

Great Ashby North Development 25/03080/HYA

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application.

I am commenting on behalf of the British Horse Society, the UK's largest equestrian charity with over 125,000 members and representing 3.2 million horse riders and horse carriage drivers nationwide and contributes over £9 billion per year to the UK economy. I am also a member of the Hertfordshire Local Access Forum and member of the National Ridgeway Trail Delivery Group.

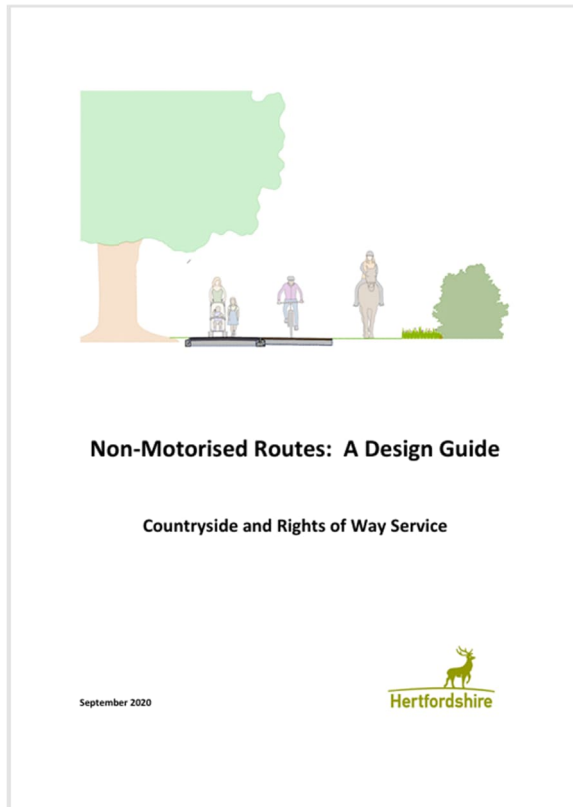
BHS Herts **object** to this application for the following reasons

1. There is no mention of equestrians and only mentions bridleways in the context of walkers and cyclists.
2. There is no comment that Weston 044/Weston 030 at Dane End Farm are connected to a DMMO EH/406/MOD which seeks to upgrade Weston 030/Walkern 025 to bridleway – Dovehouse Lane to Dane End Farm.
3. BHS Herts is not listed in the Community Involvement statement even though they submitted a detailed comment.
4. BHS Herts comment is not listed in the list of documents, and none of the comments put forward have been addressed or included in the application.
5. There appears to have been no access to the RoWIP, a statutory HCC requirement. The ROWIP is a requirement of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 and forms part of the Local Transport Plan.
6. Opportunities for improvements to the prowl network outlined in the RoWIP are missing.
7. There appears to be no comment from HCC PROW department or Countryside Management Service.
8. HCC Highways only mentions walking and cycling even though prowl are involved.
- 9.

NPPF para 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.

Upgrading specific footpaths to bridleways allows for more vulnerable road users - walkers, cyclists and horse riders - safe off road routes, rather than being restricted to cycle paths. Their implementation should follow the HCC Design Guideline for multi user non-motorised routes –

