



## Devon Countryside Access Forum

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Department for Transport  
Highway Code Division  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DR

4 February 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

### Highway Code Review

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the forum has a statutory function to give advice and this includes the Secretary of State for the Department of Transport.

The DCAF currently has fifteen members, appointed by Devon County Council, who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.

Members of the Devon Countryside Access Forum met on 24 January. The Forum is aware that a review of the Highway Code and its associated guidance is taking place, following the announcement by the Department of Transport in the autumn. This was also the subject of a public question to the DCAF in relation to safety of equestrians.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum discussed this matter and advises that horse riders and carriage drivers should be included in the category of vulnerable users, alongside walkers and cyclists.

In rural counties, such as Devon, equestrian access users are particularly vulnerable as

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a local access forum. It is required, in accordance with Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, to provide advice as to the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment.



many rural roads do not have a lower speed limit and drivers may not have good sight of equestrians ahead.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Devon Countryside Access Forum and the Department of Transport is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its functions.

The DCAF would appreciate feedback on its request.

Yours faithfully



Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum*

*Chair: Sarah Slade Vice Chair: Chris Cole*



Department  
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Our Ref: 249177  
Your Ref:

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Hilary Winter  
Devon Countryside  
Access Forum

Dear Hilary Winter

### **Horses and the Highway code**

Thank you for your letter of 4th February 2019 about review of the Highway Code. This has been forwarded to the Road Safety Unit as we have policy responsibility for road safety. I have been asked to reply.

The Department published the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) Safety Review Call for Evidence on 9 March 2018. This closed on 1 June 2018, with over 14,000 responses. The Department received many different ideas for improving the safety, and perceptions of safety, of cyclists, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users including different ways of educating motorists and improving empathy.

We published the summary of responses on 18 October 2018, and a full Government response to the consultation on 22 November 2018. Details of this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/governments-response-to-the-cycling-walking-investment-strategy-safety-review>.

The CWIS Safety Review was specifically focused on ways to improve the safety of vulnerable road users, including horse riders. Much of it is directly relevant to horse riders, including its emphasis on the hierarchy of road users, and on close passing and overtaking.

As you will know, the Highway Code already mentions horse riders and the need for drivers to exercise special care in relation to them. The new review work is designed to improve the Highway Code still further, to keep vulnerable road users safe on the roads and make sure they are at the forefront of motorists' minds when they are travelling. The review will be conducted in consultation with our stakeholders, according to the Department's usual practice, including those representing equestrians.

Yours sincerely

*Uzo Nwoko*