



LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Warwick District Planning
Warwick District Council
Town Hall, The Parade
Royal Leamington Spa
CV32 4AT

05 March 2025

Reference W/25/0027/HS2

The Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum (WSC LAF) have worked to support the expertise and experience of the British Horse Society when consulting on equestrian issues and matters relating to High-Speed Rail.

The British Horse Society (BHS) is the largest equestrian Charity representing over 3 million equestrians in the UK. Their experience is second to none.

Disappointingly HS2 Ltd and the Planning Authorities to whom the Schedule 17 applications are submitted still continue to 'consult' on equine matters but fail to take on board the specialised safety requirements for horses and their keepers.

We advised alongside the BHS on both the temporary Kenilworth Greenway and now the proposed reinstatement which are both multi-user rights of way which include equestrians. HS2 Ltd failed to take on board inbuilt dangerous issues on surfaces, alignment, acute bends, passing places, road crossing safety and many other issues. The temporary Greenway has, therefore, been in need of constant maintenance. There have been several entirely preventable accidents involving horses and riders. Multi-user Public Rights of Way require careful consideration for the safe use by all users.

We all gave up our time on attending meetings on the reinstatement proposals but once again our many concerns have been ignored.

The above application W/25/0027/HS2 is no different. The BHS met with HS2 and their contractors in March where they used their experience to voice very real concerns on several matters where dangerous issues had been built into the proposed design which would seriously affect the safety of equestrians.

It is very clear that equestrian safety has not been appropriately considered with HS2 Ltd and its contractors suggesting it acceptable for horse riders using the Greenway and Lias Line to be forced onto the Fosse Way, a 60mph incredibly dangerous road, for some 500m to then continue riding along the Long Itchington Road for another 700m before being able to rejoin the Greenway.

This is madness and potentially catastrophic for horses and riders. The only thing predictable about horses is their unpredictability. Car and other vehicle users including lorry drivers do not treat horses with respect; they neither slow down nor pass giving the space legally required by the Highway Code.

The entire design of the proposed route undeniably discriminates against equestrians while favouring cyclists.

The Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum wish to fully endorse the serious safety concerns submitted by the British Horse Society and ask the Warwick District Council's Planning Committee to understand the very real safety issues raised and ensure the suggestions and requests made to mitigate the issues are listened to. One fatal accident involving a horse and rider is one too many and something to be avoided at all costs.

The data on road accidents and incidents involving equestrians provided by the British Horse Society speaks for itself. On today's roads things can only get worse.

The provision of bridleways for the safe use of equines is poor; perhaps this is an opportunity for HS2 Ltd to consider providing and extending off-road provision of public rights of way for multi-use including horses and riders.

The Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum advise the Warwick District Council Planning Committee to **REFUSE application W/25/0027/HS2** for all the reasons given above and those submitted by the British Horse Society in their letter dated 25 February 2025.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheila Cooper', is written over a light blue horizontal line. The signature is somewhat stylized and cursive.

Sheila Cooper

Acting Chair of the Warwickshire Solihull and Coventry Local Access Forum

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