Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Whitestone Solar Farm
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) - Part 2
Date:	11 November 2026

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File Name: WHITESTONE_11NOV_ISH1_PT2.mp3
File Length: 01:07:59

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:02:29 - 00:00:05:26
Good morning. We're now resuming the hearing.

00:00:07:28 - 00:00:11:23
If we could now proceed with Nicola Henderson.

00:00:15:12 - 00:00:16:06
Go ahead.

00:00:19:20 - 00:00:50:05
Thank you. I'm Nicola Henderson from Anston Parish Council. I haven't got much to add to what mister Northcote has said as he's covered it quite comprehensively. But I just wanted to say, you've talked about how you've developed the design, looking at the landscape and sensitive to place. I would disagree with that. Just to give some history on Anston, Anston developed as a farming and quarrying community.

00:00:50:22 - 00:01:08:11
In fact, the houses of parliament were built from landstone that was quarried from Anston. And at half... The heart of Anston, we have Anston Stones, which is a triple s I limestone gorge, an ancient woodland with a scheduled monument, dead man's cave. I don't think any of this was actually mentioned in this submission.

00:01:10:05 - 00:01:40:05
But because of the history, the fields around Anston contribute to its rural setting and the historic understanding of Anston. Now, as we've already said, the land around us isn't flat so it's very difficult to screen it effectively. So as you drive into Anston from Todwick, the fields on the left are going to be covered in solar panels which is going to affect the sense of place of Anston.

00:01:44:29 - 00:01:55:25
Also, viewpoints. We have Axel Lane, which is sort of one of the main... The green heart of the community, if you like. It's where people go

00:01:57:10 - 00:02:25:10
walk their dogs, horse ride, bike. It's a very, very busy bridal way. That looks down onto the a fifty seven and the fields beyond. And at the moment, that view is an open view looking across the fields. What will happen with those solar panels is just further back, there's Northampton Trading Estate. So those solar panels will merge with the trading estate, and it's just gonna look like an industrial landscape.

00:02:29:03 - 00:02:49:11

The other thing I just wanted to comment on, you you you made quite a big point that you've removed fields to improve the visual impact but the megawatt output has stayed the same. So I would suggest perhaps those fields were never needed in the first place in terms of the amount of acreage that you need to generate that amount of power.

00:02:52:13 - 00:02:56:01
So I think that just about covers my points. Thank you.

00:03:00:15 - 00:03:05:00
Thank you Mrs Henderson. Does the applicant want to respond on any of those points?

00:03:05:23 - 00:03:07:20
No, thank you.

00:03:08:02 - 00:03:30:02
We are now going to move to interested parties who've indicated that they wish to speak, and we went through the list this morning. If we could start with William Collins, who's indicated that he has some points on a plan that was put up before the break.

00:03:32:11 - 00:03:45:11
So I think it was figure twin... Figure twenty three from the design approach document. So if we could get that back up and if Mr. Collins, if you want to speak. Thank you.

00:03:46:01 - 00:04:34:09
Thank you very much. William Collins, resident of Conningborough Parks, a retired farmer. Looking at that map, the green area that is adjacent to the m eighteen is land that belonged to my neighbor... Does belong to my neighbor. It was approached to join the scheme, but he himself removed that land, not the applicant. The other areas of light green on there, if it's possible to get one... The very first brochure that the applicant supplied to people and residents, it's very difficult to see because of the color scheme of greens and blues, but a lot of that area was already shaded, a slightly different color if you took the patients to look to where the scheme sits now.

00:04:34:26 - 00:04:50:10
And I think that indicates that they knew all along that was gonna be reduced to make themselves look good. If the inspector could get hold of that brochure, you could see for yourselves most of that was already shaded different to the area that's solar.

00:04:52:06 - 00:04:57:00
And that's the point I'd like to make. Do want to meet while I'm on the mic to carry on with the rest of my...

00:04:57:29 - 00:05:02:01
Yes. Mr. Collins, if you're speaking now, continue, please.

00:05:02:03 - 00:05:38:22

Thank you very much. On the subject of landscape and visual, I'd like to say that basically, I agree with City of Doncaster Council's statement, which can be found in APP059, Volume six, Environmental Statement Chapter seven, Landscape and Visual. Table seven point three, statutory consultation feedback from statutory consultation, period. Pages thirty to thirty five. What I would like to say on my own is that I have lived and worked every day of my life on Cunnishba parks, which is Whitestone one, and that's all I know about white...

00:05:38:24 - 00:05:58:27
That's Whitestone one. I'm sorry, Whitestone two, you're too far away for me to have any thoughts on that. But what I did find was that the photographs that they were taken from the viewpoints and public rights away are supposed to show a fair representation of the area, and they could not be more biased to trying to show the landscape in a bad way.

00:06:00:26 - 00:06:38:20
Photos taken from behind tall hedges, behind trees, some pointing away from the solar industrial estate, and one pointing directly at my home on footpath five, which is a detached cottage surrounded by open fields, but apparently, my my home obscures totally the views across the open landscape on footpath number five. Now, if the photographer had moved fifty yards to the south on the same footpath, the whole vista opens up from east, south, and west as far as Park Lane.

00:06:39:25 - 00:07:12:04
It's another deliberate attempt to destroy the views, and I did raise this with the inspector and with the applicant. Taking all the information off the photographs, including camera angles and GPS, the camera angle points directly at my kitchen window. It shows photographs inside the house, downstairs and upstairs, my security systems, and whatever else was on my property at that time. That is not a fair representation four of path five, I have to say.

00:07:13:05 - 00:07:51:11
I also... When I did raise my concerns with the inspector's office, they accepted it and added it to my original statement. I did ask the applicant via email and eventually got a reply that the photograph, and I quote, was to show the res... The occupants of the house the view they will have. I think I know what my view is and what it's gonna be. I've lived there all my life. I've asked the applicant whether they were responsible for giving the photographer the grid references and camera angles of all the shots that were taken because...

