



## **Department for Culture, Media and Sport**

### **Proposal to Authorise Motor Sport Events on Public Roads**

#### **Consultation Document**

##### **The British Horse Society**

1. The British Horse Society (The Society) represents the interests of the 3.4 million people in the UK who ride or who drive horse-drawn vehicles. With the membership of its Affiliated Riding Clubs and Bridleway Groups, the BHS is the largest and most influential equestrian charity in the UK.

2. The equine industry is estimated to be worth £7 billion to the UK economy and to employ 220,000 – 270,000 people.

3. The Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales, published in December 2005, was prepared by the British Horse Industry Confederation in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Welsh Assembly Government<sup>1</sup>.

4. The Strategy includes the following aim:

**Aim 5** 'Increase access to off-road riding and carriage driving', including the encouragement and improvement of urban and suburban riding and carriage driving.

##### **The Paucity of the Equestrian Public Rights of Way Network**

5. The length of the public right of way network in England currently amounts to 188,700km, consisting of 146,600km of footpaths, 32,400km of bridleways, 3,700km of byways and 6,000km of restricted byways. Horse riders therefore, currently have access to only 22% of public rights of way and horse-drawn vehicle drivers to only 5%. Many rights of way are now disconnected from each other because the roads that should connect them are no longer safe for

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bhic.co.uk/downloads/full-strategy-report.pdf>

equestrians to use because of the speed and volume of motorised traffic on them. This leaves many equestrians without a safe local route to use.

### **The safety of roads for equestrians**

6. As many rights of way are now disconnected from each other equestrians are forced to use roads to connect them. However many are inaccessible because the roads that link them are no longer safe for equestrians to use because of the speed and volume of motorised traffic on them. This leaves many equestrians without a safe local route to use.

## **Response of The British Horse Society to Consultation Questions**

### **Overall Proposal**

*1. Do you agree with the proposal to give local authorities the powers to allow motor sport events on public roads, subject to the local consultation? If you disagree please give reasons.*

The Society is concerned that if local authorities are given the powers to allow motor sport events on public roads that,

- The concept will set a precedent that public roads can be used for racing, and the Society questions the wisdom of this when the opposite needs to be instilled in the general public to ensure the safety of vulnerable road users.
- It will set a precedent for other racing activities such as cycle racing thereby excluding other road users from those roads for even longer.
- Satellite navigation systems will direct motorists, who wanted to use the race route, onto smaller roads thereby exacerbating problems for vulnerable road users who depend on these roads for safe hacking, carriage driving, cycling and walking

**If the proposal to authorise motor racing on roads is translated into law, it will be important that 'roads' are clearly defined so that any power to authorise motor racing on 'roads' is restricted solely to racing on tarred carriageways – byways open to all traffic and all other public rights of way should be excluded from scope of the proposals.**

### **Road Closures**

*2. Do you agree that local authorities should be able to close roads for motor sport events? If you disagree please give reasons.*

The Society believes there are particular issues with regard to public rights of way which differ from the needs of motorists using public roads. These are around the severing of rights of way (either by the partial closure of paths or by the closure of roads which prevent the continued use of public rights of

way, either way leaving paths without an outlet) where greater care needs to be taken in ensuring that suitable alternative routes are available for users. Many rights of way would be affected because they link into roads that were closed. The closing of a short length of road could have a magnified effect on the connecting rights of way network.

### **Suspension of Speed limit**

*3. Do you agree that local authorities should have the power under certain circumstances to suspend the speed limit and applicable road traffic regulations? If there are any traffic regulations you would prefer not to see suspended, please give reasons.*

The Society does not advocate the non observance of speed limits. There is already too much speeding on the road network to the detriment of the safety of equestrians. The Society is concerned that the suspension of speed limits will only encourage more people to speed and to emulate race drivers once the race has concluded, who may be inclined to see if they can match race times on certain sections of the route.

### **Event Safety**

*4. Do you agree that the Motor Sports Association and the Auto Cycle Union should be the "Authorising Authority" for any motor sport events on public roads?*

The Society considers that there should be a steward at every point where a bridleway, byway, or other under and unrecorded route which may be ridden either crosses the race route or exits onto the race route.

Stringent notification procedures will be essential. Policing of crossing points would need to be sympathetic to the needs of users; for example, waiting for long periods would not be feasible for horse riders.

Risk Assessments, specific to the needs of different types of user, should be written by a competent & knowledgeable person, with specialist knowledge of the different users, before any event.

*5. Do you agree that the Sports Ground Safety Authority could provide valuable expertise and guidance to ensure motor sport events on roads can be delivered safely?*

The Society has no comment on this question

### **Local Traffic Authorities**

*6. Would you consider working with an authorising body to host an on road event in your local authority?*

7. *Do you anticipate any potentially negative implications from motor sport events being run by authorising bodies in your local area?*

8. *Do you envisage the need for further powers in order to hold a safe and efficient event?*

### **Impact of the proposals**

9. *Under the proposals, how many motor sport events do you anticipate will be held each year?*

The Society has no comment on this question

10. *Are there any policy impacts that have not been identified in the consultation document?*

The Society raises the following issues:

- What would be the effect of the removal of the requirement for driver/vehicle insurance to participate?
- How would a third party stand in relation to damage or disruption through trespass be covered if this is removed?
- Would the organiser be required to have Liability Insurance in place and would this cover property adjacent to the route?

11. *Are you aware of any further evidence on the monetary impact of the policy proposal?*

The Society has no comment on this question

Dated 10 April.

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