

Patron Her Majesty The Queen

The British Horse Society

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Via Email

[localplan@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@enfield.gov.uk)3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

**RE: London Borough of Enfield Local Plan**

The following response is on behalf of The British Horse Society, the UK's largest equestrian Charity, representing the UK's 3 million horse riders. Nationally equestrians have just 22% of the rights of way network which is increasingly disjointed by roads which were once safe rural routes that have become busy thoroughfares. It is because of this that any projects or infrastructure affecting non-motorised users must take into account those other than walkers and cyclists. Metropolitan Commons also form an integral part of equestrian access for those living within these urban areas.

**ACTIVE TRAVEL**

Whilst the BHS supports the national initiative to encourage more cycling and walking as part of Active Travel Plans it is important that, in forming its Blue and Green Strategy, the council recognises that Active Travel ALSO includes equestrians.

The government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Safety Review says:

*"1.2 But safety has particular importance for vulnerable road users, such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders. All road users have an equal right to use the road, and safety and the perception of safety are key factors in determining how far people use these modes of transport. The safer they feel, the more they will use these active modes of travel. The more people who use Active Travel, the fitter and healthier they will be, and the more their communities will benefit from lower congestion and better air quality, among a host of other benefits"(Jesse Norman, Minister for Transport p 4)*

Jesse Norman in House of Commons debate on Road Safety, 5 November 2018:

*"We should be clear that the cycling and walking strategy may have that name but is absolutely targeted at vulnerable road users, including horse-riders"*

And final point by Jesse Norman in debate:

*"Horse riders are vulnerable road users—there is no doubt about that, and there never has been—and they have been included in the work we are doing."*

**THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF HORSE RIDING IN THE UK**

(Data comes from research undertaken by the University of Brighton and Plumpton College on behalf of The British Horse Society)

- 68% of questionnaire respondents participate in horse riding and associated activities for 30 minutes or more at least three times a week. Sport England estimate that such a level of sporting activity will help an **individual achieve or exceed the government's recommended minimum level of physical activity.**

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- Women have been identified in government studies as a social group with relatively low levels of participation in physical activity. Some 93% of questionnaire respondents were women and 49% percent of female respondents were aged 45 or above. These are comparable figures to a major Sport England survey which found that 90 percent of those participating in equestrianism are women and 37 percent of the female participants in equestrianism are aged 45 or above. **The gender and age profile of equestrianism is not matched by any other sport in the UK<sup>1</sup>.**
- Amongst the horse riders who took part in the survey, 39% had taken no other form of physical activity in the last four weeks. **This highlights the importance of riding to these people, who might otherwise be sedentary.**
- Horse riders with a **long-standing illness or disability** who took part in the survey are able to undertake horse riding and associated activities at the same self-reported level of frequency and physical intensity as those without such an illness or disability

For further information, please see:

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/~media/documents/marketing/health-benefits-of-riding-in-the-uk-full-report.ashx?la=en>

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/~media/documents/access/access-leaflets/statisticsarow-1119.ashx?la=en>

### **BENEFITS TO THE ECONOMY OF HORSE RIDING/CARRIAGE DRIVING**

The British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) represents more than 800 member companies. The most recent BETA National Equestrian Survey (2019)<sup>2</sup> indicated:

- £4,174 per horse to the economy
- £4.7 billion economic value of the equestrian sector

### **GENERAL STATISTICS**

The most recent BETA National Equestrian Survey (2019) indicated:

- 847,000 horses in Britain
- 1.8 million regular riders of 3 million total
- Lack of access to horses and riding facilities is a barrier for 22% of lapsed riders returning

### **NEWLY CONSTRUCTED PATHS**

The physical creation of new paths to both achieve LCWIP objectives and improve the lives of local residents would be welcomed as this would enhance the ability of the public to increase its access to safe off road routes for leisure and commuting. The Society is happy to work with the Council to ensure that new paths are integrated with public access areas and public rights of way network to achieve maximum benefit for ALL users.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS TO NOTE**

Since 2010, the British Horse Society has had over 4,774 road incidents involving horses reported to it, 1080 horses have been injured, 395 horses have died, 44 humans have lost their lives and 1220 have been injured; providing safe off road provision will help to prevent these numbers from increasing in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Sport England (2010) Active People Survey (2010/11)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/news-amp-events/news/national-equestrian-survey-2019-provides-optimistic-view-of-industry.php>

Commuting cycling is likely to take place at times other than when recreational use takes place. Thus a path used for commuting may well be used for recreational travel especially if it provides a circular route by connecting to other paths.

Several categories of public rights of way (bridleways, restricted byways and byways and minor public roads) are already shared by cyclists and other user groups. Thus, as a general principle, we believe that, for maximum public benefit & fairness, the reciprocal should be implemented, i.e. that new cycle paths should be shared with other user groups unless there is a specific, unresolvable reason not to do so.

Use of Traffic Regulation Orders to prohibit use of a public right of way by a specific user group for the benefit of cycling needs to be fully justified and take into account the rights of other lawful users. It should be noted that the Defra Statutory Guidance to local authorities on Rights of Way Improvement Plans, 2002, states in para. 2.2.21:

*'There is potential for conflict on ways carrying higher rights between different classes and types of users. Wherever possible proposals for improving rights of way should not unduly benefit one class of user at the expense of another. Improvements that are intended to benefit cyclists, harness-horse drivers, horse riders or walkers should not unduly restrict lawful MPV use of public vehicular rights of way'.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The inclusion of equestrians within the Council's Blue & Green Strategy provision for non motorised users would:

- Add to the health and wellbeing of a sector of the county's population who would otherwise be excluded;
- Benefit the local economy with the income that the sport attracts to local areas;
- Ensure that equality of opportunity is provided for a sport dominated by women and, furthermore, in which, less able-bodied people may participate at an equal level of intensity.
- Need cost no more than the plans which would otherwise exclude them (in many cases, simply a different sign to indicate use by all user groups).
- Why not include equestrians? The reasons outlined above mean that inclusion makes perfect sense, both financially and for equality.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to create a plan which is fully inclusive of all non-motorised users.

Yours faithfully