

Patron His Majesty The King

Bringing Horses
and People Together

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Draft Cambridge Biomedical Campus Supplementary Planning Document

Response on behalf of the British Horse Society.

According to DEFRA 'In 2020, the value of health benefits associated with outdoor recreation within the UK was estimated to be between £6.2 billion and £8.4 billion. An estimated annual saving of £2.1 billion would be achieved through averted health costs if everyone in England had good access to nature.'

Benefits of the Equestrian Industry in Cambridgeshire

The Equestrian Industry (EI) in Cambridgeshire creates commercial, social, mental and physical wellbeing and educational benefits. There are other groups and users of the soft surface Rights of Way network with equally positive social and wellbeing benefits.

The EI in Cambridgeshire (excluding the racing industry) contributes over £115 million per annum to the Cambridgeshire rural economy. Nationally the industry is the second largest rural employer – second only to agriculture.

The EI provides amazing equestrian centres who, under the BHS scheme Changing Lives through Horses, work with children and young people who have disengaged from the education system. Using the transformative power of working with horses, combined with a focus on developing key skills they can use throughout their lives, leading to increased confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to reengage with society. 3,000 children and young people have benefited from this scheme nationally since 2019.

The EI provides Riding for the Disabled Centres. RDA is a charity which pioneers the therapeutic use of horses and are leaders in disability sport. Their innovative programmes improve mobility, boost physical health and mental wellbeing, build confidence, and teach new skills for those with life challenges.

The EI provides commercial diversification opportunities for farmers and landowners in terms of livery facilities with all the additional business opportunities for farriers, vets, feed merchants, saddlers, trainers, hay merchants etc.

The racing industry is worth £4.1 billion pa to the economy nationally. It requires a huge workforce with a variety of skills and relies on large numbers of 'work riders' e.g. at Newmarket. The skills required rely on grass roots experience gained from learning to ride and hack out.

The vast majority of horse riders are female. Equestrian sport is one of the few (if not the only?) physical sport where men and women compete equally successfully for the same prizes.

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This is in addition to the well recorded benefits of horse riding which we know contributes to fitness and wellbeing both, mentally and physically.

All the above benefits rely on safe, off-road access to suitably surfaced public rights of way – amenities which are not being protected nor enhanced by the documents included in this consultation.

Since November 2010 BHS national records show that there have been 15,496 road incidents involving horses, 47 people have lost their lives and 1,686 have been injured, 636 horses have been killed and 1,522 horses have been injured.

Relevant Policies and Strategies

NPPF 105

105. 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.

There is no reference anywhere in this development document to NPPF 105 about protection and enhancement of the public rights of way for all users, only reference to restrictive cycling and walking. A consequence of this omission is that reference is only made to Active Travel. In Cambridgeshire, Active Travel means utility journeys on urban style tarmac surfaces for walkers and cyclists. It excludes walkers, dog walkers, runners, off road cyclists and equestrians, all of whom wish to access the benefits of the countryside on natural, soft surfaces which do not impact on the environment. Tarmac adds to our climate and environmental problems.

Protection and enhancement of the rights of way network should be embedded in this Plan. The large-scale future development of CBC, to include further development and housing which it has been indicated, could include land out to Haverhill Road, will result in loss of access to the countryside for local communities. This must be mitigated in some way. Provision of rights of way 'green corridors' with natural surfaces and boundaries, to at least bridleway status, linking to existing access, would benefit humans, wildlife and the environment and meet NPPF 105 requirements. Creation of a peripheral green PROW with 'loops' has shown to be successful on new developments such as Cambourne and Wintringham. It would provide a welcome retreat for CBC employees who often work in stressful situations and for those undergoing treatment or in recovery enabling them to be in a green and peaceful situation.

All CBC development should consider opportunities to enhance the rights of way network. If this were to be embedded in the policy now, it would be a legacy for future generations.

The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The RoWIP is not included in the list of local policies. As a result, there is no mention or acknowledgement of the existing rights of way, both public and permissive, which are well used and much loved by local communities in the area. There is no mention of opportunities to enhance the PROW network. This is a serious omission as it brings a local aspect to NPPF 105.

