**The All Party Parliamentary Group for Cycling & Walking**

**The British Horse Society response to the Active Travel and Social Justice Inquiry call for evidence.**

It was never the Government’s intention to exclude horse riders from active travel schemes, but they are often being excluded.

For example,

Jesse Norman in [House of Commons debate on Road Safety, 5 November 2018](https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2018-11-05a.1313.0#g1317.7) stated

‘*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*.’

Dr David Drew (Stroud) asked a question:

‘*To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to include (a) horse-riding and (b) horse-drawn carriages in his Department's support for the development of active travel and local walking and cycling infrastructure plans*.’ (HC Daily Report, 15.07.2019)

This was answered by Michael Ellis

‘*The Government’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Guidance notes that local authorities should consider the needs of equestrians where they have access to walking and cycling infrastructure such as off-carriageway routes. However, the Government does not intend to specify that all measures to support active travel must include a horse-riding or horse-drawn carriage element: decisions on this are a matter for local authorities. Nevertheless the Government does encourage local authorities to support equestrians in their active travel plans*.’

The British Horse Society sees no reason why horses cannot be used for active travel, there are examples of this happening already, brewery drays, a licensed private hire horse drawn carriage in Llandrindod Wells, licenced horse drawn carriages in Blackpool, and these commercial forms of active travel should be encouraged.

Every day riders are using their horses and ponies to do journeys that if done on foot or by cycle would be classified as active travel and not recreation. More riders and carriage drivers would like to do this, if only they were not excluded from active travel routes.

Indeed, Cycling UK’s statistics show that the majority of cycle journeys are actually leisure journeys (46%) while commuting accounts for 27% of cycle journeys. [Cycling UK’s cycling statistics | Cycling UK](https://www.cyclinguk.org/statistics)

Regardless of whether horse riders or carriage drivers are or are not considered to be ‘active travel’, they are vulnerable road users and failing to provide for them at point of design does not make sense nor maximise the value of active travel routes.

Sport England states 88% of adult equestrians are female, and 85% of children and young people who take part in equestrianism are girls <https://www.britishequestrian.org.uk/assets/EXTRA_Docs/Short%20State%20of%20the%20Nation.pdf>.

72% of cycle trips in the UK are estimated to be undertaken by men. Thus, excluding horse riders from active travel routes has a disproportionate effect on women.

The Society’s answers to the questions in the call for evidence are:

1. **Who is currently prevented from enjoying the full benefits of active travel and why?**

Equestrians (horse riders and carriage drivers) all over England are being prevented from enjoying the full benefits of active travel because they are excluded from such routes.

One such example where horse riders have been excluded is the Keswick to Threlkeld Trail leaves horse riders on the dangerous carriageway.

Implementation of LTN 1/20 is causing significant safety concerns for equestrian road users who are being put in danger. Equestrians have to use the road network to access off-road riding routes (byways, bridleways etc) but measures which are being put in place to improve the safety of cyclists and walkers are compromising the safety and ability of equestrians to access the equestrian off-road network safely. Urgent steps need to be taken to reduce this detrimental impact.

1. **In what ways are people travelling actively affected unevenly by poor provision and/or the negative consequences of motorised travel, and why?**

Horse riders are left on the carriageway whilst walkers and cyclists are provided with safe off road active travel routes, with the consequence that horse riders then have cyclists passing them on their inside, at speed, and by vehicles on their outside, at speed, a recipe for disaster. Since November 2010 the Society’s records show that there have been 15,496 road incidents involving horses, 47 people have lost their lives and 1,686 have been injured, 636 horses have been killed and 1,522 horses have been injured.

1. **Which initiatives (in the UK and abroad) aimed specifically at widening participation in active travel are having the greatest positive impacts? How are they achieving this?**

Sustrans Paths for Everyone is making a big difference to horse riders, especially where their barrier removal programme removes barriers that previously were excluding access to horse riders to the National Cycle Network. The removal of barriers on the Lias Line in Warwickshire has enabled access for horse riders.

1. **Which initiatives working to address transport exclusion (but not specifically active travel) have most to teach the active-travel community? How is their work effective?**

Multi user routes around the country help to address exclusion, examples are the South Downs Way, Pennine Bridleway, Trans Pennine Trail, Lindsey Trail, as do active travel routes that do not exclude horse riders, for example, the Shepton Mallett Strawberry Line, Weston-sub-Mendip to Easton, Somerset, Pier to Pier Cycle Route, connecting Weston-Super-Mare and Clevedon, Somerset, and the Tarka Trail, Foxhunters to Buttercombe, Somerset. These examples need to be universally adopted without having to fight for them, which is often the case.

1. **Which more general transport policies/schemes most reduce exclusion from active travel? How does this come about?**

In respect of equestrians, West Berkshire Council is one of the few councils that already has provision for horses written into its LTP [Active Travel Plan](https://westberks.gov.uk/media/36907/Transport-Active-Travel-Strategy/pdf/Active_Travel_Strategy.pdf?m=637111431714830000).

The Active Travel Plan for West Lothian states ‘*Active travel is defined as making journeys by walking, cycling and scooting. It can also include horse-riding (and even running and non–motorised water-based transport). It is an approach to travel and transport that focuses on physical activity as opposed to motorized means.*’

Cambridgeshire [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/CPCA-LTCP-Strategic-Document.pdf) refers to non-motorised users and the need to protect their amenity. *‘We support interventions that contribute to making active travel the obvious first choice for most short trips, or as part of a longer trip by other forms of sustainable transport. This investment in world-class Dutch-quality walking and cycling facilities will include a network of segregated cycleways across our region, designed where appropriate to accommodate a wide range of non-motorised users including horse riders and carriage drivers*.’

The Peak District National Park Authority has been awarded funds from Active Travel England to develop a LCWIP and the definition of terms includes horse riding.

However, these examples are the exception rather than the norm. There needs to be a recommendation that equestrians are included in every Local Transport Plan.

1. **What actions would be most effective in addressing social injustice in active travel? (financial incentives, regulation, infrastructure, institutional arrangements, funding for agencies, etc.)**

For equestrians, that action would be not to exclude equestrians from active travel routes.

For those who are commissioned to produce LCWIPs to be briefed in respect of the needs of equestrian access so that the understanding of equestrian needs is embedded from the start of the process so that inclusive routes can be provided so that the safety of all non-motorised road users is enhanced and not just some.

Ensuring that those who only want to use the routes for recreational purposes rather than for active travel purposes can do so and are not disenfranchised.

Dated 11th December 2024.