

## **BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY – REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL EQUESTRIAN ACCESS**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

This report provides information for members concerning a request from Sara Church, the local BHS representative for increased equestrian access in this area encompassing a route alongside the Jubilee River which is currently a cycle way.

### **2. Equestrian access on Cycle Ways**

2.1 Sara Church, the local BHS representative for this area has brought to our attention, a letter written by Richard Benyon, The Minister for the Natural Environment, as provided. In the letter he urges “local authorities to allow horse riders to use cycle trails, routes and other ways where it is in their power to do so and to encourage that permission or dedication to happen where it is not in their power”

2.2 Along with this letter she has submitted a request to the Council to investigate the possibility for horse riding to be legalised along a section of existing cycleway by the Jubilee River which falls within Slough. This would help to improve equestrian access by linking existing bridleways and permissive routes to form circular access for riding in this area including tracks in RBWM. The section of path in Slough is shown on the map provided.

2.3 Some horse riders currently already use this section, but their use of this route is unauthorised. The construction of the route in Slough is already suitable for multi-use and at approx. 3m is wide enough to allow multi-use so no physical upgrade works would be required. The land in Slough has reverted back to its original ownership since the Jubilee River scheme was constructed and is believed to now reside with Eton College.

2.4 The RBWM LAF and the RBWM Cycling Forum have discussed this issue and a meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012 to bring together the various user interests and Council Officers to decide on action to achieve a trial period in which horses would be allowed to ride along cycle tracks. The Trial period would last for 1 year initially to cover all seasons. Landowners’ agreement in principal would be required to allow the horse riding use of this route as a permissive right alongside the statutory cycling and walking use.

2.5 Concerns are;

- surface damage
- narrow points causing user conflict – shared use signage could be erected during the trial to warn users to expect horses.
- existing barriers – may need adaptation
- horse manure on surface causing hazard for other users – education of all users.

2.6 Outcomes of the meeting:

- a. RBWM will provide a map of the proposed route and identify the landowners involved.

- b. RBWM will walk the route to check for any physical barriers, narrow points and surfaces that could cause a problem.
- c. SBC to confirm their approval of the trial scheme.

**2.7 Action: LAF members resolve to support the trial scheme and agree with actions to take the scheme forward.**

