



Tophams Solar Farm

Horse and Rider Management Plan

Prepared by Pathfinder Clean Energy (PACE) July 2025

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Horse Rider Management Plan (HRMP) has been prepared by Pathfinder Clean Energy (PACE) in accordance with Condition 30 of the planning permission granted under reference 22/00741/FP for the development of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm at Land West of Ashwell Road, Bygrave, Hertfordshire. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that the safety and amenity of horse riders using nearby bridleways and public rights of way are safeguarded throughout the construction period.
- 1.2. The development site is located within a rural area where equestrian activity forms a key element of the local community's recreational and transport network. The site is in proximity to existing bridleways and minor rural roads that are frequently used by horse riders. It is therefore essential that construction activities are managed in a way that minimises potential risks to both horse riders and construction personnel.
- 1.3. This HRMP sets out a series of practical and proportionate measures to ensure safe coexistence between construction operations and equestrian users. These include the provision of temporary signage, protocols for site staff when interacting with horse riders, measures to mitigate noise and visual disturbance, and communication arrangements. The plan will remain in effect for the entire duration of the construction phase and will be subject to regular monitoring and review.

Site Overview

- 1.4. The development site comprises agricultural land located to the west of Ashwell Road, within the parish of Bygrave, North Hertfordshire. The site extends across multiple fields and is bordered by hedgerows, with access taken from Ashwell Road via a newly approved entrance. The surrounding area includes a network of rural lanes and public rights of way, several of which are used by equestrians for both recreational and working purposes.
- 1.5. There are no designated bridleways running through the application site itself; however, equestrian use of nearby lanes—particularly Ashwell Road and adjacent minor routes—is prevalent. Accordingly, the potential for interaction between construction vehicles and horse riders is recognised as a key consideration in the site's construction management strategy.

