



Bringing Horses and People Together

Planning Policy,
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Rushcliffe Arena
Rugby Road
West Bridgford
NOTTINGHAM
NG2 7YG

9 October 2023

Dear Rushcliffe Borough Council

Re: Tollerton NP consultation

The response below is from the British Horse Society however our volunteers in the county may also respond at a local level. There are **990 horses** registered in the NG12 postcode area (DEFRA, 2021). This equates to an annual **contribution to the economy of £5,492,520** (BETA, 2019) due to local equestrian businesses and individuals.

The British Horse Society is 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 and are increasingly forced to use busy roads to access them. Reported incidents involving equestrians using the road increased from 59 in 2021 to 66 in 2022 in Nottinghamshire and many go unreported.

Comments:

The documents largely overlook equestrian activity as a mode of travel and whilst walking and cycling are more frequently used for utility journeys, walking, wheeling and horse-riding/carriage driving are all leisure activities which make best value of off-road routes if they are shared/multi-user. Walking and cycling are mentioned more than 10 times each in the NP draft submission, whereas horses/equestrians have no mention.

Policy 5 – grass verges, part of the highway, are mentioned and are important for equestrians to be able to use as refuge, particularly as local development will increase MPV traffic including HGV journeys.

Policy 13 - the 'Walking and Cycling' routes described should conform to the government's Active Travel Strategy which states clearly that it includes horse riding [along with skateboarding and roller skating] and is supported by the Ministerial Statement of Richard Benyon from 2011 stating cycleways should be multi use.

[Cycle infrastructure design \(LTN 1/20\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Page 37 deals with the WCHAR assessment which clearly stated that horse riders should be accommodated. Cycle Infrastructure Design specifies Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment and Review (WCHAR). '4.5.10 DMRB also contains guidance on undertaking a Walking, Cycling & Horse-Riding Assessment and Review. Although this is applicable to trunk roads, it provides a good basis for assessing the needs of all users along and across interurban roads.'

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Additional routes connecting with PRow should not, in any way, compromise the use of the public rights of way by making them less amenable to existing lawful users of the right of way. 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”.

Policy 14 - excludes equestrians from the list of vulnerable road users and does not follow the Highway Code hierarchy of road users. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

If equestrians are not included as users on active travel routes, the consequence is that equestrians are left on the carriageway with lorries and cars passing them on the outside and cyclists passing them on the inside, which is an accident waiting to happen. It is therefore important that this aspect is considered in the risk assessment for such routes.

The Health Benefits of Horse Riding in the UK.

According to BETA two-thirds of equestrians are women (2019) and Church et al (2010) found 37% of women who are horse riders are over 45 years of age and over a third would pursue no other physical activity. The benefits of equestrian physical activity are well known matching with government targets for moderate to intense exercise (BHS, 2020). The therapeutic and physical benefits of horse riding and carriage driving have been proven for people with disabilities who may not be able to enjoy walking and cycling (Favali and Milton, 2010).

Newly Constructed Paths

Any physical creation of new paths is to be welcomed (provided that equestrians are included, as this will enhance the ability of the public to increase its access to safe off road routes for leisure and commuting. District Authorities should take a strategic approach to development proposals within their administrative boundary - giving consideration to potential links outside their boundaries that could contribute to a more integrated network and achieve maximum benefit for all users.

Questions:

- Why are equestrians not included in the NP draft submission?
- Will Rushcliffe BC be more creative and include equestrians on new and existing paths eg the canal paths rather than seeking reasons to exclude equestrians?

The BHS has further information for reference available here: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/free-leaflets-and-advice>.

Access Field Officer East and West Midlands
British Horse Society