00:07:52:07 - 00:08:24:24
Excuse me. If they were, I can assume... Assumption I can come to is that taking that quality of photo or the views of that, that the applicant is desperate to not show the quality of the landscape and the beautiful vistas across that land. I'm sure on your own inspections that you did unaccompanied, you must have seen some very striking landscape views across Coneybrook Parks.

00:08:25:23 - 00:08:48:13
I did not receive a a reply to that question. I still don't know today who was responsible, whether it was the company they hired, but I would assume because everyone is detrimental to the countryside that they were given exact coordinates of where to take them from, which is in my having lived there all my life, I find that at... And

00:08:50:06 - 00:09:10:15
it's downright wrong to try and hide it like that. It is... It's to try and hide... They're obviously very nervous of the landscape. Very, very nervous. I've spoken with members of the applicants that have been to my property. Now, I'm assuming it's not right to name people. Am I right?

00:09:13:26 - 00:09:19:22
Whether the applicant would agree to you mentioning anybody's names, I I I don't know.

00:09:22:16 - 00:09:24:18
Madam, I don't think we have any objection.

00:09:25:07 - 00:09:56:14
Right. So Jonathan Thompson came and sat at my table when this first started because originally, according to that map there, I'm in the middle of it. And he said to me, I said, why have you chosen this area? They looked at Brinsworth and they spread out looking for suitable land, and they could not believe that park... Cunninghamshire Parks, nobody had done anything with it. That's his view. What his view is is that he's looking at it at Pound notes, we're looking at the countryside.

00:09:57:03 - 00:10:50:18
That's what we're looking at and what we've got and what's been... What's there after two thousand years, as I said yesterday, of no development. Other members of the team, Sam is one of them, Emily, and I think it was Fiona, came out eventually after we've been presented. My wife owns the disused railway that runs through there, and we'd been been given a presentation at the time, and it was all the maps and given out to all the public. One of the service roads needs to cross that railway as does a cable route. The site they'd chosen for the service road was exactly at the spot where my mother-in-law, my sister-in-law, and my brother in law's ashes have been placed because it is such a tranquil and peaceful setting in a little corpse that's full of wildflowers in the spring and birds all year.

00:10:50:26 - 00:11:29:08
And it was only after I complained when we'd given the presentation in no consultation that they came out to see me. Now making the point again about going to the photographs, I'm sorry, that was a bit personal. And that's the right way. Some... A lot of photographs of Whitestone One didn't turn up at the consultation meetings, but have appeared on the DCO. And that hadn't given us any chance to make any comments or pass any comments about them. Why were they not on view even though they were dated before the dates of the consultation? Many of the dates on the photographs, many of the locations they say they're taken from are wrong.

00:11:30:01 - 00:11:54:00
They've accepted this. They sent me a meme email. They said that we'll get them changed. But for example, some saying there were views from the Roman villa. They were not. They were at the backside of Parks Farm. They're definitely not. Photos to be found in a, double p, zero seven six and a, double p, zero seven seven environmental statement chapter eight in figures.

00:11:59:00 - 00:12:39:15

A s zero four two on page ten have put representative viewpoint assessment, states viewpoint one is representative of visitors to Connysboro Cemetery. This photograph is taken on a private road, which the public don't have access to. It is stood in the line of a hedge where no visitors would ever be. They didn't even stand on Springbank Road. They got into the hedge. It's below the cemetery, given a lower view and angle of camera. Surely, if this is representative of a view of the cemetery, they should have been in the cemetery, stood in the cemetery, which is much higher, and the center point is the chapel in the middle.

00:12:40:09 - 00:12:47:01
That's where we've taken photographs from, and it opens the fister up five times as much as what they're saying they can see.

00:12:48:21 - 00:13:09:01
Because of all the inaccuracies with the photos and all the dates and all the information that's on it, it puts in doubt in my mind as to the accuracy of the rest of the DCO. And in my opinion, Whitestone one should be removed entirely from the planning application because we've no faith in it being correct anymore. Thank a strong

00:13:20:02 - 00:13:20:17
twenty

00:13:22:04 - 00:13:25:22
quarter altogether at the end or individually? of

00:13:26:18 - 00:13:35:02
Madam, I think that would be more efficient if we heard the interested parties and then responded to them at the end. Thank you. That was Angus Walker for the applicant.

00:13:35:10 - 00:13:40:13
Thank you. If we could now move to Greg Reynolds, please.

00:13:57:20 - 00:14:04:16
Thanks very much for the opportunity to speak. It's Greg Reynolds, and I represent... I'm the counselor for Rothen

00:14:06:13 - 00:14:37:16
Borough for Bramley and Ravenfield. I just wanted to say I'm I'm so pleased that we've had such quality of, if you like, people that feel absolutely frustrated, let down, disappointed, feel like they've had doors slammed in their faces. I have a letter here which demonstrates that perfectly. It's not even signed, but it just by... The the whole question... The request of the letter was don't put it there.

00:14:37:18 - 00:14:59:20
Put it on brownfield sites. We've got we've got a plethora of them, and they won't even discuss. They've never even told me or identified where those sites are. I asked them for the grid references, and they said they weren't available. To be honest, it's been nothing but stonewalling

00:15:01:21 - 00:15:32:18
batting away questions without a single answer, especially at the presentations I've been to where senior executives have been there and refused to answer any questions at all. Why isn't this on the brownfield? No answer. Why didn't you consider brownfield sites? We did. How many? We're not saying. It has just been obfuscation all the way. Make it as difficult as possible, and they will give up and go away.

00:15:32:27 - 00:16:08:16
And as for the reductions in it, good god, do they think we're stupid? We know you had it on, so you've gotta look like you're chopping it off. It's ridiculous to suggest that we're we're such numbschools that we don't know what that... What game that is that you're playing. And finally, my big concern, there's no benefit whatsoever for local people. They're gonna have to put up with this for the next sixty years of their lives, and you know, argue about this pinper and this out and the other.

