

Public Bridleway Impact – Quarry Appeal

Submitted on behalf of Fylde Coast Bridleways Association

To: Lancashire County Council / Planning Inspectorate

Dear Sir or Madam

Response date: 13.3.2026

The appellants' Non-Technical Summary asserts that the public bridleway "will not be impacted" by the proposed quarry development. Fylde Bridleways Association considers this statement to be materially misleading.

While the *legal alignment* of the bridleway may remain unchanged, planning and rights-of-way practice makes clear that impact is not limited to route continuity alone, but includes safety, usability, amenity, and the reasonable enjoyment of the right. A public right of way that is so adversely affected that it cannot reasonably be used for its lawful purpose is, in practical terms, rendered ineffective.

Substantial lengths of the bridleway would run immediately adjacent to active quarry workings, with no continuous physical or visual mitigation for equestrian users. This directly conflicts with established equestrian safety guidance, which recognises horses as prey animals that can react unpredictably to:

- sudden noise,
- vibration,
- heavy plant movement,
- dust plumes, and
- reversing alarms.

The British Horse Society (BHS), the recognised national authority on equestrian access, consistently advises that close proximity to industrial activity creates unacceptable risk for riders and horses and that routes subject to such influences may become unsafe or unusable in practice. [[bhs.org.uk](https://www.bhs.org.uk)]

The absence of mitigation along large sections of the bridleway means that the proposal fails to provide a safe and suitable environment for lawful equestrian use.

Of particular concern are two locations where quarry machinery is proposed to cross the bridleway.

- Visibility at these crossings would be significantly restricted by bunding, materially reducing inter-visibility between riders and large industrial vehicles.
- British Horse Society and highway-related equestrian guidance emphasise that clear sightlines and early awareness are essential where horses may encounter vehicles, particularly large or noisy plant.

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- Restricted visibility is a recognised cause of serious equestrian incidents and is inherently incompatible with safe bridleway design.

No evidence has been presented to demonstrate that these crossings can be made safe for equestrian users in accordance with accepted guidance.

The submitted plans indicate that bunding is designed primarily to protect nearby residential properties from noise and visual intrusion. However:

- Large sections of the bridleway receive no equivalent protection, despite being located closer to operational activity than some protected properties.
- This selective mitigation approach demonstrates a failure to treat the bridleway as a sensitive receptor, contrary to established planning principles and equestrian access guidance. [Access and bridleways advice | The British Horse Society](#)

It is well established in rights-of-way and planning decisions that a public right of way may be considered effectively compromised where conditions deter or prevent its reasonable use, even if it remains legally open.

Inspectors and courts have repeatedly emphasised that practical enjoyment and safety are central to the value of public rights, not merely their existence on the definitive map. Where conditions render a route intimidating, unsafe, or unsuitable for its intended class of user, this constitutes real and material harm, not a neutral outcome.

Planning Inspectorate decisions consistently require that developments do not reduce a route to theoretical availability only, particularly where vulnerable users such as equestrians are concerned. [Object to a public right of way order - GOV.UK](#)

This constitutes significant adverse impact on a public right of way that must be afforded substantial weight in the determination of this appeal.

Give limited weight to the appellants' Non-Technical Summary in respect of bridleway impact; recognise the real-world safety and usability implications for equestrian users; and conclude that the proposal results in unacceptable harm to the public bridleway, contrary to established guidance and sound planning practice.

The concerns raised by Fylde Bridleways Association are directly supported by established national and professional guidance on equestrian safety and bridleway design, which the appeal documentation fails to address adequately.

The British Horse Society, as the UK's recognised authority on equestrian access, advises that bridleways must be safe, predictable environments, particularly where horses may encounter vehicles or machinery. BHS guidance highlights that horses are highly sensitive to sudden noise, movement, vibration and restricted visibility, and that such conditions can render a route unsafe or effectively unusable for equestrian users.

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BHS advice for planners and developers further stresses that development affecting bridleways must protect equestrian safety and avoid introducing industrial or traffic hazards that deter lawful use. Where a bridleway is exposed to activities that would reasonably discourage riding, this constitutes a loss of access in practical terms, even if the route remains legally open.

Conclusion

The proposed development would result in significant adverse impact on the public bridleway. Substantial weight should therefore be given to the real-world safety and usability implications for equestrian users. The appellants' Non-Technical Summary should be afforded limited weight in respect of bridleway impact, and the proposal should be concluded to cause unacceptable harm to the public bridleway, contrary to established guidance and sound planning practice.

Yours faithfully

Jill Broadhurst
Chair, Fylde Coast Bridleways Association
On behalf of the Fylde Coast Bridleways Association