

From: [REDACTED]
To: [SheffieldPlan](#)
Subject: Sheffield Local Plan
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[Sheffield Draft Local Plan 2023.docx](#)

Good Afternoon,

Attached is a response to the Sheffield Local Plan consultation on behalf of The British Horse Society.

Can you please confirm receipt,

Regards,

Mark.

Mark Corrigan
Access Field Officer

The British Horse Society

[REDACTED]

Telephone: [REDACTED]

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Right now, hundreds of horses are being rescued from a life of mistreatment, cruelty, and neglect. Our Second Chance project rehomes horses who have suffered an unhappy past, giving them a second chance to rest, recover and rediscover a better life at one of our BHS Approved Centres. Our centres are home to BHS-qualified professionals who are equipped with the understanding, patience, skills, and knowledge needed to assist and rehabilitate those horses in desperate need.

Without your help and our brilliant riding schools, these horses face an uncertain future.

Donate today to help give neglected horses a second chance [here.](#)



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Patron Her Majesty The Queen

The British Horse Society

Bringing Horses and People Together



26th January 2023

The Consultation Team
Sheffield City draft (regulation 19) Local Plan,
Howden House,
1 Union Street,
Sheffield,
S1 52H
By e-mail only.

Dear Sirs,

SHEFFIELD DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

I am writing on behalf of the British Horse Society (BHS) in response to the current consultation on the Sheffield Draft Local Plan Strategy. The BHS is the largest and most influential equestrian charity in the country, working to improve the lives of horses and their owners through its four core foundations of education, welfare, safety and access.

1. BACKGROUND TO OUR COMMENTS

Nationally, it is estimated that there are **3.5 million people** in the UK who ride or who drive a horse-drawn carriage. We estimate that there are currently more than **87,000 horses** within the county contributing at least **£313 million each year** to the local economy, mainly through goods and services supplied by small businesses such as feed merchants, vets, farriers, trainers, saddlers, etc.

A significant number of these horses kept throughout Sheffield, both at small yards and at large equestrian centres.

Road Safety is a particular concern to equestrians, who are among the most vulnerable road users. Between November 2010 and February 2021, the BHS received reports of 5,784 road incidents, in which **441 horses and 44 people were killed** with 1350 people and 1,198 horses injured, 75% of these incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too closely to the horse. Research indicates however that only 1 in 10 incidents are being reported to the BHS; in 2021-22 alone, **3,261** horse riders and carriage drivers in England and Wales were admitted to hospital after being injured in transport accidents. (*NHS Hospital Episodes Statistics*).

The BHS actively campaigns to improve road safety by making motorists aware of what to do when they encounter horses on the road (see <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/safety/dead-slow> – we recommend taking a few minutes to watch the 'Dead Slow' virtual reality film for an impression of how vulnerable equestrians are in proximity to cars and lorries).

Because of the difficulties that equestrians encounter on roads, they avoid using them wherever possible. Road use is often unavoidable, however, sometimes simply because people have nowhere else to exercise their horses. The main off-road access available to them is the network of Rights of Way (RoW), however in many places the RoW network is fragmented, often as a result of the most heavily

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used routes being adopted as vehicular highways, and roads are often the only available links between one RoW and the next. Connecting off road routes should therefore be given a high priority in the interests of ALL vulnerable road users.

England and Wales Have over 140,000 miles of PRow, but only 22% of this network is available for horse riders (who may only use routes designated as bridleways, byways and restricted byways) An additional factor is that the network is fragmented, and roads are often the only available links between one PRow and the next.

Sheffield has around 745 km of PRow, but only approximately 113km or 13% of this network is available for horse riders well below the national average of 22% there are no restricted-byways in Sheffield. We would like to see an increase in the network available to horse riders.

a. Recognition of equestrians as vulnerable road users

Historically, pedestrians and cyclists have been considered as the main vulnerable road users. Equestrians are however increasingly recognised as being part of this group: during the Parliamentary Debate on Road Safety in November 2018 Jesse Norman, Under Secretary of State for Transport, stated that

“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.”

We therefore ask that the Local Plan includes Sheffield’s equestrians as vulnerable road users, to ensure that their needs are considered equally alongside those of pedestrians and cyclists.

b. Inclusion of equestrians in the Active Travel Strategy

The term ‘Active Travel’ applies to journeys undertaken for a range of purposes, whether to reach a place of work or local amenities, or for recreation. It is also the case that many of the routes that are used to walk or cycle to work or school are the same routes which at other times provide for recreational use.

It is now acknowledged that horse-riding is as much an ‘active travel’ mode as recreational walking or cycling. At the recent Parliamentary Debate on Active Travel in Westminster Hall, Robert Courts MP proposed that ***“horse riders...ought to be thought about in the context of active travel as well.”*** This was endorsed by Michael Ellis, Minister of State for Transport, who confirmed that ***“Active travel includes horse riders and bridle paths – this debate includes them.”***

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Council has defined Active Travel as “Physically active modes such as walking, or horse riding. It also includes walking or cycling as part of a longer journey.” (See [Cambridge and Peterborough report](#))

We therefore suggest that horse-riding should be included within the plan and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of this document.

c. Equestrians to be included in any shared-use routes, wherever possible

In order to maximise opportunities within development to help provide more off-road links for equestrians, where shared-use routes are created for active travel as a part of any development, planning policy should support the automatic inclusion of horse riders on shared off-road routes, unless there are specific reasons why this is not possible.