00:16:08:18 - 00:16:39:27
That's the fact. At And the end of the day, these people don't care about Rotherham. They only care... They're only doing this not for altruistic reasons, nothing other than the money motive. And it's us that's gonna have to pay for it, the taxpayer. Everybody that pays tax will be paying for this. And I just think that they've pushed and pushed and pushed, started construction already around fields where I live.

00:16:40:14 - 00:17:23:05
There's been no notice, no explanation, no signs of saying what it what it is, what it... What what it's for. It's just a proper metal egg entrance into a field that runs for about twenty foot, and that's it. But nobody's told us what's happening, and yet it hasn't even passed. Now if you'd know... That that sounds to me like they're treating this as a done deal. Like I say, they're not altruistically based. They're there for themselves, And the the people of Rotherham have all the muck, yeah, all the disruption, all the all the dismal things that we've come to expect from things like this, and we've had enough of them.

00:17:23:07 - 00:17:34:13
We've already got over HS two just... But that blighted lies here for ten years. Nobody listened. So I implore you, please, please, please

00:17:35:29 - 00:17:52:27
Show the behavior of of what you've heard to the... Over the last couple of days. It it must give you an idea about how how deceitful this organization has been. It does not open dialogue. It wants to close you down. Thank you.

00:17:58:27 - 00:18:24:22
Thank you, mister Reynolds. Can I just remind our speakers today that for this item, we are talking about landscape and visual matters? So to make the meeting more efficient, people could restrict their comments to landscape and visual matters. If we could now move to Janet Greenwood, please.

00:18:28:13 - 00:18:43:14

Good afternoon. I'm speaking on behalf of myself, Janet Greenwood, and also on a Micklerey Micklebring residence, that's where I live, Save Our Greenbelt, Coneysbury Park, and Braithwell with Micklebring Parish Council.

00:18:45:24 - 00:19:10:01
I've lived in Micklebring for over thirty five years. It's a village that's immediately south of Whitestone one but outside the southern DCO boundary. My concern is that being outside the red line appears to have resulted in Micklebring being treated as a peripheral consideration rather than a community whose residents will experience the consequences of this development.

00:19:11:16 - 00:19:24:27
I want to draw attention to the applicant's environmental statement, particularly Volume six, Chapter seven, Landscape and Visual. I'm concerned that the assessment does not adequately reflect the views

00:19:26:18 - 00:19:29:00
homes and And we're

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to

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but also of residential views from the north edge of Micklebring and along Greifsight Lane. Greifsight Lane runs into Rudall Lane. The applicant selection of viewpoints also needs scrutiny. We have identified other locations that provide stronger and more representative views, including the Grazing Hearts public house and the higher ground along the Braithwell footpath. These are places where the landscape is strong the

00:20:39:05 - 00:20:43:17
Have very future. for for

00:20:49:15 - 00:21:26:03
We This did not appear on the original consultation maps. All the properties developed around that period were also missing. The maps appear to have relied on outdated housing information. This raises an important question. If the applicant's baseline mapping did not accurately identify existing properties, how confident can we be that its measurements, distances to residential visual receptors and technical assessments are reliable? My home sits adjacent to view point six, the footpath.

00:21:26:05 - 00:21:59:29
However, my property is elevated at that point of around three to four meters. Those views have not been replicated anywhere. The accuracy of the baseline information also matters beyond landscape assessment. It is important the correct homes and locations are identified when assessing construction noise and long term operational noise from the solar infrastructure, inverters and battery storage. We support the City of Doncaster Council's overall position on Whitestone One.

00:22:00:03 - 00:22:37:10
However, I would ask that the City of Doncaster Council to consider the location of Micklebring and the setting that it sits in. No amount of planting can mitigate the open view I I can see... Oh, sorry, open view that I know. I see from Clifton Beacons over to Ravenfield and beyond beyond Conyersburg to Emly Moor. I asked the examining authority to consider whether applicant's conclusions have properly accounted for communities beyond the DCO boundary and whether the evidence used to reach those conclusions is sufficiently accurate.

00:22:38:11 - 00:23:14:11
I asked the inspector to consider the actual views from Micklebring, the purpose and significance of the Millennium viewpoint, the accuracy of the original property mapping and whether the visual and noise assessments adequately reflect the homes and people affected. Being outside the DCO boundary does not mean being outside the impact of this development. Finally, I'd like to add that I had made numerous attempts to Green Nation to come and visit our community. We were all they were all declined on the basis that they had not engaged directly with individual communities.

00:23:14:25 - 00:23:21:00
However, I have evidence to prove otherwise. People talk and communities share. Thank you.

00:23:28:23 - 00:23:34:21
Thank you, Mrs. Greenwood. If we can now move to Mark Corrigan, who's online.

00:23:39:29 - 00:24:18:28

Thank you, madam. Mark Corrigan from the British Shore Society. Thank you, mister Griffiths, for your opening comments on the LVIA being updated. We look forward to that, receiving that, and responding to it in due course. It it is a bit short, but we we shall do our best. So I'd like to comment on the outline public rights of way management plan Volume five, the scale of this project, demonstrated on page ten, spanning four council areas, notably Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield and Derbyshire.

00:24:19:05 - 00:24:35:04
Page eighteen of, that document four point two point three, We welcome those fifteen meter buffers on either side, the center... From the center of the public right of way. Page nineteen, four point two point three,

00:24:36:22 - 00:25:07:20
references banksman and traffic crossing routes. We would simply ask who will train these marshal or banksman, and that perhaps engagement with the British Horse Society at that point would be appreciated. Page nineteen, four point three point two, Prow permanent diversion management. What category are these Prowls and how a layman to interpret this? This.

00:25:09:06 - 00:25:13:25
Page twenty four point five, temperate prowl diversions

00:25:15:15 - 00:25:57:13
states the following prowls will require temporary diversions during the construction phase of the proposed development. It then goes on to list Conyersborough Parks three, Conyersborough Parks four, Conyersborough Parks five, Conyersborough Parks fourteen and Conyersborough Parks fifteen with no definition of what these public rights of way are. In fact, Conyersburg Parks fourteen is shown as both a footpath and a bridal way. Again, this makes it difficult for the public to make meaningful comments when the underlying notably, Western footpath is shown as a footpath, ten.

