

A358 Consultation Feedback from Taunton Deane Bridleways Association 21st November 2021

Taunton Deane Bridleways Association – Comments on proposed equestrian access on the route of the improved A358.

As Somerset County Council's policy is to provide multi-user rights of way for all vulnerable non-motorised users, where possible, I feel this should be observed in your planning. Most of the proposed pink cycle route should be a restricted byway, so giving access to more vulnerable users. Cyclists have access to bridleways and restricted byways but equestrians do not have access to cycle ways. All of the proposed cycle routes should be of multi user routes ie. Restricted byways and be labelled as such.

The surfaces of these **should not be tarmac**, but rather a surface such as rubber crumb as suggested by the British Horse Society

Section 1

- Just south of the proposed new road at Haydon, a Definitive map Modification order application is lodged with the Somerset County council in respect of Oldbroach Lane (ST2570 2358) which joins on to a footpath. If the footpath were also upgraded all vulnerable users would have off road access to the new Stoke Lane bridge. This bridge should have raised parapets, separated tracks, and mounting blocks either end.
- The proposed cycleway alongside the existing A358 should be a multiuser restricted byway to accommodate all vulnerable users.
- Equestrian access should be provided at the Stoke Road overbridge to enable riders to cross this section of the new road and access the proposed strategic cycle link(restricted byway)

Section 2

- Bridleway T 31/26 is being stopped up with no alternative provision. There should be some mitigation for this.
- I understand that provision is being made for vulnerable users to cross the Mattocks junction. Presumably, dedicated tracks will be provided across the roundabouts with appropriate surfacing, and raised parapets and mounting blocks on the bridge section.
- As a resident on the east of the A358, I frequently go Thurlbear. If Ash Lane is closed, the alternative route will be Griffin Lane, a much narrower lane with no passing places and ditches alongside the lane. I think Ash Lane should remain open.

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- Bridleway T14/8, is I understand being replaced alongside the new carriage way. The replacement route's surface should be an equine friendly material such as turf or rubber crumb which have more 'give' than tarmac
- The Permissive bridleway passing through the Fivehead river tunnel was negotiated by Taunton Deane Bridleways Association and the then Neroche Project managers, so that equestrians from east of the road could access the Herepath. There are few bridleways east

of the road so it is a very valuable route, despite the tunnel being lower than the regulation height. During the past 10 years riders have had no problem with this and will dismount from a taller horse. Mounting blocks either side of the tunnel would be very useful. The plan shows only access for walkers. **This needs to include equestrians.** It will provide an alternative route for riders who do not wish to use Bickenhall Lane bridge

- Bickenhall Lane Bridge – as this is intended for local traffic and vulnerable users, there should be distinct separate tracks for the latter, with softer surfaces suitable for horses and raised parapets. As many riders and horses will be nervous of crossing a high bridge over a busy road, mounting blocks should be provided at each end so that riders can dismount.
- Hatch Beauchamp junction overbridge
As this joins Forest Drove, a definitive bridleway on the west of the A358, the overbridge should accommodate equestrians by means of raised parapets, separated tracks and mounting blocks at each end, and be designated as a restricted byway.
- A section of the Neroche Herepath which has been closed for some years due to the failure of its foundations, appears to lie within the red delineated boundary around the fields alongside the southern section of Bickenhall Lane and up to Bickenhall woods. The renovation of this section of the Herepath would be an excellent mitigation project.

All off road routes including the proposed cycleway should be multi user routes and surfaces should conform to British Horse Society suggestions. Some tarmac surfaces are too slippery and resilient for horses.

Most horse riders are female whereas most cyclists are male, by focussing on cyclists you are discriminating against the well being of the former, whilst increasing opportunities for the latter who already have a much greater provision of routes