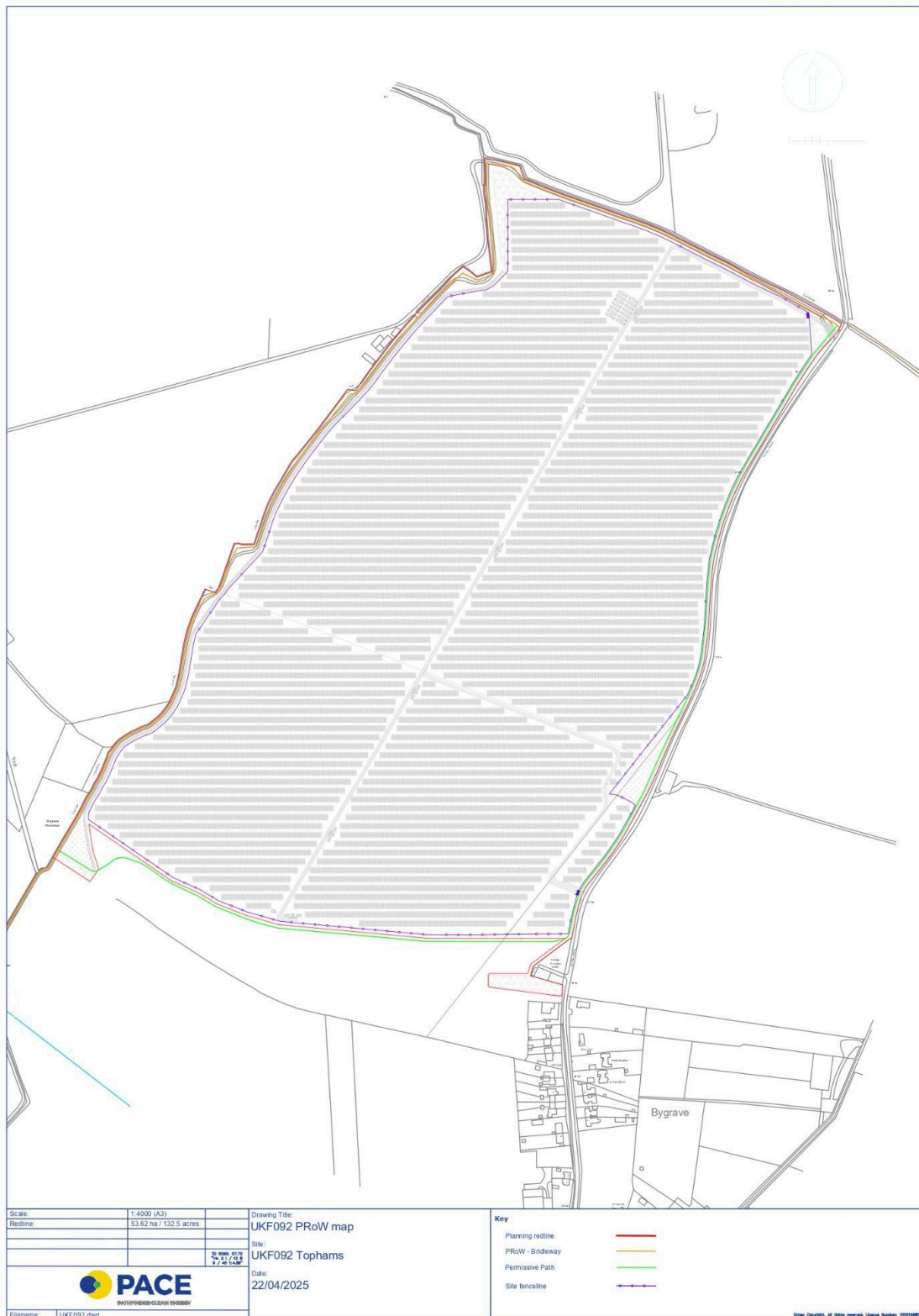


Figure 1: Site layout

Construction Timeline

- 1.6. Construction works are anticipated to commence on 25th October 2025 subject to final discharge of pre-commencement planning conditions. The overall build period is expected to last approximately 36 weeks, with additional clear up work concluding by 21st January 2027, weather and ground conditions permitting.
- 1.7. During this time, the peak construction phase—typically encompassing civil works, piling, and delivery of key components—is expected to occur within the first 12–16 weeks of commencement. This period will see the highest level of construction-related vehicle movements and therefore represents the most sensitive time in terms of potential interaction with horse riders.
- 1.8. All measures set out within this plan will be in place from the commencement of enabling works and will remain in force until the site is fully demobilised. Removal of temporary signage and cessation of mitigation measures will take place only following agreement with the Local Planning Authority.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1. Effective implementation of this Horse Rider Management Plan relies on clearly defined roles and responsibilities among site personnel and contractors. The following structure outlines the key individuals accountable for ensuring horse rider safety and compliance with this plan throughout the construction period.

Site Manager

- 2.2. The appointed Site Manager holds overall responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the Horse Rider Management Plan. This includes:
- Ensuring that all site staff and contractors are briefed on the protocols relating to horse rider safety;
 - Liaising with the Local Planning Authority, as required, to confirm compliance;
 - Maintaining up-to-date contact details for local equestrian stakeholders (if applicable);
 - Overseeing the correct placement, maintenance, and removal of temporary warning signage;
 - Ensuring that procedures for machinery shut-down and traffic pauses are followed when riders are encountered;
 - Keeping records of any incidents, near misses, or complaints involving horse riders and taking appropriate remedial action.

Site Banksman

- 2.3. Trained banksmen will be stationed at key access and egress points to the site during the core working hours and throughout all delivery windows. Their responsibilities include:
- Monitoring approaching horse riders and pausing all vehicle movements as necessary;
 - Communicating with riders in a calm, courteous, and clear manner, offering assistance where appropriate;
 - Ensuring that noisy or disruptive equipment (e.g. generators, plant machinery) is powered down or paused temporarily when horses are nearby;
 - Coordinating with delivery drivers and plant operators to ensure safe movement in the vicinity of riders;
 - Reporting any incidents to the Site Manager for immediate investigation.

All Construction Personnel and Drivers

2.4. All operatives and delivery drivers must adhere to the Horse Rider Management Plan and the protocols set out in the site induction. Their responsibilities include:

- Obeying the banksman's instructions at all times;
- Reducing vehicle speed in areas identified as sensitive to horse riders;
- Remaining vigilant for approaching horses and following protocols in the event of an encounter;
- Reporting any issues or breaches of protocol to the Site Manager without delay.

Contact Information

2.5. Should PACE need to be contacted, relevant details will be available at the site entrance. Contact details can also be found on the PACE website.

Available (Mon - Fri): 9am - 5pm

(t) +44 (0)20 7127 4542

(e) info@pathfinderce.com

3. Signage Plan

- 3.1. The A1 (M) is a national speed limit road (dual carriageway, 70mph). Once you turn off this road onto Ashwell Road, the speed limit becomes variable, ranging from 40mph to 60mph. Once vehicles turn into the site entrances, the access road leading to the site establishments, will have a strict 10mph speed limit.



Sign 1: 10mph sign.

- 3.2. Speed signs will be posted as appropriate, in compliance with highway standards. Similarly horse and rider signs (sign 2) will be placed at the entrance to the sensitivity zones (figure 2). Risks will also be managed by including relevant management strategies in toolbox talks, including complying with posted speed limits and reducing speed to suit weather conditions.



