

Greenways - 23/03/05 Hansard

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many kilometres of greenways there are in England; how many greenways and similar projects are planned; and if she will make a statement. [222058]

Alun Michael: The Countryside Agency set up six 'pilot greenway projects' in England between 1999 and 2002, which together totalled a distance of approximately 60 km (37 miles). The Countryside Agency defined Greenways" as a

"network of largely car-free, off-road routes connecting people to facilities and open spaces in and around towns and counties and to the countryside. For shared use by people of all abilities on foot, bike **or horseback**, for commuting play or leisure".

The Agency's aim was to build on existing facilities and routes and was aimed at providing:

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- Improved access to employment, shops, schools, leisure centres and places of interest.
- Inter-connecting links between communities.
- Continuity of routes.
- Encouragement to increase cycling, walking and **horse riding**.
- An improved environment—less traffic congestion and pollution.
- Attractive routes for leisure and recreational purposes.

The Agency wished to link Greenways" to other networks for non-motorised users such as the National Cycle Network, towpaths beside inland waterways, and National Trails. They include stretches of 'quiet' minor roads designed to be more attractive for people on bikes, **horseback** or walking.

The Countryside Agency has suggested to local authorities that through the introduction of their 'Rights of Way Improvement Plans', they could identify further routes and develop further integration with public transport, as part of the effort to reverse the trend for increasing reliance on the private car for the journey to work.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmhansrd/vo050323/text/50323w11.htm>