00:25:57:15 - 00:26:15:17
Western footpath is shown as twelve, and Western footpath is shown as thirteen. So it's it's a little bit disturbing that Conyersborough Parks is not given any definition at all. We'd like to see that rectified and hopefully it will be in the future.

00:26:17:22 - 00:26:21:03
Page twenty three, four point six point two.

00:26:23:17 - 00:26:31:22
We see this as being vague. We see clarity on how any upgraded routes would be incorporated and not simply considered.

00:26:34:12 - 00:27:07:11
Page twenty three, four point six point five, definitive modification orders. It states the applicants aware of a number of definitive modification orders having been submitted for consultation with neighboring local local authorities within the vicinity of the proposed development. There are actually

three of the four council areas that the solar farm encompasses, so perhaps that area needs reexamining and again, we look forward to mister Griffith's LVIA.

00:27:08:29 - 00:27:11:26
Page twenty five, five point one nine.

00:27:13:24 - 00:27:23:19
Neighboring local authorities were practical. What does this actually mean? Will provision be made to remove infrastructure if these DMMOs are confirmed?

00:27:25:16 - 00:27:35:08
The second document that I would like to make comments on, if I may, is the Whitestone Solar Farm reports and statements volume five,

00:27:38:12 - 00:27:59:27
a p p zero four six, permiss... Page forty nine, permissive rights paths. Why the permissive path shown in this category and not shown within the public rights of way management plan? Page forty nine eight point one three, whilst we do welcome the linking of bridal ways, we would appreciate to be consulted in this regard.

00:28:01:29 - 00:28:35:28
Page forty nine eight point one four, which within w two, It seems to be very confusing and vague and difficult to interpret. It's difficult to see what lens of permissive bridal ways are being proposed when the correct category of pull it right of way is not used. We'd like to see that be rectified. Page forty nine, eight point one point six. Again, a vague statement. Who can use permissive along some stretches? We seek clarity on this point.

00:28:36:00 - 00:28:52:22
We highlight in our original objection to the applicant that a landlocked bridle way, a landlocked path was being created which would only be available for pedestrians and cyclists. We informed Whitestones that cyclists cannot legally use a footpath.

00:28:54:19 - 00:29:42:17
Page fifty nine, we note the map and key simply shows existing public rights of way by a green dash line and does not differentiate between footpaths, bridleways or restricted byways. This makes these plans difficult to interpret and therefore makes a relevant meaningful consents... Consultation response difficult. The proposed permissive paths are shown as a dashed purple line. It's also vague to see how this is to be interpreted. Thirteen point seven nine kilometers or eight point five seven miles of permissive paths not broken down into definition footpath bridal way, restricted by way for a scheme of this size seems like a disproportionate insufficient length of paths being offered.

00:29:45:15 - 00:29:56:16
So I think that brings me to the end of my comments. And again, I'll just reiterate, I look forward to receiving the updated LVIA. Thank you, madam.

00:30:02:19 - 00:30:04:10

Thank you, mister Corrigan.

00:30:06:19 - 00:30:19:23
Perhaps it's getting slightly off landscape and visual, but it it does lead me on to a point I did have about public rights of way and how they're shown in the application.

00:30:22:05 - 00:30:57:00
And please correct me if I'm if I'm wrong, and there is a particular plan that shows the the public rights of way and shows whether their footpaths bridle ways on other and what their actual numbers are. Although there's descriptions of the public rights of way in the outline public right of way management plan, APP zero four seven. And then there are plans of the public rights of way in country parks in APP zero eight four.

00:30:58:11 - 00:31:07:02
It... It's it's not been easy to try and work out when people refer to, you know, footpath number

00:31:08:18 - 00:31:19:03
for Conisborough Park where exactly that is without looking at numerous documents and trying to work it out. So I wonder if that's something perhaps the applicant could look at.

00:31:19:05 - 00:31:30:09
Thank you, Madam Angus Walker for the applicant. Yes, we will in the next few minutes, I hope. I'll be able to provide you with the documents you should look out for this information.

00:31:33:03 - 00:31:37:15
Is there a plan or a set of plans with those?

00:31:38:19 - 00:31:40:05
There are right

00:31:40:07 - 00:31:41:13
way plans.

00:31:43:20 - 00:31:51:08
Will confirm with my colleagues whether that shows all the public rights of way that you're asking about and get back to you in a moment.

00:31:51:10 - 00:31:52:02
Okay. Thank you.

00:32:00:14 - 00:32:03:27
If we could now move to Jeanette Graham, please.

00:32:37:10 - 00:33:23:06

Thank you. Jeanette Graham, resident of Clifton and Connysborough for thirty eight years, Whitestone One. Whitestone One virtually wipes out our whole parish of Connysborough Parks. Clifton is the only village in the whole of Connysborough Parks. Many of Clifton's residents have lived here for decades, and in some cases, for all of their lives and generations before, valued for its characterful rural agricultural setting, access to nature and country pursuits, its beautiful hilltop position amidst the surrounding green, It's peace and tranquility.

00:33:23:18 - 00:34:17:12
Just about everybody in Clifton is a nature lover and enjoys it in a rich variety of ways. Due to mobility issues, I find it difficult to get out and about much. This means that I take full advantage of the lanes and pathways in my very immediate vicinity. The accessible route for me and for many other Clifton residents, thirty six point five percent of whom are also over sixty five and in a protected characteristic group, is to go down Beacon Lane, which runs along the top of the limestone ridge and arrives at the most spectacular lookout point, view point four, at four hundred and thirty feet, which gives panoramic views down into the basin and across the valley as far as the eye can see.