Sign 2: horse and rider warning sign.

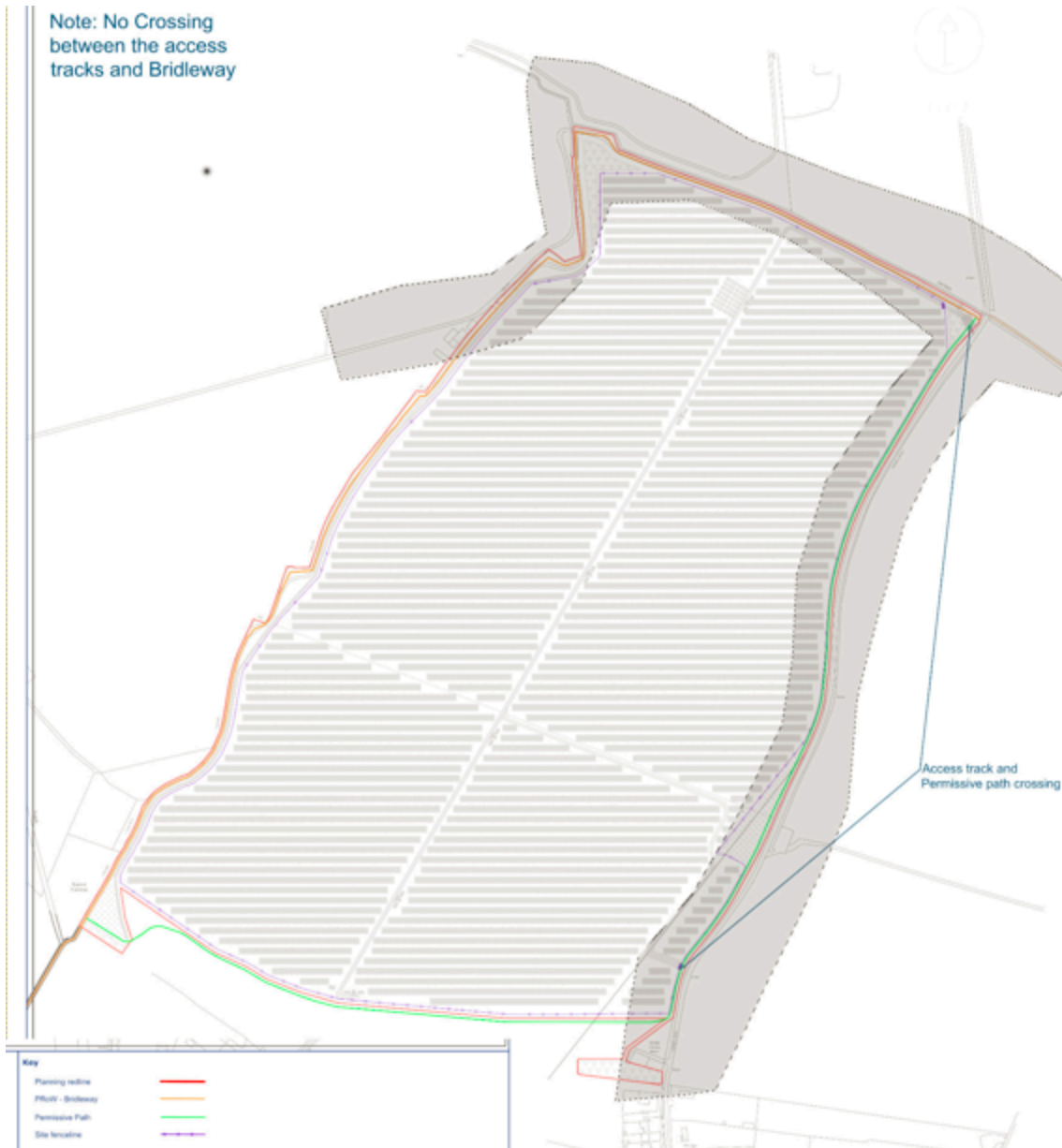


Figure 2: Sensitivity buffer for horseriders (marked in grey) entrances to these zones along paths and tracks will be marked with warning signage (figure 2) to forewarn plant operators and members of the public.

4. Procedures

- 4.1. This section sets out the operational protocols that will be followed by all site personnel in the event that horse riders are encountered on or near the site access routes during construction. These procedures are designed to minimise risk, avoid disturbance, and ensure a safe environment for both equestrian users and construction teams.

