

The Impact of Active Travel Plans and LTN 1/20 on Equestrians

A Summary of the Issues

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All local highway authorities have to produce a Local Transport Plan in which they set out their plans for active travel. From the outset, Parliament included equestrian travel in active travel and equestrian travel is included in the Active Travel England Route Check User Manual. However, equestrian travel is often being ignored in the implementation of active travel plans by local highway authorities.

Local Traffic Note (LTN 1/20) is the primary guidance for local highway authorities, but it is causing significant safety concerns for equestrians as it ignores equestrian travel. Equestrians have to use the road network to access off-road riding routes (byways, bridleways etc.), but measures which are being put in place to improve the safety of cyclists and walkers are compromising the safety and ability of equestrians to access the equestrian off-road network.

The British Horse Society has identified twelve issues of concern. The recommendations in respect of these twelve issues are summarized in this summary document.

Full details of these issues can be found in the full paper which can be found at www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice under "other publications".

- 1. Consultation:** For each route identified to improve cycling, an assessment is made whether there is current and potential demand for equestrian use (including horse drawn carriages). Equestrian users should only be excluded from multi-user routes where an overwhelming safety justification exists. Any risk analysis must also consider the risk generated as a consequence of that exclusion.
- 2. Segregation of user groups:** Shared use in rural and many semi-urban fringe areas is the most appropriate type of use and that segregation will not normally be required, appropriate, or represent best value.
- 3. Route width** should be contextual to the ordinary traffic of the neighbourhood, likely predominant use, and overall context of the location. Where existing routes are repaired or improved there should be flexibility in width criteria to reflect local circumstances. A minimum usable width of 3 metres should only apply to new routes.
- 4. Infrastructure:** The guidance in LTN 1/20 on junctions and crossings is revised by referring to existing published guidance or it is made clear that the present guidance relates only to urban locations where equestrians are unlikely to be found.

5. **Furniture:** Furniture (including gates and other barriers) on all routes should be compliant with British Standard BS5709:2018 (gaps Gates and Stiles) including the guiding principle of 'least restrictive option'.
6. **Signage:** The default position should be that diagram 956.1, rather than 955 or 956, is erected on cycle routes (including roadside verge shared-use facilities) in rural / semi-urban / urban fringe locations, except where a specific restriction (such as a bylaw, PSPO or Traffic Regulation Order) is in place restricting equestrian use of that route.
7. **Surfacing:** on Public Rights of Way (bridleways and byways), well-constructed, non-sealed surfaces using self-binding aggregates provide an accessible, firm and stable surface that is more suitable for a wider range of users including many wheelchair and mobility scooter users. It is likely to offer a more cost-effective solution than sealed surfaces, particularly where levels of use are lower than in urban areas and where no mechanically propelled use is expected. The Society recommends that further research is undertaken to ascertain the impact that sealed surfaces have on the speed of cyclists.
8. **Bridge parapet heights:** For those parapets that are below the recommended standard, signage recommending horse riders dismount should be erected. Equestrians should only ever be excluded from multi-user bridges where an overwhelming safety justification exists, and that any risk analysis must also consider the risk generated by that exclusion.
9. **Lighting:** Routes outside built up areas used primarily for recreation should not normally require lighting save where it is needed for safety reasons.
10. **Quiet lanes:** Both speed limit reductions and the partial closure of designated routes to through-use by motorised traffic are needed for the most cost-effective and practical solution to increasing safety and reducing traffic on many minor roads / quiet lanes.
11. **Cost of Active Travel Schemes:** A more flexible funding formula to allow schemes to deliver benefits over a much wider scale/overall distance than can be achieved within the current LTN 1/20 framework. In the rural context, the delivery of a continuous traffic free route - even if delivered to a lower standard - is strongly preferable to the delivery of a shorter or non-continuous route completed to a higher standard.
12. **Development within the boundaries of existing highways:** Consideration should be given to the creation of new cycle routes through highway creation powers in preference to the adoption/alteration of popular equestrian routes, and the provision of routes that travel parallel to existing roads but on

the other side of the hedge/fence to give a greater feeling of safety due to greater distancing from traffic.

Contact us

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

02476 840 515
access@bhs.org.uk
www.bhs.org.uk