



## Highways Agency Cambridge to Huntingdon A14 improvement scheme Public Consultation

### Response of The British Horse Society

#### The British Horse Society

1. The British Horse Society (BHS) 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. The BHS is committed to promoting the interests of all equestrians and the welfare of horses and ponies through education and training.
2. The equine industry is estimated to be worth £7 billion to the UK economy and to employ 220,000 – 270,000 people.
3. 90% of riders are female<sup>1</sup>. 25% of riders are aged under 16 years and 48% are aged under 24 years.<sup>2</sup>
4. 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>3</sup>.
5. The Strategy includes the following aims:
  - Aim 2** 'Increase participation in equestrianism and develop the social contribution of the Horse Industry.'
  - Aim 3** 'Boost the economic performance of equestrian businesses.'
  - Aim 5** 'Increase access to off-road riding and carriage driving', including the encouragement and improvement of urban and suburban riding and carriage driving.

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<sup>1</sup> The health benefits of horse riding in the UK – Research undertaken by the University of Brighton and Plumpton College

<sup>2</sup> The National Equestrian Survey 2011 (BETA)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bhic.co.uk/downloads/full-strategy-report.pdf>

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

6. 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 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.

## **Road Safety**

7. Over the years road design has provided safe refuges and paths for walkers and cyclists, but in the process has mainly forgotten the needs of equestrians and in some cases made things even worse for equestrians.

8. The NHS Hospital episode statistics for 2011 – 12 show that there were 4,142 'animal rider or occupant animal drawn vehicle injured in transport accident' (V80)

<http://www.hesonline.nhs.uk/Ease/servlet/ContentServer?siteID=1937&categoryID=211>

9. 504 road accidents involving horses have been recorded on The Society's [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk) reporting website since it was launched in the autumn of 2010. Many accidents and near misses are still not being recorded yet so the total should be much higher.

## **Response of The British Horse Society**

The benefits of the proposed scheme are stated to include '...*providing safe local access for pedestrians and other non – motorised road users,*' it is important that in progressing and implementing the scheme it is always remembered that horse riders and horse carriage drivers are non – motorised road users and need to be catered for in the scheme.

Routes and facilities that are being provided for non motorised users need to be for all non motorised users and not just for walkers and cyclists.

The opportunity needs to be taken wherever possible to ameliorate the severance of public rights of way that occurred when the original dualling of the A14 took place.

Provision of any non motorised routes on the detrunked section of the A14 need to provide for horse riders and horse carriage drivers.

Only a surface with a traditional top-grit should be used if carriage drivers and horses are to use it without the likelihood of slipping. The following advice should be adhered to:

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/~media/BHS/Files/PDF%20Documents/Access%20leaflets/Horse%20and%20Highway%20Surfacing%20Leaflet.ashx>

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/~media/BHS/Files/PDF%20Documents/Access%20leaflets/BHS%20Advice%20Surfaces.ashx>

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