00:34:18:09 - 00:35:00:16
This gives me and others the freedom to enjoy the countryside on our doorstep, being only a couple of hundred meters from home, and prolongs my independence and well-being and gives me a sense of purpose. During my mobility scooter ramblings, I can socially interact and meet other neighbors and local folk, which provides me with communication and connectivity opportunities, important to keeping a good balance of mental health. Grotesque industrial rows of proposed solar panels and infrastructure would be devastatingly prominent and out of all reasonable scale to this ancient rural green environment.

00:35:01:05 - 00:35:01:22
It would be

00:35:01:24 - 00:35:41:01
a blight and infestation of such major proportions that no compensatory factors or screening could ever camouflage. I would no longer have the wish nor joy in seeing our heritage so demeaned, disrespected, and flagrantly and unnecessarily trashed, nor to take my ramblings between a prison of security fencing and cameras and rows of mounted solar panels obliterating the panoramic views. Any attempt to screen and camouflage Whitestone's proposed industrial landscape would indeed in itself cause further degradation to the openness of the current landscape.

00:35:41:08 - 00:36:21:29
Thirty six point four percent of Glifton residents, a much higher proportion than quoted by Whitestone, are in a protected characteristic group for age alone, much higher than the twenty one point eight percent that Whitestone stated. So they have worked with... From an inaccurate baseline once again. This matters because whilst Whitestone have identified the existence of age population and poor health being higher in the neighborhood, I could find no meaningful assessment of the differential effects of Whitestone one to demonstrate how they would address this disproportionate impact on visual amenity and landscape.

00:36:22:09 - 00:36:51:00

Finally, if Whitestone are allowed to devastate this view and access, thirty six point four percent of Clifton's population would be unfairly and substantially disadvantaged because they cannot necessarily just go somewhere else to look at such a unique view of their homeland and access the countryside. So it would be taken out of their reach, out of their life entirely to their very great distress and detriment. Thank you.

00:36:57:04 - 00:36:59:16
Any questions? Thank you

00:36:59:18 - 00:37:07:11
very much, missus Graham. Very grateful to you. If we could pass now to Nicholas Eastwood, please.

00:37:26:28 - 00:37:36:19
Thank you for this opportunity. I'm Nicholas Eastwood. I've been asked to represent Firsbury Residents Association, which is a small hamlet sitting on the border of Rodham and Doncaster.

00:37:38:06 - 00:38:05:28
The Botley West decision issued yesterday is relevant context to this agenda item. That scheme was refused after this decision maker considered harm to Greenbelt, heritage, and landscape. We recognize that Whitestone must be judged on its own evidence. We ask the examining authority to scrutinize the site specific effects carefully alongside the benefits claimed for this scheme.

00:38:07:25 - 00:38:11:23
We've listened to Sam, we've listened to the applicants today.

00:38:13:11 - 00:38:37:01
They've referred to AP zero four zero zero four zero design principles, including AP one five eight and zero four six. We ask what those principles actually changed around Connorsbury Parks and around Fursby. Mister Griffiths has said the design process responsive to topography at Highmo.

00:38:38:22 - 00:38:53:19
We ask what specific response was made to the elevated field parcels around Fursby, namely parcels thirty one, thirty, one six two b, and thirty four f. And where is that shown?

00:38:55:09 - 00:39:23:26
Mister Griffiths has also said that open views are retained. A p zero five nine paragraph seven four point three distinguishes landscape effects from visual effects. A view across the site may remain visible while the landscape itself, within it changes. Can the applicant identify the views where openness is said to be retained? What infrastructure is visible and what layout changes support that claim?

00:39:26:17 - 00:39:44:08
Fursby Residence Association is specifically concerned about the proposed Whitestone one substation beside Connysborough Lodge, the former medieval hunting lodge at the heart of Connysborough Parks on Park Lane. This is clearly visible from properties within Fursby.

00:39:46:19 - 00:40:08:13
The applicant referred to access as a reason for Whitestone two substation location. We ask what access need justifies Whitestone one location. There is no existing road serving that site. What access rights and infrastructure does the applicant assume, and what alternative locations were actually assessed?

00:40:11:05 - 00:40:16:13
Why was a less harmful location not selected in that substation one location?

00:40:19:17 - 00:40:49:01
Still in relation to the substation location, mister Griffith described the landform as being on high land but flat. A flat surface does not answer the visual effects of placing a large substation on elevated ground. Can the applicants please identify the levels used in assessment and show how its height and position would appear from Connysborough Lodge, the historic landscape, public rights of way, and from Fursby, which is our little amulet.

00:40:52:02 - 00:41:06:17
Within the applicant's presentation this morning, on landscape and visual, there was no mention of how the megawatt capacity actually influenced the design, no mention about how much money is going to be made from the design.

00:41:08:05 - 00:41:40:26
At a short notice meeting shortly after the application was submitted to the planning inspectorate, We asked Sam directly for a clear answer on examination record. What generation capacity is actually required? And is the proposed seven fifty megawatt requirement? Or is that the applicant's chosen scheme capacity? Was a lower capacity or differently located design assessed to reduce harm to residents, the historic landscape, and public rights of way users?

00:41:42:27 - 00:42:21:16
The applicant has confirmed that the updated LVIA at deadline one will include the host authorities viewpoint discussions. What we ask is why is the LVIA being updated during examination? Why is it now that we're only getting this? What has changed since the application assessment? What evidence prompted this update and has it led to any design change? Can they provide the design and assessment chronology so the examining authority can see how the landscape and people's experience influenced the layout of that?

00:42:23:07 - 00:42:36:23
Earlier, mister Griffiths has confirmed that viewpoints are being discussed and reassessed with the host councils. We ask how the community can contribute to this. How can Fursby residents can, contribute to this?

00:42:38:14 - 00:43:08:28
We are the people who use these rules every single day. We raised the need to assess public rights of way as a user experience during non statutory and statutory consultation. A number of times, all our residents said, we need user experience. Why is that work only being done now after the application?

Did they actually listen anyway? What were pointer actually? All like consultation when they didn't listen.

00:43:18:00 - 00:43:34:11
We also asked the applicant to explain why viewpoint twelve on bridal way thirteen was removed on grounds of vegetation. This route opens up to views across the western side including views towards the proposed substation that I've mentioned earlier.