General Approach

- 4.2. All construction staff and delivery drivers will be trained to adopt a precautionary, calm, and respectful approach when in the vicinity of horses. Riders may be vulnerable to unexpected noise, movement, or unfamiliar vehicles; therefore, all actions must prioritise safety and the avoidance of sudden disturbance.

Vehicle Approach Protocol

- 4.3. Where site-related vehicles (including HGVs and LGVs) encounter horse riders:
- Drivers must reduce speed immediately and approach with caution.
 - Engines should be kept as quiet as possible; avoid use of air brakes or reversing alarms if disengagement is safe and approved.
 - Vehicles must pull over where possible to allow riders to pass at a safe distance.
 - Where there is no safe opportunity to pass, the vehicle must wait in position until the rider is clear of the vicinity.
 - Eye contact and courteous hand signals may be used to reassure the rider of the driver's awareness.
- 4.4. Banksman will assist at access points to oversee such interactions, advising drivers and communicating directly with riders if required.

Encounter Protocol on Site Perimeter

- 4.5. If a horse rider is observed approaching or passing the site entrance or boundary:
- The banksman shall alert plant operators and the Site Manager if activity near the boundary may cause concern.
 - Noisy or vibrating equipment (e.g. pile drivers, generators) within 50 metres of the rider's location shall be paused immediately.
 - Works will only recommence once the horse and rider have passed safely and are no longer within the sensitive range.

- 4.6. This procedure will be clearly included in daily briefings and tool-box talks, and implemented without exception.

Incident Response

- 4.7. In the unlikely event of an incident or near miss involving a horse rider:
- The Site Manager shall be informed immediately;
 - A formal incident record shall be completed detailing the location, time, nature of the event, and names of those involved;
 - Where necessary, contact will be made with the Local Planning Authority and/or local equestrian groups to offer reassurance and outline remedial actions.
- 4.8. All incidents will be reviewed by the Principal Contractor as part of ongoing health and safety performance monitoring.

5. Plant and Machinery Shut-Off Protocol

- 5.1. To safeguard horse riders from sudden noise, vibration, or visual disturbance, specific protocols shall be followed to temporarily shut down or mute machinery when equestrians are within proximity to the construction site.

Trigger for Action

- 5.2. The protocol is triggered when a horse and rider are observed:
- Within approximately 50 metres of the active construction zone; or
 - Approaching or passing the site entrance or any machinery operating adjacent to site boundaries or access tracks.
- 5.3. This buffer may be increased in particularly enclosed or acoustically reflective areas at the Site Manager's discretion.

Shut-Off Procedure

- 5.4. Once a horse rider is identified within the sensitivity buffer:
- Banksman or spotter immediately notifies the Site Manager and relevant plant operators via two-way radio or agreed signal.
 - Identified equipment (e.g. pile drivers, rotating plant, generators, excavators) shall be brought to a safe halt at the earliest opportunity.
 - All alarms, sirens, and high-pitched alerts are to be silenced where feasible under safety regulations.
 - Idling equipment shall be switched off if safe and practical to do so.
 - Works will remain paused until the rider has passed clear of the site and/or is no longer within the visibility or audible range.
 - Once confirmed by the banksman, normal operations may resume, subject to a verbal all-clear being given to plant operators.

Operator Responsibility

- 5.5. Operators are expected to remain alert to the surrounding environment and to respond without delay when instructed. Daily start-of-shift briefings shall reinforce this requirement, and all operatives will be familiarised with the shut-off zones around the site.

6. Engagement and Communication

- 6.1. Effective communication with the local equestrian community and clear internal coordination are essential components of this Horse Rider Management Plan. This section outlines how PACE will engage with stakeholders, share information, and maintain responsiveness throughout the construction period.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 6.2. Prior to the commencement of works, PACE will notify relevant local stakeholders of the construction programme and measures in place to protect horse rider safety. Key stakeholders are include:
- Local equestrian centres and riding schools;
 - Known regular users of nearby bridleways;
 - Bygrave and Ashwell Parish Councils;
 - Hertfordshire County Council's Public Rights of Way team;
- 6.3. Notifications will include:
- A summary of the construction timeline;
 - A description of the horse rider safety protocols;
 - Contact details for the site liaison officer or project manager.
- 6.4. Stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback or flag any specific concerns prior to mobilisation.

On-Site Communications

- 6.5. A clear chain of communication will be established and maintained among the construction team to ensure swift implementation of this plan. This includes:
- Briefings during daily start-of-shift meetings;
 - Toolbox talks focusing on horse rider safety every two weeks, or more frequently during high activity periods;
 - Provision of laminated encounter protocols at all site entrances and plant cabins.
- 6.6. Site radios or mobile devices used by banksmen and supervisors will include emergency contact numbers and direct lines to the Site Manager.

