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**Countryside
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**Road Safety Strategy Post 2010 consultation
Zone 2/13 Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR**

16th July 2009

(Sent by e-mail to roadsafetyconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Dear Sir /Madam

Consultation Response; A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World

I am responding to the above consultation on behalf of Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS).

About CAFWS

CAFWS, a Local Access Forum, is an **independent statutory advisory body** established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to give advice on countryside access matters. It has a balanced membership of knowledgeable and experienced users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers), landowners and other interests (including conservation, disabled access, landscape).

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex. The Department for 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.

Response

Prior to the consultation deadline (14th July) permission was sought, and granted, from the Department of Transport to submit a late response. This response has been compiled by the Forum Officer following discussion by Forum Members at its meeting on 15th July.

This Forum felt strongly that to increase safety on roads, particularly rural ones, it is essential that all users are considered including all non-motorised users (NMUs - walkers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers). Activity by these users meets many of the government's agendas including health and sustainable transport (active travel). In particular the Forum would like you to consider the following points:

- 1. Use of the road network by NMUs.** NMUs often prefer to use rights of way (RoW) and other off-road routes where they exist, but unfortunately it is rarely possible to complete a whole circuit without having to cross, or travel along a section of road. The road network therefore plays a vital linking function in RoW networks. Many once safe to use roads have become much busier over recent years, a trend which is likely to continue making them dangerous places for vulnerable users, in particular horse riders, and for young cyclists. The issue of safety of NMUs may not be fully appreciated by studying KSI figures as often they do not put themselves into a threatening position, but choose to avoid using roads they perceive as being dangerous, for example many riders often elect to box their animals to ensure safe riding. Road safety is one of the key

issues identified in the West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan (<http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/rowip>).

More could be done to ensure drivers are made more aware of the vulnerable nature of NMUs during driver learning/training.

2. **Speed on rural roads.** The Forum supports a reduction of speed on rural roads but feels there needs to be sufficient resources to promote and enforce speed limits if they are to be successful in making roads safer. The reduction of speed on rural lanes should improve safety as well as increasing the attractiveness of the rural road network to NMUs.
3. **Large vehicles on rural roads.** Reduction in the size of vehicles on rural lanes would add to their attractiveness for sustainable transport and recreational use. There is data that shows that HGVs are responsible for a disproportionately large number of cycling casualties. Many drivers, including HGV drivers, use SatNav systems that guide them along unsuitable roads. An initiative to minimise HGVs impact on minor roads by improving SatNav routing would be welcomed. This should be pan-European as many intercontinental drivers rely on such technology in countries they are not familiar with.
4. **Verge provision and management.** Verges, where they exist and are not too uneven, overgrown or litter strewn, can provide a safe refuge for walkers and other NMUs. Many verges are getting eroded by once narrow lanes being widened, often incrementally, to cope with increasing traffic levels. Highway and Rights of Way departments should be encouraged to work closely together, possibly through integration of LTP and RoWIPs to ensure verges that link off-road routes or link urban areas with the deeper countryside, are better maintained for this purpose. The importance of verges was also highlighted by the joint Countryside Agency and Institution of Civil Engineers publication "Rural Routes and Networks" 2002 ISBN 0 7277 3203 X - page 16.
5. **Sight Lines, vegetation clearance and position of signs.** Many rights of way exit on to roads - the importance of clear sight lines should be taken into account when considering road safety at such locations and reference should be made in the document to management of such. Again there could be a role to play linking the LTP and RoWIP.

Thank you for considering this response.

Yours faithfully



Jane Noble
Forum Officer, Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex
<http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws>

Copy for information to:

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All members of CAFWS
Craig Bowdery – Secretary to the Forum
Christine Luff – WSCC Right of Way Team
Leader

Lisa Creaye-Griffin – WSCC Rural Operations
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