

## Equestrians

Oxfordshire has approximately 18,000<sup>1</sup> horse riders and horse owners. In addition, the south of the county has a rich history of racehorse training and breeding. These equestrian interests contribute to the local economy and add to the cultural, social, tourist, educational, health and sporting life of the area, but their available public riding network is disconnected and riders, especially young or novice, can be put at a disadvantage by vehicle use and infrastructure.

The adopted *Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plans* and *Local Transport Plans* include equestrian issues, but as the county's population and infrastructure expands with a focus on healthy place-shaping and tackling the Climate Emergency it is worthwhile revisiting equestrian issues in areas that the County Council is responsible for.

### What is the idea?

To better include and integrate horserider and equestrian issues across the following areas under Oxfordshire County Council's control:

- **Road Safety and Highways**

The highways infrastructure used by riders (roadside verges, minor or unsurfaced roads, public rights of way, greenways) needs to be high quality and well managed to improve confidence and prevent harm. Intelligence about hotspots of use, accident areas and situations, livery location and network availability can be combined to better inform maintenance, repair, road user behavior and route planning decisions and management.

- **Integration with new Active Travel and Place Making measures**

Where new or replacement active travel utility routes, such as cycletracks and greenways are being planned, these can be assessed at early stages for their potential to include equestrian safe links or stand-alone routes.

- **Policy making**

Including equestrians' specific interests when developing relevant Oxfordshire-wide policies such as LTCP, OxIS and Oxfordshire 2050 will help focus on their needs as vulnerable road users and value equestrians' contribution to the local rural economy.

- **Engagement and Consultation**

Early engagement with local equestrian organisations when considering new or replacement transport infrastructure will help identify use patterns and interests that may not be apparent from a desk-based survey or transport modelling.

