

RESPONSE BY BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY TO HIGHWAYS ENGLAND CONCERNING PROPOSED M25/A3 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

These comments are confined to Highways England Options 9 and 14 since Option 16 has already been rejected. We understand from both proposals that detailed plans for new crossings of the M25 and A3 by non-motorised users (NMU's) have not yet been developed since none is shown on the plan for Option 9 plan and Option 14 plan shows only various hashed and solid orange lines without any explanation or details of how crossings would be made. We welcome your comment in respect of both Options that these "Could include further provision for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians" and similar comments in your Technical Appraisal Report and its appendices.

BW12

The only public bridleway which is immediately affected by the intersection itself is BW12 (see Map 1 attached) which connects Pointers Road to the part of Wisley Common which lies to the northeast of the intersection. Using this bridleway involves operating 2 sets of manually operated traffic lights at the points marked A & B on Map 1 and riding or leading a horse on the footway of the roundabout under the A3 at point C with only a low vehicle crash barrier separating horse and rider from heavy and often fast moving traffic. We submit that the present configuration of this crossing is unpleasant for cyclists and pedestrians but dangerous for horse riders. It urgently needs upgrading. We note that your rather brief survey of use of BW12 by NMU's apparently did not record any use by horse riders. However we can confirm that riders do use it but, that it is not ridden more frequently is, we believe, because many horse riders perceived it as dangerous. Option 14 would reduce the danger somewhat in that the existing roundabout would be dedicated to pedestrian, cyclist and horse rider use. However under both options it would still, as we understand it, be necessary to operate at least two sets of lights and wait for traffic to stop. This is in itself potentially dangerous with a horse. **Recommendation:** We therefore submit that under either option this crossing should be replaced by a bridge or subway dedicated as a public bridleway and constructed to bridleway standards to link BW12 with s193 common land on both sides and to enable riders to access the stopped up publicly maintainable Pointers Road and its link to BW69 on the Chatley Heath side. At the very least every crossing intended for equestrian use should be programmed so that the use of the push-button to operate the crossings secures an immediate change of the lights to permit horse riders to cross without delay. This feature is for example included in the three equestrian crossings installed on Epsom Downs. In this location however we regard this as falling short of the provisions for the safety of horse riders, who are a vulnerable class of user, which is actually required

BRIDGES

The NMU bridges affected by your proposals are marked at points X & Y on Map 2 attached and we note that under both proposals the span of these bridges would need to be increased. The bridge over the A3 at X is classified as a footpath but was constructed as a bridleway bridge under previous side road orders, is of bridleway standard and is used by horse riders and cyclists as well as pedestrians.

Recommendation: The bridge at X on Map 2 should be shown as a bridleway on the highway authority's definitive map and statement and, as was prioritised by the NMU stakeholder group, brought up to Highways England Bridleway Bridge Standards.

The bridge at Y is used mainly as a footpath though some cyclists also use it. It is an important link connecting the west side of the A3 (where the RHS car park ,via FP7, BW8 and Wisley Common are located) with the east side (where there is a bus stop at the A3/Elm Lane junction as well as a link to BW544 and BY525 via the publicly maintainable vehicular carriageway, Elm Lane). However the bridge could, if rebuilt to bridleway standards and with a suitable link on the Wisley Lane side, also provide a valuable link for cyclists and horse riders between BW8 on Wisley Common to the west of the A3 and Elm Lane, BW544 and BY525 to the east. **Recommendation:** The bridge at Y on Map2 should be rebuilt to bridleway standard, designated as a bridleway and a bridleway link provided to BW8 on Wisley Common

The bridge over the M25 at Z is also at present recorded on the definitive map as a footpath. It is built to bridleway standard and there is provision for horse riders to access to Wisley Common (s193) from it. However this is little used by horse riders as it involves opening and closing three gates on the south side and one on the north. We appreciate that this bridge is outside the scope of your proposed works but suggest that this would be an opportune time to make this low cost improvement which would significantly improve access opportunities. **Recommendation:** This bridge should be reclassified as a bridleway and access for horse riders on the southern side of the M25 should be reconfigured.

Connectivity

The present proposals do not make it clear that the existing rights of way will be maintained or restored to a standard that is at least as convenient to all NMU's as the present arrangements. Clearly this is essential but more importantly there is an excellent opportunity to improve access by NMU's to the separate areas of common and access land at minimal cost. Wisley Common, Ockham Common and Chatley Heath are important recreational areas for walkers and cyclists as well as horse riders and NMU access from one to the others is at present far from ideal. Horse riders in particular are extremely vulnerable wherever they come close to heavy traffic and adequate separation is essential.

Recommendation: In addition to the specific proposals detailed above Highways England should, in accordance with its statement that "Further provisions could be made for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians", engage in constructive discussion with NMU groups to ensure that and access to and enjoyment of the recreational land which adjoins the M25 and A3 is improved for all NMU's with their safety as a prime consideration.

Impact on Environment

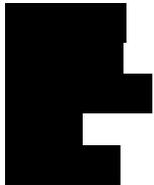
Options 9 and 14 would both have a substantial impact on the local environment and amenities. However it must be obvious that the impact of Proposal 9 would be much more severe. Not only would the new slip roads at high level take up much more common and public access land, the visual and noise pollution which they would contribute would adversely affect almost all the adjacent land which the

public currently enjoy. This is mostly ancient heath and woodland and it is very unlikely that any replacement land would provide the same quality of environment. **Recommendation:** If either scheme is really necessary the Society believes that Proposal 14 is by far the less damaging subject to the amendments for access and recreation included in this submission being incorporated.

Conclusion

The British Horse Society believes that the proposed works provide an excellent opportunity for improving existing and proposed provisions for all NMU's and for horse riders in particular. In addition to the specific recommendations outlined above the Society would wish to be involved in the detailed discussions, which it believes are essential, on what other improvements can be achieved.

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