Conflict with cyclists is sometimes given as a reason for excluding horses from shared routes, but this rarely has anything to do with either the horse or the bicycle, simply the inconsiderate person who happens to be riding one or the other. Horse riders and cyclists as two vulnerable road user groups have more in common with each other than differences. This is illustrated by the work that

the BHS is doing in partnership with Cycling UK in the current '[Be Nice, Say Hi!](#)' campaign and with Sustrans in their 'Paths for Everyone' initiative.

The key to a successful shared route is the design: for example, rather than positioning a cycle path down the centre of a route with verges either side, the cycle path should be positioned to one side and the two verges combined to provide a soft surface for walkers, runners and horses on the other. (This also addresses the issue of horse droppings which, as research has confirmed, represent no danger to health and disperse quickly, particularly on unsurfaced paths.)

d. Reference to the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum (HCAF) guidance [Equestrians in Hampshire](#)

The HCAF has developed this guidance for planners and developers in response to feedback from local authorities, which indicated that they would welcome more information about how they can include equestrians in their work, engagement and consultation.

Written by members of HCAF with support from Hampshire Countryside Service and the BHS, this document has been widely circulated within and beyond Hampshire, sparking interest from other authorities outside the county.

e. Benefits to the Economy

"The most recent national survey by the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA – which represents more than 800 member companies) concluded that nationally the equestrian sector (excluding the racing industry) was worth **£4.7 billion a year** to the UK economy. Based on an estimated horse population of 847,000, this represents just over **£5,548** per horse."

There are currently 5811 registered equine passport holders in the Sheffield post code area, therefore a significant annual local contribution of £32,239,428

<https://www.beta-uk.org/pages/news-amp-events/news/national-equestrian-survey-2019-provides-optimistic-view-of-industry.php>

f. THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF HORSE RIDING and ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES:

(Data comes from research undertaken by the University of Brighton and Plumpton College on behalf of The British Horse Society)

- 68% of questionnaire respondents participate in horse riding and associated activities for 30 minutes or more at least three times a week. Sport England estimate that such a level of sporting activity will help an **individual achieve or exceed the government's recommended minimum level of physical activity.**
- Women have been identified in government studies as a social group with relatively low levels of participation in physical activity. Some 93% of questionnaire respondents were women and 49% percent of female respondents were aged 45 or above. These are comparable figures to a major Sport England survey which found that 90 percent of those participating in equestrianism are women and 37 percent of the female participants in equestrianism are aged 45 or above. **The gender and age profile of equestrianism is not matched by any other sport in the UK¹.**
- Amongst the horse riders who took part in the survey, 39% had taken no other form of physical activity in the last four weeks. **This highlights the importance of riding to these people, who might otherwise be sedentary.**

¹ Sport England (2010) Active People Survey (2010/11)

- Horse riders with a **long-standing illness or disability** who took part in the survey are able to undertake horse riding and associated activities at the same self-reported level of frequency and physical intensity as those without such an illness or disability

For further information, please see:

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/~media/documents/marketing/health-benefits-of-riding-in-the-uk-full-report.ashx?la=en>

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/~media/documents/access/access-leaflets/statisticsarow-1119.ashx?la=en>

g. The psychological and social benefits of horse riding:

Horse riding stimulates mainly positive psychological feelings.

Horse riders are strongly motivated to take part in riding by the sense of well-being they gain from interacting with horses. This important positive psychological interaction with an animal occurs in a very few sports. Being outdoors and in contact with nature is an important motivation for the vast majority of horse riders.

We would urge Sheffield City Council to incorporate the principles set out in this guidance into their planning policy: most particularly, **that equestrians should be considered and consulted with at an early stage within the planning of any major housing or infrastructure development.** This should include any proposed new multi-use routes.

“The use of former railway lines and tracks for recreational purposes (including walking, cycling and horse riding) or for potential public transport use should the opportunity arise in the longer term.” where proposed new bridleways, when implemented, should restore connectivity within the wider RoW network in a way that will benefit all users, including equestrians.

3. CONCLUSION

“Good growth also means providing open space and leisure opportunities to encourage healthy and active lifestyles and encouraging more of us to use active forms of travel”.

Horse riding is a year-round activity which (along with associated activities such as mucking out and pasture maintenance) expends sufficient energy to be classed as moderate intensity exercise. The majority of those who ride regularly are women, and a significant proportion of riders are over 45. For some older or disabled people, being on horseback or in a horse-drawn carriage gives them access to the countryside and a freedom of movement that they would not otherwise be able to achieve. There are also considerable psychological and social benefits from equestrian activities, as the BHS is demonstrating through the [Changing Lives through Horses](#) initiative.

Equestrianism is a popular activity in Sheffield, and one which contributes significantly to the local economy. The equestrian community in Sheffield currently has many difficulties in finding safe access within the area. Many issues could be addressed and resolved through good planning of future development. We hope therefore that the Sheffield Local Plan Strategy will include policies that will support this.

Furthermore, we would ask the Council, to consider using some of the CIL money arising from future developments to improve the off-road network for higher status users of the PROW in the surrounding area which would benefit both the existing and new residents. A community horse arena could also be provided an example of a successful community arena can be found here-

https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/attraction/friezland-arena/

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of this response further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Mark Corrigan.

Mark Corrigan
Access Field Officer –Yorkshire Region.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact contact information, likely a phone number or email address.