

Patron Her Majesty The Queen

The British Horse Society

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Bringing Horses and People Together

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The
British
Horse
Society

Mid Sussex DC Planning Officer

Via email: planning@midsussex.gov.uk

17th January 2024

RE: DM/23/2867 Land East Of Ansty Way Cuckfield Bypass Cuckfield West Sussex:

I am responding to this consultation on behalf of the British Horse Society, the UK's largest equestrian charity with over 122,000 members and representing the country's 3 million horse riders. I apologise for the lateness of the response but it seems that this application is, effectively, part of DM/23/2866 to which I have previously responded and the content below is identical.

We object to this application.

National Planning Policy Framework

- Paragraph 98 states that, "Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities..." Providing for equestrians helps to fulfil this requirement¹
- Paragraph 100 says, "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."

The inclusion of equestrians within the provision for walkers and cyclists in this application would only improve the value for money of such undertakings and improve the safety of local riders (see BHS safety stats at the foot of this letter)

West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan

"3. Vision and objectives

The Council's Vision for PRoW in West Sussex is:

*To enable people to enjoy the countryside on foot, **by horse** and by bicycle, for health, recreation and to access services, while recognising the need to balance this with the interests of those who live and work in the countryside and the management of special landscapes."* (my emphasis)

"4. Existing situation

However, development also brings opportunities to provide access for NMUs through appropriate infrastructure design and provision."

"5. What people think

All user groups consulted, particularly horse riders, were concerned about the lack of connectivity of the PRoW network, particularly outside the South Downs. It was strongly felt this will only get worse with increased development and volume of traffic not just on the A and B roads but on the rural roads, which NMUs have to use to link PRoW. Road verges, where they exist, are often considered dangerous and sight-lines are often poor – better management of vegetation and considerate positioning of signage would be helpful. Routes along or adjacent to carriageways or using field edges were suggested as being required to help improve connectivity and provide a safer network for all NMUs. There was also concern that due to severance some paths are not used and therefore do not contribute to the available network."

¹ <https://www.bhs.org.uk/media/gannghxh/health-benefits-of-riding-in-the-uk-full-report.pdf>

Making provision for equestrians within this development would provide some mitigation for the impact on them on surrounding roads arising from the increased traffic.

Mid Sussex Local Plan

“DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes

Access to the countryside will be encouraged by:

- *Ensuring that (where appropriate) development provides safe and convenient links to rights of way and other recreational routes;*
- *Supporting the provision of additional routes within and between settlements that contribute to providing a joined up network of routes where possible;*
- *Where appropriate, encouraging making new or existing rights of way multi-functional to allow for benefits for a range of users. (Note: ‘**multi-functional will generally mean able to be used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders**’)* (my emphasis)

DP7: General Principles for Strategic Development at Burgess Hill

Support the delivery of a multi-functional route between Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath

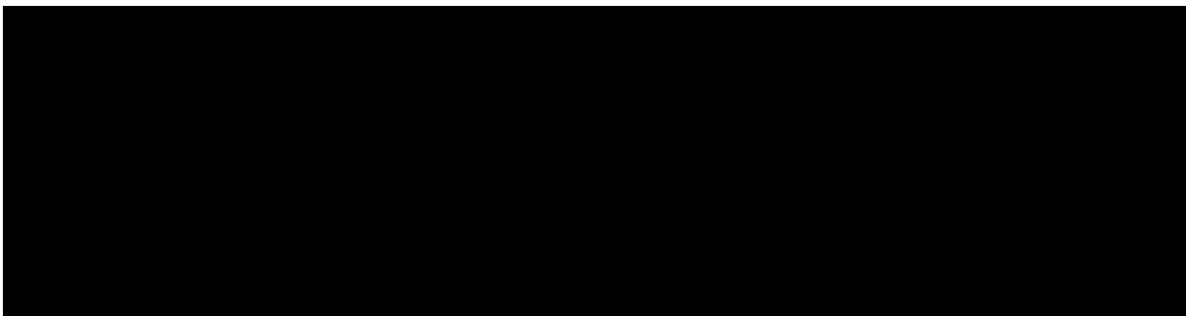
The note at the foot of the page states *“In this context multi-functional means able to be used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders”*

It is evident that Mid Sussex DC anticipates that equestrians should usually be included in provision for non motorised/vulnerable road. Unless there are evidence based cogent reasons for their exclusion, so too should they be included in this application.

In the event that the planning authority is minded to approve this application, we would ask that a condition of planning is that all multi use routes provided within the application should also include horse riders and, ideally, carriage drivers. Further, no subsequent changes should allow this condition to be removed. Finally, substantial developer contributions should be sought for improvements to the local public rights of way network which is likely to be significantly impacted by an influx of so many new people. In the event that these conditions are met, we would be willing to remove our objection.

We would, of course, be willing to work with the company in making safe provision for equestrians.

Yours faithfully



Equestrian Safety BHS National Statistics: 2022

- 3,552 road incidents involving horses have been reported to The British Horse Society (this is anticipated to be around 10% of the total number)
- Of these, 69 horses have died and 125 have been injured
- 139 people have been injured because of road incidents
- 26% of riders were victims to road rage or abuse.