

# Advice on responding to DEFRA's Consultation on the Landscapes Review

## **Background – Why Are We here?**

### **What is the Landscapes Review**

In May 2018 the government asked for an independent review into whether the protections for National Parks and AONBs are still fit for purpose. In particular, what might be done better, what changes will help and whether the definitions and systems in place are still valid. The review's final report was published on 21 September 2019. It was led by Julian Glover. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>

Although the Landscapes Review does not touch on the use of motor vehicles the Government response has a section on 'managing visitor pressures', which includes the impact of recreational motoring on green lanes. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response>

DEFRA's consultation goes further and includes questions on whether or not the Government should legislate to restrict the recreational use of motor vehicles on unsealed roads, either within protected landscapes or **everywhere**. Views are also sought on introducing restriction to tarmacked roads. The relevant questions are numbered 13 to 17.

## **Organisational responses versus your personal responses – what we are requesting you do.**

The main organisations representing two and four wheeled green roads interests will be putting forward detailed organisational responses, which will also contain technical arguments. This work is supported by LARA and the NMC, and backed up by the latest evidence. The organisations involved are the leading experts in their fields with decades of experience and knowledge and have regular contact with the Government.

As a result, we are asking for people to focus on the core points in the press release, as a significant response to these will carry weight. There is no need for you to respond with complex arguments in this initial call for views. It could be that in doing so you may unintentionally conflict with efforts on your behalf by the representative organisations. If you do want to assist in supporting the work of representative organisations in a more detailed way on this consultation, or on other green roads matters, please get in touch with us – we would very much welcome your support and interest,

## **How to submit your response.**

### **1. Emailing your response**

This is the simplest way to respond. You can prepare and email your response quickly, easily and send it directly to DEFRA's consultation team via: [landscapesconsultation@defra.gov.uk](mailto:landscapesconsultation@defra.gov.uk). Please make it clear that you are responding to questions 13-17 of the consultation. This is important and will ensure your response will be tallied properly to the consultation exercise as conducted by DEFRA.

You can simply put your responses in the email or email a letter containing your responses as an attachment. But in both cases, you will need to clearly indicate, as a heading to the email and/or letter, that you are responding to DEFRA's consultation on the Landscapes Review.

### **2. The online questionnaire**

If you should decide to respond via the online questionnaire, which may be the case if you want to comment on other aspects of the consultation not related to motorised vehicles, you will find that like all online questionnaires it has to be worked through question by question. If you don't want to respond on other aspects of the consultation, DEFRA say that it is perfectly acceptable to respond only on the questions in the 'managing visitor pressures' section, which contains the motor vehicles questions. The consultation is specifically laid out in sections for this very reason. We are told that it takes about 4-5 clicks to get to the

'managing visitor pressures' section and so therefore should be relatively easy.

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/future-landscapes-strategy/government-response-to-the-landscapes-review/>

### **Points to note in submitting your response**

- Be polite, restrained and measured. Responses that are aggressive, dismissive, abusive or defamatory will be disregarded.
- Respond as a member of the public and not a member of an organisation.
- Use your own words to make your response personal and individual.
- Please keep your response focussed. Be succinct and authentic talk about the things you feel strongly about.
- Remember to make it very clear which questions your comments are in response to.

### **Suggested points you may wish to include in your response**

**DO NOT CUT AND PASTE REPONSES FROM THE LARA/NMC PRESS RELEASE. Government departments spot this kind of thing and have been known to group identical responses and count them as a single response.**

Points you may want to consider:

- responsible motorcyclists share the government's aim of preserving the countryside including the network of green lanes for everyone to enjoy.
- your concerns on how the government response strays from the spirit of the Landscape Review (doesn't mention vehicles) and Landscapes for Everyone, targeting motorcycling on Green Roads.
- that you already feel discriminated against due to motorcycling on unsealed roads already being severely restricted with less than 2% available for you to enjoy.
- your personal circumstances and relationship with the countryside, including any relevant professional / vocational experience of green roads and countryside access.
- why do you choose to enjoy the countryside on a motorcycle or four wheeled vehicle
- how you successfully and safely share the green roads with other users when using them.
- how green roads offer you a safer environment in which to motorcycle or drive a vehicle.
- how accessing the countryside helps your physical and mental health, including how any personal circumstances might prohibit you accessing the countryside otherwise.
- how you believe motorised vehicles are an important part of natural countryside cultural heritage.
- how you believe that the actions of a minority of irresponsible users should not curtail your preferred way to access the countryside
- your recognition that countryside routes need to be managed, and that you accept this might involve proportionate restrictions on a minority of routes

**Please remember to avoid complex technical arguments!**

LARA / NMC February 2022