The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

Not included in the policies although referred to.

Vision Zero

Surely this strategy should be embedded in the ethos of CBC :

‘The Vision Zero Partnership is committed to preventing all road deaths across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and to significantly reduce the severity of injuries and subsequent costs and social impacts from road traffic collisions.

Vision Zero is a road safety partnership strategy adopted and built on, incorporating the international Safe System policy approach for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.’

Failing to take every opportunity to improve the off road, safe access for all vulnerable road users does not meet the aims and ambitions of Vision Zero.

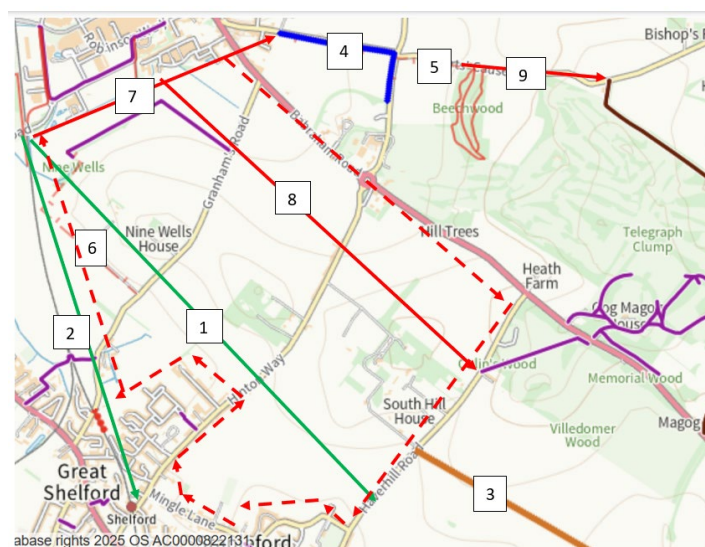
The British Horse Society Access Strategy:

- Ensuring there is a presumption in favour of including provision for equestrian access automatically alongside access for walkers and cyclists in (i) all Local Development Plans and Local Transport Plans, (ii) when roads are created or improved, and (iii) when new developments are planned, unless there is a strong evidence reason why this would not be possible.
- Ensuring that horse riders have access to active travel routes. Horse riders, like walkers and cyclists, are vulnerable road users. Currently horse riders are often excluded from these routes leaving them to ride on roads that are not considered safe for walkers and cyclists to use.

The key is the presumption in favour of including provision for all vulnerable road users.

Non Motorised User access and plans in the pipeline:

Future proofing is needed which could bring about a joined-up PROW network in the area:



1. The CSET busway design includes a grass bridleway within the transport corridor.

2. The Sawston Greenway includes equestrian access.
3. A DMMO Application has been submitted for a bridleway off Haverhill Road in Stapleford.
4. A bridleway is included in the plans for the Babraham Road Development which will deliver part of the route to link up to the Roman Road byway.
5. Permissive bridleway access part way up to the rear of the Roman Road.
6. A peripheral bridleway to include / link to:
 - a. NMU path alongside Haverhill Road from the A1307 to Stapleford – this was included in the Linton Greenway / CSET design at inception but has yet to be delivered.
 - b. The new junction on the A1307 and Haverhill Road includes an equestrian crossing.
 - c. A bridleway is included in the plans for the new country park between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way adjacent to the busway and the Retirement Village.
 - d. Exclusion of equestrians is to be removed from the Linton Greenway alongside the A1307.
7. This route used to be a permissive bridleway but is now a cycling and walking route only. When the cycle path was built, the bridleway gate at the junction with the path and the A1307 Babraham Road, was removed and thrown in the hedge. The new bridleway creation on the housing development is intended to link to this route therefore the path must be designated as at least a bridleway
8. This route has been recognised on the ‘wish list’ for decades. A safe off road NMU path from Cambridge to Magog Down (please note that when the agricultural land between Hinton Way and Haverhill Road was sold a few years ago, it was sold as ‘a potential development opportunity’).

