

Patron His Majesty The King

Bringing Horses
and People Together

The British Horse Society
Abbey Park,
Stareton,
Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 2XZ

Email enquiry@bhs.org.uk
Website www.bhs.org.uk
Tel 02476 840500
Fax 02476 840501



To: Neighbourhood.Planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Subject: Harston Neighbourhood Plan – Submission public consultation

23 January 2025

The British Horse Society (BHS) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Harston Neighbourhood Plan.

The Society notes the definition of Active Travel and the inclusion of riding a horse within that definition. However, riding a horse does not involve wheels. Carriage driving does include equestrians and wheels however, there is no rider when driving for someone to be 'on' a horse:

Active Travel	Refers to journeys on foot, cycle or other 'wheeled' modes of active travel (e.g. mobility scooter, wheelchair, pushchair, cycle freight, on horse), although other non-motorised users may also use the network.
---------------	---

It is suggested that this definition should be changed to:

'Making journeys in physically active ways – like walking, wheeling (using a wheelchair or mobility aid), cycling, scootering, riding or driving a horse.'

Using the term 'Active Travel' when meaning provision for all non-motorised users, causes further confusion and conflict where the document refers to CCC's Active Travel Toolkit and Strategy from which equestrians are excluded and is nothing to do with those wanting to access the countryside on natural paths in rural surroundings:

- 12.4. Cambridgeshire County Council has developed:
- the Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments, adopted in March 2024 and available to view here www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Active-Travel-Toolkit.pdf
 - the Active Travel Strategy, adopted in March 2023 and available to view here www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Cambridgeshires-Active-Travel-Strategy-Adopted-March-2023.pdf

CCC's Active Travel is about urban style cycling on environmentally damaging tarmac to LTN 1/20 standards – a standard which was created for inner London. Therefore, there is a conflict within this document about the definition of Active Travel. It is important there is consistency throughout the document. It is noted that the Plan recognises the importance of horses as part of the rural nature of Harston – the rural nature paddocks bring to the village are referenced on a number of occasions. Access to suitable, safe rights of way is essential for the wellbeing of both horses and their riders.

Please note that should the definition of Active Travel within this document be changed in any way to exclude equestrians, the BHS would object to the Plan.

The British Horse Society is an Appointed Representative of SEIB Insurance Brokers Limited who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Registered Charity Nos. 210504 and SC038516. A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England & Wales No. 444742

Local and National Policies

According to DEFRA 'In 2020, the value of health benefits associated with outdoor recreation within the UK was estimated to be between £6.2 billion and £8.4 billion. An estimated annual saving of £2.1 billion would be achieved through averted health costs if everyone in England had good access to nature.'

There are a number of National and Local Policies relating to rights of way which appear to have been omitted.

NPPF 105

105. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

There is no reference anywhere in this document to NPPF 105 about protection and enhancement of the public rights of way for all users, only reference to restrictive cycling and walking under the CCC's Active Travel plans. This excludes walkers, dog walkers, runners, off road cyclists and equestrians, all of whom wish to access the benefits of the countryside on natural, soft surfaces which do not impact on the environment. Tarmac adds to our climate and environmental problems.

The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The RoWIP is not referenced anywhere as a local policy. There is no mention of opportunities or requirements to enhance the PROW network. This is a serious omission as it brings a local aspect to NPPF 105.

The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

Not included in the policies although referred to.

Vision Zero

'The Vision Zero Partnership is committed to preventing all road deaths across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and to significantly reduce the severity of injuries and subsequent costs and social impacts from road traffic collisions.

Vision Zero is a road safety partnership strategy adopted and built on, incorporating the international Safe System policy approach for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.'

Failing to take every opportunity to improve the off road, safe access for all vulnerable road users, not just cyclists, does not meet the aims and ambitions of Vision Zero.

Section 12 – Active Travel

12.1. There are two objectives sitting under this theme:

Objective 14: Different parts of the village will be better connected through an improved rural and village footpath network.

Objective 15: New development will utilise all opportunities to secure active travel routes to facilitate access to both neighbouring developments, surrounding countryside and village services.

The BHS supports many of the comments submitted by the Ramblers Association in connection with rights of way however, footpaths are the most restrictive form of access. Restricted byways are the most inclusive paths for non-motorised users. Public money should be spent to benefit the most users possible therefore new provision should be delivered to at least bridleway status, but preferably restricted byway.

There are many references to permissive rights of way in the Plan. Permissive access can be very useful, but it can disappear at any time. It is at the gift and whim of the landowner. It cannot be relied upon to be available 'tomorrow' even. The BHS supports creation of public rights of way registered on the Definitive Map. At the very least, permissive paths should be supported by a Permissive Path Agreement with the Local Authority.

The BHS role is also to protect the bridleway network. Any proposals to change a rural right of way into an urban cycle path would be objected to by the BHS and probably the Ramblers as well. We are concerned that the NP under Objective 15, appears to support the creation of urban cycling provision on precious bridleways much loved and well used by walkers, dog walkers, runners, off road cyclists as well as equestrians:

Proposals to turn the bridleway into a Greenway with a wide surfaced route needs to ensure the countryside feel is retained and path surfaces do not look urbanised.

6. Improvements to existing public footpath from end of Button End to existing bridleway from Haslingfield to Hauxton are desired to make it more suitable for cyclists and equestrians, now the bridleway is proposed to be upgraded to a Greenway. This public footpath used to be a bridleway until maps were reviewed in 1940s. Further improvements along Button End lane itself (e.g. road surfacing, speed limit) would also make it safer, as would desired route 8, away from the busy and noisy A10.

Making something 'more suitable' for cyclists is highly likely to make the one and only bridleway in the area, less suitable for equestrians and other soft surface users.

It is the BHS belief and understanding that the proposal for the Greenway is in fact a new path to bridleway standard not use of the existing bridleway.



The BHS requests that the NP supports their view that provision of cycling paths should be 'in addition' to existing rural rights of way not instead of them. We very much hope that the NP can support this view.

Aspirational Routes map 18

There is no clarification on this map of what status these aspirational routes would have. Again, for them to be inclusive, they would need to be at least bridleway status.

Network Rail

The BHS would be very happy to work with Harston NP and Parish Council and other Stakeholders in seeking the best possible mitigation to the impact of the EW Rail proposals on the rights of way network and ensuring that the project provides enhancement and protection of the rural rights of way as required by NPPF 105.

Lynda Warth
County Access & Bridleways Officer – Cambridgeshire
British Horse Society