00:43:37:24 - 00:44:30:05
What evidence shows that vegetation will screen those views in winter? What leaves are absent? Has the route been assessed from a horse rider's height view? And is the vegetation relied upon for screening secured and managed through AP forty six? We ask that this viewpoint and the route selection be addressed within the updated LVIA. The applicant has said that public rights of way will be assessed as a user experience, but actually what methodology will be used? Will it distinguish horse riders on bridleways from pedestrians on footpaths? What eye height assumptions will it use for mounted riders? And was any assessment carried out for horseback? The assessment should explain how these views change along each route and how long the development remains visible.

00:44:31:23 - 00:45:08:14
Mr. Griffiths has said EN1 was never going to remove all the issues. We are now asking for a scheme with no effects. EN1 recognizes that energy projects can have adverse landscape effects. We know that while requiring the applicant to apply the mitigation hierarchy and decision maker to weigh residual effects against the benefits, the question is whether the effects on this landscape and its users have been properly assessed, avoided or reduced where possible and clearly presented for that planning balance.

00:45:09:20 - 00:45:28:01
Finally, Connysbury Parks is a connected historic landscape with more than two thousand years of human history. We will forward you our own historic landscape evidence to this examination, which is a ninety one page document which has been completed by residents within Fursby.

00:45:30:01 - 00:45:56:19
Fursby has no legal road through it and bridalways two, four and fourteen are essential to residents in everyday life. We use the bridal ways. We ask that the updated assessment address the changing views experienced along the... These rules... Routes, and that we have a reasonable opportunity to comment on any new evidence in a timely fashion. Thank you.

00:46:02:29 - 00:46:07:01
Thank you, mister Eastwood. And we have Angela Eastwood.

00:46:18:21 - 00:46:51:21
Good morning. I'm Angela Eastwood. I am going to speak on behalf of Stave Arr Bridal Ways firstly, and then on behalf of myself as a resident of Thursby, if that's okay. Firstly, I just agree with mister Northcote about the design. I don't think it's very good. And as a layman, I don't think we're getting to this stage. We're proposing such changes as we are. I'd also like to say on behalf of Save Our

Bridleways that it's really poor there's been no consultation with the British Horse Society despite this being offered on several occasions.

00:46:52:03 - 00:47:22:08
My own advice as an experienced horse rider, horse owner, living within College Park, having moved there predominantly for the bridleways has also been ignored. But I'll continue now with the speech on behalf of Save Our Bridalways. So speaking on behalf of Save Our Bridalways, I'd like to raise concerns about the applicant's assessment of the effects on existing bridalways and equestrian users. Firstly, the experience of complete riding journeys.

00:47:23:00 - 00:47:56:17
Horse riders experience the landscape continuously rather than individual fixed viewpoints. Again, this has been fed back by myself through the non statutory consultation and the statutory consultation. This is not new feedback. We ask whether the applicant has adequately assessed the effects of solar panels, fencing, construction activity, landscape changes along the entire riding routes. Conyersburg Parks is a very special part... Place where I live. It's got interconnected bridleways, and it was one of the primary reasons that we moved there.

00:47:58:08 - 00:48:35:24
Secondly, Whitestone one and Connicheborough Parks. Our particular concerns relate to Fursby Lane, Connicheborough Park Bridalway two, Park Lane, Bridalway four and the connected bridalway network. We've also concerns regarding Connorsbury Park's Bridalway thirteen, where the elevated topography, changing views towards the development may not be adequately represented by the applicant's selected viewpoints. Sorry. I'm getting distracted by you whispering. We asked the applicant to explain why the previously proposed viewpoint twelve was excluded and whether viewpoint eleven adequately represents the experience of riders traveling along bridal way thirteen.

00:48:36:23 - 00:49:08:24
Thirdly, proposed permissive equestrian routes. We question whether the proposed permissive routes adequately compensate for the loss of existing rural riding experiences, particularly where routes may become enclosed by fencing or screening vegetation. Fourthly, I'd like to bring to your attention equestrian safety. We are seriously concerned that the current proposals could create circumstances in which a serious or potentially fatal equestrian accident could occur. Horses are flight animals can re...

00:49:08:26 - 00:49:42:11
And can react unpredictably to sudden noise, machinery, large vehicles, and restricted spaces. I'll give an example. My horse is seventeen three hands high. He weighs... Which is one point seven five centimeters to his wither. He weighs seven hundred and sixty pounds, eleven stone third... That's eleven stone thirteen pounds, and one thousand six hundred and seventy five pounds. Imagine him being spooked on one of these bridalways, me coming off, and that coming to you at full force.

00:49:42:16 - 00:50:17:24
It's not just gonna be a horse rider that's injured. It is gonna be users of the public rights of way, and indeed road users if he gets onto a road. We ask that detailed safety implications, including interactions with construction traffic, are examined under the appropriate transport matters. Finally, our evidence gathering to date. Our detailed work so far is concentrated particularly on Whitestone

One, including First Bay and the Conyersburg Park's bridal network. However, our wider equestrian community impact survey covers all three Whitestone areas.

00:50:18:13 - 00:50:53:02
This was completed on November eight. And once the findings have been analyzed, we intend to submit further evidence relating to other affected riding routes than those mentioned today, horse welfare, safety, well-being and the local equestrian economy. We ask the examining authority to require a route by route assessment of the effects on equestrian users, including the cumulative impact on complete riding journeys. We would also welcome the accompanied site inspection of the bridleways that we've suggested already in our written representations.

00:50:55:06 - 00:50:59:20
I would like also just to to bring to your attention, we did touch on

00:50:59:22 - 00:51:00:07
it

00:51:00:09 - 00:51:32:17
yesterday, that there were some survey works done on a on a trenching field that's associated to the substation on Park Lane bridleway, which is bridleway number four. When the survey works were done, the applicant showed a complete ignorance to horse safety. This was raised during the survey works being done. The survey couldn't be completed because the applicant had failed to take into account the clay soil and the water logging because it was done in February. So the actual works were done again.

