



Department for
Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

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Dear Damian,

Thank you for your letter dated 3 November, enclosing a copy of an email from Councillor Maureen Comber of The Old Cottage, Frith End, Bordon, GU35 0QS, who asks about horse riding and sustainable transport.

I understand the problems that horse riders face in finding suitable safe routes, but I believe that our planning guidance already sets out a framework to remedy these problems. Contrary to Councillor Comber's suggestion, horse riding can benefit from Section 106 agreements and there are many specific examples of S106 funding being used to create or improve bridleways.

Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. The remit of S106 agreements is laid out in Circular 05/05. A planning obligation must be *necessary* to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms.

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) deals with rural areas and states that planning policies should provide for a range of suitably located recreational and leisure facilities for horse riders. Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) deals with open space, sport and recreation and requires local authorities to promote health and well-being by providing opportunities to people of all ages for informal recreation to walk, cycle or ride within parks and open spaces or along paths, bridleways and canal banks. It states that local

authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks and specifically states that planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies.

More specifically, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local authorities to produce a "rights of way improvement plan" (ROWIP) to meet the present and likely future needs of the public and to consider the needs of equestrians through the creation of bridleways and restricted byways.

The second issue your constituent raises is that horse riding should be considered in transport terms rather than just recreational terms. In transport planning, the main policy document is PPG13 on transport, which emphasises that new development should reduce the need to travel, especially car travel, and be accessible by public transport, walking, and cycling. PPG13 does not mention horse riding

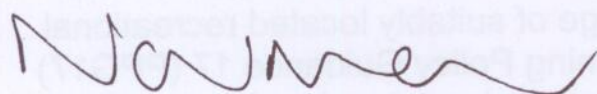
The national Sport England Survey, which looks at recreational journeys, identifies that 0.8% of population or 340,000 people go horse riding at least once a week and this represents 65 million journeys nationally a year. This emphasises the importance of horse riding, particularly in more rural areas. In comparison 1.8 million people (4.5% of population) cycle once a week for recreation which represents 270 million recreational cycle journeys.

However, when looking at journeys for transport reasons, the National Travel Survey shows that the use of horse riding for non-recreational reasons is negligible, whereas there are approximately 650 million transport cycling trips and nearly 9,000 million non-recreational walking trips (excluding 2,800 million "just walk", recreational and holiday trips).

I hope therefore planning policy has struck the right balance of promoting horse riding, along with cycling and walking, for recreational purposes whilst concentrating on walking and cycling as a way of meeting transport needs in new developments.

I hope this reply is helpful

Yours sincerely



NORMAN BAKER