilltop Farm and Arbour Lane. To understand the relationship between Firsby, the surrounding countryside, the recreational network and proposed construction arrangements.
- Conisbrough Parks Footpath 3 — Arbour Lane towards Park Lane. To appreciate the existing open countryside, historic setting and experience of walking through the landscape.
- Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 4 — Park Lane. To consider the effects of proposed electrical infrastructure, construction activity and changes to the historic rural setting.
- Conisbrough Parks Route 14 — Arbour Lane towards Park Lane. To appreciate the historic landscape and views towards Conisbrough Castle, with the precise footpath and bridleway classifications checked against the definitive map.
- Ravenfield Footpath 10 — Braithwell Road towards Garden Lane. To appreciate the changing views towards Conisbrough Castle and consider whether the Applicant's selected viewpoint adequately represents the wider route.
- Ravenfield Footpath 2 — St James' Church towards Ravenfield Ponds and Arbour Lane. To consider the relationship between the historic church, the surrounding countryside and the wider historic landscape.
- Ravenfield Bridleway 4 — St James' View towards Moor Lane. To appreciate the connected recreational network, changing topography and views across the countryside.
- Firsby Brook and Firsby Bridge. To appreciate local drainage conditions, the relationship between the watercourse and nearby properties, and any potential effects of the proposed development.

45. I appreciate that the Examining Authority may not be able to visit every location. However, my highest priority is an accompanied residential site inspection at [redacted] followed by the proposed Firsby Lane construction crossing, Conisbrough Parks Bridleway 13 and the historic countryside surrounding Firsby.

Request for consideration of removing Whitestone 1

46. I understand and support the need for Britain to develop renewable energy. However, I believe that this must be balanced against the environmental, historic, landscape and residential consequences of the particular development proposed.

47. My concerns about Whitestone 1 are substantial. They include the potential for extensive visual effects around [redacted], the loss of openness and rural character, the effects on the historic landscape, public rights of way and the proposed construction arrangements affecting Firsby Lane.

48. I ask the Examining Authority to consider whether the Applicant has adequately assessed these effects individually and cumulatively, particularly the potential for [redacted] to experience development across approximately 240 degrees of its surrounding outlook.

49. I also ask whether the Applicant has demonstrated that its proposed landscaping and mitigation would adequately address these effects, or whether the location and scale of Whitestone 1 create impacts that cannot satisfactorily be mitigated.

50. I respectfully request that the Examining Authority gives serious consideration to the removal of Whitestone 1 from the Development Consent Order proposal, if the evidence does not justify its inclusion.
51. I have worked hard to build a life and raise my family at [redacted]. I value the home we have created and the countryside that surrounds it.
52. My greatest concern is that future generations may not have the opportunity to experience the same open landscape, tranquillity and historic countryside that my family and I have enjoyed.
53. I therefore ask the Examining Authority to visit [redacted], see the potential extent of the development from our home and consider carefully whether Whitestone 1 is appropriate in this location.
Thank you for considering my request.
Lee Ashworth
[redacted]
Whitestone Solar Farm — EN0110020