00:51:33:07 - 00:51:56:29
And despite my feedback to the applicant about the dangers of placing welfare cabins, JCBs on a blind bend on a part... On Park Lane bridal way, again, the setup was exactly the same when the when the works recommenced. So I have no faith that these applicants will actually listen to what we say. That's it for Save Our Bridal Ways. Thank you.

00:52:03:09 - 00:52:16:20
So I do this next speech on behalf of myself, Angela Eastwood, occupier of a property in Thursby. My comments are about the effect on my home and my personal experience of living in in and using Conyersburg Parks.

00:52:19:18 - 00:52:52:04
My main points are the effects on my home and its outlook because this is all what I can discuss, the views and experience of riding through Conyersborough Parks and the flooding and surface water evidence around Fursby. At the barn, we've raised during nonstatutory consultation and also normal consultation, the panels on land parcels thirty one and thirty two would look directly into our rear windows. I've repeatedly asked why the applicant chose not to carry out a residential viewpoint assessment of my home.

00:52:52:09 - 00:53:23:06

I asked the applicant to provide evidence behind that decision, identify how it's assessed the outlook from our rear rooms, and explain the basis for its conclusion that the app... Impact is acceptable. I'd also ask yourselves to note that Fursby has no legal through road. Fursby Lane, Conspira Park bridal way number two is our only vehicular access. Bridleways two, three, and four are part of my daily life for walking, riding, exercise, and reaching the surrounding countryside.

00:53:23:20 - 00:53:30:01
Keeping these routes physically open would not by itself preserve their open views or role of character.

00:53:31:19 - 00:54:08:21
I'd like to know, has the applicant assessed the experience of using them, include... Including the effects of panels, fencing, and screening? I want to explain to this room, the people online, the applicant, and yourselves, what this landscape means to me personally. When I ride along the higher parts of bridalways fourteen and Park Lane, bridalway four and see Conyersburg Castle across the parks, the view is magnificent. It feels magical. I feel part of the landscape and its history. That experience depends on the open views and the connection between the routes, the castle, and the surrounding land.

00:54:09:00 - 00:54:41:19
Has the applicant assessed the effect of the development on those views and what the experience of riding through the landscape will be like should this proposal be granted? Connishborough Parks is a connected layered historic landscape. Within around these fields are the Roman villa, the medieval deer park associated with Connishburgh Castle, evidence of Thursby pottery production, historic farms, routes, later railway and water infrastructure. These features help tell the story of how the landscape developed and are experienced across the open land.

00:54:44:10 - 00:55:22:21
In relation to some matters that have actually been brought out this morning, I also want to note and ask the examining authority to note that we keep talking about solar arrays across these fields. The applicant has not provided information about where the other industrial solar infrastructure, such as transponders, are gonna be placed. How can we make comment on how this is gonna affect us, the safety of myself and my horse and other horse riders in this area? It seems unbelievable that at this stage, we can't be told where the actual infrastructure is going to be.

00:55:25:06 - 00:55:56:04
I would also claim that mister Griffiths talked about sensitivity in the design. The CIO confirmed he didn't know that there was a a Roman villa on the site. I'd question, actually, if they're saying it's a suitable site, but what research did they did they do before they actually chose it. I have a neighbor as well that, at the moment, is, you know, in relying to be insensitive, is gonna have solar arrays all around his property. That's not sensitive in my mind.

00:55:56:28 - 00:56:28:09
A substation next to Park Lane. The methodology produced by mister Griffiths this morning was that in Whitestone two, a substation has been placed in the location because of the access roads. There are no roads within Connorsburgh Parks, simply bridalways. It's also on elevated land. Again, that's been

discussed by mister Griffiths about topography, And it's also being placed across from a heritage asset, Conyersbury Park Lodge, which is an old royal hunting lodge and a heritage asset.

00:56:28:11 - 00:56:32:23
Again, I would question the sensitivity of the placement of this substation.

00:56:34:22 - 00:57:06:23
I also would like to say in relation to the viewpoints, the castle appears to have been mitigated out. The viewpoints that have been taken, and I will submit those on written representation, if you take them a step to the side, you can see the castle. It also wants to be noted that it has been stated within the documents. The solar panels are gonna be visible from the castle. So the castle once used to look out onto the royal hunting grounds. There are windows orientated on the top level of the castle so that people could look out.

00:57:07:05 - 00:57:31:03
Instead of seeing the royal hunting grounds, they're gonna look out onto solar, infrastructure, and industry. And I'd also like to substantiate the point made by my colleague on the right. You can't take out land which was never agreed to in the first place. So showing the original plans when the landowners say they never agreed to it is very misleading. Thank you.

00:57:37:16 - 00:57:52:04
Thank you very much. That brings us to the end of the list of the interested parties who indicated that they wanted to speak on landscape and visual matters. So if I can pass to the applicant and their team if they have any comments.

00:57:52:13 - 00:58:07:29
Thank you, Madam. Angus Walker for the applicant. Just before I pass back to Mr. Griffiths to respond to those submissions, Just on the rights of way plans, if I can draw your attention to two of the application documents,

00:58:11:17 - 00:58:44:17
APP084, which is figures for Environmental Statement Chapter fifteen, Figure fifteen point seven shows all at a glance all the public rights of way within in and a five kilometer radius around the order limits. And then APP011 is the streets and rights of way access plans, and that shows all the rights of way labeled rights of way, public rights of way within the order limits.

00:58:45:01 - 00:58:57:16
If you would benefit from a plan showing other or any features relating to rights of way, we will be very happy to prepare one and provide it to

00:58:57:18 - 00:59:05:02
you. I haven't got them in front of me right this moment to say, but I'm grateful to you for flagging those up.

00:59:06:24 - 00:59:11:25
And my colleague is just looking up the APP one one one.

00:59:11:27 - 00:59:14:05
Zero one one is the second one.

00:59:14:07 - 00:59:14:29
Zero one one.

