EN0110020 — Conisbrough Runners ([redacted]) — Concerns Regarding EMF, Public Health and Recreational Users — Request for Examination Clarification
Run The Castle Conisbrough<[redacted]>
Whitestone Solar
[redacted]
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Dear Whitestone Case Team,

Whitestone Solar Farm — EN0110020
Conisbrough Runners — Interested Party Reference: [redacted]

Having reviewed Whitestone Solar Farm's Environmental Statement Chapter 16, Section 16.6, Electromagnetic Fields [APP/6.16], we would be grateful if the following matters could be brought to the attention of the Examining Authority.

Public health and recreational use of Conisbrough Parks

Conisbrough Runners wishes to express its concern about the potential health implications of introducing extensive electrical infrastructure into a landscape regularly used by runners, walkers, horse riders, children and families.

These concerns have been heightened by the UK Health Security Agency's published information discussing research into possible associations between electromagnetic-field exposure and certain health conditions, including childhood leukaemia and Alzheimer's disease.

We recognise that this research does not establish causation or demonstrate that Whitestone's infrastructure would present a health risk. Nevertheless, given the scale of the proposed development and the recreational routes within Conisbrough Parks, we believe it is reasonable to seek clear, project-specific evidence demonstrating that public exposure has been properly assessed and that the relevant safety standards will be met.

The Government guidance is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electromagnetic-fields/electromagnetic-fields-sources-and-health-effects

Questions for the Examining Authority and Applicant

1. Site-specific assessment

Paragraph 16.6.2 refers to technical advice recommending an EMF assessment addressing cable locations, routing, voltages and sensitive receptors.

Can the Applicant identify the Whitestone-specific technical calculations supporting its conclusions, including maximum operating conditions, cable configurations and predicted magnetic-field strengths, rather than relying solely on generic National Grid data?

2. Park Lane Bridleway and public exposure

Table 16.28 identifies Park Lane Bridleway, Conisbrough Parks Bridleway No. 4, as crossing cable corridor CRB.

Can the Applicant confirm the proposed cable arrangements, minimum burial depth and maximum predicted magnetic-field exposure at locations accessible to members of the public, including people using this bridleway?

3. Electrical infrastructure within Whitestone 1

Can the Applicant identify where its assessment considers the full range of electrical infrastructure proposed within Whitestone 1, including relevant substations, transformers, inverters, battery energy storage infrastructure and associated cables?

Has the potential exposure of recreational users travelling along nearby public rights of way been specifically considered?

4. Unconfirmed cable routes and enforceable safeguards

Paragraph 16.6.4 confirms that the exact underground cable routes have not yet been determined.

Can the Applicant identify the binding design parameters, minimum separation distances, burial depths and Development Consent Order requirements that would secure the assumptions relied upon in its EMF assessment?

5. Combined effects on recreational users

Can the Applicant identify where the combined operational effects of electrical infrastructure, fencing, solar arrays, construction access arrangements and changes to landscape character have been assessed for runners, walkers, horse riders and other recreational users travelling through Conisbrough Parks?

We are particularly concerned that assessments based on individual locations may not adequately represent the experience of travelling along an entire recreational route through the proposed development.

6. Government health guidance and sensitive receptors

In light of the UK Health Security Agency's published information concerning electromagnetic fields and potential health effects, can the Applicant demonstrate, using Whitestone-specific technical evidence, that the proposed infrastructure will comply with the applicable UK public exposure guidelines?

Can the Applicant also confirm whether children, families and other recreational users of Conisbrough Parks have been considered as potential receptors, particularly where public rights of way cross or pass close to electrical infrastructure?

7. Compliance with the Scoping Opinion

The Planning Inspectorate's Scoping Opinion anticipated an EMF technical appendix addressing

potential effects on human and ecological receptors.

The Applicant has instead presented its assessment within Environmental Statement Chapter 16.

Can the Applicant confirm how the assessment meets the substance of the Scoping Opinion's requirements and identify the technical evidence supporting its conclusions?

8. Examination procedure

As electromagnetic fields are not expressly identified as a separate topic in the published agendas for Issue Specific Hearings 1 and 2, would the Examining Authority consider addressing these matters through written questions or another appropriate examination procedure?

If these matters can appropriately be raised during the forthcoming hearings, we would welcome clarification.

Conclusion

Conisbrough Parks provides an important recreational landscape for surrounding communities. The introduction of extensive solar and associated electrical infrastructure represents a substantial change to the character and use of this countryside.

Our concern is not based on an assertion that adverse health effects have been demonstrated. It is that the Applicant should provide transparent, site-specific evidence showing that the potential effects on people using this landscape have been properly considered.

We would also ask the Examining Authority to consider whether the Applicant's assessments adequately address the cumulative experience of recreational users within Whitestone 1, rather than treating public rights of way and electrical infrastructure as isolated features.

We appreciate that the forthcoming hearings are subject to the Examining Authority's management and would be grateful if these questions could be considered within the examination process.

Thank you for your assistance.

Kind regards,

Conisbrough Runners
Interested Party Reference: [redacted]
Whitestone Solar Farm — EN0110020