

Mr E Chorlton
County Environment Director
Devon County Council
Lucombe House
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
EX2 4QW

10 August 2004

Dear Mr Chorlton

Cycleway at Highampton

The Devon LAF recently held a Training Day and visited a number of interesting sites in the Torridge/West Devon area.

The LAF was pleased to look at the recently completed cycleway in Highampton, together with Graham Cornish from DCC.

The LAF would strongly recommend that this cycleway should be made multi-use as it could easily accommodate horse-riders in addition to cyclists and walkers. This would accord with recommendations in the Leisure Industries Research Centre report on multi-use, recently carried out for Devon County Council. Whilst there is always the possibility of conflict between different users, the LAF would wish to encourage and promote a responsible attitude and respect for others by all users.

The Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England on Rights of Way Improvement Plans (Defra, November 2002) acknowledges the need to consider the needs of equestrians who are "more usually ..forced on to busy roads that are unsuitable for horses" (paragraph 2.2.9). The use of the cycleway by horses would enable riders to develop routes along minor roads and avoid the increasingly fast and busy stretch of the A3072.

The Rt Hon Alun Michael MP wrote to Parish Councils on 5 December 2003 in his capacity as Minister for the Horse stating that he is "keen to improve off-road

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access for equestrians, both by enhancing the existing network and by creating new bridleways". The Minister also spoke to the National Equine Forum on 25 March 2004 and referred to research carried out by the Henley Centre for Defra. One of the five specific recommendations for a horse strategy referred to "the continued improvement of off-road riding opportunities,...and working with other groups such as cyclists".

The LAF understand that the Parish Council in Highampton now supports a solution which incorporates multi-use and is of benefit to all groups. The LAF would strongly advise that early discussions take place with the Parish Council to secure an acceptable multi-use route and develop an appropriate code of conduct which could be publicised locally.

The LAF would further like to advise that consideration is given to constructing future or potential multi-use routes with a surface suitable for all users.

The LAF requests it is notified of similar schemes to Highampton, at an early stage, so that it has an opportunity to comment.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Winter
Secretary
Devon Local Access Forum

c.c. Highampton Parish Council