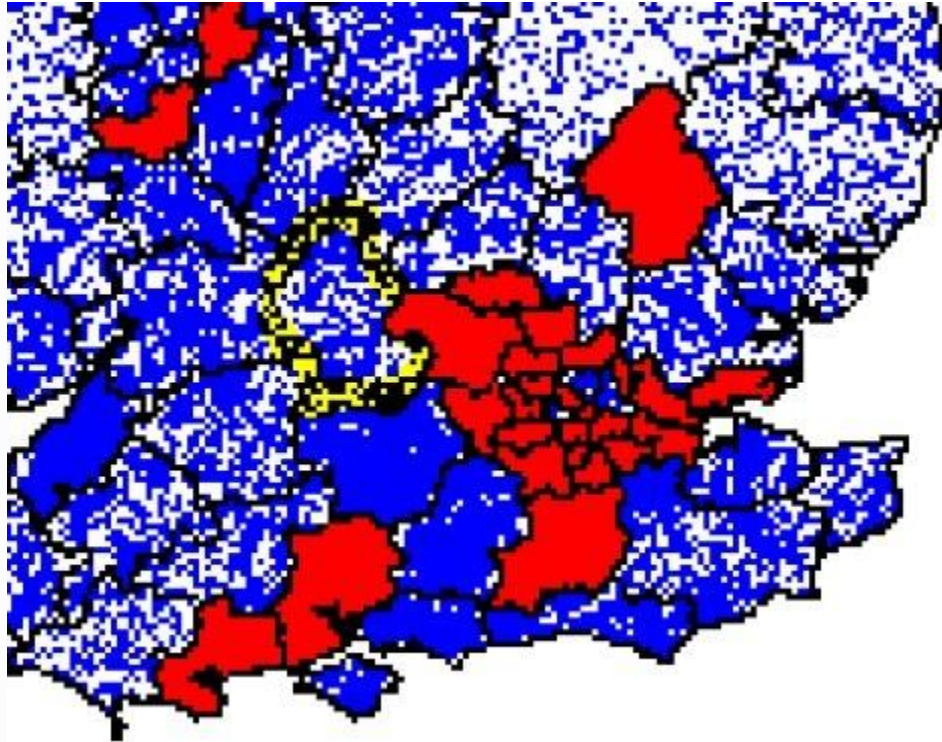
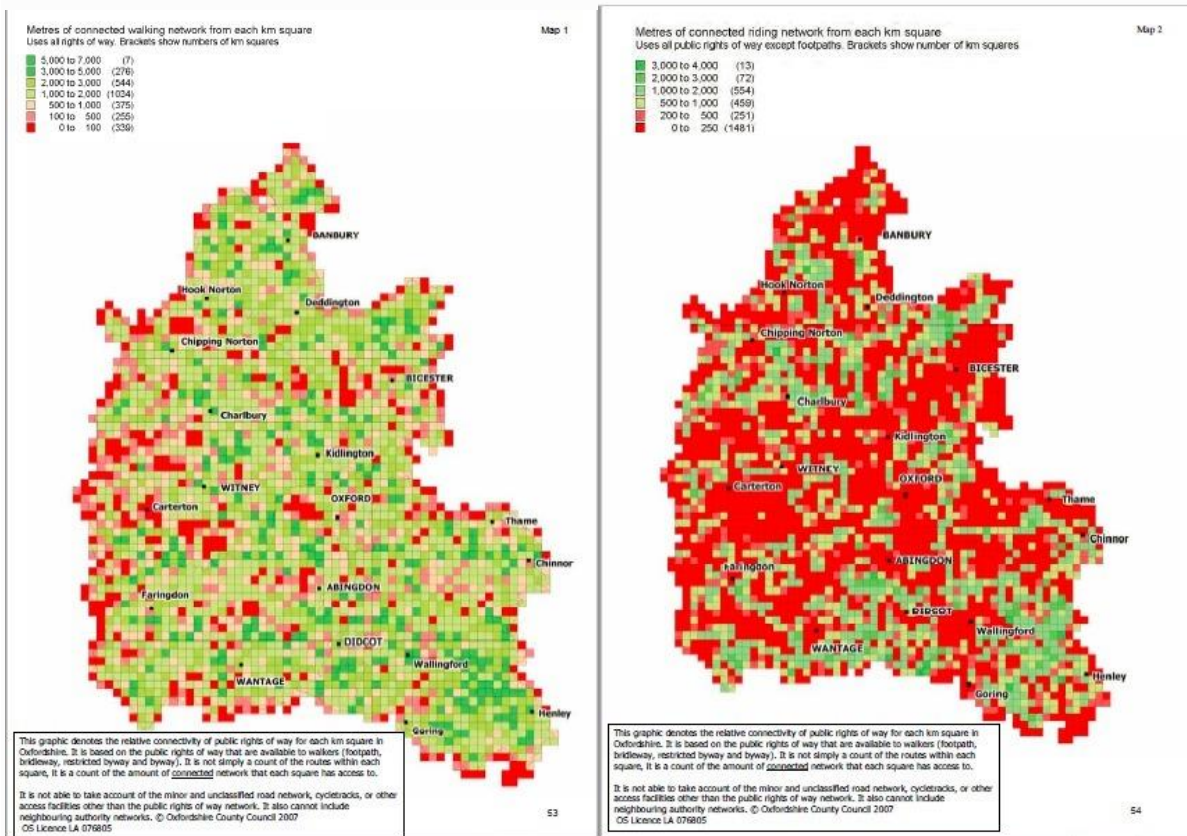


Fig 1: Horse ownership graphic. 1-40 horse per blue dot. 40+ horses per red dot<sup>2</sup>



Figs 2 and 3: Graphic of connected public rights of way network for walkers compared with the network for horse riders and cyclists. Red is worst and dark green is best<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *National Equine Database horse passport data 2010*

<sup>2</sup> *British Equine Federation* [https://www.bef.co.uk/repository/EquineDevelopment/Mid\\_Term\\_Review\\_Manifesto\\_for\\_the\\_Horse\\_V7\\_Jan\\_2017.pdf](https://www.bef.co.uk/repository/EquineDevelopment/Mid_Term_Review_Manifesto_for_the_Horse_V7_Jan_2017.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *British Horse Society Incident Map* <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/safety/incident-map> (accessed Dec 2019)

<sup>4</sup> *Network connectivity map from Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2015-2025*

## Question 8

### **Equestrians - What do you think?**

Do you think that horse riders and equestrian issues need consideration in OCC strategy, policies and practice? How do you think equestrian use of the highway network could be made safer?

To respond please use the online consultation form.