Consultation Objectives:

Connectivity and movement

Does the proposal?

- Consider all feasible options to connect to existing rights of way and cycle networks to maximise active travel?

Not only do these proposals not consider ‘all feasible options’ to link to the rights of way network, none are even considered. Cyclists are mostly male. Horse riders and carriage drivers are mostly female meaning that inclusion of cycling with total exclusion of equestrians does not meet Equality policies.

The public realm and wellbeing

Does the proposal?

- Positively integrate with the Campus and surrounding community and provide spaces or opportunities that can improve community cohesion, integration and the health and wellbeing of all users?

No attempt whatsoever despite the requirements of the two policies:

Policy 73: Community, sports and leisure facilities

Policy 73 sets out criteria to ensure that developments of new or existing community, sports and leisure facilities improve the range, quality and access to facilities both within Cambridge and where appropriate, in the sub-region of the city. Proposals for new facilities or the replacement of existing facilities are supported where there is a local need. This must be demonstrated through a local need assessment.

Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure

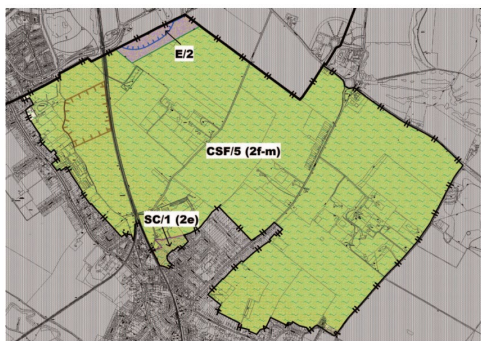
In 2011 a partnership of local organisations, including the South Cambridgeshire District Council, produced the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy which provides an overarching green infrastructure strategy and network for Cambridgeshire. The level of growth that is planned in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge will put pressure on existing green infrastructure and will require investment to develop this network. Policy NH/6 sets out criteria to ensure that all new developments contribute to the enhancement of green infrastructure.

Lack of rights of way provision in the Plan is very disappointing given the acknowledgement:

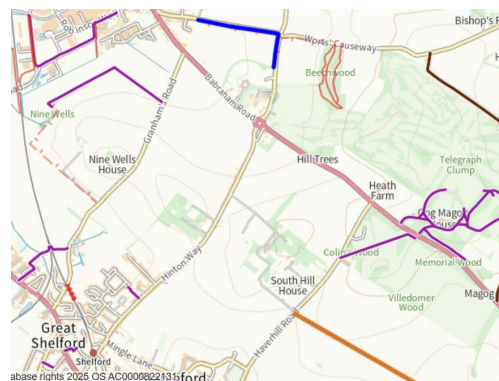
- 3.26** In summary, although parts of the Campus include an element of green space and public realm, it is dominated by streets and buildings. Most users of the Campus do not have direct access to high quality public realm or green open space for play, recuperation, sports or any other outdoor activities to support health and wellbeing. Green infrastructure is also unevenly distributed across the Campus and so there are large areas with no green infrastructure, links to natural habitats to support biodiversity or improve the Campus environment.

In conclusion

Expansion of CBC, the need for further development to support the site in the future including housing which has already been mooted to be created out to Haverhill Road in CCC, land sale promotion and other documentation, along with changes to protection of the Green Belt, will result in encroachment on green belt which currently includes access routes for local residents. Without an integrated plan for protection of the existing, and inclusion of new rights of way, there will be no joined up network – which is contrary to the Cambs Rights of Way Improvement Plan.



Map 2: Map of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan E/2 land



This response is a request for the Greater Cambridge Planning Team to 'look at the bigger picture' and to consult with Stakeholders – The Ramblers, The BHS, the Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum and off-road cyclists - regarding the need to include protection and enhancement of the Rights of Way network

within their planning policy. Natural surface rights of way benefit humans and the environment. This approach would support the comments made by the BHS on the other sections of this consultation.

Lynda Warth
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British Horse Society

23.1.25