



Bringing Horses and People Together

**Biddulph Neighbourhood Development Order consultation**

The response below is from the British Horse Society however our volunteers in the county may also respond at a local level.

LP Page 19 points 6 and 7

The British Horse Society is the UK’s largest equestrian Charity, with over 118,000 members 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.

Horse riding is included in the Active Travel definition. Jesse Norman MP, Parliamentary Under – Secretary of State for Transport in a House of Commons debate on Road Safety, 5 November 2018 (1) 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.....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.” The cycle ways referred to can, in most cases, be inclusive of equestrians to provide additional shared non-MPV off road routes and to avoid horses being sandwiched between fast moving road traffic and cyclists on roads.

The footpath network referred to includes a high proportion of former RUPPs. The British Horse Society is working with local volunteers to submit claims for higher rights where historic evidence supports his as part of the Project 2026 objectives.

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The green infrastructure described should be inclusive of equestrians via bridleways, byways and multi-user non-MPV routes. Natural surfaces encouraging biodiversity are preferable for equestrians. Routes need to be protected from unauthorised or anti-social MPV misuse for environmental and safety reasons. Extending public rights of way and other provision for walking, cycling and horse-riding will require additional resource for countryside teams to maintain and protect the valuable network.

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Heritage assets infers inclusion of rights of way. Staffordshire Moorlands has a high proportion of routes recorded as footpaths which are former RUPP’s:

Area	Total No's of RUPPs	Total Footpath	% of Total
Staffordshire Moorlands	180	154	<b>86%</b>

The BHS is working with local volunteers to submit claims for higher rights where historic evidence supports his as part of the Project 2026 objectives. The significant delays in assessing and determining claims then modification of the definitive map and statement suggest resource implications in the legal team.

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Equestrian tourism is increasingly popular for both novice riders and for those wishing to take their horse on holiday. This positively impacts rural industry such as vets, farriers, coaches, equine land managers, feed merchants, etc. Making Biddulph and Staffordshire moorlands a welcoming place for equestrians through improving the connectivity of the off-road network is key in securing this aspect of tourism. Creating Wildlife corridors for multi-use to enhance the environment and engaging with landowners for access would improve the network.

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27 August 2021