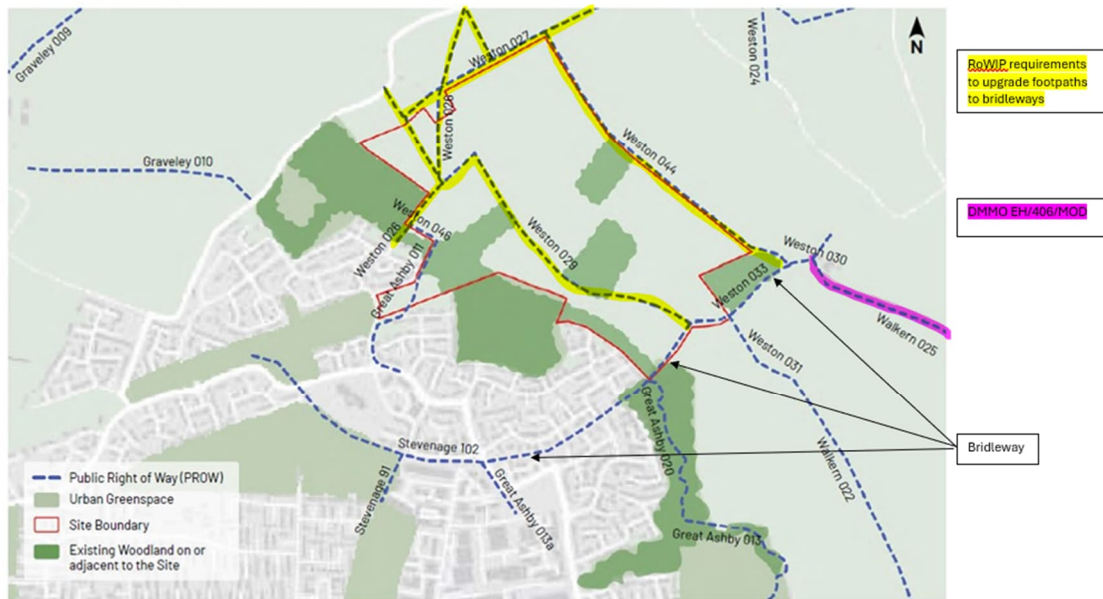
[HCC_Countryside_Rights_of_Way_Service_2_Redacted.pdf](#)



BHS Herts requests the following specific RoWIP suggestions be made to the application – see attached diagram for clarity:

PROW plan from Planning Statement with specific RoWIP amendments

Figure 2.4: PROW on or adjacent to the Site



1. Upgrade Weston 044 to bridleway (RoWIP no. 4/195) along the northeastern site boundary to connect bridleway Weston 030 to upgraded Weston 027 and connect with bridleway Weston 035, hence making a significant improvement to the prown network.
2. Upgrade Weston 027 to bridleway (RoWIP No. 4/194) in the northwest of the site to connect bridleway Weston 035 to Back Lane.
3. Upgrade Weston 026 to bridleway (RoWIP No. 4/262)) to the west of the site, and connects with Merrick Close
4. Upgrade Weston 029 to bridleway (RoWIP No. 4/263) through the centre of the site connecting bridleway Weston 030 to the improvements to the north of the site (as above).

This development is in a rural setting already used by many walkers, cyclists and horse riders. These improvements will significantly enhance the experience of residents in this development, satisfy the requirements of NPPF 105, and improve the prown network for users.

Multi-user leisure routes around and through the site is seen as an enhancement to a rural development linking urban with rural, and is emerging best practice. Examples include Stevenage West with a figure of eight bridleways and restricted byway through

and around the site. Closer to home, the Roundwood development has a new bridleway along its eastern edge connecting with the bridleway network to north and south of the development.

List of larger livery and stable yards, excluding the many small stables of a couple of horses:

Dane End Farm, Tilekiln Farm, Chesfield Equestrian Centre, Bennington Lordship Farm, Lords Farm, Walkern Livery Stables and Westonbury Livery Stables with a combined total of over 190 horses all likely to use the prowl network in and around this site.

Number of horses registered by DEFRA Equine Passport Service in the post code area of this development is over 1300. Using the British Equestrian Federation estimate of a minimum £5500 per annum for a horse, this equates to £7,150,000 to the local economy

Statistics from Ramblers, Cycling UK and BHS

Walkers about 50:50 male female

Cyclists about 70-75% male

Equestrians about 80-90% female

This imbalance, coupled with exclusion from Active Travel and green infrastructure funding disproportionately affects women (equestrians are 80% women), older adults, disabled riders, and ethnic minorities (including Traveller communities). It risks breaching:

- **The Equality Act 2010** and the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- **NPPF para. 96** (supporting healthy lifestyles);
- **NPPF para. 105** (protecting and enhancing PROW).
- **NPPF para. 116** (highway safety and cumulative impacts of road network)
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As the BHS 2025 Policy Statement makes clear:

“Equestrian access is too often seen as a luxury or an afterthought. In fact, it is a matter of safety, inclusion, and legal equality.”

To summarise, until these matters are resolved, the BHS Herts object to this planning application. I am willing to meet with the planners and applicants if it will assist in this resolution.

Best regards
Brian Worrell
BHS Herts