

British Horse Society Response to the Proposed London Low Emission Zone

The British Horse Society (BHS or “the Society”) represents the interests of the 4.3 million people in the UK who ride or who drive horse-drawn vehicles. With a membership in excess of 102,000, the BHS is the largest and most influential equestrian charity in the UK.

The BHS works, amongst other things, for safer on and off-road riding and driving through an improved public rights of way network. The BHS works in partnership with other user groups, local and central government to make riding on the road, and rights of way useful and open to all.

In an effective partnership, a Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales was prepared by the British Horse Industry Confederation, Defra, DCMS and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Strategy includes the following aims:-

- **Aim 2 ‘To increase participation in equestrianism and develop the social contribution of the Horse Industry’**
- **Aim 3 ‘To boost the economic performance of equestrian businesses**
- **Aim 5 of the Strategy is to ‘Increase access to off-road riding and carriage driving’.**

The Society makes the following representations in respect of the draft LEZ proposal.

The Society recognises the need to improve air quality within London but considers that any such proposals to achieve this aim should not have a disproportionate effect on any particular sector of the public or any particular sector of industry.

If the Low Emission Zone is implemented as planned it will have a disproportionate effect, not only on the equine industry and leisure riders within the M25, but also on those from outside the M25 who need to access equine facilities within the M25.

Equestrian businesses throughout the UK are predominantly and historically low-margin enterprises. In recent years, insurance, rates and other running costs have risen significantly, leading to an increase in the number of establishments which have ceased trading.

The horse Industry is acknowledged by government to be an important contributor to the national economy (£4.2bn); a valuable part of the social fabric of many communities; and a contributor to human health and well-being, sporting prowess and education. The continuance of equestrian establishments is therefore in the wider interests of society at large.

The Society has 3,700 members who have Greater London Borough post codes, plus numerous approved livery yards and approved riding establishments within the M25. We estimate that there are at least 80 riding establishments within Greater London. These provide opportunities for people to ride and take exercise. Vauxhall City Farm, a registered charity, which is seeking BHS approval provides such opportunities to disabled riders and disadvantaged youngsters.

Wimbledon Village Stables, Trent Park (Southgate), Wormwood Scrubs Pony Centre (East Acton), Lee Valley (Leyton), Ealing Riding School, Dulwich Riding School, Newham Riding School (Beckton), Hyde Park Riding School, London Equestrian Centre (Finchley) and Mount Mascall Stables (Bexley) are examples of the many BHS approved establishments situated within the M25, many of which offer career training for students and with provide riding lessons for the local community.

Westway Stables in West London participates in the Positive Activities for Young People programme, which targets young people at risk of social exclusion or falling into crime by providing them with diversionary activities.

Sport England is currently linking inner city schools with BHS establishments to introduce more children to horses, and to encourage them to take exercise this way.

The LEZ proposals could jeopardize the viability of many of these centres, and the services that they offer to all sectors of society.

BHS approved riding and livery establishments and leisure riders who have a horse box tend to have lorries that are in their second lease of life and will not meet the Euro III standard. TfL's estimate of the cost of modification for a non compliant lorry, at £3,000 is often more than the lorry is worth itself. Even if horse owners were able to afford to replace their lorry, their old lorry would be worthless as it would not comply to the Euro III standard.

If equine leisure users and establishments cannot afford to replace their lorries or pay £200 every time they drive it within the proposed LEZ, businesses will close and leisure riders will not be able to access competitions and teaching opportunities. Horse lorries tend not to be used frequently, often they will be used no more than once a week, they therefore do not contribute greatly to London's poor air quality.

A horse lorry is vital for many equine establishments – in an emergency they need to be able to transport horses to the vet for urgent treatment. Establishments located within the M25 often have no grazing and therefore need to transport their horses to grazing outside the M25 ring.

Horse lorry owners who access garages within the M25 ring for repairs and servicing of their vehicles will be adversely affected by the draft proposals as will those businesses.

If the LEZ proposal is implemented it is imperative that riding on the road is made safer for all equestrians and that more off road access opportunities are provided within the M25 ring so that equestrians can at least ride to centres and competitions when these are not too far away. Money raised from the LEZ charges needs to be invested in improving routes and providing new routes for the non motorized user.

Source: [*British Horse Society*](#)