Community Updates

- 6.7. PACE will issue periodic community bulletins (digital or printed) at key stages of the construction programme. These will include:

- Notification of peak delivery periods;
- Any temporary adjustments to access arrangements;
- Summary of any incidents or issues reported and actions taken;
- Reassurance that horse rider safety remains a priority.

6.8. These updates will be shared via the Parish Council clerk, community noticeboards, and the project website (if applicable). Reporting to:

Mrs Karen Clark

Email: clerk@bygraveparishcouncil.org.uk

Reporting and Feedback Mechanism

- 6.9. A dedicated contact point will be maintained for the duration of the construction period. This will include a phone number and email address, displayed on signage at the site entrance. All feedback or complaints relating to horse rider safety will be logged, acknowledged, and responded to within five working days.
- 6.10. Where appropriate, PACE will liaise directly with affected parties to explain actions taken or to update the HRMP if emerging issues are identified.

7. Monitoring and Compliance

- Site checks
- Record keeping
- Reporting of near misses or incidents

7.1. The effectiveness of the Horse Rider Management Plan (HRMP) depends on continuous monitoring, clear reporting, and a structured approach to compliance. This section outlines the procedures that will be followed to ensure the measures contained within the plan are properly implemented, maintained, and adapted where necessary throughout the construction period.

Daily Monitoring

- 7.2. The Site Manager or their nominated deputy will conduct daily inspections of:
- All horse rider safety signage to ensure visibility, legibility, and correct positioning;
 - Construction access points and interfaces with public highways or bridleways;
 - Adherence to protocols by drivers and plant operators during vehicle movements.
- 7.3. Observations from these inspections will be logged in the site diary or digital record system and reviewed weekly.

Toolbox Talks and Inductions

- 7.4. All staff and subcontractors will receive a site induction which includes a dedicated briefing on horse rider safety and encounter protocols. In addition:
- Toolbox talks covering HRMP procedures will be held fortnightly or in advance of any period of increased construction activity;
 - Attendance will be recorded and refresher sessions provided where compliance concerns arise.

Compliance Checks and Auditing

- 7.5. Formal internal audits of the HRMP will be undertaken monthly by the Site Manager. This will include:
- A review of incident reports and stakeholder feedback;
 - Confirmation that all protocols (e.g. shut-off procedure, banksman deployment) are being followed;
 - Assessment of any changes in risk profile or access arrangements.

- 7.6. Where non-compliance or areas for improvement are identified, a corrective action plan will be agreed and implemented within five working days.

Incident Reporting and Escalation

- 7.7. All horse rider-related incidents, near misses, or public complaints will be:
- Logged in a central register;
 - Investigated by the Site Manager with input from the Principal Contractor as required;
 - Reported to the Local Planning Authority if required under the condition trigger or where the incident has a material impact on public safety.
- 7.8. Incidents will be reviewed during site team meetings to ensure learning is embedded and further risk is minimised.

Review and Continuous Improvement

- 7.9. This HRMP will be reviewed under the following circumstances:
- Following any incident or material change to site access or construction logistics;
 - In response to stakeholder feedback or direction from the Local Planning Authority;
 - At the mid-point of the construction programme, to assess effectiveness and determine whether any measures should be refined.
- 7.10. A final review will be carried out during the demobilisation phase to support lessons learned for future sites.

Signage Removal Plan

- 7.11. At the conclusion of the construction phase, all temporary signage installed under this Horse Rider Management Plan shall be removed in a safe and timely manner. This includes, but is not limited to:
- Horse rider warning signs positioned along site access routes and entrances;
 - Contact information signs for the site liaison officer;
 - Motorist advisory signs highlighting the presence of equestrian users.

Timing of Removal

- 7.12. Signage shall remain in place until:

- All major construction works are complete;
- The volume of construction-related vehicle movements has ceased;
- A final inspection of the site access arrangements confirms that interaction with horse riders has returned to background levels.

7.13. The anticipated removal window will be within five working days of the last scheduled delivery or site demobilisation activity. The exact timing will be confirmed by the Site Manager and recorded in the site close-out report.

Method of Removal

- 7.14. Signage will be removed manually by site operatives or the appointed traffic management contractor. All fixings and posts will be dismantled fully, and no materials shall be left on verges or roadside. Where any permanent features were temporarily altered to install signage (e.g. fencing or posts), these shall be reinstated to their original condition.
- 7.15. Any damage to the highway verge or bridleway interface caused during signage removal shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority or Highway Authority as relevant.