00:59:27:21 - 00:59:31:02
That's figure fifteen point seven on the screen now.

00:59:45:14 - 00:59:47:16
That's fifteen point seven.

00:59:53:23 - 01:00:11:20
So what what I was trying to get at was having a plan that I could look at and immediately identify which one was, for instance, right away number four in Connorsburgh Park. I can see that there's plans.

01:00:12:12 - 01:00:20:08
Now looking at the streets and rights of way access plans, do label the rights of way within the order limits.

01:00:22:08 - 01:00:27:02
That suffices, but if not, of course, we are happy to

01:00:29:00 - 01:00:31:17
provide further plans to clarify anything.

01:00:40:13 - 01:00:45:22
I can see that now. So thank you for pointing that out. That's very helpful.

01:00:45:24 - 01:00:51:17
You're welcome. I'll now hand back to Mr. Griffith to respond to the recent submissions. Thank you.

01:00:52:13 - 01:01:23:26
Thank you, Sam Griffiths, on behalf of the applicant. And we'll pick up on a few of the points that have been raised, attempting to do so in order just to keep track. So first of all, Viewpoint fifteen was mentioned, and I can confirm that this will be resubmitted with an updated location, which does not have the property in the foreground. So that will be submitted. Figure eleven of the design approach documents shows, which is APP forty.

01:01:24:21 - 01:01:55:03
I referenced that because the representation mentioned the non statutory consultation master plan and the fact that you may be interested to see that, that is provided within the design approach document at Figure eleven. And it has a series of point best described as dots, dots around residential dwellings.

And on the key, that is marked as areas to be designed in discussion with residents, acknowledging that those areas cannot be designed without meaningful engagement.

01:01:55:22 - 01:02:30:03
You can define or rather the applicant can define an offset from a hedgerow or a tree as a set best practice number. We don't hold that there is a set right offset from a residential dwelling. I think we've got a minimum offset of fifty meters, and that's secured by the works plans. But those areas were shown on the non statutory mass bands, so we need to engage with residents. We need to do our fieldwork where invited to do so, go into the properties to view those views and design the scheme accordingly in response to that discussion.

01:02:31:21 - 01:03:02:08
There was one or two points raised around the baseline mapping on some of the figures. And essentially, the project team, the applicant has used ordinance survey maps as and when they're updated, the figures are updated. But I should emphasize that is only for the purpose of presentation of figures. The work the assessment work across LVIA and the wider environmental topics is done using all sorts of data, aerial maps and field work, so we don't rely only on ordinate survey mapping.

01:03:03:12 - 01:03:37:20
There's some discussion around consideration of receptors beyond the DCO boundary, which might be referred to as the order limits. And if I'm understanding the point correctly, I would just make the point that our study area, in the instance of the landscape and vision impact assessment does extend to three kilometers and therefore all of the receptors with potential to experience significant adverse impacts within that range are assessed as such. So I wouldn't want there to be any misunderstanding that just by nature being not within the order limits, a receptor was not assessed.

01:03:38:14 - 01:04:19:13
On the point around what raised on screen by the British Horse Society, I've made the point that probably the clearest plan to view permissive paths, which are proposed to impart augment the network that can be used by equestrians is provided within the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan, APP forty six. And that also, it was mentioned later that there's no consultation with the British Horse Society, but we did receive feedback from them following statutory consultation, and that is detailed within the consultation report, including our associated responses.

01:04:21:03 - 01:04:22:23
Beyond that,

01:04:24:09 - 01:04:27:20
it may be useful to bring one more plan on to screen,

01:04:29:07 - 01:05:00:15
particularly given the representations by Fursby residents that was made, which you've seen some similar plans like this. We didn't look at the Fursby ones earlier. We were looking at some wider examples. What this plan shows is, again, how the scheme changed over this time. On the far left, you can see all the land that was considered for potential to have solar and associated infrastructure on day

one as it were upon project launch. You can see then in the middle and the bullet points below these plans detail the rationale as to why things were changed.

01:05:01:03 - 01:05:41:09
There was removal of land closer to Fursby, partly due to some archaeological discussion and partly in discussion with residents both within dwellings and also submitted via consultation feedback in writing. It wasn't that one was listened to more or less than the other. You can see also in that middle plan there the introduction of mitigation planting or screening. Again, that is not to say, therefore, it is invisible. It is to minimize and soften the appearance of such components. And you can see on the far right hand side, Master Plan four, the complete removal of further land for solar and the withdrawal of the fields either side of the public right of way from the order limits entirely.

01:05:42:00 - 01:06:05:05
And the only reason for making that change was in discussion with residents and seeking to minimize and where we can avoid impacts on residential visual amenity following discussions on where there are potential to have visibility from specific locations within the dwelling. So the point there is this is the project's response to that engagement, both in person and in writing.

01:06:07:14 - 01:06:39:22
And once again, yes, the document reference, that's the design approach document, a p p zero four zero. And then one point just around... Which is which is important to clarify. We're discussing a lot around the extent of solar. I think it's a good point that there are wider components within Works one, power conversion stations, for instance. And this is detailed in several places, primarily through the outline design parameters, which correspond to the works plan.

01:06:39:24 - 01:07:09:21
So the works plans are APP ten. And ultimately, they all feed into schedule one of the draft DCO, which is reference AS009. So quite right, we shouldn't just talk about solar. There's a wider group of components within that, but I point to those documents to fully articulate what is proposed within each works area as secured within the DCO. And I think I will stop there. Thank you.

01:07:11:26 - 01:07:27:12
Thank you very much. I'm aware that there are a couple of people who've got their hands up. Whilst I do note that you may have comments now, we have been working on this topic for a lot of time this morning.

01:07:28:27 - 01:07:35:13
If it's possible to return to us in writing on any further points that you may have.

01:07:38:00 - 01:07:39:20
I do suggest that we

01:07:42:04 - 01:07:55:19
move to a break now for lunch and return at five to two when we will start the next topic, which is three point two glint and glare. Thank you.